

Statistical and Financial Return Forms Committee.

At the close of 1937 representations were made through the Bureau of Industry concerning the need for the standardization and simplification of the statistical and Financial return forms required by Government Departments from trade and industry. A committee has been set up to consider the question, and the nomination of its personnel has been completed, though the committee has not, as yet, had opportunity to meet. It will do so in the near future, and it is hoped that some progress will be made that will satisfy the convenience of the interests concerned without in any way minimizing the effectiveness of administration.

Public Authority and Local-body By-laws Committee (Two Meetings).

The recognition that standardization activity affected the activity of local bodies and public authorities at so many points was responsible for the appointment of this committee, on a basis widely representative of these interests, in order that the work of any other committee, which was considered to affect substantially local bodies or public authorities, should be submitted first to this committee for review before being referred to the Advisory Council for adoption. This procedure will eliminate the risk of action being taken which might in some way handicap or adversely affect local-body and public-authority interests.

The second meeting of this committee took the form of a conference of representatives of local-body and public-authority interests called to consider the desirability or necessity of proceeding with an active programme of standardization of local-body by-laws. The conference unanimously concluded that the work was a matter of urgent necessity, and strongly urged that it should proceed with the utmost expedition. Consequent upon this recommendation the necessary committees were instituted under the direction of the Building Divisional Council, good progress having been made, as reported elsewhere under appropriate headings.

Town-planning Committee.

Executive Sub-committee 11 meetings.

The quickening of interest in the field of town-planning was no doubt responsible for the request from the Town-planning Board to the Standards Institute to proceed with the preparation of model clauses for guidance of local districts in the preparation of their town-planning schemes. This committee, representative of all interests, therefore deputed a sub-committee to prepare the necessary provisions, and it is making good progress towards the completion of the draft clauses.

Similar work carried out in overseas countries in addition to the existing schemes in New Zealand have been carefully investigated with a view to ensuring that the model clauses, which are in course of preparation, will be in accord with the latest developments in the town-planning sphere. When the work is completed it should exert a useful influence in preventing haphazard expansion and development, which produce conditions socially detrimental and which result in economic loss.

If past experience be any guide to the future it is not necessary to look far to see how some co-ordination of ideas and plans in the past would have obviated many of the administrative difficulties and undesirable conditions which we are, to-day, striving to remedy.

STANDARDIZATION OF LOCAL-BODY BY-LAWS.

In view of the strong and numerous representations from local bodies and public authorities throughout the Dominion, to which reference was made earlier in this report, an active programme of standardization of local-body by-laws has been instituted.

In making these submissions those concerned have stressed the general loss and handicap that results from the existing position. A number of local authorities have pointed out that their by-laws have not been revised over periods extending from fifteen to fifty years, with the result that they are somewhat obsolete. Others have intimated that they are withholding revision or compilation of a new set of by-laws pending the issue of the standard provisions.

In support of its representation one small local body emphasizes that the preparation and printing of a set of by-laws for its own use would involve considerable cost, and that this cost, multiplied by the number of other local bodies similarly placed, would be avoided by the issue of a general set which could be adapted to local requirements of a detailed nature.

Again, it has been stressed by other local authorities that it is not unusual to find the use of identical equipment compulsory in one locality yet prohibited in an adjacent district. This, it is pointed out, causes confusion to contractors and artisans; duplication of work and expense in preparing specifications, and heavy duplication of the stocks of suppliers. It also handicaps transfer of supplies and incurs heavy capital and obsolescence charges on reserve stocks and stores. Particularly in view of the comparatively limited quantity of this class of equipment and material that is necessary to satisfy local requirements, unnecessary variations in types, patterns, and dimensions so diversify its production as to render local manufacture uneconomic, and on this account we have to import the material and equipment which could otherwise be manufactured in the Dominion, and thus deny to the people of the Dominion opportunity for further employment and enterprise.

In the report of a committee appointed by the Minister of Health of the United Kingdom pointed comment is made on this aspect of the position to the effect that the phenomenal increase in the activities of public authorities for a generation past has established them as the largest aggregate market for many staple commodities, and that the satisfaction of this market by local production is due to the people of the United Kingdom, and in particular to British manufacturers, who will thereby have their position immeasurably strengthened.