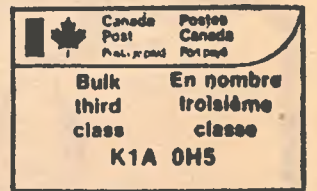




Metric monitor



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Metric Commission Canada

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United States Metric Board

The Board vs. the budget

by W.L. Beeman
Assistant Editor

"Rumours of our death are somewhat exaggerated," according to United States Metric Board (USMB) Information Specialist Chip Maurer, replying to statements that the Board was to be abolished on 1982-03-31. In fact, says USMB General Counsel Dan Peyser, the most likely prognosis is that the Board will be in existence at least to the end of the fiscal year (1982-09-30).

According to our Washington sources, the rumours started during the annual budget preparation period, during which the House of Representatives, the Senate and the President all have to give their consent. On 1981-09-09, the House approved a continuing resolution for the financial support of various government agencies, including \$2.708 million for the USMB. However, on 1981-09-11, when the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee met, chaired by Senator Lowell Weicker, a Republican from Connecticut, it recommended, in agreement with the Administration policy of abolishing agencies, that the USMB be phased out on 1982-03-31 and that its budget be held to \$1.5 million.

These recommendations were modified when the full Senate Appropriations Committee met on 1981-10-28. With the concurrence of Senator Weicker, an amendment by Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii to extend the USMB's life to 1982-09-30, the end of fiscal year 1982, and then transfer its functions to the Department of Commerce, was passed.

However, this bill has still not been considered by the full Senate, which began to meet on 1981-11-12 to consider the budget. Senator Weicker threatened to

filibuster it, because an amendment concerning prayer in schools that he disagreed with had been added. As the *Monitor* goes to press, the bill is still stalled in the Senate.

Since government funding was to run out at midnight Friday 1981-11-20, a conference committee composed of members from both Houses of Congress began to meet Friday afternoon and continued over the weekend

to agree on a new appropriations bill to present to the President on Monday morning, 1981-11-23. However, President Reagan vetoed it, saying that too much money was being spent, and many Government employees were furloughed Monday afternoon. At the same time, the conference committee drafted an extension of the continuing resolution bill, on which Government had been operating until 1981-11-

20. This allowed employees to return Tuesday morning. The extension, to which President Reagan agreed, provides funds until 1981-12-15, at which time a new budget will be presented. As previously stated, the most likely prognosis is that the USMB will be in existence at least to the end of fiscal year 1982 (1982-09-30).

According to David Gorin, president of the American National Metric Council (ANMC), a pri-

ivate organization, it is important to realize that the Administration's attempt to phase out the USMB, along with other government agencies, does not mean that it is anti-metric. "The Department of Education is also being phased out," he said. "This does not mean that the Administration is anti-education - just that it is trying to trim the budget by consolidating its departments and agencies as much as possible."

Metric a fact of life : Crompton

"The metric system is now a fact of life for all Canadians, and it's proceeding without the major problems predicted by vocal pessimists," George Crompton, National Manager of the Retail Merchants of Canada, Inc., told the Metric Commission's recent public meeting in Hull, Quebec.

Crompton went on to point out that for most items conversion does not take a great deal of planning by retailers.

"As an example, when toothpaste went metric, a 150 mL package took the place of the king size or whatever size had been affixed to the package. All it required was the same treatment as any other package change made by the supplier," he said. The conversion of many items, including toothpaste, has created a benefit for consumers and retailers which is not often talked about: a reduction in the number of sizes offered for sale.

"This gives the consumer at least an adequate supply of sizes, easy value comparison, and results in more orderly shelf-stocking and a reduction in inventory requirements for the retailer."

Crompton went on to say that with the exception of the conversion of scales in the retail food industry, independent retailers will not be required to spend large sums of money to purchase metric equipment.

"For example, home goods retailers have had to purchase new tape measures, metric sticks and little else. Hardware stores, paint and wallpaper stores, clothing stores and the like are in a similar position. Large organizations may also have the additional cost of updating their computer programs to handle metric sizes. But on the whole, conversion has not been an overly expensive procedure to date," he continued.

When the conversion of retail food scales begins next January, he said, retailers will have to do some long-range planning by determining whether current scales can be converted, or whether they should purchase new equipment while the Federal Government tax and duty benefits apply. If the store pre-packages products, new labels will have to be ordered.

Crompton warned that for a period of time suppliers may be shipping products in a system of



Photo - W.L. Beeman

Metric proceeding without major problems

measurement different from the one used by the store. This will require the store to check and double-check all incoming invoices and retail selling prices.

"It would be very costly, for example, if cheese was purchased for \$2 a pound and the retailer assumed that the cost was \$2 a kilogram and set the retail price accordingly."

Crompton emphasized that there will be some confusion for a short period of time for both the retailer and the consumer "... but contrary to some public state-

ments that have been made, I do not think either party will take long to adapt to the metric system.

"To assist all parties during the changeover period, Metric Commission Canada will be releasing radio and television messages, conduct press conferences and media briefings and make a great deal of material available to retailers. These will include price conversion tables, signs, pamphlets and a retailer's handbook, containing information and basic instructions on converting food stores".

