

EM9510: The Globe and Mail, April 7, 1995, page A28

The metric system

This is the 200th anniversary of the birth of the metric system, in France.

- The system has seven fundamental, or base, measures. Many metric units are named for

famous scientists (Newton, Coulomb and Kelvin) and one is named for a wine merchant – Claude Emile Jean-Baptiste Litre.

- Use of the system has spread internationally. In 1897, for instance, Britain passed a statute legalizing metric measures for trade

and abolishing the penalty for using or having in one's possession a weight or measure of that system.

Sources: Collier's Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Britannica (1911).

REFERENCE: Collier's Encyclopedia, Macmillan Educational Company, New York, and P.F. Collier, Inc., London & New York (1987), Volume 16, page 69 states that *The liter; a metric unit of volume or capacity, is named for a founding father of the metric system, Claude Emile Jean-Baptiste Litre, whose family sold wine in the first litre (liter) bottles to bear the name.* (The same statement appears in the 1992 edition, Volume 16, page 69.) [Waterloo Public Library call number: 031 Col V.16 1987]

Chemical & Engineering News, May 8, 1995, page 63

More on metres

SIR: As an active proponent of the metric system since 1940, I welcome the letter of James G. Van Oot (Going metric – proper-

ly, C&EN, Feb. 6, page 36). May I add a few points and clarify some others?

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Litre is the only correct spelling because it

is named after the father of volume, Claude Litre. Such was his passion for the accurate measurement of volume that he named his daughter Millicent (C&EN, Jan. 14, 1980, page 64).

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The two excerpts reprinted above are used in Figure 1.3 of the STAT 231 Course Materials and in Statistical Highlight #1.