

*Metric System*

was something to which the prairie farmer was bitterly opposed.

This amendment to the Canadian Wheat Board Act will not sell another bushel of wheat for the western farmer or raise the price of that wheat by one cent. It simply reduces the cost to the grain companies which have to convert bushels into tonnes for international markets, which they have been doing for years. If this bill is enacted into legislation as it presently stands, we will have many angry individuals in western Canada. I have a stack of letters on this issue, all expressing opposition to it.

Our friends opposite so often talk about democracy, but I think this legislation gives us a fine example of the way the government believes in participatory democracy. I say the government does not believe in participatory democracy. I have a stack of letters close to a foot high and I hope to send out my speech to each one of these letter writers, though if hon. members wish I could tabulate them for the House.

**Mr. Paproski:** I have some here which I can read too.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. The hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga) has the floor for the purpose of making a speech, and I think we should all listen.

**Mr. Elzinga:** Anyone who travels in western Canada realizes that the majority of the western farmers are opposed to this legislation. I was in my constituency this past week discussing various issues with the farming population, and this was one of their main areas of concern. As the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) pointed out earlier, they were very disappointed when the government pushed the abolition of capital punishment down their throats, and this is another issue which is being pushed down their throats.

**Mr. Marchand:** There was a free vote on capital punishment.

**Mr. Elzinga:** There was no free vote on capital punishment in the cabinet. That was the biggest farce there ever was, and you know it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. The hon. member for Pembina will please address the Chair.

**Mr. Elzinga:** There was no free vote.

**Mr. Roy (Laval):** I voted for retention, and that was a free vote.

**Mr. Elzinga:** A free vote—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. I suggest we get back to the bill under discussion. Capital punishment is now in the past.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Mr. Elzinga.]

**Mr. Elzinga:** As I was saying a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, I have a stack of letters about a foot high all expressing opposition to metric conversion. Rather than read them all into the record, let me refer to one brief letter from Pibroch, Alberta, which is in my constituency, which expresses the sentiments of the correspondence that I have received.

Dear Sir:

I understand that the bills concerning metric changeover have not yet passed in the House of Commons, and I would like to register my complete opposition to the passing of any legislation which would put this metric system into operation. Farming is difficult enough without any further complications, such as this would cause.

I trust that you as my representative in Ottawa will vote against any passing of bills to further change over to metric, especially where it concerns the farming industry in any way.

This is exactly what the amendment seeks. We wish further to consider the clauses affecting the farming population. Clauses 2, 6, 8 and 10 refer to the farming sector and deal specifically with tonnes and hectares.

I believe the minister stated on second reading that all of the farm organizations were in favour of this legislation. The heads of these farm organizations were about as in tune with the people as this Liberal administration is; they did not bother to gather a consensus among their own membership. What happened was that they were brainwashed by our friends opposite to consent to this metric legislation. They followed the foolish advice of the present government.

Since then the locals of the many farm organizations have gathered together in opposition to this legislation. I have a letter from the Westlock District 32 Unifarm which I wish to put on record; it challenges what the minister has said in this House, namely, that the farm organizations were in favour of this legislation. This is another example of hon. members opposite misleading this Chamber. This is a letter from Mrs. Donna-Faye Brown, secretary of the Westlock District 32 Unifarm:

At a recent director's meeting of Westlock District 32 Unifarm a motion was carried that the understated resolution be submitted to Unifarm Region 3 Convention to be held at Freedom Hall on April 5, 1977. A subsequent motion was carried instructing the secretary to forward to yourself a copy of the same resolution.

The resolution herewith reads:

Be it resolved that, in Canada, both the mile and the acre be retained as the unit of measure in our system of measurement.

It is our hope that the resolution may add strength to the arguments of yourself and your colleagues in the debate concerning metric conversion.

I am encouraged to see the membership rise up in opposition to this legislation. I think that the leaders of various farm organizations have now found that they put themselves in a difficult position in consenting to this legislation at the beginning. We are finding with this legislation, as with so many pieces of legislation which the government brings forward, that the government has no idea of the cost involved. All we can do is estimate the cost. In reality, I do not believe the present administration has even inquired what the estimate is. In the United States the metric conversion cost estimate ranges from \$40 billion to \$100 billion. Taking the usual ten to one differential between Canada and the United States, that