

and placing a paper bag of suitable size over the inflorescence of each when ready to begin flowering, as the plants self-fertilize perfectly when thus treated.

In order to share in this distribution of material, applications should be made promptly, stating the number of parcels which the applicant is prepared to grow.

GEO. H. SHULL

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### THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE METRIC SYSTEM

IN SCIENCE, September 5, 1924, Professor Satterly, of the University of Toronto, takes exception to any plea for extended use of the metric system. His concluding argument is: "The trouble with men like Mr. McAdie is that because they like a thing they think all the world must agree with them." The professor doubtless means that some men when they have a good thing like to share it; and for the implied compliment we return thanks, although not sure we deserve such unstinted praise—and in public, too.

"I have been teaching physics in Toronto for the last twelve years and have introduced (*sic*) the English units more and more," says Professor Satterly. If his students are submissive, certainly others should not object. May the progress continue until the table of linear measurement beginning "three barley corns make an inch" is reached. Clean, dry, medium-sized corns, laid end to end. Later it can be determined how many corns make a yard, a rod, a rood, a perch, a pole or a chain.

The professor also prefers pounds, shillings and pence to the decimal money in use in Canada. He asks, "And how is it that the quarter is so popular?" The profound truth is—it is easier to get than a dollar; but if given a choice between accepting a quarter or a dollar, I know which one I'll take; and I fancy Professor John will do the same.

ALEXANDER McADIE

BLUE HILL OBSERVATORY

HAVING been an interested reader of the various recent comments regarding the present status of the metric system as printed in SCIENCE, one or two additional observations may aid in clarifying the situation.

In the first place, why does not such a highly organized scientific group as that of the United States Weather Bureau discard the Fahrenheit thermometer with its freezing point 32 degrees above a zero which has no scientific meaning at the present time? A step in the right direction was shown in the weather map of the northern hemisphere prepared by the Weather Bureau during the early months of 1914 and suddenly discontinued on August 2 of that year

when the warring nations of Europe stopped sending in the necessary data. Why not resume the publication of these maps and then adopt the same temperature scale or the common Celsius scale for the United States maps also?

Professor McAdie's arguments in SCIENCE for June 13 will be accepted without dispute by scientific workers. However, it should be borne in mind that the "cooks" and "carpenters" use the system taught them in the public schools and that very little attention is given to the metric system in the arithmetic classes of the common schools. This is due partly to the fact that a very large percentage of the teachers are not sufficiently familiar with that system to teach it effectively and in a larger degree it is neglected because neither teachers nor school supervisors have ever been convinced of its practicability and adaptability to everyday affairs. The metric system will never be generally adopted until the masses of the people are convinced of its practical value. The masses can most easily be reached through the rising generation in the common schools. The teachers can most easily be "sold" to the system if we can convince them that its use would save about a year's time in compound numbers in arithmetic. Men like Professor McAdie, who know the working advantages of the metric measures from constant daily use, have a real responsibility in bringing the matter to the attention of grade teachers, taking advantage of every opportunity that presents itself in normal schools, teachers' institutes and teachers' associations.

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### GERMAN BIOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

THE claim is made that the price of German biological publications is no higher than many American and not so high as the English. May I ask SCIENCE to publish data that show the average cost per page of this library's most recent subscriptions to serial publications issued in four countries?

Country	Average Cost per page	No. Journals in estimate
America, U. S.....	\$.010	27
England .....	.0111 +	17
France .....	.006	8
Germany .....	.016 +	29

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### THE PAN-PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A STATEMENT in SCIENCE for August 29, page 195, quoted from the press, to the effect that I "have tentatively accepted the directorship of the Pan-Pacific