

STANDARD MARK

Since the presentation of the last annual report, wherein reference was made to the registration of the Standard Mark, a procedure has been established whereby the Mark, a facsimile of which appears below, is now available to traders under license which may be granted upon application being made to the Minister of Industries and Commerce.



The establishment of this procedure introduces the new and fundamentally important principle of providing a means whereby the relative nature and comparative quality of goods may be defined in a way that is easily discernable by the general public. This will afford an effective protection to the public against the purchase of inferior commodities represented as quality goods, and will also assist purchasers to secure the most suitable commodities for given purposes with due regard to price in relation to their own financial resources. It will thus enable the general public to interpret the value of the goods they purchase on a basis of known quality and known quantity in relation to known price.

The use of the Mark will have the further advantage of providing a valuable facility to trade and commerce by making available an effective and reliable means of certifying the nature and quality of goods in a way that will establish and maintain public confidence. It will also avoid the confusion and conflict that arises from the use of general and ill-defined terms between buyer and seller, and will provide a more equitable basis for competitive trade.

As the use of the Standard Mark is extended, it will fulfil a function similar to that of the King's Hall-mark on gold and silver wares since the fourteenth century. In this way the quality standard of these precious metals has been protected against the unfair competition of counterfeit lines, which simulate quality in appearance and presentation only, thereby enabling people to readily distinguish genuine commodities from cheap imitations. Likewise the purpose of the Standard Mark is to provide a hall-mark of quality and utility for use on commodities which comply with New Zealand Standard Specifications. In each case a similar method is adopted to ensure that these two distinctive Marks shall remain an effective guarantee of the intrinsic quality and true description of the commodities in connection with which they are used.

For the past five hundred years the right to use the Hall-mark on gold and silver wares has been granted by Royal Charter only after competent and independent authority has assayed the precious metals to determine their quality. Similarly, the Standard Mark is registered in New Zealand in the name of His Majesty the King, and its use will be permitted only on commodities which comply with the requirements of New Zealand Standard Specifications as determined by competent opinion representative of producers, distributors, and consumer interests. The use of the Standard Mark, therefore, is based upon the procedure and precedent of the Hall-mark used on gold and silver wares during the past five centuries. Throughout this period, alleged quality or certification marks have been used in various forms by numerous commercial interests. None of these, however, has closely adhered to the principles which govern the use of the King's Hall-mark, and consequently they have proved much less effective. During more recent years the Standards organizations in other countries have adopted Standard Marks which have met this deficiency. In adopting the Standard Mark and making it available for use as a distinctive quality mark, New Zealand, therefore, is moving in accord with a sound, universal development.

When affixed to commodities, or used on invoices, show-cards, price-tickets, or in advertising, the Mark will represent a reliable certification by the supplier concerning the nature and the quality of the goods on which, or in connection with which, it appears.

The use of the Standard Mark will thus establish trade on a basis of fuller mutual confidence and good will. Moreover, it will assist to eliminate the loss and waste that arises from the use of a multiplicity of individual specifications, different only in unimportant details which, as compared with a common specification, necessitate shorter production runs and considerably increased overhead costs. This loss, together with that which results from the waste and handicap of superfluous variations in types, sizes, and grades of commodities, due only to marketing innovations and caprices, substantially increases the cost of production and distribution without yielding any compensating gain.

A further advantage that will accrue from the use of the Mark is the greater stability of the market which will result from the continuity of production made possible through the use of the relevant Standard Specifications which represent a clear statement of the type and class of commodities that will best satisfy any subsequent demand of the respective distributive trades and the consumer public.

The Mark as a symbol of a relevant Standard Specification will provide a common language between buyer and seller. It will not replace other guides to selection, but will supplement these and so make advertising more reliable, labelling more informative, and trade-marks a more efficacious means of maintaining the prestige of the goods and the reputation of the business interests concerned.

In connection with commodities for which no Standard Specification is in existence as a basis for the use of the Mark, a Standard Specification may be developed upon request, with the co-operation of