

opinion

No changes for the metric program



The Hon. Judy Erola, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs recently announced that the Attorney General of Canada will appeal the Ontario Provincial Court decision concerning metric retailing of gasoline and diesel fuel. She went on to explain that the appeal was launched in order for "all parties concerned, to have a clearer understanding of the law." Changes under the Weights and Measures Act which were brought against two Ontario service station owners who contended that regulations disallowing imperial measures at the pumps infringing upon their constitutional rights, were recently dismissed by Judge William Ross.

While the appeal is before the courts, Erola said that her department will suspend application of the metric regulations applying to the retailing of gasoline and diesel fuel, home furnishings and individually weighed foods. Regulations requiring that store-weighed foods be advertised in metric only which was scheduled to take effect on January 1st, 1984, have been postponed for the time being.

She also stated that there was no present intention to change the federal Weights and Measures Act and regulations dealing with metric conversion. She also noted that almost all pumps dispensing retail gasoline and diesel fuel, and almost all commercial weighing devices in retail food stores, have already been converted to metric.

The moratorium on the application of these regulations in no way affects the vast majority of metric conversion programmes which are going forward on schedule, said Erola. She noted that only a few metric changes involve regulation, and that the conversion programme, now nearing completion in most sectors, has been carried out almost entirely on a voluntary basis.

The Consumer and Corporate Affairs inspectors will continue to apply the weights and measures regulations - in either imperial or metric - to protect consumers from fraud, deception and inaccuracy in measurement. She will also meet with representatives of the retail food industry, and with members of national consumer organizations, to explain the government's position and to ensure that the long-standing co-operation between the government and these groups in the metric conversion process would be maintained.

In addition to the metric upset, major oil companies say that they won't switch back to selling gas by the gallon, despite a decision in provincial court that would allow them to do so. In quashing charges against the two service station owners who persisted in selling gas by the gallon, Judge William Ross ruled that Canada's Weights and Measures Regulations violate the Charter of Rights.

Four of the largest oil companies in Canada - Petro-Canada; Gulf; Shell and Imperial; say it would cost millions to switch back the thousands of gas pumps across the country, and they have no intention of doing so. Imperial Oil stated that they had spent approximately \$10 million in 1977 to convert back to imperial measures and to again change the system, when people aren't buying as much gas as they were, would be extremely costly. A spokesman for Gulf Canada said that they would not be switching back to imperial because consumers aren't concerned about the way that gasoline is measured but instead they are more concerned about the price. Petro-Canada said that they have no intention of switching their 2900 outlets back to imperial and a spokesman for Shell Oil said that switching back its 3300 outlets would be irrational due to the fact that they would be spending money trying to stop the inevitable metrication of the oil industry of Canada.

A study, using radar devices at four locations (in 1977), to find out if metric road signs mattered, determined that drivers behaved somewhat cautiously, possibly as a result of some uncertainty but after two weeks of driving under conditions with metric signing, their travelling velocity is indistinguishable from pre-metrication conditions.

The old phrases "If it's good enough for Europe, it's good enough for us"; "Canada must march in step with other countries"; "We have to be progressive and most of the world is already on the metric system." It's easy enough to figure out"; etc., etc., ... shows that people are gradually beginning to accept the metric system. But then again, we don't have much of a choice, do we?

Arthur Black

Patronage rampant

That was an inspiring New Year's message from Premier William Davis wasn't it. What? You missed it? Oh my, it was in all the papers. Basically, Bland Bill told us that Hard Times are subsiding, but only Hard Work by everyone in society will prevent a resurgence of economic difficulties.

Very uplifting. The premier's speech would have been even more uplifting if it hadn't had to share newspaper space with another story out of Queen's Park. It was a story about good old-fashioned Patronage.

Interesting concept, patronage. As an individual, I can give my patronage to Eaton's or Simpson's or Radio Shack. However, if I were a government, then patronage would become an entirely different game. Government patronage means distribut-

ing goodies to your friends and supporters. Never mind whether they're good or even qualified. The only criterion is: did they help to get you elected.

