

*Metric System*

**Mr. Woolliams:** I have not been talking about it all day. You must have had a night dream.

**An hon. Member:** A nightmare.

**Mr. Woolliams:** There are nightmares and nightmares. But I do not intend to get off the track. Over the years when I have spoken, I have not digressed.

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

**Mr. Woolliams:** Anyone who levels that charge knows he is most insincere.

I will go back to what I was saying. What did Mr. Pearson say in that great speech about the opposition? He went on to say:

It should supervise all expenditures and prevent overexpenditure by exposing to the light of public opinion wasteful expenditures or worse.

Let me pause there. Can hon. members believe that in days when growth is just about zero, when we have almost one million unemployed, when we pour out money like the Social Crediters who are not in the House tonight, when we have the highest rate of inflation, the highest interest rates, the highest housing costs, the highest cost of living, the government brings out a bill on metric conversion! This great government!

**An hon. Member:** Shame!

**Mr. Woolliams:** This conversion will cost us another \$500 million.

**Mr. Paproski:** That is only for starters.

**Mr. Woolliams:** The little businessman, the little business minister, or the minister with little business—whatever you want to call him—screws up his face, he is upset. Of course he is upset. He has to go back and talk to the people about the metric system. He has never sat in the opposition. He does not understand what we are up against with that great, powerful majority who stand together through thick and thin.

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

**Mr. Woolliams:** I would rather have a few members. I would rather have a few members of the Tory party who might walk across the floor, who might differ, because if I thought that I belonged to a party where everybody had to think alike, I would know there was no thinking at all.

**An hon. Member:** You could not do that anyway.

**Mr. Woolliams:** What is the function of the opposition? Why am I speaking tonight?

**An hon. Member:** Yes, why?

**Mr. Woolliams:** The opposition is to arouse, educate and mould public opinion by voice and by vote. The Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Horner) said to us in his private chambers and in his open way that he would fight this bill to death, but he was not here for the vote.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Woolliams:** The opposition must scrutinize every action of the government and in doing so prevent the shortcuts through democratic procedure which governments like to make.

Let me pause there for a few moments. Do hon. members know what 90 per cent of the law is about, whether it has to do with metric conversion or any other matter? Ninety per cent of our law is manufactured by order in council, by some unknown body. That is what this government is going to do to the farmers and the city people of western Canada and to the gas and oil industry. It is going to thrust and ram conversion through.

I call this parliamentary insemination. An hon. minister opposite shakes his head. He is the one who destroyed *Time* and *Reader's Digest*.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Woolliams:** I feel sorry for him.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired, and there does not seem to be unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to continue.

**Mr. Bob Kaplan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, if I thought for a moment that my restraint and the restraint of my colleagues would permit this bill to progress any more rapidly, I would not have stood up, but we can see from the way the debate has deteriorated this will not happen. In the speech the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) just completed he spent perhaps two minutes on metric conversion, and the rest of his time was spent on the rationalization of the joys of being in the opposition. I hope that is a joy the opposition will have for many years.

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

**Mr. Kaplan:** There is also a burning regret that hon. members opposite have lost a very good member, the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Horner), to our side of the House.

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

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would answer a question.

**Mr. Kaplan:** I will answer the hon. member's question at the end of my remarks.

**Mr. Woolliams:** I hope the hon. member will answer before 10.30.

**Mr. Kaplan:** After the demonstration of how clever the hon. member opposite is, I am not certain whether I can answer his question, but I will certainly try.