

A further illustration is in the case of paint, for which specifications have been adopted by the Building Divisional Committee through the work of one of its sub-committees. The use of these specifications will ensure that the paint used will afford an effective coating over a period much longer than is possible with some inferior paints that may otherwise be used. The economic loss involved in painting at unnecessarily frequent intervals is aggravated by the deterioration of buildings that results from the use of inferior paint when the repainting is not carried out with the necessary frequency to compensate for the inferiority of the paint used. What applies in these two instances applies with equal emphasis, even though in different incidence, in relation to the work of the committees that has been outlined in this report. Serious injury, for instance, has occurred through the use of chemical fire-extinguishers manufactured from a metal that was so subject to corrosion as to render it distinctly dangerous. This illustrates in a minor way the importance of the work of the committees in relation to accident hazards through lack of provisions that ensure the use of suitable materials, designs, and construction. The work of these committees, therefore, when regard is taken of the hazards associated with equipment used in the spheres in which the electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, building divisional, and many other committees are working, is of utmost economic and social importance, especially if it is considered in relation to the greater economy and efficiency that is effected from the use of the best materials, designs, and processes.

The activity of the Standards Institute during the past year contains possibilities of benefits to the people of New Zealand that are not easy to calculate at this stage. It has also initiated a work that will facilitate internal and external trade in terms of equity to all parties concerned. In this respect it meets the requirements of the repeated recommendations of past Imperial Conferences, an extract from which, taken from the report of the Conference on Standardization to the Imperial Conference of 1930, copy No. 225, pages 2 and 3, reads as follows:—

“The conference takes note of the growing recognition of the value of standardization as a means both to economy and to efficiency in the interests of producers and consumers, and draws attention to the importance of the contribution that may be made by its judicious development, to the economic welfare of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a whole, and of its various parts.

“It welcomes the advance which has been made in various parts of the Commonwealth in the co-ordination of standardizing activities under one central body representative of all parties concerned; and recommends to the consideration of those parts of the Commonwealth in which such co-ordination has not been achieved the adoption of steps to that end.”

#### BUREAU OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH.

*Social Science Research Committee.*—Mr. Evan Parry (Chairman), Dr. C. E. Beeby, Dr. Elizabeth Gunn, Mr. E. H. Langford, Mr. Geo. Lawn, Dr. E. Marsden, Mr. T. H. McCombs, M.P., Dr. D. G. McMillan, M.P., Professor R. W. Souter, Mr. F. B. Stephens, Mr. D. Wilson, Mr. Ormond Wilson, M.P. Secretary: Mr. W. T. Doig.

The Bureau of Social Science Research, which has just been established by the Government, has made a good beginning in its first important investigation—an inquiry into the standards of living of dairy-farmers—and although the actual field-work has not yet begun the preliminary plans have been drawn up and the technique and scope of the investigation decided upon. The inquiry is to be not merely a statistical analysis of the cost of living of a representative group of families, but a comprehensive economic and sociological survey of rural communities where dairying is predominant, including a detailed analysis of the living conditions of a representative group. Such important questions as nutrition, child and female labour, rural housing, educational and recreational facilities will also be closely studied. It is hoped that such a survey will help the Government in policy matters relating to the dairy industry.

This standard of living survey will be extended to cover city workers, and it is felt that the results will be useful to the Government in arriving at decisions on policy measures relating, *inter alia*, to wages, cost of living, and price control.

Although the Bureau is as yet in embryonic form, a good deal of preliminary work was done by the secretary during the period in which a report was being prepared for the Hon. the Minister on the desirability of setting up such a Bureau, and he is now completing a survey of economic research which has been conducted in New Zealand during the past ten years.

Further problems on which specialist members of the Committee are at present working are: (a) Nutrition (Drs. Gregory and Gunn) and (b) Industrial psychology (Dr. C. E. Beeby and Professor R. W. Souter); and the Bureau, when these reports are handed in, will decide what avenues of research are most urgent and practicable, and will act accordingly.

Apart from its own special investigations, the Bureau will grant assistance to independent workers in universities and other institutions if their research comes within the scope of the Bureau's activities and if the type of investigation receives the Committee's approval. It is hoped, further, that by providing facilities for publication of work of merit in the social sciences, and by providing conditions under which investigations may be undertaken, that a stimulus will be given to this type of research, and that some incentive will be given to future investigators by enabling them to obtain recognition for work done.