Got a bag man in Mississauga who can't tie his own shoelaces but who raised some money for the Party? Make him a director of something or other, at say 50 thou a year.

That's government patronage. And few governments practice it with more verve and enthusiasm than Ontario's Tories. Premier Davis and his cabinet get to hand out some 3,500 appointments to more than 600 separate boards and agencies. And you don't even have to be a successful Tory to share in the largesse.

Ever hear of Omer DesLauriers? Thought not. Omer's chief claim to fame is that he once ran as a Tory candidate in a provincial election and got

thumped. Omer is now Ontario's Agent-General in Brussels, for which he takes home \$50,000 annually.

Morley Rosenburg is an ex-NDP-er who ran and lost as a Conservative in 1981. After the election he brought a brief blush to Tory cheeks by complaining in public that he'd been promised a judgeship. But it all worked out in the end. Mister Rosenburg now makes \$60,000 a year for sitting on the Ontario Municipal Board.

Now it would be decidedly unfair to suggest that all political appointments handed out by Bill and The Boys In Blue are merely sinecures for sucking at the public mammary. They all undoubtedly possess great business acumen and expertise.

The fact that they are all Tories is probably the sheerest of coincidences.

Not that patronage is a disease

exclusive to Ontario Tories you understand. Oh my no. Take a look at Ottawa, where a floundering Liberal government, going down for the last time, has been flinging out patronage appointments like kiss candies on Halloween.

Or perhaps as Santa Claus does on Christmas Eve, to be more accurate.

This past Christmas, glad-handed mandarins in charge of the Federal Toy Bag dispensed one Governor-Generalship; one Air Canada chairmanship and twenty-one, count'em twenty-one appointments to that Ottawa Mausoleum, the Canadian Senate.

Care to guess how many of those plumbs went to Tories or New Democrats?

Patronage. It's an old tradition in Canada. More than a hundred years ago, Sir John A.

Macdonald, our first Prime Minister, stood up in the House of Commons and intoned: "Every government selected for the civil service their own friends and no one could object to it."

That was 'way back in 1878. Patronage is still going strong today. A few years ago, Saul Alinsky the Chicago labour reformer, visited our capital and remarked: "You've got a patronage set-up here that makes (Chicago mayor) Daley's look like a junior league."

And it thrives here in Ontario. In 1979 our provincial government announced formation of a "sunset" review process to get rid of useless (and patronage-ridden) government agencies, boards and commissions.

Now, five years later, 15 such agencies have disappeared.

And 25 new ones have sprung up.

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A new face at the the "NEWS"



Meet Lynne Badger - "Editorial Assistant".

The Terrace Bay Schreiber "NEWS" would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you our readers, the newest member of our staff. Lynne Badger assumed the position of "Editorial Assistant" for the "NEWS" last week.

Lynne comes to us with a great deal of experience in the field of the newspaper business, having worked in the Display Advertising Department of the Times News/Chronicle Journal in Thunder Bay as well as for the Great Rendezvous Company (Thunder Bay) where she was responsible for preparing press releases and working on promotional material during the Great Rendezvous Festival. To top that off, she knows how to handle a 35 mm camera and writes a pretty mean sentence. Lynne also holds an honours degree in Physical and Health Education with a minor in English (Canadian Literature).

She is actively involved in various clubs and organizations in Terrace Bay and plans on providing our readers with more material concerning these important groups.

We hope that you will stop by the office and wish Lynne congratulations and best wishes on her new position.

poet's corner

by KRISTINE ARTHUR

Gulls soaring effortlessly
 Across far-flung horizons,
 Flowers sprouting carelessly
 Softly near and fresh ...

... in simple essence "being"

Straining never, yielding freely
 To the spirit deep within
 Impelling and compelling
 To achieve their given ends ...

... a flowing harmony.

Only people struggle
 Against their own soul's life,
 Straining to be what they are not
 And not be what they are ...

... Herculean effort changing nothing.

When all that is required
 Is trust in Him who sails the gulls
 And energizes flowers
 And fills our own frail spirits...

... with His perfecting love.

Kristine Arthur
 May 1983

