

Threatened Confusion in the Textile Industry

[Measured by the number of wage earners, capital employed or wages paid, textile manufacturing is the leading industry of the United States. One of the most valuable possessions of this great industry is the system of textile standards based on a few convenient English units of weight and measure. It is a remarkable fact that practically all of the measurements that are necessary in the many complicated processes of manufacturing textiles are made with six units, two of length and three of weight, the yard, inch, pound, ounce, dram and grain. This simplicity of standards which are as familiar as our mother tongue, greatly facilitates calculation and understanding at every step in the manufacture and marketing of textile products. And yet, despite the great advantages of this precious inheritance, there has been carried on for years a persistent propaganda by a powerful group to introduce by force into the United States a foreign system of weights and measures.]

Strange to say, this movement to destroy the uniformity of our standards of measurement has had its headquarters in the Bureau of Standards at Washington, which was established in 1901 for the custody, comparison and testing of standards, but which for nearly twenty years its officials have made an agency for the destruction of our established standards of measurement. If the textile manufacturers of the country had realized what a calamity the success of this bureaucratic campaign would bring to their industry, Congress and the Departments at Washington would have been deluged with protests against the propaganda from every branch of the textile trade. Instead of this, however, the textile trade has remained indifferent while the propaganda went on. Why? Simply because we do not appreciate pure air until we pass from the atmosphere outdoors to a crowded room in which the air has been polluted by the breathing of the occupants, nor a common language until we have occasion to communicate with those whose language is strange to us and who do not understand our mother tongue.

So with weights and measures, we do not realize the inestimable value of simplicity and uniformity until we are involved in the confusion of multiple standards, as are the textile manufacturers of the Continent of Europe, who are compelled to struggle, both in the mill and the market place, with an incurable and indescribable mixture of the metric units, which have been forced on them by law, and the pre-Revolutionary and English units, which they cannot and will not abandon.

Realizing these truths about weights and measures the writer has for years done what he could to defend our established standards of measurements against all assaults. Recently a new phase of the propaganda to involve our weights and measures in confusion has developed, and to which attention is called in the following statement.]

For the past six months, beginning with March, 1919, a mysterious propaganda has been carried on by mail throughout the United States and Great Britain under the name of "The World Trade Club," with headquarters at San Francisco, from which city vast quantities of expensive literature have been mailed broadcast, appealing to all classes of people in all parts of the United States, Canada and Great Britain for support of a movement to secure legislation by the United States Congress and the British Parliament making the use of metric weights and measures compulsory and prohibiting the use of the English weights and measures now established.

A Mysterious Organization.

The mystery surrounding this World Trade Club of San Francisco was due to its sudden appearance, no one ever having heard of it before, the vast extent of its mail campaign, whether measured by the number of expensive circulars sent out or the great extent of territory covered, the lavish expenditure of money in the work, and the deliberate omission of the name of its principal, if not its only, financial backer from the literature distributed by the Club.

The arguments advanced in this San Francisco literature

deserved no consideration in any serious discussion of weights and measures, but were framed to appeal to the large number who habitually confuse the metric system with decimals, and currency with weights and measures, and to stir up a senseless clamor instead of leading men's minds to the truth. So instead of attempting the impossible task of drowning it with a counter clamor I have directed my energies to finding out what was back of this mysterious propaganda. During the six months that it has been under way I have been patiently collecting the evidence and now the occasion seems opportune to make public what I have discovered.

In reporting my findings I shall not refer by name to one important individual connected with the World Trade Club, but shall designate him as "Mr. Z.," leaving it to Mr. Z., if so disposed, to make known his identity and give to the public the information that I have not yet secured. Various sources of my information will be designated by numbers as I have not asked permission to make public the names of my informants.

Chronology of the Propaganda.

March 29. The World Trade Club's mail campaign begins with an expensive circular printed in colors, accompanied by a circular letter bearing the printed signature "Wm. E. Hague, Secretary-Treasurer," asking that the recipients sign the petitions enclosed and addressed to President Wilson, the House Committee on Coinage Weights and Measures, British Prime Minister Lloyd-George and the British Parliament, endorsing the exclusive use of the metric system "by legislation, promulgation or order in council" in the United States and British Isles, two stamped envelopes addressed to the President and Prime Minister being also enclosed for mailing the petitions.

