

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 13, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

IMPLICATIONS OF FUTURE WORK HABITS

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Madam Speaker, as new technologies advance, Canadians will be working fewer hours and shorter work weeks. The most significant result of this development is the time not spent at a regular job when people individually and collectively can create new technologies that will develop our basic industries and natural resources.

Canadians can exploit their traditional image as hewers of wood and drawers of water. We can, for example, advance new technologies for growing trees, producing higher volumes of grain, and cleaning up our great resources of water.

Someone once said to me that he can imagine a time when he will work three days a week. He will be able to devote over 50 per cent of his time to his own interests, and yet retain the same basic income and maintain his standard of living.

Imagine the benefit to this country from people with new ideas and new concepts. It will be very exciting, but we have to identify what people are going to do with their time.

There is potential for an exciting future, but unless it is properly planned it could be disastrous. Canadians will have to change their way of life so that the time not spent at a regular job is less passive and more structured and productive to provide self fulfillment. Canadians can become a creative society.

And so I ask the Government today to ensure this creative future for us and recognize and study ways to deal with the social implications that will arise from the new technologies.

* * *

METRIC CONVERSION

DENIAL OF VOLUNTARY CHOICE—SIZE OF COMMISSION'S BUDGET

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Madam Speaker, on the page opposite the editorial page of today's *Globe and Mail* is an article by one of this nation's most illustrious

barristers, Mr. Morris Shumiatcher of Saskatchewan. His article is entitled, "Going Down the Drain with Metric", and its thrust is that the decimal system is far less practical for everyday use than is the duo-decimal system that was the free and voluntary choice of the people of Canada before this Government, with its mania for controlling people and things, stepped in.

The lead editorial in today's *Toronto Sun* is on the same theme. Amongst others, it makes the point that, while the U.K. and the U.S. have abandoned their metric commissions, ours has gone from having a budget of \$44,000 a year to spending some \$32 million annually. Mind you, it does serve to provide employment for 20 commissioners, 19 of whom are "Liberal hacks".

That this issue is so alive after these many years of Liberal pressure and propaganda speaks volumes about how deeply Canadians still feel, not only about the practicality of the metric system but about the Government's tactics in forcing its adoption. When will the Government admit that on this issue above all others it has misread both the requirement and the public will? Metric must be voluntary.

* * *

TRADE UNIONS

CALL FOR FREEDOM IN POLAND

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is surely aware that in Poland Mr. Lech Walesa and nine other unionists representing a majority of Polish workers sent a letter this week to their Government calling for the release of those convicted for union activity and political beliefs, and reinstatement of persons fired for union work or membership.

The union leaders pointed out that "disregarding the will of society can profit neither the Government nor society". The letter further noted that "re-establishment of union freedom is one of the indispensable elements of a much desired and genuine national agreement".

The New Democratic Party urges the Government of Canada to voice its support for the re-establishment of free trade unions in Poland, in the strongest terms possible, and actively to seek unanimous support at the International Labour Organization to be held in Geneva at the beginning of June.