

BUILDING STANDARDS

In common with the Standards organizations of the other English-speaking countries, this organization has extended its activities in connection with the formulation of codes of practice and related specifications for building materials in anticipation of a major post-war building construction programme. It is gratifying to be able to report in this connection that the work is as well advanced in New Zealand as in the other countries concerned, and is probably considerably further advanced than it is in most of them. The investigations that are being carried out overseas and the conclusions resulting therefrom have been carefully examined and used in relation to the corresponding work here. Conversely, there is substantial evidence coming to hand from some overseas countries that our work is being used to assist them in the formulation of codes of building practice.

The value and importance of this work is soundly evidenced by the attention that has been given to it in Great Britain, where the Ministry of Works has sponsored a comprehensive programme for the preparation of codes of practice for civil engineering, public works, building, and constructional work to ensure the most effective use of labour and materials consistent with proper regard for safety, public health, durability, and appearance. These codes of practice are being documented and published by the British Standards Institution as British Standard Codes, and are being supplemented by British Standard Specifications for materials and methods of test.

Building Research Committee.—The appointment of the chairman of the Building Code Sectional Committee and the Secretary of the Standards Institute to the Building Research Committee of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has provided a close and valuable liaison which will ensure that the results of the research carried out will be taken into account in the preparation of relevant Standard Specifications, and will thus be made available in the most convenient form to all affected interests.

Building Code Sectional Committee.—Three further Parts of the Standard Code of Building By-laws have been issued, bringing the total number of Parts now available to nine, as follows:—

- Part I.—Preliminary.
- Part II.—Building Permits.
- Part III.—General Design and Construction.
- Part IV.—Basic Loads and Stresses to be used in Design.
- Part V.—Reinforced and Plain Concrete Construction.
- Part VI.—Panel Walls in Framed Structures.
- Part VII.—Means of Egress. (*Issued this year.*)
- Part VIII.—Residential Buildings. (*Issued this year.*)
- Part IX.—Light Timber Construction. (*Issued this year.*)

In addition, the original sections concerning masonry buildings and chimneys, appearing in the Standard Model Building By-law, Sections I–X, issued in 1935, are still available for the guidance of local authorities, engineers, architects, Government Departments, and the other affected interests.

Part VII: Means of Egress.—This Part establishes minimum requirements in respect of the means of egress from buildings other than private dwellinghouses and buildings used for public meetings. The requirements apply to all buildings erected after the by-law comes into force, but do not apply to existing buildings except in cases where the means of egress are considered by the local-body engineer and an officer of the local fire brigade to be inadequate for the safety of the occupants. Owing to serious fires experienced in some parts of the Dominion, the responsible local authorities have during the past few years strongly represented the urgent necessity for completing this Code, which evidences that its issue will fulfil a need which has long been felt. While in the past there has been some loss of life in New Zealand owing to inadequate means of egress, this country, fortunately, has been free from disasters of any great magnitude. Nevertheless, overseas experience demonstrates the necessity to adopt safeguards that will minimize and avoid such hazards before rather than after they occur. The appropriate committee has in the course of preparation a separate Standard Specification for Fire Doors and Fire Windows which is required for citation in the Egress Code.

Part VIII: Residential Buildings.—This Part of the Standard Code establishes minimum requirements in respect of dwelling units, relating to such matters as number and size of rooms, lighting, ventilation, and general amenities, including special provisions in respect of apartment buildings and similar premises. It will therefore provide uniform, minimum, essential requirements necessary to ensure adherence to sound principles of housing construction, which will mean that the thousands of homes built to these requirements in the future will be so planned as to afford good living conditions.

Part IX: Light Timber Construction.—This Part of the Standard Code establishes minimum constructional requirements for the type of building construction commonly known as “stud framing”—*i.e.*, in which the structural parts are of relatively small dimensions arbitrarily determined and not specially computed. It will therefore apply to the great majority of residential and other small buildings erected in the Dominion. In addition to the necessary general provisions and minimum requirements in respect of timber and other materials, this Part of the Code covers the essential aspects of foundation and floor-construction, wall-framing, roof-construction, and wall-coverings. This Part of the Code, in common with several other parts, will assist to eliminate the wasteful use of timber and other materials, the only effect of which is to hasten the exhaustion of our essential supplies. At the same time the most economic use of these materials consistent with adequate structural strength will be ensured.