Scaling up to metric

Metric conversion is now nearing completion: weather information, road signs, gasoline, automobiles, drugs, chemicals, beverages, textiles, prepackaged items in food stores, and many other items are now measured in metric units such as degrees Celsius, litres, metres and grams.

In 1977 Parliament passed the Statute Law (Metric Conversion) Amendment Act, giving the Canadian Government authority to regulate the conversion of retail food scales. Regulations under the Weights and Measures Act were published on 1981-07-08 and are now law. The contents of the regulations are based on industry

and consumer recommendations designed to ensure that the conversion is fair and equitable to both retailers and consumers.

The metric conversion of retail food scales will start simultaneously in 21 cities across Canada in January 1982. It will progressively cover the rest of the country within a two-year period ending in

December 1983, according to schedules established by local industry committees in the different areas. The selling of individually-weighed food items in metric units will mark the virtual completion of metric conversion for consumers. By the end of 1983 metric units will be used by the majority of Canadians for normal commer-

cial and legal purposes.

Weights and Measures regulations affect the selling and advertising of food that is weighed in the store only (e.g. fresh meats and produce, cheese, fish, nuts, candy, confections, etc.) as well as the scales used to weigh these. (See Conversion Schedules, p. 5).





A Measure of Good Taste



CHRISTMAS PUDDING

- 500 mL chopped suet
- 325 mL seeded raisins
- 375 mL fine dry bread crumbs
- 325 mL sultana raisins
- 125 mL chopped mixed candied peel
- 275 mL brown sugar
- 500 mL all-purpose flour
- 5 mL baking powder
- 1 mL salt
- 1 mL nutmeg
- 1 mL cinnamon
- 1 mL allspice
- 1 lemon, grated rind and juice of
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 125 mL milk or beer
- Brandy Butter (see below)

Combine suet, seeded raisins, bread crumbs, sultana raisins, peel and brown sugar in a large bowl.

Mix flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon and allspice over the fruit mixture; toss to coat fruit with flour. Add lemon rind and juice, eggs and milk or beer. Blend well.

Spoon mixture into a greased 1 L mold. Cover with foil. Steam 4.25 h. Steam 1 h to reheat at serving time. Serve with Brandy Butter. Makes 12 servings.

BRANDY BUTTER

- 75 mL butter, softened
- 125 mL fruit sugar
- 50 mL brandy
- 1 mL vanilla extract
- 1 mL nutmeg

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add brandy, vanilla and nutmeg.

Refrigerate at least 4 h or until firm.

Makes 175 mL (12 servings).

(From *A Collage of Canadian Cooking*. Reprinted with the permission of Canadian Home Economics Association and of Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd.)

Letters, &c.

Earlier conversion

We note that in the 1981-09 issue of the *Metric Monitor*, you published a note on "That wild blue (metric) yonder . . ."

While we recognize the importance of the larger carriers making the conversion step to metric, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that First Air converted its tariff to metric effective 1980 January 12.

We are dedicated believers in SI and look forward to the day when Canada is fully metric.

T.E. Rowlands,
Director Scheduled Services

Stock report?

To our readers:

Every year come Yuletide, our distinguished stock market analyst, Forbes Barron, rouses himself from his uneasy slumbers at the Rideau Club and once more soils his fingers with printer's ink. This year's effort concerns the latest reports from the world's measurement exchanges.

. . . And here is the latest report from the international mensuration bourses. In London today the pound fell to 430 g as a wave of profit-taking swept the market after yesterday's gains. The troy ounce stabilized after an early decline on the Zurich bourse, ending the day near its long-term average of 31.1 g. The metre suffered in heavy trading, plunging to a new low of 1.04 yd; analysts with the Metric Commission feel that it is currently undervalued, and expect it to rebound to around 1.09 yd. The Imperial gallon, floating since last spring, rose to 4.8 L in London, and in related trading on the New York exchange the U.S. quart posted a slight gain, closing just short of a litre. Jewellers' markets, still reeling from last Tuesday's devaluation of the scruple, suffered a further blow today when the London Goldsmiths' Society announced its intention to move toward early adoption of the metric system; a spokesman for the Society said, "To paraphrase Mr. Huxley, a gram is better than a dram." Opponents of the measure, however, termed it "unscrupulous". Provincial markets reported mixed trading over the day, with the bushel slipping slightly to 35 L on the Manchester Exchange and the gill closing at 150.6 cm³ in Chicago, its highest since Monday. The speed of light remained gratifyingly constant in all markets.



Photo - D. Windrim

Grade 3 students at Donnan Elementary/Jr. High in Edmonton proudly show their "Metric Me" t-shirt.

Metric is fun

I am a grade school teacher, and each year make it an important part of my curriculum to teach metric awareness. Near the end of the year, I make each of the kids a "Metric Me" t-shirt. Throughout the year, they've kept monthly track of their height and mass, and many of them really get involved in the record-keeping. The t-shirt often becomes a souvenir that they hang onto - I've had them

visit me three or four years later, and they still have it in a drawer at home. The photos show some of the children of the Grade 3 class at Donnan Elementary/Junior High in Edmonton.