Attached to the circular was a slip on which was printed this request:

This is a copy sent to you in advance of printing a very large edition. Can you improve, strengthen, condense, correct or contribute one more fact? Do it for the benefit of all human kind. Do it quickly, for the press is started. *Telegraph Collect*, Ramsey Mailing Co., 618 Mission St., San Francisco, World Trade Club."

March to September. Four different editions of the World Trade Club circular, revised and printed in more expensive form, are spread broadcast throughout the United States, Canada and Great Britain, being mailed, not only to newspapers and organizations, but to individuals in all walks of life, and in every case enclosed with pro-metric petitions and stamped envelopes addressed to President Wilson and Prime Minister Lloyd-George.

July. An entirely new circular distributed by the World Trade Club, having attached to it a resolution "voted unanimously by the World Trade Club on June 18, 1919," urging that the United States Congress and the British Parliament adopt the metric system as the exclusive, legal standard.

March to September. Many newspapers and periodicals publish pro-metric articles and editorials based on the World Trade Club circulars, in some cases naming the World Trade Club and in others letting the articles appear as if they were original. Among the publications that "fell" for the San Francisco stuff was "Commerce Reports," issued by the Department of Commerce, which includes the Bureau of Standards, and which published the pro-metric resolution "passed unanimously" by the World Trade Club.

Reports of Investigators.

May 12. A letter from the World Trade Club to New England correspondent No. 1 states:

"This movement is world wide and there are headquarters for furthering the project in New York, Brussels, Sydney, Tokio, Rome and other large cities of the world."

May 20. San Francisco correspondent No. 2 investigates the World Trade Club and writes:

"The World Trade Club is located in an office on Mission Street without any indication of its presence on the entrance door or elsewhere. A man connected with an advertising agency located there stated the funds for the work came from various societies throughout the world."

May 24. San Francisco correspondent No. 3 investigates and reports:

"Wm. E. Hague, secretary of the World Trade Club, who is also secretary of the One Hundred Per Cent Club and the Foreign Trade Club, states that the work of the World Trade Club is being financed by Mr. Z, a wealthy business man of Boston now residing at the _____ Hotel in this city. Mr. Z. is actuated solely by a desire to benefit the human race by bringing about the adoption of the metric system. It is his hobby and he has the money to gratify it."

May 28. San Francisco correspondent No. 4 investigates and reports:

"All this circularizing is financed by a rather mysterious individual named Z. He has paid about \$80,000 to one local advertising firm and the total cost to date is around \$100,000. No one at the address of the World Trade Club wanted to say anything. There are two theories about Mr. Z's purpose. He may be trying to improve the Allies' foreign trade balance by securing international adoption of the metric system, or he may be carrying out the hobby of a rich eccentric."

June 9. San Francisco correspondent No. 3 investigates and reports:

"The statement that Mr. Z. is a wealthy Boston business man is misleading, as we find that he was formerly engaged in manufacturing somewhere in Massachusetts. He is credited with being a millionaire, but however this may be, he is spending a lot of money in the prosecution of his hobby, pays his bills and asks no favors or contributions to promote the work. The above information was obtained from Mr. Hague, whom I have known well for many years and in whom I have the greatest confidence."

June 23. San Francisco correspondent No. 5 investigates and reports:

"Mr. Z. seems to have unlimited funds and pays promptly. He invariably desires to know the exact amount to be paid several days before the account is due."

June 23. San Francisco correspondent No. 2 investigates and reports:

"Mr. Z. has engaged the services of the Ramsey Mailing Co. to print, mail and distribute a vast number of circulars and this work is being paid for by Mr. Z. *The name 'World Trade Club' is adopted simply for convenience and to give more weight to the matter sent out than if it was signed by an individual. Mr. Z. is doing this work quietly and has made no effort to gain the personal publicity which might easily have been his.*"

July 14. San Francisco correspondent No. 3 investigates and reports:

"I have interviewed Mr. Z., who was the subject of our recent correspondence. Mr. Z. is devoting a large part of his private fortune in presenting to the public arguments for the exclusive use of the metric units. Literature is being sent out under the name of the World Trade Club *as a matter of convenience and to avoid the appearance of being the work of an individual, which, in Mr. Z.'s opinion, would detract from its effect.*"

Fake "News Items."

