

from whom the boiler may have been bought, or the boiler-maker. Any one of these persons may be found responsible for the explosion. The owner or user is relieved of responsibility by showing that the boiler has been efficiently examined, at proper intervals, by a competent person, and, if any repairs have been recommended, that they have been properly carried out. He is, however, liable for the acts of his servants, and if the engineer were found to blame, the owner or user would be held responsible. A boiler insurance company may be found responsible where its inspector has been negligent in making an inspection, or the commissioners find him to be incompetent. A second-hand dealer may be found to blame for selling a boiler which he knew to be defective, or misleading a purchaser as to its condition. And a boiler maker can be found to blame for improperly making repairs, or where a boiler has been improperly constructed.

When one takes into consideration the fact that this act has been in force for twenty-two years, that there are a far larger number of boilers in use there than in Canada, that the density of the population is far greater, that in comparison the number of boiler explosions is considerably fewer, and the number of persons killed and injured much smaller, there can be no doubt that the British law is founded on common sense and works well in practice. Legislation in Canada could not follow a better model. The Act should be a Dominion and not a Provincial Act, as the machinery required would be adapted to every province, and would be more effective and cheaper by having a single commission of competency, which could not be attained by a multiplication of boards.



THE COMING SYSTEM OF MEASURES.

In another part of this issue will be found Mr. Halsey's reply to the letter of the secretary of the Decimal Association of Great Britain, referring to the continued use of certain old terms of measures in countries using the Metric System. The survival of terms used in special trades might naturally be looked for alongside of the acceptance by the general public of any national system of weights and measures. But while the terms referred to are used in the silk factories, they are not recognized beyond. When the silk merchant puts his goods on the market, he uses the terms of the Metric System. The sailor still takes his soundings in fathoms, but when he goes ashore he finds he cannot buy cloth by the fathom. He must buy by the yard. So with the silk manufacturer; and the survival of a factory custom in a particular trade or place does not diminish the significance of the steady and uninterrupted advance of the Metric System for general purposes over the world. The circumstance that some English terms are still used in the textile trades on the continent merely follows from the predominance hitherto held by British textile manufacturers in the markets of the world, and not because there is any inherent disadvantage in adapting the metric measures to the trade. At the recent international congress, at Paris, held to promote a universal standard of yarn counts, it was agreed by the British representatives that such a universal system should be in metric terms and no other; and Mr.

Halsey's present arguments on these points are pretty fully answered in a report published by the American Chamber of Commerce, in Paris, last year on a conference with the Société des Ingénieurs Civils de France. The Chamber, with a view to weighing all objections to the Metric System, submitted thirty questions to the society, and these were answered in detail. Considering the conservatism of British manufacturers, the report of the yarn congress referred to is a striking testimony in favor of the Metric System. We have this report before us and two paragraphs are worth quoting. They are: "The urgent need of the trade is a system of counts which will embrace all classes of yarns, be convenient for the spinner and reeler, and also for the manufacturer, and which will be understood in all countries. 'Count' being the relationship of length to weight it is obvious that such a system could not be attained unless there were one uniform system of weights and measures. The Metric System of weights and measures is so perfect and has been adopted so widely that it forms the most suitable basis for a uniform system of counts of yarns."

Mr. Halsey is struck by the fact that the United States appears to be the strongest fortress of the English system of weights and measures. This is because the United States has, nationally speaking, lived like the oyster, self-contained within its shell, and with comparatively little foreign trade outside of the English-speaking peoples until in recent years. Great Britain lives by her foreign trade, and her past refusal to adopt a system now used by practically all the rest of the world has cost her the loss of millions of pounds. Now she realizes it, and hence the House of Lords has passed the second reading of a bill to render the Metric System compulsory in Great Britain on and from 5th April, 1906. Inasmuch as a majority of the members of the House of Commons have already signed a memorial in favor of the system, there appears to be little doubt that it will pass. Canada and the other colonies will fall into line, because the Premiers of all the colonies at the last Colonial Conference in London, expressed themselves formally in favor of the change. Costly and inconvenient though the change may be for the time being, the gain will be worth the cost, as all Canadians will realize when they compare our present decimal coinage with the old Canadian currency of pounds, shillings and pence.



—The Canadian Telephone and Telegraph Company recently took a number of Ottawa aldermen on a jaunt to the United States to inspect various independent telephone systems. The same company is also offering telephones at reduced rates to aldermen in London, Ont., if they obtain a franchise. While there may be nothing intentionally wrong in either of these acts, they are not worthy of public commendation. If independent telephony is for the benefit of the people, and there is incontestible evidence that it is, companies by avoiding all appearance of evil, in their dealings with aldermen, will stand a better chance of obtaining competitive franchises, and securing the confidence of the people. Any act which indirectly places an alderman under an obligation, however slight, to an applicant for a public franchise, is deserving of the strongest censure.