Continue doing your excellent job of covering metric conversion in Canada and around the world. Metric lives!

D. Windrim

 Metric Commission Canada

Commission du système métrique Canada

METRIC MONITOR

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Metric and Standards Secretariat moves

Metric and Standards Secretariat of the Ministry of Industry and Tourism has moved to Room M1-17, MacDonald Block, 77 Wellesley Street West. Mailing address is:

Ministry of Industry and Tourism
Metric and Standards Secretariat
Hearst Block, Queen's Park
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2E1



FILCHOCK

"And do you, Susan, promise to love, honor, obey and teach John the metric system?"

(From *Metric Bulletin*, Volume VIII, no. 6. Reprinted with the permission of J.J. Keller & Associates, Inc.)

Guiding the Metric Commission

The Advisory Committee on Information Policy (ACIP) was formed in 1973 to guide Metric Commission Canada in achieving acceptance of metric conversion by the various Canadian publics and in seeking cooperation of volunteers from all sectors of the economy.

The Committee advises the Commission on information policy and reports to the Commissioners in session at their periodic meetings. As such, the Committee recommends major information strategies for metric conversion in Canada, reviews existing policies and strategies and recommends to the Commission necessary changes.

The members are drawn from a cross-section of the Commissioners. C.J. Laurin, a retired Vice-President and Director of Maclean Hunter Ltd. has been Chairman of the Committee since its formation. Currently, the other members are: D.R.B. (Sandy) McArthur, Chairman of the Commission and ex-Chairman of Inland Cement Industries Ltd.; Maurice Archer, Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Chairman of Archer, Seadon

and Associates Inc., Consultants; Stevenson Gossage, first Chairman of the Commission and a retired Vice-President, Canadian Pacific Railways; and Cleo Mowers, ex-publisher of the *Lethbridge Herald*. In addition, the Executive Director and Information Director of Metric Commission Canada are *ex-officio* members.

In line with scheduling meetings at the same time as those of the Commission itself, the Committee met four times during 1980/81, to cover a wide range of subjects. Lengthy and detailed discussions were held concerning the public awareness campaign for scale conversion in the retail food industry. In addition, the Commission's overall information policies were reviewed and were recommended to the Commission to be reconfirmed. Also, the concept of holding open meetings of the Commission was discussed in great detail and a recommendation to proceed with them was made. Both these recommendations were accepted at meetings of the Commission.

The Committee held its 46th meeting at the Palais des Congrès

in Hull, Quebec on 1981-10-27 and its 47th meeting at the Bayshore

Inn, in Vancouver, B.C. on 1981-11-30. The next meeting is planned

for the Nova Scotian Hotel at Halifax, N.S. on 1982-02-01.



Photo - Fernand R. Leclair

(From l. to r.): V.J. Pelisek, A/Director, Information Directorate MCC; P.C. Boire, Executive Director MCC; D.R.B. McArthur, Chairman MCC and Chairman (retired) Inland Cement Industries Ltd.; C. Laurin, Chairman of the Committee and Vice-President (retired) Maclean-Hunter Ltd.; M. Archer, Vice-Chairman MCC and Chairman, Archer, Seadon & Associates Inc., Consultants; C. Mowers, ex-publisher of Lethbridge Herald. Missing: S. Gossage, Vice-President (retired) Canadian Pacific Railways.

Australian conversion: the true story

Metric Commission Canada has recently received a number of letters concerning an article which first appeared in the American Metric Journal. The Journal, an anti-metric publication, stated that the Australian Government, reversing its policy of metric conversion, had made the use of imperial measures legal again. The Metric Monitor asked MCC Information Officer David Shoihet to find out the true story.

A recent story in the *American Metric Journal* stating that the Australian Government has just re-legalized the use of inch-pound imperial measuring devices has been labelled untrue by Peter Kaye, information officer for the Australian High Commission.

Kaye pointed out that David Thompson, Australian Minister of Science and Technology, has lifted the ban on the importing of imperial weighing devices because "now that the country is almost fully metricated there is no need for the ban." Kaye termed the country's conversion to metric as "an outstanding success." Simply put, Australians are learning in easy steps through personal involvement in metric transactions.

This doesn't mean that every Australian citizen is predominantly using metric units. The Metric Conversion Board recognizes that people can only develop metric measurement concepts through experience and that it will be a few

years yet before they become fluent in metric measurement.

However, the conversion of shop scales and retail trading practices has been more difficult to accomplish. No shopkeeper wants to advertise in his shop window that his steak costs \$2 a kilogram when a competitor down the street continues to put up the price of 91 cents a pound, giving the impression that the product priced by the pound is cheaper. At first, although scales were being converted or replaced by metric instruments, the familiar ticketing, giving the price per pound, prevailed.

The impasse was overcome when one Australian state decided that consumer interests must be protected by a requirement that when goods are weighed out on a metric scale, a price per kilogram must be quoted.

It was only when all scales were converted in the shopping sector that traders were required to cease quoting prices in pounds and ounces.

Government policy, projected through the Metric Conversion Board, of not forcing too fast a pace has paid dividends. Newspaper-sponsored opinion polls showed that national support for continuing metric conversion increased from 67 per cent in 1974 to 76 per cent in 1976. Opponents have moderated their original position to advocating that both systems should continue side by side.

