

The committee has now come to the conclusion that in due course the code for fire resisting construction should be amalgamated with the existing Egress Code and supplemented by further provisions relating to fire fighting equipment so as to form one comprehensive fire protection code.

Means of Egress.—It was decided to defer consideration of means of egress, in relation to existing buildings, until some aspects of the code for fire resisting construction had been clarified.

Panic Prevention.—A separate standard by-law for precautions against fire and panic in buildings for public meetings was completed during the year. It relates to all buildings which are required to be licensed under Section 312 of the Municipal Corporations Act. Its provisions ensure that adequate, properly trained staff will be available at all performances and that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that exits, passageways, fire appliances, emergency lighting and signal systems, &c., are in proper working order.

Theatre By-law.—Some further progress has been made with the preparation of a separate part of the standard code of building by-laws dealing with all aspects of theatre construction. This work has, however, been necessarily delayed to give priority to the code of fire resisting construction generally.

Fire Resistance Ratings.—Ideally, these ratings should be determined by a standard test, and to this end the British standard definitions for fire resistance, incombustibility, and non-inflammability of building materials and structures (including methods of test) has been adopted as a New Zealand standard specification. Unfortunately, there is difficulty in providing the equipment to carry out the tests specified. In the meantime the Fire Resistance Ratings Subcommittee is endeavouring to prepare an arbitrary schedule which will allot ratings to the materials and constructions in general use. In respect of permanent construction materials, figures available from other countries can be accepted as being applicable to New Zealand conditions, but the lighter construction materials, and particularly the various types of wallboards, vary in different countries and this variation is important in view of the short fire resistance ratings which some of these constructions provide. The subcommittee is faced with the problem of producing tentative arbitrary ratings without the factual data necessary to afford a scientific basis. Progress has been made and it is hoped that the schedule will be completed during the coming year.

County Building By-laws.—The standard code of building by-laws has been completely reviewed to determine its suitability for application in counties. It was found that, although a number of modifications were necessary, the technical provisions of the standard code were mainly applicable to all areas. A draft of the necessary modifications was circulated to all interested parties for comment.

Adoption of Standard Code.—Evidence of the value of the standard code of building by-laws is afforded by the extent to which local authorities are incorporating its various parts in their by-laws. At the end of the year no less than 63 cities and boroughs and 4 counties had adopted Parts I–VI of the standard code as their own by-laws. Sixty-two cities and boroughs and 4 counties had adopted Parts VII–IX. A further 30 local authorities had the code under consideration.

Town Planning Committee

Development over recent years necessitated a revision of the standard code of clauses for town planning schemes issued in 1941. Comments are now being sought from the various interested parties in the light of their experience.

Building Materials Sectional Committee

Parent Committee.—This committee examined 10 draft British standards in relation to New Zealand conditions and reviewed 17 British standards which had been circulated for comment, 7 of which were recommended for adoption. One amendment to a British standard previously adopted in New Zealand was endorsed.