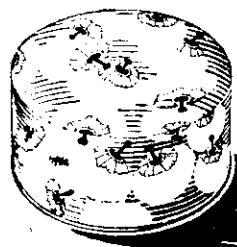




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WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES

Survey of New Zealand Children's Feet

FIVE THOUSAND New Zealand school children are at present having their feet examined and measured in an interesting survey undertaken by the Standards Institute to find out if and where the shoe pinches. Orthopaedic specialists, footwear manufacturers, the Plunket Society and various women's organisations have been concerned for some time about injuries which ill-fitting shoes can cause to children's feet, affecting their posture and general health in later life, so the Institute is engaged on a New Zealand-wide survey.

So far 260 inspections have been completed in Wellington schools alone, and it will take another two years for the foot-measurers, on their travels, to reach the 5000th and final pair of feet. Similar work is being done on a large scale overseas, particularly in South Africa and the USSR.

The Institute's footwear committee believes that in the past not only has an insufficient number of sizes and range of gradations in those sizes been manufactured, but that basic measurements sometimes also differ among manufacturers. The standard specification for basic measurements for lasts will correct this, and at the same time, provide for wide range fittings. And so the Institute has two representatives "on the road," measuring, checking, and writing up the feet of the 5,000. They hope to arrive at the measurements predominating in New Zealand, and through them, at the most suitable types of last.

A *Listener* staff-writer went with the measurers, R. Ellison and W. Steward, to a Wellington school the other day, to see how the job was done. They met the headmaster, set up the apparatus (which is a measuring device made by the Dominion Physical Laboratory) in an empty classroom, produced tape and callipers, threw a log on the fire, and called for the "subjects." In this case they were girls, accompanied by a teacher. Inch by inch, foot by foot, measurements were taken (to a 16th of an inch) and noted on a chart containing the child's name, age, sex, town, school, and nature of the district.

"What," *The Listener* asked, "has the type of district to do with the feet?"

"We like to get an idea if the child is accustomed to flat or hilly country. It has a bearing on the type of foot."

Taken at Random

"Are the children pre-selected?"

"No, they are taken more or less at random so that we can get a cross-section. In a class of, say, 24, we take every fourth child; in a bigger class it may be every sixth, and so on." New Zealand measurements had been based on American and English measurements, and now they wanted to find out if, in New Zealand, a distinctive type of foot had been developed.

"Do you note deformities?"

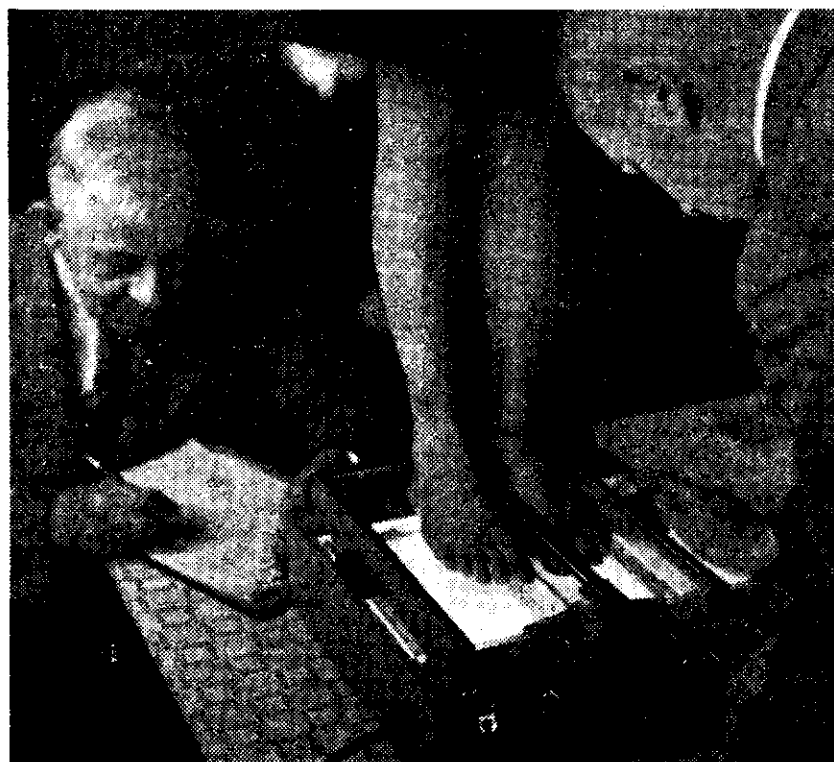
"No; but from the measurements we take, we hope to amend the standard specification of lasts and finally to secure better fittings, avoiding malformations caused by badly-fitting boots and

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REPRESENTATIVES of the Standards Institute measuring a child's feet with special apparatus designed at the Dominion Physical Laboratory