One opinion poll, in a study of a metrically advanced community in South Australia, found that:

- 1) Once a metric shopping environment is established, "only a minuscule section of the community finds the use of the metric system a specific annoyance".
- 2) "Compared to other problems encountered when shopping, metric conversion is insignificant."
- 3) "More than eighty per cent of residents have few or no problems with the metric system."
- 4) "Only eleven per cent claimed to be unhappy about living with the metric system. They were predominantly more than fifty years old."

Ever seen a metric lobster?

In an effort to reduce waste and improve efficiency, Red Lobster restaurants, a subsidiary of General Mills, have gone metric. One of the largest seafood chains in the U.S., with 296 outlets nationwide, they are now cutting their seafood portions in metric measurements.

When Red Lobster cut their seafood portions using the inch-pound system, the cut weight was not to vary more than one-quarter of an ounce either way from the stated weight. If the variance was more than one-quarter of an ounce over the stated weight, the extra weight was cut off and used for a recipe that uses odd sizes of seafood. If the variance was more than one-quarter of an ounce under the stated weight, the piece was recut for another purpose.

According to Kate McAlister, menu research and development coordinator at Red Lobster headquarters in Orlando, FL, the old pound scales were in increments of one ounce (28.35 g). Since the seafood was to be cut with only a quarter of an ounce variance, the

to be one quarter of an ounce within the prescribed limit."

McAlister also reports that the decrease in cutting errors is partly psychological. "When we make improvements in the restaurant such as new uniforms or new menus, the production employees usually do not see the results of the improvements," says McAlister. "But when we do something for the kitchen, the kitchen employees love it and feel they are getting an extra job benefit."

"The change to metric has raised the consciousness of the production people because they feel that we are doing something for them," McAlister goes on to say. "Now they are more attentive, aware, and interested, and they got really excited about the changes. As a result, the production people are cutting better now than they did before. This improvement in employee morale has also reduced our costs."

Fred Lake, manager of the Gaithersburg Red Lobster, says, "We have been able to cut inefficiency and waste four to five percent with the new metric weighing procedures, because there is less waste now in over-portioning the fish." The actual size of the portions served remains the same, as do the menu listings. When asked how these cost reductions will help Red Lobster patrons, Lake replied, "Any time you reduce costs, while it may not actually reduce prices, it can hold down future price increases."

Lake reports, "The training of the employees was very easy. We

"Conversion to metric was an enjoyable challenge"

put up metric education posters and charts with metric equivalents and removed the English units from the kitchen. The training took less than five days." Yenca reinforced Lake's opinion that the training was easy, adding "It was an enjoyable challenge."

McAlister explains that Red Lobster decided to convert to metric because "We felt that the U.S. will some day convert to the metric system, and we wanted to test the system to see what impact it would have on our operations. All we had was positive feedback from our management and employees."

She points out, "We tested the program for over a year, beginning in May 1980. We tried it in two restaurants for seven months and expanded it to 31 restaurants for six months. The waste percentages decreased after beginning the metric program, although the exact percentage reduction is not known."

(From Metric Reporter Vol. 9, No. 19. Reprinted with the permission of ANMC)

"Using the metric system is psychologically more accurate"

kitchen staff had to do a lot of estimating to stay within the prescribed limits. Red Lobster's new metric scales are in increments of five grams, making the cutting more accurate. The production staff are able to be more precise with their cutting and are able to stay within the prescribed limits (approximately five grams either way) more easily than with the previous system.

Bill Yenca, a production employee at the Red Lobster restaurant in Gaithersburg, MD, says, "Using the metric system is psychologically more accurate. Having to stay within a 10 g range sounds more precise than having

Australians buy their meat



in kilograms

**NEXT MCC
OPEN MEETING
1982-02-02
at the Nova Scotian Hotel
Halifax, N.S.**

Notes from all over



Photo - P. Tennenhouse

Jewellery converts

At a recent meeting of Steering Committee 7 in Toronto, Ken Boddy, Vice-President of Gold Arts Jewellery, reported on the progress accomplished to date in the Jewellery Sector.

Refiners of precious metals, jewellery manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, importers and a few retailers are represented in the Jewellery Sector Committee 7.41. Conversion to metric is to be implemented by 1981-12-31 to coincide with the effective date of the Precious Metal Marking Act.



Photo - W.L. Beeman

Information officers meet in Ottawa

The provincial and territorial information officers held their annual meeting in Ottawa on 1981-10-20/21. (From L to R, sitting): Judy Saunders, Whitehorse; Aldéo Daigle, Fredericton; Eileen Stubbs, Halifax. (Standing) V.J. Pelisek, MCC; Peggy Templeman, St. John's; Hugh Warburton, Charlottetown; John Yeomans, Regina; Madeleine Pouliot, Quebec; F. Brodeur, MCC; Denise Marcoux, Montreal; Joan White, Edmonton; Peter Wall, Victoria; André Anderson, Quebec.

