

STANDARDS

# Standards are Good for Users And Producers World Over

## Large-Scale Purchases Now Made Only by Speculation, Consumers' Organizations to Help Small Buyer Also

**S**PECIFICATIONS, standards, for quality, performance and practice—these bind the work-a-day world together, bridging oceans, crossing boundaries. Standards make it possible for any nut to fit any screw thread of that size. They prevent the buying of “a pig in a poke.”

*Caveat emptor*, let the buyer beware, is replaced by specifications and guarantees by the seller that his goods measure up to what is agreed generally is proper weight, size, quality or service. Consumer and producer find specifications and standards are good for business and good for users.

An immense amount of buying is still being done, particularly by individuals and small concerns, without any specifications whatsoever. But it is predicted that all buying agencies in a comparatively short time will purchase only upon some well-known specification.

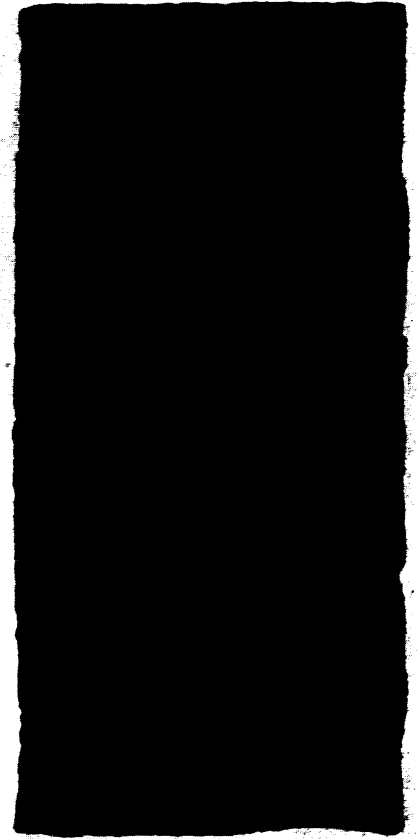
Scarcely a technical professional or trade organization exists without a committee on standardization. Here buyer and seller meet on grounds of equality. The more important national standards are given the blessing of a federation of societies known as the American Standards Association and world standards are cleared through the International Standards Association.

The consumer, who is individually each of us, has heretofore been inarticulate and at the mercy of the seller. But consumers' associations are remedying that by bringing to their members the same sort of technical advice that great

corporations find profitable in purchasing.

Often more than one group is concerned with standardization. For instance, James H. Herron, consulting engineer of Cleveland, has explained how the singer, piano manufacturer and scientist must work together to standardize musical tone. The manufacturer must set his standards to conform to the range of the human singing voice and yet be compatible with the physical structure of the piano. A singer trained to an instrument of certain pitch may suffer serious strain if required to perform at slightly different pitch. And an increase of only five vibrations per second in the standard A tone with a corresponding change throughout the scale would put an additional strain of about half a ton on the framework of a piano.

*Science News Letter, February 19, 1938*



LASTING IMPRESSIONS

CHEMISTRY

## Long Storage May Lose Important Parts of Food

**F**OODS kept for years in a “super-normal” granary, if such a policy should be established, would be subject to more than the ordinary expected risks of moth and rust, mice and moldiness, Dr. Frank M. Schertz, Washington, D. C., plant physiologist, points out. The things we used to think of as prime importance in foodstuffs, carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, might be preserved with a minimum of loss, and yet the materials might lose so much of their vitamins and other perishable constituents that the stored masses might in emergency prove a delusion and a snare, filling our stomachs and yet starving us to death.

The idea of a “super-normal” granary was suggested originally by Prof. R. B. Harvey of the University of Minnesota. Prof. Harvey thinks that far wiser than the present national policy of burying a

vast gold reserve in the Kentucky hills would be the accumulation of hoards of food and feedstuffs, textile materials, and other farm and forest products. Prof. Harvey goes Secretary Wallace's ever-normal granary scheme one better, in that he would have it operated in terms of decades rather than mere years.

The hazards of long-time storage of foods are exemplified by Dr. Schertz in a single case, that of carotene, a plant pigment which is also an important vitamin. In fresh green leaf material carotene is present in ratios of only one part to from 6,000 to 20,000 of the total bulk. Yet without this tiny pinch of carotene we perish.

And carotene can not be stored successfully, in the dried state at least, even at low temperatures. Half of it is lost in as little as a month under ordinary storage conditions. Under specially controlled

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