

Adjournment Debate

1979, all applications for assistance under the National Housing Act must be in metric units. This is an administrative requirement under the National Housing Act.

Sector committee—construction, 5.01, a voluntary committee composed of voluntary representatives of the construction industry, including the Housing and Urban Development Association and the Canadian Construction Association, approved a plan that set target dates for conversion to help the industry convert as rapidly and economically as possible.

There are sources of plywood in metric dimensions, and the capability of the lumber industry to produce the required plywood panels in metric dimensions has been established.

As for progress in the United States, the American National Metric Council has been co-ordinating, planning and scheduling since 1973. Now that there is a U.S. metric board in operation, further impetus has been given to metric conversion plans already under way via the American National Metric Council voluntary sector committees.

An example of progress in the U.S. metric conversion program is in the automobile manufacturing sector, this being the single largest manufactured export Canada has, representing 27 per cent of all exports to the U.S.A. The way automobile manufacturers are swiftly converting to the metric system in the U.S. is the very kind of voluntary program that the U.S. metric board is required by Congress to encourage.

From the very beginning the Canadian metric conversion program has been and is being co-ordinated with counterpart American sector committees. In the last few days alone, six U.S. committee members, including a director of the ANMC and staff from the U.S. metric board, met with their opposite numbers in industrial sectors in Ottawa.

The white paper on metric conversion in Canada, issued in January, 1970, which called for the establishment of MCC was agreed to by the House leaders of all parties. An order in council, the metric commission order of June, 1971, established the Metric Commission with a mandate to involve voluntary participation from all sectors of the Canadian economy.

In 1975-76 a resolution debate on the program of guideline dates for metric conversion was held, including committee hearings at which industry, labour and consumer groups presented their views. The report of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs unanimously recommended that the House consider the advisability of adopting the guideline dates, and recommended further legislation to facilitate metric conversion.

The first such legislation, the Statute Law (Metric Conversion) Amendment Act, chapter 55, was debated in the House and Senate and assented to on August 5, 1977, by the Governor General. The second Statute Law (Metric Conversion) Amendment, Bill S-10, has received Senate approval and first reading in the House of Commons on December 15, 1978.

This legislative action supports the 102 sector committees comprising over 2,000 volunteers who are currently developing

[Mr. Maine.]

the plans and schedules for implementation of the metric system in their sectors of the economy.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION—TELEVISION
COVERAGE IN SOUTHEAST MANITOBA

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, on January 26 I asked a question of the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) regarding the installation of CBC English television in south-eastern Manitoba. This is the third time that I have used the adjournment debate to bring this matter before the government. I was wondering how best to get this message to the government in view of the fact that it has not lived up to its promises on this question. What I intend to do is to outline to the government once again the promises it has made in the hope that this will be one promise it will fulfil, rather than making all the promises and, once it comes to implementation, having the words prove to be empty.

In 1975 a petition was passed and signed by 346 members in the southeastern area of Manitoba requesting the then CBC president Laurent Picard for CBC English television programming. The CBC at that time, in response to the petition which I forwarded to them, said the following, and I quote from a letter of May 21 signed by Dennis Townsend, director of parliamentary services:

● (2215)

Under the Accelerated Coverage Plan, a UHF 50 kw transmitter with a 300-foot tower is scheduled for Sprague, Manitoba, with the expectation that an application for it will be made to the CRTC in 1978. The transmitter will provide CBC English TV service.

I protested back in 1975 that 1978 was too far in the future. Having made the protest, I figured I would receive some favourable response. On August 14, 1975, the liaison officer for the CBC wrote as follows:

It should also be noted that we are nearing the half way point in the five-year plan. Since it takes about two years to prepare our documents, have our application heard by the CRTC and put the service into operation, it is now very difficult for us to change any of our target dates.

That letter was written in 1975 and it was referring to the target date of 1978. Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and I kept on working. The year 1978 came, and I felt it was time to approach the government once again to see whether it would do anything. I wrote to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation once again, and I received the following reply from Mr. Dennis Townsend:

Using this and the other criteria which Anne Richens of this office explained in her August 1975 letter to you, Sprague is included in ACP Priority Group 100, and it is our expectation that we will apply to the CRTC this summer for permission to establish the Sprague transmitter.

Mr. Townsend's letter was dated February 8, 1978. I was very hopeful that we would get somewhere because the CBC was saying the same thing in 1978 as it had said in 1975. Then I thought I received the real word in a letter written by the hon. Secretary of State dated March 2, 1978, in which he said the following:

I note that you directed a copy of your letter to Mr. Townsend, and you will now have received his reply of February 8, informing you that the CBC does