Upcoming Meetings

DATE	SECTOR	LOCATION
81-12-03	Steering Committee 62 Food	Vancouver
81-12-10	Sector 7.42 Bicycles and Accessories	Montreal
81-12-15	Sector 61.05 Horticulture	Ottawa
81-12-16	Sector 4.03 Petroleum Refineries, Wholesalers & Gasoline Service Stations	Toronto
82-01-12	Sector 7.49 Luggage and Leather Goods	Toronto
82-01-13	Sector 8.17 (Planning Urban Forestry and Arboriculture)	Toronto
82-01-13	Sector 9.30 Services to Business Management	Toronto
82-01-25	Sector 2.08 American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc.	Houston
82-01-27	Sector 7.45 Brush, Broom and Mop	Montreal
82-01-28	Sector 9.10 Provincial Sub-Committee Health and Welfare	Ottawa
82-01-29	Sector 9.10 Health and Welfare	Ottawa
METRIC COMMISSION CANADA MEETING		
81-12-01/02	66th Meeting	Vancouver

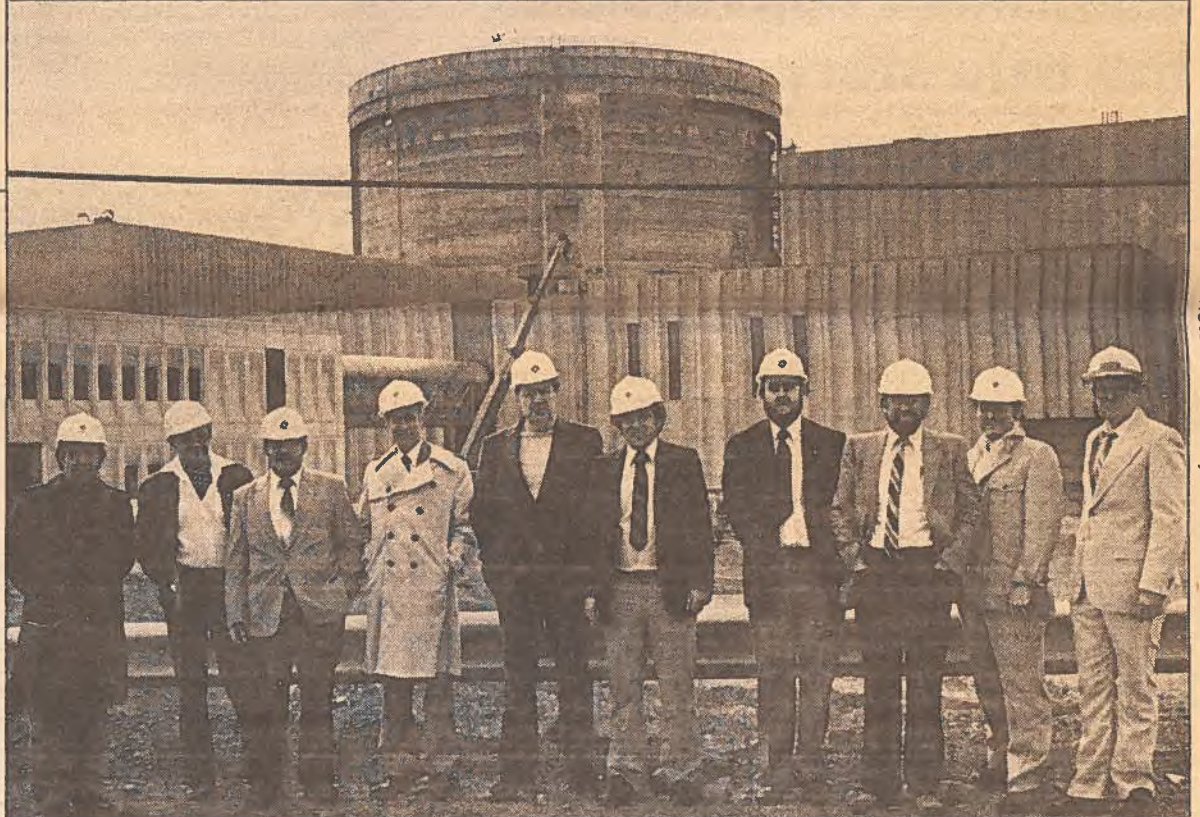


Photo - Courtesy N.B. Electric Power Commission

Visit to nuclear generating station in New Brunswick

On 1981-09-30, the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission hosted a visit of Sector Committee 10.03, Post-Secondary Non-University Education, at its nearly completed Point Lepreau nuclear generating station. One of the features of Point Lepreau is the station's SI design, a first in Canada.

The station contains a CANDU (PHW) reactor with a nominal station output of 630 MW. When in operation the station will have a manpower requirement of 250 trained staff.

(from l. to r.) François Brodeur, MCC; Horst Meysick, St. Clair College; Fathi Shalabi, The New Brunswick Electric Power Commission; Georges Desbarats, MCC; John Berry, MCC; Bill Richardson, New Brunswick Department of Continuing Education; Don Stewart, New Brunswick Department of Labour and Manpower; Terry Cotter, University of New Brunswick; Eugene Suchoboki, Wascana Institute; David McCurdy, The New Brunswick Electric Power Commission.

