

ECONOMIC AND TRADE NOTES

Shanghai

(City)

China

(Country)

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(Date)

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New Weights and Measures for China

The "British Chamber of Commerce Journal," Shanghai, in its July, 1931 issue publishes the following comments regarding the efforts of the Greater Shanghai Municipality to put into effect the new system of weights and measures as from July 1 of this year:

"To change old established custom is one of the most difficult tasks that anyone can undertake and when such custom affects some 400 million people the vast majority of whom are illiterate, the task becomes almost superhuman. Yet such is the task that has been undertaken by the National Government of China in connection with its new standard weights and measures.

"It is of course recognized that uniform standards of weights and measures throughout the country are desirable. It would have been no easy matter to standardize and systematize the existing units of weights and measures, and such a reform would have taken many years to make really effective, but to make a clean sweep of the existing system and to introduce the International Metric System, with two standards, the new standard and the market standard, is a task which is fraught with infinitely greater difficulty.

"To be effective the new law, which was promulgated on 6th February, 1929, should be simultaneously enforced throughout the country, but so far apparently the attempt is being made to enforce it on merchants and traders in the Greater Shanghai area only; and as it has not even been adopted by the Customs and other Government Departments and as the law contains penal clauses directed against those who do not conform, a situation arises in which merchants are obliged to use the old standard, the use of which is contrary to law, in order to conform to Custom requirements.

"There are many practical difficulties to the enforcement of the law and even were all departments to conform to the new standard throughout the length and breadth of the land it would still be a matter of years before the users of weights and measures could conform, for platform scales with the new marking are not obtainable at present and there are no precision machines in China for the accurate marking of the beams of platform scales or the dials

5312

"of spring balances. Unless the people of the country are to be called upon to sacrifice millions of taels worth of scales and balances, it will be necessary to remark the beams and dials of existing scales in accordance with the new standard, and as accurate marking cannot be done by hand time must be allowed for the importation of the requisite machinery and for carrying out the work of adaptation.

"Were the Government Department and Railways to adopt the new standard and were a period of say 3 to 5 years specified during which the use of old or new standards was optional, there would be some prospect of the new standard becoming general throughout China, as during this period conversion tables could be used if so desired, but unless this is done it is to be feared that the attempt to introduce the new standard will lead to confusion and trouble and will in the end prove abortive."

T T T T	Percentage	
	Unit	Cent
JA:OM	100	100
...	25	25
...	4	12
...	12	25
...	8	12
...	15	25
...	-	-
...	-	-
...	-	-
...	-	-
...	-	-

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