

With the outbreak of the war the organization closed down its operations, and during the war it became defunct as the result of all the member bodies, except Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, becoming engaged in hostilities. The necessities of war production, and the collaboration between the English-speaking countries, upon which the successful conduct of the war depended, quickly demonstrated the paramount importance of giving urgent attention to the question of co-ordinating the standards of the English-speaking members of the United Nations.

Ordnance engineers, and other authorities responsible for seeing that the Allies received the quantities of munitions and materials they needed for the most effective conduct of the war, have frequently stressed that vital war production has been seriously delayed and impeded because of the undue diversity of specifications. William L. Batt, member of the United States Raw Materials Board and the Combined Production Resources Board, Vice-chairman of the War Production Board, and President of SKF Industries, commenting on the seriousness of the position which existed in this regard, states that lack of unification of screw-threads alone added \$100,000,000 approximately (£31,000,000) to the cost of the war, and, more important, correspondingly delayed servicing of equipment. This specific example of the increased cost of the war would represent but a fraction of the total increased cost of war production due to the lack of co-ordinated standard specifications. This is perhaps best illustrated by the tremendous increase in production, and the vast economies which were achieved because of the existence of standard specifications as a basis for war production as demonstrated by the reductions in production costs, varying from 23 per cent. to over 95 per cent., which have been quoted by the British Institution of Production Engineers. The importance of this aspect was emphasized in 1943 by Clifton E. Mack, Director of Procurement, U.S. Treasury Department, who was especially concerned with lend-lease operations. Mr. Mack stated :—

The efficient operations are the direct result of the application of the principles of standardization. . . . Without standardization the United Nations could not even anticipate the overthrow of our opponents. . . . The termination of World War II will release to a world of peace new industrial techniques which we have lately been forced to squander in wasteful conflict.

The co-ordinating activity which took place during the war years finally led to the establishment of the United Nations Standards Co-ordinating Committee in 1944. With the conclusion of hostilities it was widely and increasingly recognized that, if post-war trade was to achieve its fullest measure of development, an organization for international standardization would be a vital necessity. Britain, Canada, and the United States, as members of the United Nations Standards Co-ordinating Committee, sponsored a proposal for a conference of all the member bodies, with a view to securing agreement to convert the United Nations Standards Co-ordinating Committee to a permanent international standards organization. This proposal was endorsed by a conference of all members held at New York in October, 1945. The conference also agreed upon the terms of a draft constitution which has been submitted to the member bodies for consideration and comment prior to being ratified at a further conference which it is proposed to call in London during October, 1946. Mr. A. R. Galbraith, F.R.S.E., M.Inst.C.E., Chairman of the Standards Council, and Mr. E. H. Langford, M.A., a member of the Council, were the New Zealand delegates.

At the conclusion of the United Nations Conference in New York, the New Zealand delegates, together with the delegates from Australia and other Empire countries, visited London, at the invitation of the British Standards Institution, in order to discuss standardization policy, in relation to international trade and otherwise, with the object of reaching conclusions concerning matters that should be presented for the endorsement of the newly constituted international standards organization at its first meeting, which it is proposed should take place in October of this year. It was also desired to take advantage of the opportunity that offered to discuss items for inclusion in the agenda for a British Commonwealth Standards Conference to be held in London to coincide with the meeting of the international standards organization.