

---

2 June, 1911.]

COINAGE AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

[4th Day.

---

Mr. BATCHELOR—*cont.*

difficulties be got over—I put it to you with all deference—if you were to say that after a time—say, 10 years or 15 years hence—the metric system should be adopted or the decimal system of coinage? So long as we give a sufficient time for commercial conditions to adjust themselves to the alteration in order to prevent any violent dislocation of business, which, of course, would be intolerable, it does not seem to me that there would be such a disadvantage to commercial interest.

Mr. BUXTON: Would that really be so, because you have at one time or another to start your metric system and your decimal coinage as against the existing system? Ten years' notice would surely not get them any further. Take the case of the cotton trade which I have referred to: at some particular moment they must change from one system to the other. It is that particular moment that will disorganize their trade, no matter what length of notice may be given. That is the practical difficulty, as to the disorganization of their trade. I think if we were suddenly both to accept this proposition and to enforce it compulsorily we should have a revolution here.

CHAIRMAN: I am quite certain that if you imposed the decimal coinage in this country you would have a revolution within a week.

Mr. BATCHELOR: Supposing you started with your penny.

Sir EDWARD MORRIS: At any rate, you would change your Government in a week.

Mr. BUXTON: You would certainly change your Government.

CHAIRMAN: You would change any Government that tried to impose it.

Mr. BUXTON: It is a practical question. We are, I think, all agreed that if we had a clean slate it would be a very different matter.

Mr. BATCHELOR: As regards the criticism of Sir Joseph Ward, the Australian Parliament considered that the half-crown was a useless coin, and that it was absurd for us to go on minting them. It does not affect the computation, and it is not a very convenient coin.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: I agree, if all parts of England and the oversea countries had the two-shilling piece and no half-crown, it would be all right.

CHAIRMAN: The curious thing is, we tried dropping the half-crown here, and we were compelled by the public again to coin it.

Sir JOSEPH WARD: That difficulty does exist, Mr. Batchelor, and it is the fact that people from other countries going into Australia with half-crowns find that there is a tendency to treat them as two shillings. If you have a different coinage in countries so close together as that, there is no doubt, while in theory what you say is right, and it may be desirable to avoid an excessive number of pieces of silver to represent a pound, yet where all the other countries have the half-crown, and you stop it, it makes the use of every half-crown our people take to your country more difficult.