FYI

To contact the Metric Conversion Information Centre closest to you, write or call:

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Elizabeth Towers
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St. John's, Newfoundland
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(709) 737-3527

P.E.I.

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(902) 892-0333

NEW BRUNSWICK

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(506) 453-3690

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640 Cathcart Street
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(514) 866-0505

The dollars are the same

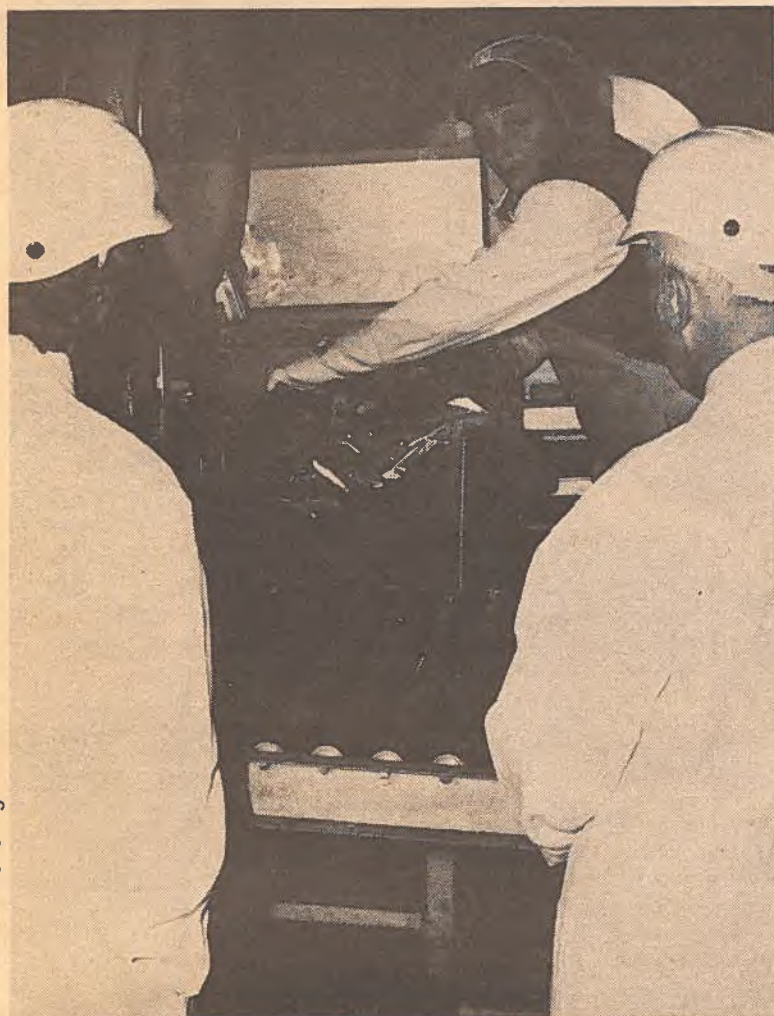


Photo - B.C. Craig

Approximately 94 500 kg of fish are processed every day at the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation plant in Winnipeg.

by Marion Morrison
Sector Publicity Officer
MCC

More than 3500 fishermen in western Canada have been selling their daily catch by the kilogram since last June, and according to

Tom Dunn, president and general manager of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg, the changeover has been going smoothly. His organization was the first and so far is the only one in Canada to purchase fish in SI units.

"The fishermen soon realized the dollars were the same, and that's what counts," said Mr. Dunn. When the decision was made to start implementing the Corporation's metric conversion program, it was decided that the first major step should be taken where it all begins - with the fishermen.

"We expected the change to be dramatic," said plant manager Sam Cunah. However, careful planning paid off and the expected problems amounted to barely a ripple.

Because close to 70 per cent of Freshwater's buying is done through agents, Corporation representatives went out to the field last spring to conduct training sessions for agents and packers. "We talked with them, explaining what had to be done. It really doesn't amount to much." Essentially, it's a matter of converting the scales, then paying by the kilogram. Being able to demonstrate that a fish weighed in kilograms brings exactly the same money as the same fish weighed in pounds is the key. "All they needed was a little guidance," said Mr. Cunah. The agents then passed the message on to the fishermen and that was it. By summer, scales in the packaging sheds were 95 per cent converted to metric at an average estimated cost of less than \$300 each.

Fishermen who deal directly with the Corporation were also helped on an individual basis. In addition, an article on metric conversion and what it means to the individual fisherman was published in the May issue of *Freshwater Country*, a periodical published and distributed to all fishermen selling to the Corpora-

tion. Price lists comparing price per kilogram and price per pound were also made available.

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is a Crown Corporation established in 1969. It markets freshwater fish caught in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwestern Ontario and the Northwest Territories, either inter-provincially or for export. Almost 20 per cent of the world's fresh water is located in the area served by the Corporation. Main species include whitefish, pickerel, sauger, trout, northern pike, arctic char, tullibee, perch, goldeye, bass, mullet, cisco, inconnu and sturgeon.

