

Theatre By-law.—This part of the Standard Code of Building By-laws was completed in preliminary draft form during the year. It incorporates such requirements as are necessary in respect of theatres and places of public assembly which are not dealt with elsewhere in the code. It deals with special constructional requirements, means of egress, lighting, alarm systems, seating, furnishing, and fittings.

Panic Prevention By-law.—Consideration was given to comments received on the draft panic prevention by-law. This entailed so many amendments that it was found desirable to submit a revised draft for further review.

County Building By-laws.—The Statutes Amendment Act, 1947, gave counties and Town Boards the same by-law-making powers as those enjoyed by cities and boroughs. A special conference was called to review the Building Code and decide if any modification was necessary to make it suitable for counties and Town Boards.

Fire-protection By-laws.—Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission set up to investigate the Ballantyne's fire in Christchurch in 1947, a full programme of work was initiated in fire-protection by-laws and was well advanced at the close of the year. The major aim is to establish a comprehensive code which will reduce the risk of fire and control its spread. This code will classify buildings according to hazards, considering class of construction and nature of occupancy. It will also cover, among other things, the protection of openings, the installation of fire-fighting equipment, alarm systems, and measures for evacuation.

The existing Egress Code is being revised as recommended by the Royal Commission, and separate codes and specifications are being prepared for theatre construction, fire-resisting ratings for building materials and structures, and fire-fighting equipment, including sprinkler systems, riser mains, hose reels, and portable extinguishers.

In carrying out the fire-protection programme, invaluable co-operation was extended by the representatives of all interests concerned. Particular mention must be made of the work of Mr. W. E. Aked, Building Superintendent to the Wellington City Council, and Mr. V. R. J. Hean, of the Ministry of Works.

Adoption of Standard Code.—Local authorities have made further progress with the incorporation of Parts I-IX of the Standard Code of Building By-laws in their own by-laws. At the end of the year 68 cities and boroughs had adopted Parts I-VI and 23 were taking the necessary steps. Sixty-two cities and boroughs had adopted Parts VII to IX and 25 others were in the course of adopting them. Parts I-IX had been adopted by four counties. Inquiries showed that the various parts would be even more widely adopted in the coming year.

The Municipal Association, at its last annual conference, endorsed the principle of incorporating standards codes in by-laws by citation, as provided by the Standards Act, 1941. Under this procedure the authorities concerned will work from the standard codes as originally issued.

Measurement of Buildings Committee

Comments on the proposed standard method for the measurement of building work received from quantity surveyors, architects, builders, and others confirmed the need for this standard specification. The first eleven parts have been recommended for issue, and the remaining twelve parts are now in circulation for comment.

Building Materials Sectional Committee

As well as co-ordinating the work of sub-committees, the parent committee directed action in connection with three draft British standards and seven British standards relating to building materials.