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**press**  
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SPEECH BY MR BAEY LIAN PECK, CHAIRMAN, METRICATION BOARD,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE 1978 "TAILORING IN METRIC" EXHIBITION  
AND FASHION SHOW ORGANISED BY THE SINGAPORE TAILORS  
SHOPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION AT PEOPLE'S PARK CENTRE ON JUNE 16, 1978

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Metric conversion in Singapore has come a long way. The public, manufacturing and commercial sectors have largely converted to the metric system. It is only the retail trade that remains to be converted.

In fact, the use of metric units in retailing is now relatively common. The "metre" was introduced as early as 1972 and now a number of importers, wholesalers and retailers of textiles are using this unit. In 1972 the use of the "litre" was established with the conversion of petrol dispensing pumps. The "kilogram" was exposed to the people with supermarkets converting to the metric system in 1974.

The Metrification Board is faced with the "chicken-and-egg" problem in metricating the retail trade. The retail trade is made up of importers or manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. It is common to have one party accusing the other of not making the move, and each preferring to adopt the "wait-and-see" attitude.

I am pleased to say that this problem has been solved for the textile trade.

In August 1977 a Working Committee under the Metrication Board was formed comprising representatives from the textile importers' and wholesalers' associations, the Department of Trade, the Consumers' Association of Singapore and the Metrication Board to draw up a programme for the complete metrication of the textile trade. The programme begins with the conversion of importers, then the wholesalers and lastly the retailers. To date, about 90 percent of the importers are using the metric system, while a large number of wholesalers and retailers have metricated.

I would urge members of the Singapore Tailors Shopowners' Association and other tailors and dressmakers, to render their support by placing orders for textiles by the metres.

I am very glad, today, that the Singapore Tailors Shopowners' Association has already come forward to support this programme by holding this "Tailoring In Metric" Exhibition and Fashion Show. I was told that the objective of the exhibition and fashion show is two-fold. The Association takes this opportunity to bring metric knowledge in tailoring and dressmaking to their members and to the public. We have to dress everyday and this exhibition will equip members of the public on the vital statistics and clothing requirements in metric. At the same time, it also provides members of the Association a chance to develop their skills through a mutual exchange of ideas and thus bringing about a general increase in the standard of tailoring in Singapore.

I am sure that by now, all Singaporeans are aware that metrication would affect everyone. I am, however, equally confident that the benefits of metrication when introduced would be appreciated since the present confusing situation whereby a multiplicity of units of weights and measures are used would be eliminated.

The excuse or preference for yard because of familiarity of use should give way to the metric system which offers a much simpler decimalised system of calculation. About 95 percent of the world have implemented a metric policy and it is important that we should metricate to keep track with them.

Thank you.

/tdk