

R E P O R T O F T H E
I N D U S T R Y C O N F E R E N C E O N S T A N D A R D I Z A T I O N

Called in the Name of
The Secretary of Commerce
By the Visiting Committee
National Bureau of Standards

January 12, 1945
The University Club
New York City

Summary

The discussions in the Conference revolved largely around three fundamental questions:

1. Will standards play an increasingly important and expanded role in our national economy?
2. What should be the relative roles of Government and industry in standardization activities?
3. Is a substantial increase in standards for consumer goods to be expected in the post-war era?

The Conference took the following formal action with regard to policy matters:

RESOLVED

That in the opinion of the Conference, the rapid growth of standards activities, their extension into new fields, and the bearing of standards upon production and sale all make it important for top management to give attention to this matter and to provide for its orderly development.

That this Conference endorses in principle the report entitled "Standards in Commerce -- A Basis for Action," submitted to the Secretary of Commerce by Mr. Carroll L. Wilson.

That the National Bureau of Standards can increase the value of its services to industry by strengthening its work on the fundamental standards and methods of measurement and on the development of data needed in standardization activities.

That the Conference notes with approval the steps taken by the American Standards Association to broaden the scope of its work so that it may deal with any standard or standardization project, whether in the field of engineering or consumer goods or in any other field which deserves national recognition.

That in the field of consumer goods, just as in other fields, each standard approved by the ASA must represent the work of those groups which are concerned with its scope and provisions; and no effort must be made to impose standards on them.

That this Conference expresses its readiness to reconvene and to be of further service to the Secretary of Commerce, if requested.

It was the view of the conference that industry should take a strong leadership in the increased standards activities

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which are bound to follow the enormous industrial expansion of the United States -- and especially in those activities which involve negotiation, opinion, judgment, and compromise. It was the consensus of opinion that there should be full cooperation on the part of the Federal Government. As expressed by Mr. Carroll Wilson in a report prepared for the Secretary of Commerce (and which was endorsed in principle by the Conference):

"The public should look primarily to business rather than Government, to evolve the performance data it will want. Likewise, standards development should follow the voluntary agreement process as its main channel. For this work government agencies can provide facts, measurements, and technical assistance; these will be their best contributions."

Much of the discussion in the Conference was devoted to standards for consumer goods, it being the general view that the post-war years will see extensive developments in this field which will require the full participation of all interests, including those of the consumer.

One member of the Conference said, in effect, that this part of the discussion could be summarized by the statement that, "However much we have differed on details, there is one point upon which there has been unanimous agreement, namely: that our customers are entitled to full information in regard to the products they buy from us."

Not only did the Conference "note with approval" the steps which have been taken by the American Standards Association to broaden the field of its activities, but it was the general view that present fields would have to be cultivated more intensively; and further, that arrangements should be made for participation and support on a broader basis -- both by organized groups and by individual companies -- in the work of the ASA.

Excerpts of the discussion of questions before the Conference are attached.

Appointment of Conference Committee

The Conference recommended the appointment of a committee by the Secretary of Commerce

"to advise with the President of the ASA in regard to the recommendations of this conference and the steps to be taken to effectuate these recommendations and thereafter to report to the Secretary of Commerce through the Visiting Committee."

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In accordance with this resolution, Mr. Wayne C. Taylor,
Under Secretary of Commerce, appointed the following committee:

Charles E. Wilson, President (Chairman)
General Electric Company

Frederick M. Feiker, Dean of Engineering
George Washington University

Clarence Francis, Chairman of the Board
General Foods Corporation

Ephraim Freedman
R.H. Macy & Company, Inc

Frank B. Jewett, President
National Academy of Sciences

William B. Warner, President
McCall Corporation

Arthur D. Whiteside, President
Dun & Bradstreet, Inc

R.E. Zimmerman, Vice-President
U.S. Steel Corporation

Encl: Excerpts