

such a scheme would not imply enforced standardization, and would leave manufacturers free to produce all the varieties they like outside the scheme. It would, however, ensure that the community has the choice of buying simple designs of certified quality at fair prices.

### A Lesson from the Army

Here is seen the most valuable lesson of war, as applied to peacetime economy. Little as it may be appreciated, the most efficient Army is the most economically maintained and supplied. At first sight a modern Army has a bewildering array of equipment, particularly in armament and transport, but actually types are kept down to the strictest minimum, and standardized as far as possible to make for more efficient training, replenish-

ment, and actual use in warfare. Types and sizes of trucks, for instance, are kept down in variety, and truck bodies are standardized for all makes of chassis. The soldier's uniform—not to mention his underclothing—is the very epitome of standardization, and consequent efficiency and economy. Because of this standardization—and the guaranteed demand—the cost of any item of military equipment, whether it be a jeep, a battle-dress, a tin of bully beef or a tommy-gun, is a mere fraction of what an article of similar certified quality would cost a civilian in peacetime.

While it would be undesirable to go to such extremes on "Civvy Street," the lesson is clear: Simplicity, at no sacrifice of quality or usefulness, means greater security to producer and consumer alike.

## SOLDIER SLANGUAGE

### Origin and Meaning of some Service Expressions

By 595939

**W**AR ALWAYS does things to language. It creates new words to fit new situations and materials, it enriches colloquial speech, and it breeds vivid and lasting slang. To the wealth of slang terms already existing in the three services, and in "Standard Slang," the second World War has added an astounding number of rich and sparkling gems of language.

What is slang, anyhow, and how does it differ from ordinary speech? Greenough and Kittredge in "Words and their Ways," say that slang "is a peculiar kind of vagabond language, always hanging on the outskirts of legitimate speech, but continually straying or forcing its way into the most respectable company." Not a particularly helpful definition, is it? Perhaps Professor Martin Griffith comes closer when he says "Slang is a continuous attempt by normal people to freshen and enliven speech." Certainly the chief characteristics of slang are its pithiness, its directness, and its vigorous quality.

Eric Partridge, the leading English authority on slang, in his book "The World of Words" lists thirteen reasons why slang is employed. But it is not so much "reasons" that are wanted as "impulses," for slang is born more often than it is consciously invented. It may be called wild language in the sense that we speak of wild flowers. Chesterton, although he exaggerated, made an important point when he said "All slang is metaphor and all metaphor is poetry."

Slang is a quick leap to expression, it is the language of situation. It is inevitable, then, that wartime should breed slang arising out of unusual situations and new states of mind. The R.A.F. especially, consisting of young men and women faced with a wide variety of machines and involved in novel physical and emotional circumstances, has produced a crop of slang terms which alone would make a formidable glossary. Many of these expressions have been adopted by the other Services, who possess already wide slanguages of