



# METRIC

Metric Commission Canada

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## ABOUT U.S. CONVERSION

### Metrication and return-on-investment linked

Metrication and return-on-investment are clearly linked in private industry said Mary Ann Gilleece who gave the keynote address at the 10th Annual Conference of the American National Metric Council. Ms Gilleece is U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (Acquisition Management).

"Let's examine why," furthered Ms. Gilleece:

"Many industries have realized that there are substantial markets for their products outside our own borders and have developed strategies which help them effectively pursue overseas markets.

"It's no accident that when General Motors decided to build a world car, part of their strategy included producing in hard metric dimensions rather than inches. Other companies such as John Deere and Caterpillar, just to name a few on the growing list, have had similar strategies.

"It's interesting to note that even though this nation represents the world's largest marketplace, many of our imports are in metric dimensions. The signal to us is that the

American consumer is concerned with getting maximum return-on-investment and has no problem seeking that return even if that means buying and using products in metres and litres.

"The sooner we realize that the United States is like a fisherman using inch-worms to catch fish which are biting better on metric worms and start using the right bait, the more fish we're going to catch.

"I realize some may view the inch system as a protective barrier against further invasion of our markets from overseas competitors. I can only say that it is a fragile and temporary barrier which has been proven to offer little protection against competitive products. Hiding our heads in an inch bucket may also lock us out of valuable export opportunities.

Ms. Gilleece gave two principle reasons for the United States Department of Defense to specify metric products in order to improve return-on-invest:

"The first is operational capability.

"In this regard we focus primarily on our requirement to be interoperable with our allies . . . we must

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### We are moving to a common goal says Canadian Ambassador

"Things are not always what they seem," cautioned Ambassador Allan E. Gotlieb in his address to the 10th annual conference of the American National Metric Council in Washington.

"If you look carefully at newspapers on both sides of the border, Canada is marching along the path of metric conversion, hampered only by a reluctant America, where things are moving at a much more deliberate pace and causing all sorts of trans-border problems for Canadian manufacturers and exporters.

"That's the way it is being told," he said, and "the impression does exist that Canada's move to metric keeps running up against United States' roadblocks." However the facts differ, and he cited examples that show "a tremendous amount of progress — far more, I suspect, than most Americans understand and certainly far more than many Canadians believe to be possible."

The ambassador added that he feels it is an over-simplification to state that metric conversion in the U.S. is

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## Common Goal

being driven by industrial pressure and in Canada by government pressure.

"I believe that the reason we are moving to a common goal by different routes reflects the differences in our economic and industrial patterns."

He pointed out that the United States has a huge, self-sufficient domestic market. Major industries can make a living manufacturing and distributing entirely to the American consumer.

"They become involved in exporting only when the domestic market is down, or when they have surplus inventory."

"Canada does not have the same luxury," stated the ambassador. "We must design and manufacture our products with other peoples' requirements in mind . . . products developed in metric are essential if we are to be competitive."

Economic necessity thus dictates a faster move down the track toward metric for Canada, compared to the United States.

"In Canada," concluded the ambassador, "the major thrust to conversion has been carried out in every sector of the economy, not by government bureaucrats, but by representatives of business, industry and professions. Government was there to advise, to assist, to provide the coordinating mechanisms. But the real work, the tough decisions, the hard planning and implementation were done by people from mining and manufacturing and transportation and teaching and medicine and every part of the private sector you can imagine." ↗

## Dominance of Metric Food Advertising Re-instated

Responding to consumers' groups and retailers to lift the moratorium on enforcement of metric regulations, Canada's Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has reaffirmed the government's stand on the use of metric units in the marketplace.

While permitting the continued use of imperial units in advertising the price of individually measured foods at the retail level, the Hon. Judy Erola said that metric must be predominant in advertising. Dual advertising of food prices at the retail level will be allowed until the end of 1985.

The moratorium had been put in place following an Ontario court decision which said that the regulations violated the constitutional rights of two Toronto gasoline dealers who sold by the gallon.

The government's appeal of that decision has been adjourned until September 10th.

The Minister said that her action to amend the regulations under the Weights and Measures Act, which currently require the use of metric units only, "will reduce the present uncertainty and reaffirm the government's commitment to metric conversion. It will give consumers more time to get used to metric units and will also prevent the risk of confusion in price advertising."

The measures were taken under the advice of the Consumers Association of Canada and the Retail Council of Canada, as well as other representatives who attended the Metric Forum in Ottawa in April. ↗

## Metrication

work for standardization and interchangeability. This must include the consideration of metrication since we are the primary partner working with a measurement system uncommon to the rest of the world.

"The second reason for us to specify a metric requirement involves economics.

