

Concrete Roofing-tiles.—A Standard Specification for concrete roofing-tiles is also in the course of preparation with the object of ensuring that these tiles will be manufactured to a satisfactory quality and service standard.

Code of Practice for Fixing Roofing-tiles.—A further specification establishing a code of practice for the fixing of both concrete and earthenware roofing-tiles is under consideration. This code will minimize the inconvenience and risk to householders which result from tiles becoming displaced through having been improperly fitted.

Building-boards.—In view of the growing use of building-boards, a Standard Specification for these materials is in the course of preparation. Provisions in respect of each type of board will specify minimum requirements in relation to transverse strength, density, fire-resistance, and other factors which determine the suitability of the boards for various uses.

Fire-resistance Ratings.—In view of the importance of accurately determining the fire-resistance ratings of various building materials and methods of construction, this matter has received close attention during the year with the object of formulating standard methods of test which can be used by the Dominion laboratories. The basis for this work has been provided by the relevant British Standards, one of which has already been recommended for adoption as a New Zealand Standard Specification.

Ceramics.—With the increasing demand for porcelain and enamelled fireclay ware a Simplified Practice Specification has been issued with the object of eliminating, for the time being, the production of non-essential articles. The Simplified Practice Specification will be followed by Regular Standard Specifications for the various items specified therein.

Doors.—The Emergency Standard Specification for Doors, referred to in the previous report, has been revised in the light of the comments received during the period of its initial application. The responsible committee proposes to review the specification further at a later date.

The value of standardization that has been carried out in the building industry is soundly evidenced by competent opinion, which estimates that the cost of standard doors, for example, is from 20 to 60 per cent. less than that of special doors ordered to individual specifications differing from normal trade standards, and that the general reduction averages from 10 to 15 per cent., which substantially absorbs the increased costs due to war conditions. The latter estimate is supported by analysis of the actual increase in the cost of doors compared with the minimum overall increase in timber-construction costs. This is in accord with a statement by Mr. James Byrnes, Director of Economic Stabilization, U.S.A., in the course of a general instruction to Government agencies, in which he stated that standardization effectively carried through can combat the rising cost that threatens price ceilings, maintain at maximum the output of civilian goods that is possible, and bring the prices of some essentials down. That this is generally appreciated is evidenced by the work being carried out in Great Britain, to which reference has been previously made, and is further supported by the following statement in this connection recently received from Australia:—

“Standardization is a Solution.—Standardization and mass production are obviously the solution to reducing the present high costs of building in Australia. The popular conception of standardization is, of course, a fallacious one. It does not imply sameness, lack of variety, and monotony. It simply denotes large-scale use of the best method of producing any given product. By standardization we mean the standardization of various parts of a house without standardizing the appearance of the completed house. For instance, doors and window frames can be standardized and produced by modern factory methods. Similarly with kitchen and bathroom units. Linked with mass production, standardization of this nature can give a tremendous boost to the output of the building industry. And—most important—mass production, plus a reduction in the number of designs, means lower costs.”

COMMERCIAL STANDARDIZATION

Overseas Purchasing.—The Specifications Co-ordination Committee has continued its functions of co-ordinating the Dominion's requirements in respect of supplies ordered from overseas and correlating these with the Standard Specifications of the countries of supply. In appropriate cases New Zealand Emergency Standard Specifications have been issued for the guidance of purchasers in New Zealand and suppliers overseas. Sixteen such specifications were completed during the year, bringing the total number of Emergency Co-ordination Specifications to forty-nine. In addition, the Committee has reviewed more than five hundred orders, varying from one to sixteen thousand items, with a view to ensuring that the descriptions and specification items were in a form that was readily understandable to the suppliers, and that the commodities ordered could, wherever possible, be supplied from the current production of the countries concerned.

Cost Accounting Terminology.—Further good progress has been made with the work of preparing the proposed New Zealand Standard Code of Cost Accounting Terminology, which, it is hoped, will be completed during the ensuing year. By establishing generally accepted definitions of the terms used in cost accounting, the Standard Code will avoid the confusion that arises through the use of terms which convey different meanings to different people, and which, up to the present, have seriously handicapped cost accountants and students. The committee recognizes that it is engaged upon a very comprehensive and difficult work which is fundamental to a proper understanding and