Aug. 11. The World Trade Club introduces a new feature into its program by sending to the press "News Items" printed in typewriter type with this "Note to the Editor": "Release

immediately. Please insert under current date." These "news items," which bear the name "W. H. Hammer, President," in addition to those of the Club and Wm. E. Hague, all relate to the pro-metric propaganda. Their value as "news items" can be judged by two of them.

One of these quotes as if it were recent a pro-metric statement by Secretary of Commerce Redfield, which I find was made by that official in a speech in Baltimore on Dec. 27, 1918, eight months previous to its appearance as a World Trade Club "news item."

In this San Francisco Club the flight of time does not affect the news value of the items in which the newspapers of the country are asked to "insert current date" and "release immediately."

For example, one of these items quotes without naming the date a pro-metric statement by Andrew Carnegie, which on investigation I find was made by Carnegie in a letter dated Cannes, France, Dec. 13, 1897, and addressed to Albert Herbert, Boston, Mass., twenty-two years preceding the date on which the editors of American newspapers are asked by the World Trade Club to "release it immediately" as a "news item," inserting "current date."

"A Thousand Dollars for One Word."

August 11. The World Trade Club sends to the newspapers a release-immediately-please-insert-current-date "news item," making this announcement:

"\$1000 Will Be Paid for a Single Word."

"San Francisco, August _____. Can you create the one word which will best denote the United States and all parts of Britain? If so, you will be paid at the rate of \$1000 a word. The World Trade Club of San Francisco has offered \$1000 to the person who suggests the word which, in the judgment of the Club's Metric Campaign Committee, is best adapted to world-wide use. The World Trade Club is offering this award because in carrying on its present campaign for the adoption of metric units by all English-speaking people, it was hampered by the lack of a single short word which would express all English-speaking countries. The money will be paid to the winner at noon on May 15, 1920."

Fake Editorials to Influence Congress.

August 11. The World Trade Club seeks to relieve the editors of newspapers by sending them "suggested editorials on metric weights and measures." Here is the title with a few significant passages from one of the ready-made "editorials," which the editors were to use as their own in order to persuade people in all parts of the country to write to their Representatives and Senators, urging legislation to make the metric system compulsory and the English system illegal:

"Tell Your Legislators."

"For months past the World Trade Club of San Francisco and the Metric Association of New York have been waging a vigorous campaign for the adoption of the metric units of weight and measure by the United States.

"World Trade Club particularly has been right on the job. The copious literature issued by the club has shown with relentless logic the need for world-standardization of weights and measures, and the great gain the metric system would bring to the United States in trade, in manufacture, in education.

"Hundreds of America's most eminent men have taken the trouble to write or telegraph World Trade Club pledging support to the campaign.

"All this is very well.

"Reasons are good; but acts are better.

"World Trade Club is doing its part. But there is still an important step to take.

"It is: *to get the thing done.*

"In other words, the matter is now up to the *legislators* of the United States, particularly the *members of Congress.*

"Congress has dallied with this subject ever since the days of Thomas Jefferson.

"Our legislators lacked the 'gumption' to adopt meter-liter-gram. In 1866 Congress made the metric system legal. Why was it not made exclusive? Now is the time to remedy the error.

"Our legislators know this. They know, too, that metric standardization will remove a great handicap on commerce and education. But they need to be reminded—to be written to—to be urged to get the thing done.

"Write today. A postal will do it. *Write your Senators, your Congressman. Get the thing done. Tell your legislators.*"

August 16. Announcement by press dispatch from Washington that, because of a great popular demand, a bill making the metric system compulsory is to be introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman A. H. Vestal, Chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures, and that extended hearings will be given on the measure.

Lending Weight to the Propaganda.

Sept. 10. San Francisco correspondent No. 3 investigates and reports:

"The World Trade Club is not in any sense an organization such as the name implies, *it being merely a name adopted for the purpose of lending weight to the propaganda* such as it would not carry over the name of an individual. It is of course impossible for this to become generally known, but as the local sponsors of the movement are within their rights in making use of this title, I see no way in which it can be prevented."

Effect of the Clamor.

Sept. 15. I call on Chairman Vestal of the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures, and he tells me the report of Aug. 16 is correct, that a metric bill is to be introduced in the House, the reason being the great clamor for such a bill, thousands of letters having come from all parts of the country. I ask him if he knows what is back of this clamor. "Yes," he replies. "World Trade Club?" I ask. "Yes," is his answer. "Do you know what the World Trade Club is?" I ask. "No," he replies, "but I propose to find out before I get through with it."