"Private industry has taken advantage of their metrication planning to rationalize their investments and reduce inventories. So can the Department of Defense . . . We probably maintain the largest inventory of parts in the world. Another opportunity lies in the application of life cycle considerations for components . . . it is vital for us to know in advance about the specific metrication plans of our suppliers. If not, we may find ourselves in the costly position of trying to maintain inch-pound components in a predominantly metric environment."

Ms Gilleece then outlined the policy of her department:

"First, we will consider the use of the metric system in all of our activities consistent with operational, economical, technical and safety requirements. Second, we will use the metric system in all new designs unless such use is not in the best interest of the Department.

Our policy is flexible and considers both current and future activities."

Ms Gilleece concluded with a request for the continuing support of the American National Metric Council:

"Metrication offers an opportunity for industry to standardize and clean house as well as prosper. We will definitely work in harmony in a way that lets us obtain similar benefits. Our metric policy is sound but we will continue to need your help in stimulating awareness of that policy with your own management, as well as our resource managers, engineers, scientists and procurement specialists." ↗



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## Commonwealth and Canada help CARICOM


Both the Commonwealth and Canada are providing help to lesser-developed Caribbean countries in moving toward metric conversion.

Canada has offered to provide a wide variety of promotional and technical material, and to conduct workshops to assist the lesser-developed countries of the CARICOM group (known as the Common Market of the Caribbean) to make the transition.

The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation is providing the services of a metric expert, Madhusudan Toutam, for a 12-month period in which he will assist the group with all aspects of bringing about the transition.

While the more developed countries in CARICOM such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados have made considerable progress in converting to metric, the nine remaining are still at a relatively early stage.

Those include Belize, Antigua, Saint Christopher/Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

Canada is also providing the services of a standards consultant, Phil Preston of P. Preston Associates Ltd., through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). 

## In this plant, metric parts come in yellow

Metric means yellow to the employees of Kearney and Trecker Corporation, a U.S. machinery manufacturer.

That's because the manufacturer, operating in the U.S., must produce machines using both imperial and metric fasteners, and a color code turned out to be the simplest way of distinguishing between systems used for sizing the fasteners.

"All our metric weldments and castings are painted yellow; we identify cutting tools with yellow markings; all our metric lifting bolts are colored yellow and all metric fasteners are iridited, which gives them a yellow cast", says company representative Oscar Jensen.


"Eye bolts are one of the key items requiring proper identification, he said, "since it is possible to put a metric eye bolt into an inch thread and vice-versa, and create a serious safety hazard."

Jensen, who is Manager/Purchasing for the company, was speaking to a symposium on Metric Issues in the Fastener Industry, conducted by the American National Metric Council.

## Chinese move closer to SI

Unified standard measurements based predominantly on the SI metric system will be adopted by China by 1990, according to an order issued by China's State Council in early March. Originally, the Council ordered that the metric system be adopted in 1959, but several measuring systems are still in use, including China's traditional weights and measures.

To date, SI units have been adopted by the Chinese departments of education, publication, information, standards, and metrology; metric is used in textbooks for middle schools and colleges.

The move to metric in China is influenced by concerns for uniformity in measurement with the rest of the world, according to China Daily newspaper. A State Council spokesperson was quoted in the newspaper as saying that "the development of (China's) economic construction, science, technology, culture, and education, as well as its increasing international economic and technical exchanges, call for setting and adopting unified measures." 


(Reprinted from the ANMC Metric Reporter)

## Congress says 'no' to study

By a narrow margin of 146-143, the U.S. House of Representatives voted down a bill to study metric conversion and the impact on U.S. industry if conversion does not take place.

Cheryl Cummins, vice-president of the American National Metric Council, said the rejection of the bill wasn't a vote on the merits of metric conversion, but "a result of the current political climate, which isn't conducive to producing money for extra studies." She said an effort may be made in the Senate to revive the study.

An earlier study conducted by the National Bureau of Standards in the U.S., concluded that U.S. resistance to metric conversion was hurting exports to an otherwise metric world, and that a government-coordinated plan would reduce conversion costs to American business.


More recent studies among leading U.S. industries have shown that many have already converted, and that full conversion by the year 2000 is seen as inevitable. 

(With files from the Wall Street Journal)

## Metric Overview Study

The Metric Commission is conducting a survey of Canadian-based business and industry. Information will be collected by telephone interview from about 750 firms, 250 national associations, and 100 trade journals.

The main purpose of the study is to determine achievements to date, identify barriers remaining sectors are facing in their efforts to convert to metric, and to qualify the nature of constraints arising from links of certain sectors with the U.S. economy.

