

the Department of Internal Affairs. Their issuance and universal adoption will be of such immense value to local authorities as to pay its own tribute to the consistent and effective work of the members of the Building Code Technical Sub-committee who have formulated the provisions which subsequently have been endorsed by the Building Code Committee.

The formulation of the different parts of a building code necessitates an examination of the various standards and materials used by different countries, and even districts within the same country, which vary so widely. Consequently, the preparation of a new standard code involves an immense amount of research and consideration in order that conflicting viewpoints may be resolved in a code best suited to our conditions and requirements.

It is recognized that many local authorities have not the necessary technical staff (or the financial resources to employ such a staff) to enable them to prepare the detailed provisions which are necessary to provide reasonable Dominion-wide safety. The committee is therefore proceeding with the preparation of clauses covering the use of bricks, stone, plain concrete, reinforced concrete, and steel. In connection with steel, it is covering both the field of riveted work and of welded work. Most attention has hitherto been given to the question of reinforced-concrete construction, as this is probably the most popular material in which large structures are being constructed. As the instability of large structures naturally involves the greatest amount of risk to life and limb, it is felt that this is the next part which should be issued. The sub-committee has been working on it for several months and has held a large number of meetings. It has also received the assistance of a District Advisory Committee working in Auckland which has discussed various clauses as they were prepared and has expressed opinions thereon, in addition to bringing forward suggestions for modifications or additions.

It is thought that with very little more work the reinforced-concrete section can be issued, and if it becomes a standard for the future work of New Zealand a great advance will have been made.

With the completion of the reinforced-concrete section certain testing necessary to ensure good workmanship and material is called for. Originally the method of carrying out these tests was included in an appendix, but the universal use of concrete and the desirability for tests under all circumstances has brought the sub-committee to the decision that it will be better to bring out a special standard dealing solely with the question of testing concrete, including the material constituents thereof, and this work is well advanced.

PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES.

Actually there can be no distinct line of demarcation between standardization of local-body by-laws and the development of standards for materials, equipment, and commodities upon which public authorities may base their purchases. This aspect of the work should be undertaken in the interest of true economy, efficient service, protection against accident hazards, effective administration, and co-ordination and synchronization of related activities: indeed, on account of the significance of its general economy and social advantages.

The principle of purchasing supplies on the basis of standards is one that has been so widely accepted in most countries that any departure from it has come to be regarded as a violation of a regular procedure. The savings, according to authoritative statements, are authentically estimated, in various countries, to reach surprising proportions.

This is supported by the finding of the second report of the Committee for the Standardization and Simplification of the Requirements of Local Authorities to the Ministry of Health of the United Kingdom, from which the following vital passages are quoted:—

"We are constituted a Committee in January, 1932, as the upshot of a conference of representatives of the associations of local authorities called at the Ministry by your predecessor, Mr. Greenwood, to see what more could be done towards standardizing the innumerable articles bought by local authorities (*i.e.*, purchasing a standard unit which should incorporate the best points of all available types) towards simplification by the adoption of the type or types of articles most generally used . . ."

Reference is made to a previous report dated 29th March, 1934, in which the following recommendation was made:—

"1. That local authorities should standardize all their requirements to which standardization is appropriate, and simplify them by eliminating unnecessary variations of type, size, or quality."

and the report continues to say:—

"We brought to notice the activities of the British Standards Institution and urged all local authorities to take advantage of British standard specifications, where they exist, and to draw the attention of the Institution to articles which might usefully be made the subject of British standard specifications. We referred to the obvious waste of time and money involved in the use of twenty types of one article where five types would do, and we quoted from the experience of local authorities, railway companies, and others, both in this country and abroad, to show that standardization and simplification, where they have been practised, have effected economy and increased efficiency."

A further inquiry was instituted in Surrey, England, concerning the desirability of purchasing according to standards, with the result that it was found that on a total of £380,600 expended on supplies in the financial year 1929-30 a definite saving of £20,000, or 5.25 per cent. over the first twelve months had resulted. The Committee of Inquiry made recommendations that would carry the principle further, and as a result of this they estimated that a further £10,000 per annum, making a total of £30,000, or 7.87 per cent., would be effected.