

could have been thoroughly dealt with because in the months preceding the month of June we had ample time to study the whole matter. The government has in its hands the power to introduce legislation, and this matter was pulled in and out several times but was never dealt with in a straightforward fashion.

The Metric Commission is one of the many disaster areas in this government. They have a massive turnover of staff. The sector chairmen change rapidly. When you go out and talk to some of the people in industry who have been sector chairmen, you find that some of them have been in that position for one meeting only, that they got nowhere or could not stand the proceedings, and resigned, that then another sector chairman was appointed, and another one following him. There is little direction or co-ordination on the Metric Commission. The small business sector is not represented on the commission. The people who are heading the sector commissions are from big business, not from the medium size or small business sectors. The reason is that people in that area cannot afford in many cases to take time to become involved in the metric debate.

What we seem to have in the Metric Commission is a gang of innovative bureaucrats and idea peddlers who feel they are entitled to inflict on the people of this country their ideas which they believe are in our best interests, and for some reason this in Canada is known as democracy.

Take the example of how decisions are taken. There is, for example, an association called the North American Fastener Association. These people have got together and have decided, in their consideration of metric conversion, to use a 12 star bolt head as a standard. Now a 12 sided bolt head may be a great idea for the production line with special power tools, but in effect it means that those in the repair field, or the farmer, will have great difficulty salvaging a bolt and nut for use again. This is the sort of thing that is taking place. That matter has never been brought up before parliament or a committee of the House, and it is not mentioned in any of the metric reports. It is something that is being done by a small group of manufacturers which will have a dramatic effect on the conduct of the machinery business in north America.

We, as members of parliament, have no input into the Metric Commission. We can, along with the examination of the spending estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, see them on an annual basis, but that means a member of parliament would have to disregard all other items in the department's spending estimates and spend his ten, 15 or 20 minutes of questioning strictly on the matter of metric conversion. Given the structure of the committee system in parliament, it is a totally inadequate way to deal with this matter.

The arrogance of the Metric Commission is legendary. They have only produced three annual reports, and the last one was ten months late. We had Metric Commission officials before our caucus finance committee in 1974. Their representation to us was to put on the screen a map of Canada. They had the

### *Metric System*

capital of Manitoba listed as Edmonton and the capital of Alberta listed as Winnipeg.

**An hon. Member:** Shame!

**Mr. Kempling:** Surely that illustrates the stupidity of the people who put that presentation together. When we pointed it out to them, they laughed; they thought it was a great joke. That shows the insensitivity of these people.

What the Metric Commission is doing, with the full agreement of the government, is to proceed with an incomplete program that is costing millions of dollars. The cost to date amounts to \$19,823,477 which will be spent on the Metric Commission's activities from its inception to the end of 1978. I think the people of this country have a right to ask what they are getting for this money.

The members of the Metric Commission continue to display their arrogance by showing lack of information and by not meeting with the parliamentary committee. I have said many times in committee that there is no reason in the world why we cannot have an annual meeting with the Metric Commission, spread over two or three days if necessary, to review their progress. But they like to hide behind the estimates, and they have few people there to answer questions. They do not submit their reports to parliament on time, and they have done very little to co-ordinate the whole metric program.

We have asked time and time again that a bill be brought in to deal with the metric program in its entirety. As a matter of fact at one stage the minister of industry, trade and commerce of the day said that he did not know what to put in the bill if a bill were brought forward. He said he would be glad to receive suggestions from us. We sent him a letter giving him a whole list of suggestions on how to draft a bill dealing with metric conversion, but of course they were not accepted. The whole approach to this is wrong.

There is no doubt that metric conversion in time will be brought about, but there are different ways of handling it. In the United States, for instance, they are handling land measurements quite differently from us. In a letter which we have from their committee on science and technology this is what they say:

The matter of land measurements was specifically discussed in our committee hearings. Land measurement was frequently given as an example where there would be very little advantage to be gained from making the change-over and where the costs of doing so would be entirely out of proportion to any possible gains. It was also noted that in the State of Louisiana land measurements continue to be made in the old French measurements, a leftover from the days when France colonized that part of the continent. The same applies to Spanish land measurements in California. In neither of these cases has it been found advantageous to switch to the English system in the past, and there are not now any plans to switch those measurements or any land measurements elsewhere in the United States to metric measurements.

● (1650)

In regard to possible change-over to the Metric System by the Board of Trade in Chicago, and the possible effect on grain and other commodity trades, there are, to the best of my knowledge, no plans in existence at this time for a change-over. I have made inquiries with officers of the Board of Trade, and their position is that if any of the commodity trading organizations individually decide on their own to change to the Metric System, the Board would accept such a