Not only do Freshwater's agents buy from the fishermen in metric, they pack their purchases into 27 kg tubs for delivery to Fresh Fish Receiving at the Winnipeg plant. Filling the tubs poses no problems. They are the same tubs

packaging. It must be admitted, however, that the cheers had nothing to do with the boxes being hard metric sizes. What rejoicing there was had to do with the ease of opening and emptying boxes, compared with the packaging Freshwater had been using.

"We combined metric with new technology," said Mr. Cunah. The fact that a new measuring system was introduced at the same time turned out to be a non-issue.

The plant production reporting system has also recently gone metric. Again the changeover was carefully planned and is proceeding smoothly. During the month prior to conversion, reporting was done in imperial and metric units, so staff could get used to the new system. Metric calculators were provided to management and the word went out. As of 1981-11-01, it would be metric only.

"We were concerned about our computer department," said Mr. Cunah. "The programs had to be changed. The people involved were concerned, but as it turned out they were ready well before the changeover date and they tell me the job wasn't nearly as difficult as they expected."

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has yet to establish a date by which its changeover to metric will be complete. Almost 70 per cent of its product is shipped to the U.S., which is not as advanced in metric conversion of the fishing industry as is Canada.

"Right now," said Mr. Cunah, "we're shipping mainly in hard imperial and soft metric. The next step is hard metric and soft imperial, and finally hard metric only."

"fish in kilograms bring in the same money as fish in pounds"

that used to hold 60 pounds and it still takes the same amount of fish to fill them. About 3500 such tubs arrive at the plant each day.

Progress has been made in other areas too. For example some fish are now packed at the Winnipeg plant and shipped in 10 kg boxes. Customer resistance was expected, especially from the U.S. It never happened. Instead just about everyone including the U.S. customers welcomed the new

Scales conversion schedules

Retail food scales conversion schedules have been prepared by over 400 representatives of the retail food industry, the scale industry and consumers, in 19 District Committees across Canada, to achieve a coordinated conversion that can be carried out as speedily as possible while keeping any inconvenience and expense associated with the conversion to a minimum.

There is a coordinated schedule for each district, which is available from MCC, scale suppliers, wholesalers or associations. MCC has mailed a copy of the appropriate schedule to all food retailers across Canada.

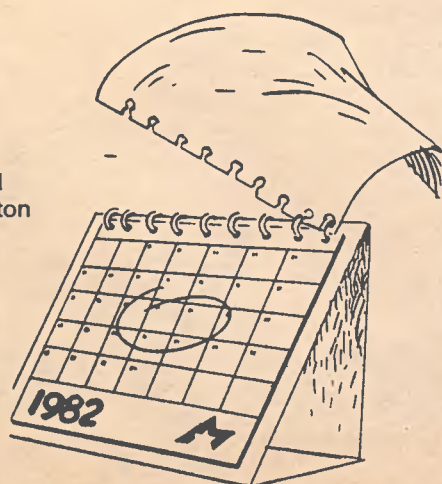
People in the following cities will be buying their food in metric in January 1982:

January 4

- Brampton, Oakville
- Calgary
- Edmonton, St. Albert
- Kamloops, Vernon, Penticton
- Kingston
- Montreal, East and West
- Montreal Island
- Oshawa, Ajax, Newcastle
- Ottawa-Hull
- Quebec City
- Regina, Moose Jaw
- Sherbrooke, Asbestos, Magog
- St. John's
- Timiskaming
- Thunder Bay
- Trois Rivières, Cap-de-la-Madeleine
- Victoria, Vancouver Island
- Windsor, Essex, Leamington
- Winnipeg, Selkirk

January 11

- Halifax/Dartmouth
- Hamilton, Burlington
- Saint John, Sussex



PASCON: A plan to improve public awareness in construction

by W.L. Beeman
Assistant Editor

"The main purpose of PASCON," according to its chairman, Roy Duxbury, "is to make sure that conversion of construction in Canada takes place at a grass-roots level. If you try to direct it from on high, you won't succeed."

"There are three main aspects of our plan," he continued. "The first is our role of closing the information gap between the sector planning level and those who are actually doing the work of construction across Canada - the contractors, designers, consulting engineers, developers, suppliers, distributors, etc. We are identifying the problems and acting as catalysts in their solution."

"We cannot hope to do all the information work, though, and this is where the second aspect of the plan comes in. Public awareness will remain a responsibility for all sectors. Our role is supportive, not pre-emptive; we can help, but not replace the present information disseminators. We can identify perceived problems and make sure that those in a position to solve them are aware of their existence and take the proper steps."

"In order to do all this we are building up a professional communications network to replace the inaccurate, distorted information already circulated with accurate and reliable material. The problem with the popular press is that it is looking for sensational material, not good news. We can get around this by improved contacts with the editors of the trade magazines of the construction

industry, who are in a better position to give balanced coverage.

"The greatest problem with the conversion of the construction industry," continued Duxbury, "was the gap between official myth and actual reality - like the story of the prison governor who believed he had a model institution, until it was burned down by rioting prisoners. He had believed what he wanted to believe, and only managed to mislead himself."

"That was our problem. For instance, concrete block manufacturers have told us they are 100% converted, but when we asked how many metric orders they actually ship out, it was only 20%. What they had meant was that they were entirely capable of filling metric orders, but were still receiving most of their business in

imperial units.

