

without imposing impracticable obligations. In the case of three international committees (ISO/TC/36, Cinematography; ISO/TC/42, Photography; ISO/TC/65, Manganese Ore) it has been decided not to participate at all. Instead, we will accept the submission of the British Standards Institution.

RECOGNITION OF ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

Striking evidence of the greatly increased recognition of the technological and economic significance of standardization activity in other countries, in consequence of which it is continually gaining phenomenal impetus, is contained in two reports recently received from Great Britain; one by a committee appointed by the Right Hon. G. R. Strauss, Minister of Supply, in 1948; the other by a committee appointed by the Anglo-American Council on Productivity, formed in 1948 by Sir Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain, and Mr. Paul Hoffman, Economic Co-operation Administrator in the United States, which is composed of representatives of management and labour both in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America.

The references to the economic importance of standardization and simplification in both these reports throws emphasis on the value of the corresponding activity in this country.

The order of reference of the committee appointed by the Right Hon. G. R. Strauss was—

To investigate, in consultation with the British Standards Institution and appropriate organizations, the methods by which manufacturers and users of engineering products determine whether any reduction in the variety of products manufactured is desirable in the light of technical, commercial and other considerations; to report whether these methods are adequate and what, if any, further measures should be taken by industry or by the Government to ensure that such simplifications as are determined are put into effect.

Reference to the importance of simplification and standardization, on page 4 of this report, says :—

There can be no question that unnecessary variety of product at any stage of manufacture lowers efficiency. The loss is not confined to any one stage of manufacture, but extends to the supply of raw materials and components. It also applies to all phases of distribution and to the ultimate user. The latter is not only faced with the resulting higher prices, but often with related problems of non-interchangeability, delay in obtaining non-standard spare parts, increased stocks and unnecessary design and administrative work.

Because the technical and economic problems of standardization and reduction of variety are complex, it is often not realized how large are the overall savings which can be made by increasing the length of production runs as a result of eliminating or reducing the manufacture of specials or small batches.

On page 5 it continues :—

There can be no doubt that the relatively high degree of specialization and simplification in United States industry (including the smaller firms), is a major reason for their higher industrial productive efficiency. There are historical and other reasons for this difference, but in our view economic position makes it imperative that our manufacturers should, in general, aim at a greater degree of specialization and simplification.

In support of these statements it quotes (on page 9) :—

The example of the standardization of paint tins, which the metal box industry carried out in close collaboration with the paint trade, and which reduced an inordinate number of containers to five significant sizes based on the most economical use of tinsplate. This involved a decision to pack paint by volume rather than by weight, and the financial savings thus secured were substantial—some £100,000 was estimated to have been saved in 1948 for the paint trade by two factories of one metal box manufacturer alone. This saving illustrates the benefits which can flow from full collaboration between users and producers.