

labour and material, reasonable control of prices, rapid replacement and refurnishing of "blitzed" homes, and, to a certain extent, the education of the public in good taste and design.

Little has so far been accomplished in New Zealand, in comparison with Great Britain, but since the Standards Institute was established as a Government activity about seven years ago a good deal of legislative machinery has been prepared to permit the issue of standard specifications for a large number of the items in the average household budget.

Difficulty with Imports

The standards of many staple foodstuffs have already been specified, but in clothing so far only footwear has been covered, fifteen utility specifications being already in existence. Several difficulties have been met in the inclusion of other items of clothing, not the least being that much of the material is imported, and standard specifications cannot be established for these materials without the concurrence of overseas interests. A good deal of work has, however, been done in standardizing the basic measurements and size designations of garments, and so increasing their utility and service life. The remaining problems are being tackled by the Ministry of Industries and Commerce, through the Standards Institute, and progress is hoped for in the near future.

New Zealand can claim to be the first country in the world to produce national standard specifications for footwear, containing minimum requirements for materials, workmanship, and component parts. These specifications were prepared by a committee of technical experts, representative manufacturers, retailers and repairers, and consumer representatives nominated by women's organizations, the School of Home Science, and the Federation of Labour. In the spirit of the utility

scheme the aim is to do away as far as possible with superfluous types, sizes, and variations, and to produce a sound and inexpensive article suited to the requirements and purchasing power of the general public.

Housing, which is estimated to account for 23.3 per cent. of the average cost-of-living budget, is already covered by a Standard Building Code and related standard specifications for building materials. These embody minimum requirements to ensure that houses are properly designed, will have a reasonable life, with low maintenance charges, and will afford proper living-conditions. Even the paint required for the protective coating of a house—a matter of the utmost importance to the householder—is covered by the code.

The Standard Mark

A number of other miscellaneous items, including fuel and light, soap, brushware, and school stationery, are covered by standards for the protection of the consumer, and there are as well about four hundred technical standards indirectly benefiting the community through reduced production, distribution, and maintenance costs. It has been estimated



The utility scheme has possibilities in household furniture. Simple designs are in better taste, easier to produce, cheaper. Which of these nineteenth-century chairs do you think the better ?