Findings from the current survey will facilitate program planning for the new Metric Office which will replace Metric Commission Canada in March 1985. Field work is now being carried out by RES Policy Research Inc. and it is anticipated that results will be available by September 30, 1984. 

## **STEEL INDUSTRY**

### **Market factors still a problem**

There have been a number of areas where conversion to metric has shown strong progress in the steel industry, but Stelco Incorporated says a number of market factors have been preventing a wider use of metric-sized products.

Speaking in Ottawa, John Hood, senior vice-president of the huge steel company, said that 20 percent of its orders for steel products are now in metric sizes, and the company is ready to handle a far larger percentage.

Virtually all steel products are now available in metric sizes, he said.

However a number of hurdles stood in the way of greater progress, Hood said, "stocking of metric sizes by service centres was one of the main ones," and he suggested that the information program being carried out by the metals task force of the Metric Commission could go a long way toward alleviating the problems.


The Stelco vice-president pointed out, however, that conversion had come a long way in certain areas.

In can manufacturing, he said 90% of the industry has converted to metric ordering.

In steel plate, the number of standard thickness has been halved from 64 imperial to 32 metric sizes with consequent savings, and has not presented any problem to designers.

Most industries which use corrugated steel pipe, steel siding and roofing are ordering in metric sizes, thanks to standardization by industry institutes.

Bars for concrete re-inforcement represent a major success story, Hood said. The Canadian industry converted completely to metric about three years ago, with the number of sizes reduced from eleven to eight, "resulting in distinct economies for all concerned."

Stelco's new plant in Nanticoke, Ontario, known as Lake Erie Works which opened in 1980, conducts its operations in metric. 

## **EXPORT TRADE**


### **Export Clubs Grow**

M. Konrad Sigurdsson, chairman of the Export Club of Toronto is emphatic: "the metric system is essential if Canadians are to compete in the exacting world of international trade. I know. And I know of its dollar value from 24 years of trading experience.

"I came to Canada in 1960 to join a company that had been selling machine tools in Japan since 1894. That's correct, 1894. And all the machine tools we sold to Japan had to be in the metric system. If they were not, we couldn't sell them. Those manufacturers who appreciated the importance of the metric system in international trade, got the business; those who stuck to the imperial system, lost out. The metric system is here to stay. Its language is universal and used by all international traders. Certainly, we in the Export Club speak the language of trade — Metric!"

The Export Club of Toronto was founded a short 20 months ago by five businessmen, meeting informally, talking ideas, talking trade. Today the club has a membership of 400 and its outstanding success has resulted in a remarkable spinoff. Ten other Canadian communities have hastened to join the export-club movement — Sudbury, Windsor, Niagara region, Halton region, Whitby-Durham region, Trois Rivières, Vancouver, Peterborough, Sault Ste-Marie. The latest offshoot, the Ottawa-Carleton Export Club held its inaugural meeting on June 5th.

"To my knowledge, said Mr. Sigurdsson, "the export club is the only forum in Canada where business people from all nations can get together informally and do business on an international scale."

"This is a Canadian invention, and so new, but already we've had inquiries from American cities, from New Zealand, and the latest, the Chamber of Commerce, Cologne, West Germany. 

## **Canadian-Japanese Trade Booming**

Canadian manufacturers have been urged to seek export markets in Japan. With its huge domestic consumption, and a population of 120 million, the potential is great. There are 36 million households in Japan.

To tap this market, metric usage is mandatory. Japan, which completed its changeover to the metric system in 1966, requires the exclusive use of metric units in the measurement and description of domestic products traded within the country.

Metric labeling is required for canned, bottled, and processed foodstuffs and other daily necessities offered for retail sale, whether domestic or imported.

Yoshio Ishikawa, deputy executive director of the Japan Trade Centre, in a recent address to Toronto businessmen, stated:

"In recent years, trade between Canada and Japan has been booming. According to Japanese statistics, trade totalled \$8 billion in 1983, with an \$800 million surplus for Canada. And this trade pattern is not solely composed of raw material going to Japan and manufactured items coming to Canada. Today, finished and semi-processed products comprise some 30 percent of total Canadian exports to Japan, and the export of Canadian-made finished goods alone amounted to \$210 million last year.

"The sales of manufactured products to Japan actually increased 24 percent in 1983.

"In industrial machinery and parts, Canadian exports jumped almost \$50 million to \$81.2 million. This is accounted for mostly by sharp increases in sales of earth-drilling equipment, much of which is now mounted on Japanese-built offshore oil rigs. Petroleum, gas and coal machinery exports nearly doubled last year, while goods ranging from chain saws to elevators and escalators also did well."

"Some 400 Canadian companies are exporting goods to Japan. They know that while it is a highly competitive market, it is not a closed one." 