

press release

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SPEECH BY MR BA EY LIAN PECK, CHAIRMAN OF THE METRICATION BOARD AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY OF THE "SELL-IN-METRIC" COMPETITION AND METRIC CONTEST ON 26 SEPTEMBER 1980 AT 3.00 PM IN THE DOLPHIN RESTAURANT, WORLD TRADE CENTRE

Mr Ridzwan Dzafir, Director of Trade; Mr Wee Boon Chye, President, Singapore Provision Shops' Friendly Association; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to speak to you at the close of this "Sell-In-Metric" Competition.

I am indeed glad that you, the members of the Singapore Provision Shops' Friendly Association, have enthusiastically responded to our call and committed yourselves to metrication. Throughout the six-week competition, you have seized the opportunity to learn and sell in metric. In doing so, you have not only helped yourselves, but have also done a public service by teaching the public metric. I am sure many of you are familiar with selling in metric now, and have discovered that the metric system is indeed an easier system for conducting your sales.

I noticed that although most of you own weighing scales with dual (kg/kati) readings, few have solely metric-calibrated ones. Dual-calibrated scales are handy during the transitional period for the purpose of comparison so that you can familiarise yourselves with the metric equivalents. However, this learning process cannot be extended indefinitely for there is a tendency to continue with or reverting to the familiar customary units and ignoring the metric ones. This will hinder progress.

The instillation of confidence and ability to sell in metric can only be inculcated through constant practice. Therefore, I would propose that once you have learnt to quantify metric quantities, try to get your weighing scales re-calibrated in solely metric units. By using a solely metric scale and not making constant comparisons with the old units, you are building up your confidence to sell in metric. Thus, you will be fully equipped and prepared for the time when only metric scales and sales will be allowed.

As retailers, you complement the Board's role in educating the consumers by providing a training ground for them to practise buying in metric. I know that many of you have taken efforts to display our teaching posters and even some self-made teaching aids. These efforts are most commendable. May I urge you to continue to teach your customers. Advise them to buy in 100 g, 200 g, 300 g, etc., so as to reap the benefits of the decimal nature of the metric system. Also, price those lighter items on sale by per 10 g or 100 g, and the heavier items by per kg. In this way, price computations would be simplified for both yourselves and your customers.

Today, our younger generation, being educated on the metric system, is not able to calculate in terms of katis, tahils, pounds and ounces. The continued use of such units in our daily lives would only be confusing and irrational for the younger people who would have to waste precious time and effort in learning the customary units.

I am confident that retailers can adapt to the change from the old to the new system with ease. I would like to urge all retail trade associations to follow the footsteps of the Singapore Provision Shops' Friendly Association in encouraging and assisting their respective members to make a complete changeover as soon as possible.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the prize winners and extend my appreciation to the Singapore Provision Shops' Friendly Association and Cold Storage Manufacturing Pte Ltd for their contributions towards this metric campaign.

Thank you.

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