Summary of the Case.

The information given above regarding the World Trade Club of San Francisco, obtained from a number of independent sources, is all in agreement and indicates that this Club is backed financially by one man, Mr. Z., whose name does not appear on any of the vast quantity of literature which has been mailed under the name of the World Trade Club; that of the two names, W. H. Hammer and Wm. E. Hague, appearing on this literature, the former is not mentioned in any of the various reports, while the latter is referred to in complimentary terms in one of the reports, and appears to be acting as a secretary of several San Francisco organizations, including the World Trade Club, in which he is evidently not the moving spirit; that the World Trade Club has expended a very large amount of money in an extraordinarily extensive mail campaign with the object of manufacturing directly and through the press a public sentiment that would lead a sufficient number of people in all walks of life and all parts of the country to bring pressure to bear on both branches of Congress at Washington and of the Parliament at London to enact legislation making the use of the metric system compulsory and that of the English system illegal; that the principal and apparently the sole financial supporter of this World Trade Club is the mysterious Mr. Z., who is reported as being actuated by a desire to benefit the human race, and who withholds his own name and conducts the propaganda under the name of the World Trade Club because it would carry more weight under that name than under the name of an individual.

It also appears that up to the present time Mr. Z.'s plan has attained a certain success in the United States. The ef-

fect of the propaganda has been such that, as Chairman Vestal admitted, enough people have written to their Representatives in Congress to create a pressure which is leading to the introduction of a compulsory metric bill and to the granting of hearings on it before the House Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures.

Turn on the Light.

For one I wish to enter my protest against this method of manufacturing and misleading public opinion. Before this propaganda to force the metric system on the American people and make it a crime punishable by fine and imprisonment to use our English weights and measures goes any farther, I ask the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures to call upon Mr. Z. of the World Trade Club to disclose his identity and give all the facts regarding his mysterious and objectionable propaganda in order that the people and their Representatives, not only in the United States, but in all English-speaking countries, may know what the World Trade Club actually is and who is or are back of it.

It may be that this San Francisco campaign is the work of only one man, who is devoting his private fortune to the propaganda in the sincere belief that it is all for the benefit of mankind. If so, the American people and their Representatives at Washington should know it, so as to be able to place the proper weight on the pro-metric influences radiating from San Francisco for the past six months.

On the other hand the mystery surrounding this World Trade Club, its lavish expenditure of money (reported at \$80,000 for one edition of its circulars, of which there have already been four) and its methods of agitation are such as to excite the suspicion that it is not the enterprise of one man, but is a deep laid scheme by a group to accomplish in 1919, when world affairs are in a state of flux, something that has heretofore been impossible, the compulsory introduction of a foreign system of weights and measures in English-speaking countries. If that is true, then the English-speaking peoples and their Representatives should know it.

Whichever of these two theories may be the truth, one thing is certain. No individual or group should be allowed to carry on a propaganda under cover of a misleading name, such as "World Trade Club," for the purpose of exciting popular clamor and by that means securing the enactment of special legislation by Congress or the Parliaments of other countries.

End the Artificial Pressure on Congress.

The regulation of weights and measures is one of the most difficult problems of government. A mistake in the control of fundamental standards is almost certain to prove irreparable. Any proposal, therefore, to change an established system calls for a thorough knowledge of the facts, clear thinking, calm deliberation and complete freedom from the influences born of bias developed by propaganda.

Let there be an end once and for all to the artificial pressure that has been brought to bear on Congress to enact compulsory metric legislation, a pressure that for nearly twenty years has had its source in the Bureau of Standards and which for six months has been intensified by the mail campaign of the mysterious World Trade Club of San Francisco.

SAMUEL S. DALE.

Boston, Mass, Sept. 27, 1919.

CORRECTION.

We are obliged to a correspondent who has called our attention to an error, due to a misplaced decimal point, in the silk ribbon calculation on page 24 of the September issue. The weight of the warp was given correctly as 58.5 drams, which is equal to .228 lb. instead of 2.28 lbs. Likewise the weight of the filling was given correctly as 41.8 drams, which is equal to .163 lb. instead of 1.63 lbs.

MAIN 19.