

Metric System

am, an ordinary little shopper going into the ordinary shop to buy a tin of Chun King dinner, and I am faced with a 1.13 kg. tin which costs \$1.65. How can I compare that to what I bought last week? How am I going to know if the price has gone up or gone down? How am I going to know if I am getting a bargain or not getting a bargain? Your average housewife is going to go berserk when she faces this sort of thing, when she goes to the supermarket and has to figure it out.

Let's say she goes in to look for coffee. We all know how high coffee has climbed recently. It has got more and more expensive. We even have to pay 20 cents for a cup of coffee in these hallowed precincts. The only reason why so many people are fighting to get in here is that they can buy cheap coffee, at 20 cents a cup. We get a real bargain here in coffee. Everywhere else in the world the price of coffee has gone sky high. Brazilian coffee is now very expensive.

Let's say the poor housewife goes into the supermarket and wants to buy some coffee. She sees this very attractive advertisement I hold in my hand, printed in black and white. The white letters say "Don't forget"; I don't know what they are asking you not to forget, but that's what it says, "Don't forget." Looking below that, she sees coffee listed. She can get Airway whole bean coffee; that surely is a good brand of coffee. Then she sees she can get a 907 g. bag. What in the name of heaven is the poor soul going to do when she sees that? How does she know how a 907 g. bag compares with a tin of coffee? We used to be able to call them tins. You went in the shop and you bought a tin of coffee. Now a 907 g. bag costs \$4.69.

Well, let's say she wants to drink crystals. She may be a crystal drinker. I believe out west they drink a lot of crystals. They have a lot of dry weather out there, a lot of dust. It makes them drink crystals. You can buy Empress orange flavours. You can get 4 x 9.2g. pkg., apparently for 77 cents. What in the name of heaven is she to make of this? That's why I say this is an accompaniment to the user-pay policy, that is to say, the user will not know what he is paying under this policy. And it has been brought in because the Liberal government has been able to control inflation.

If the government has been able to control inflation, we would never have had this bill before us, never. Inflation was at 10 per cent; now it is at 7.8 per cent, I believe, and going up. The wage and price controls have failed. They are an utter and abysmal failure and not working. Inflation is vibrating through the economy again and the government, aware it cannot control inflation, does not want the public to know inflation is still going on, so it is changing the whole measurement system to make sure nobody can tell if it has gone up or gone down.

What is going to happen to Statistics Canada if this barbaric plot is enacted in legislation? I do not want Mr. Speaker to think that I am not being relevant to this bill. I relate my remarks to Clause 3 of the bill, the amendments to the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act. I would have thought the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Abbott) would have gone off his rocker when he saw his name used like

[Mr. Crosbie.]

this in this bill, I imagine even without his permission. These amendments to the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act would remove the reference to Canadian units of measurements and would thereby eliminate obligatory dual marking in favour of single metric marking. Ah, Mr. Speaker, they think we can't read, that we can't understand what that means. That means that we will not have two systems of marking, one alongside the other, so that the person used to the original system can see how the original compares with the new, and therefore know the new means. That is what the dual system would do. But they are going to eliminate that in favour of single metric marking.

Mr. Speaker, with single metric marking there will not be a mother in the country who will know what she is paying. What is the Minister of Small Business (Mr. Marchand) doing about this? He is assisting the business community to give every mother the "business," if he allows this to go through the House. I ask the minister to look at Clause 3 of the bill. I will bet you it was not discussed in the sacred precincts of the cabinet room in the East Block, or wherever the cabinet meets. Perhaps it meets in the West Block now since the Minister without Portfolio has joined the cabinet. I am sure he would not meet in the East Block, so it would have to be the West Block.

Did the cabinet study this clause providing for the elimination of obligatory dual marking in favour of single metric marking, because not a consumer in the country will know what he is paying, except the CBC. The CBC will be able to figure it out; it has a staff of tens of thousands. Perhaps 10,000 of them will be put to work figuring this system out, figuring out what single metric marking amounts to. But the rest of us do not employ staffs of tens of thousands. CTV does not have that large a staff. I don't know how CTV is going to do it.

Mr. Paproski: What happened to your film?

Mr. Crosbie: I will come to that in a moment.

The next item in the advertisement is very serious for those who like pancakes and waffles. You can buy Empress syrup for pancakes and waffles in 1.25 kg. bottles. Even the Russians are coming into it; they talk about the kg. Then, you can get tomato juice, Libby's Canada Fancy in a 540 ml. tin, for 39 cents. How is anyone to make sense of that? Are the constituents of the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) in Nova Scotia to go into a food store and know what a 540 ml. tin for 39 cents is? How will the housewife compare that tin with last week's ordinary, human tin, with the tin she understood, a tin that had some warmth, a tin she could recognize, the cost of which she knew? When she sees this tomato juice listed at 39 cents she will think, "My God, this is a bargain!" She is going to buy a 540 ml. tin, but it may cost twice as much as it cost the week before.

The western farmer does not want to engage in this conspiracy against the consumer. It is the Liberal government that is engaging in this conspiracy. The western farmer wants to sell his products honestly, in acres, or bushels per acre. He doesn't want to sell it per hectare. Whoever heard of the likes of it?