

How to prepare for metric transition

[Editor's note: Last in a series of five articles on the metric system.]

With America's impending switch to the metric system of weights and measures a fact of life, many people are naturally wondering what they can do to prepare for the transition. Congress, in officially adopting the metric system last December, realized the change would cause a tremendous upheaval in both the professional and private lives of almost every body. That is why a 10-year transition period was designated for the change.

But, as Dr. Charles Thompson, assistant professor of education at the University of Louisville, has pointed out, there will be people who will fight against the change and cling stubbornly to the old, familiar English system.

"But if they try to resist, they're going to find themselves terribly confused," Thompson said. "The best thing people can do is to begin now to try to think in terms of meters and liters and kilograms and kilometers at every possible opportunity."

This doesn't mean, however, that people be completely on their own when trying to acclimate themselves to metrics. When Congress established the metric system as our official system it also created a metric board which will work to make the transition smooth.

Part of the job of that board will be to help launch public education cam-

paigns. Some state governments have already gotten into the act and have taken such steps as erecting highway signs with distances and speed limits in both miles and kilometers.

Other states, such as Kentucky, have passed measures making instruction in the metric system mandatory in public schools. Kentucky's resolution further states that by 1980 the metric system "shall be given the major emphasis" in all public school weights and measures instruction.

But government, Thompson emphasized, will not be carrying the entire public-education burden. A large number of educational materials are on the market and can be picked up easily by anyone eager to familiarize himself with the new system.

One national hamburger restaurant chain, for example, has published a game book for children in which the games and exercises are tied in with metric measurements.

"Paper cups with metric information lights are readily available in many public schools across the country."

Conversion scales showing the relationships between the English and metric measurements are on the market, and books explaining metric and providing hints on how to use them are available in most bookstores.

Measuring cups with a metric scale on one side and the English scale on the other are being manufactured; and

"metric sticks" similar to the familiar yard sticks are also available.

Before very much more time has elapsed, Thompson said he expects to see television spots and newspaper articles on the subject.

But without a positive attitude, none of these things is going to help people become comfortable with the metric system, Thompson said.

And one of the side effects of a bad attitude on the part of parents will be to inflame that same attitude in their children, he said.

"By this he means that if a child comes home asking for help with his metric schoolwork and is met with a negative response from his parents, it is going to be difficult for him to learn to use the system easily.

If a person is estimating the size of the room, he should try to determine its size in meters. If he is planning a trip out of town, he should figure how many kilometers he has to drive. If he is deciding how much weight he needs to lose, he should figure it in kilograms.

When a person can do those kinds of basic tasks quickly and easily, he has the metric system licked.

The following lists the metric units of length, volume and weight; and the relationship between each unit and the base unit, and gives the English system equivalents for the most frequently used units.

Length: Kilometer (km), 1,000 meters; Meter (m), 1 meter, 39.37 inches; Decimeter (dm), 1 meter, 3.94 inches; Centimeter (cm), 1 meter, 39 inch; Millimeter (mm), .001 meter, .04 inch.

Volume: Kiloliter (kl) (cubic meter), 1,000 liters; Dekaliter (dl), 10 liters; Hectoliter (hl), 100 liters; Hectometer (hm), 100 meters; Dekameter (dam), 10 meters; Meter (m), 1 meter, 39.37 inches; Decimeter (dm), 1 meter, 3.94 inches; Centimeter (cm), .01 meter, .39 inches; Millimeter (mm), .001 meter, .04 inch.

Weight: Kilogram (kg), 1,000 grams; Gram (g), 1 gram, .035 ounce; Decigram (dg), .1 gram, .0035 ounce; Centigram (cg), .01 gram, .00035 ounce.

And if you're as hard as one may think, he said, Thompson, who has taught a number of seminars to introduce teachers to the metric system, said that after only a few hours of instruction those teachers usually find that they can comfortably handle metrics.

This doesn't mean simply being able to take the number of miles and convert them to kilometers, or to take the number of pounds and convert them to kilograms. It means being able to "think in terms of metrics."

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Continued from page 7

condition for stripping and farmers have been preparing their crops for market.

Mrs. Frank Conyers of this county Monday on the opening tobacco market one-half acre of tobacco grown by herself for a total of \$225.31.

Gobel Henry returned Sunday from the St. Joseph, Missouri, Lexington, where he submitted to a successful operation a week ago.

MARRIED—Miss Adelle Lyman and Newton Byrd, all of the Moorefield section Tuesday morning.—Miss Elizabeth returned from Lexington, Ky., Monday night at her home Sylvania Dell, Harrison county.

"make the courthouse crowd nader" before the next gubernatorial election. It's the old political game all over again despite what the people said in November 1975.

DIED—Mrs. Nora Feaback Endcott of Paris, Friday afternoon at Massie Hospital.—Miss Pearl Hovick, 41, at her home in Cincinnati, Friday.—Mrs. Rebecca Ann Herrington Fryan, 90, Monday night at her home Sylvania Dell, Harrison county.

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FOR SALE: GE Color TV, 19 inch portable, starting at \$298.25. Model, starting at \$398. Garrett's Furniture Co., phone 299-2308. 12-9-76

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FOR SALE: Mahogany parlor set, General Electric and Propagate upright furnace; 180,000 B.T.U. Used one season. 299-2308. 12-9-76

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FOR SALE: 18 percent dairy pellets in bulk. Nicholas Feeder Supply, phone 299-2308. 12-9-76

FOR SALE: Tractor and Equipment. 58 Massey Ferguson Diesel, 501 Ford Motor, Massey Ferguson High lift type, Flomo 44" mower, Deere Tractor Backhoe, Deere, 299-5709 or 299-7292. 12-9-76

GE WASHERS & DRYERS: Washers at \$229.95. Dryers at \$179.95. Buy at Garrett's Furniture Co., phone 299-2308. 12-9-76

FOR SALE: New country land. Nicole Gillespie, phone 299-5846. 12-9-76

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