



THE DOZENAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

INCORPORATING THE DUODECIMAL ASSOCIATION

We are not the first to suggest that the decimal system leaves much to be desired. Our first recorded antecedents in Europe go back some four hundred years when, once the Roman system of recording results of calculations was replaced by the Indo-Arabic system of numerals to calculate with, mathematicians pointed out the deficiencies of the primitive counting scale of ten - a scale which, among other faults, is unable to represent in simple terms such basic fractions as thirds and quarters, fractions which are commonly needed in every-day life as well as in mathematics.

The present phase of resistance started in Britain with the decimalisation of the coinage. To any but those who are convinced that decimalisation is a change greatly to be welcomed, it is quite obvious that there are social and cultural objections to general decimalisation with which we should be concerned. Our traditional, easily divisible, "Imperial" (or "Anglo-American") system of weights and measures and the metric system based on the number ten, are two mutually exclusive systems of measurement. The argument is one of numeration; the numeration system needs to attain those merits of divisibility which traditional measurement systems have evolved as a result of practical needs. Our human-orientated measures, with their flexible divisions, should be retained for ordinary use to ensure the continuation of utility with comprehension. We do not oppose change because there is always a natural resentment to change. Measuring systems - and counting systems - should be allowed to evolve, and not be forced to stand still. We oppose unnecessary change, and in particular we oppose change which brings no benefits to ordinary people. Decimalised currency, for instance, was primarily for the benefit of money counters at the expense and disadvantage of money users; with its binary and ternary divisions, £.s.d. required fewer coins to make up a given sum for payment and change-giving. For these and other reasons we also support various groups formed to meet current threats to traditional measures.

Resistance needs to be based on sound arguments, and in its literature the DSGB therefore tries to supply reasons why our traditional means and methods, which have their near-equivalents in other countries, are not "unscientific" (as some experts would have us believe), and they are superior to any arbitrary committee-designed arrangement. Other systems, past, present and future, are examined and discussed in our publications, particularly with regard to their merits for uniting social and scientific applications and to discuss the inadequacies of the current measurement scene. Some of the advantages and disadvantages are described in our various papers for those interested.

