

OCTAL INSTEAD OF METRIC?

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Canada seems doomed to follow the metric madness of Europe and it is probably too late to raise objections which are purely logical in origin.

A number system involves three basic

council is satisfied with the agreement the council at a regular session will then pass a By-law to approve the filing of the agreement in the Registry office. The plans are now signed by the Ministry of Housing and partially forwarded on to the land registrar and the developer.

The township solicitor, after deeds and agreement are signed, registers simultaneously the subdivider's agreement, the subdivision plan, and the deeds of the lands being transferred from the developer to the corporation of the municipality.

Tenders are now sent out for servicing of Phase I. The services are installed. From tendering to installation of the services will take about 3 months for a 50 to 100 lot subdivision. The services are inspected then approved by another professional, the township engineer. When his approval is given to council the township will then issue building permits. The services do not have to be 100 per cent complete provided sanitary, storm, water, hydro and road bases are approved by the township engineer. The rest of the work such as curbs and gutters can be put in the same time as building construction. As soon as basements are in a surveyor is called to check the basement to see if it complies with the local zoning regulations, then issues a certificate of his findings. This certificate is also required for a mortgage. If any of the basement walls do not conform to the zoning regulations the builder must either demolish the basement and start construction again or apply to the committee of adjustment for a minor variance approval. This takes a minimum of 5 weeks. If the committee approves of the minor variance the builder can then proceed with construction. If the committee does not approve then he has no recourse but to demolish the basement or appeal the committee's decision to the O.M.B.

The house are now partially constructed and open to the public for sale. They are now sold. I believe at about this time the county assessor now enters the picture. The developer will be doing clean up work on the subdivision for the next year or two. As you can now see a development of about 50 lots will take about 3 years to finalize although people can be living in the new homes about 1 year after the developer has decided to create the subdivision.

ingredients, a choice of "base", a choice of fundamental unit size and choices of names. Metrication has selected 10 as the base. There is nothing sacred about 10, in fact, in this present age 10 is a very poor choice. The obvious number base is 8. Computers work in a binary system, the computer control tapes for automated machinery are punched in octal numbers, and all the countless thousands of hand-held mini calculators use electronic circuits which are binary in origin. Incidentally, all these calculators contain a chunk of circuitry which only has one function — to change numbers from binary to decimal. These circuits would be removed by a change to Base 8 arithmetic, at a considerable saving.

Base 8 arithmetic would largely resolve the fraction-decimal war, at least with regard to the important day-to-day fractions. For example 3.5 would mean three and five eighths. The process of repeated division by two, which is essentially a binary operation, is quite fundamental to human behavior. If it were not then it would be just as easy to cut a pie into five equal parts as it is to cut it into four equal parts. The metric marvel should try that on for size! If the ancients had been able to tell the difference between their fingers and their thumbs then we might already have had Base 8 arithmetic long ago.

The basic unit sizes should, as far as possible, have some meaningful relationship to the user. Humans create materials, books, houses, pint mugs and the like which are related to their own size and physical needs. That is why the ancient "body" measures made so much sense. In contrast the metric measures don't seem to fit anything nicely. The meter is too long, the centimeter too short, the kilogram is too heavy and the gram is absurdly light. The litre will make us all drunks, the decilitre will ruin the beer industry — and any metric purist who mentions a half-litre should be run out of town. In passing it should be noted that not all is nice in metric; some of the definitions of the basic units, such as the ampere and the mole, are not the easiest things to remember or work with. What is really needed is a basic unit size which is designed for use, not for computational convenience.

The question of names will prove to be the worst feature of metrication. Names should be as dissimilar as possible: like yard, foot, inch. The metric system, by using the same suffix, creates a similar euphony which blurs the distinction between the units: centimeter, millimeter, decimeter and so on. It's rather like living in Smithville: one is inclined to ask, "Which Smith?"

It seems likely that the next generation — of people or computers, whichever

comes first — will reject the metric system, base, size and name; and then adopt the more fundamental octal system.

It is foolish to be stampeded into the metric system at this time, a process which will be costly and painful. Perhaps we should lead the world by generating our own system, the Canadian Octal Rational Number System.

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"A GUIDE FOR WRITTEN DESCRIPTIONS OF LAND": the Guide first published in 1969, has now been reprinted with revisions to relate to Sections 5 and 6 of R.S.O. 1970 Reg. 780 under the Registry Act. Individual copies will be mailed free of charge on receipt of an address label or a self addressed 9" by 12" envelope plus \$0.32 in postage stamps. Requests should be directed to: "Written Descriptions", Property Rights Division
Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations
15th Floor, 400 University Avenue,
TORONTO M5G 1S5

A Procedural Guide on "FIRST APPLICATIONS" under the Land Titles Act (mainly for the legal profession, but of interest to surveyors) may be obtained by sending a 7½ by 14" self addressed envelope plus \$0.35 in postage stamps to:
Richard E. Priddle,
Director of Land Registration and
Acting Director of Titles
15th Floor, 400 University Avenue,
TORONTO M5G 1S5

The Registry Act and the Land Titles Act, each complete with Regulations etc. are now available at \$2.50 each from:
The Ontario Bookstore,
880 Bay Street, TORONTO.

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