"Because of similar problems, some contractors were unable to find metric-sized 1200 x 2400 mm plywood, and had to cut their own from imperial-sized 4' x 8'.

"The problem was distribution of metric materials - we believe the original sector conversion plan hadn't taken the mechanics of distribution fully into account. To solve this, we have brought the suppliers and distributors together into a separate sector committee so that they will be in charge of working out these problems themselves."

"Given the complexity of the task of converting the construction sector, we are not expecting any quick fixes. However, we believe that we have a clearer grasp of the problem than before, and are well on the way to its solution."



Photo - W.L. Beeman

Duxbury: supportive, not pre-emptive role

Building for the future

by V. Stengels
Public Works Canada

I am convinced that the old saw — no news is good news — does not apply to the metric conversion of the Canadian construction industry.

Since 1980-01-01, for example, all government projects have been designed and documented in SI units of measurement. Many, if not most, manufacturers of various construction materials have

To illustrate this point, let us look (figure 1) at some typical project specifications. I would like to draw your attention to the highlighted dimensions. When we look a little closer, we see that all dimensions are direct arithmetical conversions. The question is — are those dimensional values realistic? Honestly, it does not make any sense to ask the contractor to install an electrical wall receptacle exactly 356 mm above the floor. The original dimension was 14", and, if we

Figure 1: Direct Conversion

- Equipment described below shall be mounted at the following height:
1. Inside wall receptacles and telephone outlets: 356 mm above floor, 457 mm above floor when a bumper exists.
 2. Outside receptacles: 762 mm above ground.
 3. Clock outlets: 2286 mm above floor or 457 mm below ceiling.
 4. Counter receptacles: 152 mm above counter.

Figure 2: Rounded off

- Equipment described below shall be mounted at the following height:
1. Inside wall receptacles and telephone outlets: 356 mm above floor, 457 mm above floor when a bumper exists.
 2. Outside receptacles: 762 mm above ground.
 3. Clock outlets: 2286 mm above floor or 457 mm below ceiling.
 4. Counter receptacles: 152 mm above counter.

published technical literature and catalogue information expressed in metric terms. They are waiting for orders of metric-sized materials.

use common sense, we can see that an acceptable measurement here would be 350 mm. The same applies to all other dimensions in this paragraph. And this is not an isolated case. These are representative examples of a fairly widespread problem we have of a lack of understanding of the use of metric in our documentation and publications. Such misapplications and discrepancies potentially provide a wealth of ammunition to discredit the whole metric conversion programme.

Regarding the actual construction work in the field — in most instances, the project managers were quick to assure that everything was carried out in strict accordance with the metric contract drawings and specifications and that there were no problems.

However, our surveys of numerous construction programmes indicate that metric contract documents, of whatever quality, do *not* mean that the building projects are substantially constructed and finished with metric sized materials. Most of our carefully designed metric buildings, in fact, are built with imperial-sized materials.



Photo — courtesy Interact

Although there may be some hitches in the process of conversion in the construction industry, metric building is still alive and well in Canada. Seen above is a model of Ottawa's Rideau Centre, a multi-use complex which includes a hotel, convention centre, 1500-car parking lot, more than 7500 m² of office space, and over two hundred shops, services and department stores built entirely in metric, according to Chris Ansley of Viking Rideau, a consortium of three corporations which joined to build the project. Also, according to Jean Valin of City Hall, all of Ottawa's roads and utilities have been planned in metric for the last two years. Seen below is a crane at the Rideau Centre silhouetted against the Parliament Buildings.

When we attempted to find out the reasons for this discrepancy, the unequivocal answer was that the metric-sized materials were not available.

While some of the essential building materials *are* available in hard-converted metric sizes, there are a number of others which are not available, or, if they are available, they are either more expensive or must be brought in carload lots. There is a long list of available metric-sized materials, which includes ready-mixed concrete, reinforcing bars, concrete blocks, clay bricks, doorframes and doors, windows, some gypsum boards, acoustic panels and few light fixtures. On the other hand, there are a limited number of wood

product panelboards available — particularly plywood and particle boards.

In the construction active areas of Canada the majority of designers are working in metric. However, very frequently the contractors and builders make some adjustments on the job site to accommodate the non-metric size materials. This may sound very expedient at the present time but we are considering our future actions. For example — the designer has detailed the frame of the building to accept metric sized materials. The contractor, for the sake of convenience and profit, changes the spacing of framing members to the old imperial standard to suit the imperial sized

materials. Say, some five or ten years later we have to make some alterations to that building — at that time all the available materials will be in metric sizes only and consequently they will not fit. This will involve substantial extra cost which we could avoid if we did the things right today.

Well, that pretty well states the problem. The solution is fairly clear.

Since the change to metric measures is inevitable and in the best interests of Canada, it should be completed as early as possible. Every year that passes sees further investment in facilities that will require conversion and a postponement of the benefits to be derived from metric change.



Valdis Stengels

It would appear that we have done our job, that there is nothing further we should be concerned about in regard to the use of metric measurements and that no further action should be needed. The real situation, however, is entirely different.



Photo — W.L. Beeman