

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
JAMES L. PHARR, President

DAWSON W. WINN, Vice President

AUSTIN DREWRY, Secretary-Treasurer

HARRY H. STEINLE, Manager

PREFABRICATED *Home* MANUFACTURERS'

Institute

SHOREHAM BUILDING, WASHINGTON 5, D. C.

REPUBLIC 5775

April 15, 1946

Hon. Henry A. Wallace,
Secretary of Commerce,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wallace:

The work of the Division of Trade Standards of the National Bureau of Standards is unquestionably one of the most valuable and least praised government services to the American citizen. It has for nearly twenty years brought the unquestioned scientific findings of the world's greatest testing laboratory to every consumer in the form of comprehensible standards for many of the products which he daily buys.

An article in Business Week of March 30th indicates that this valuable service to American taxpayers may be curtailed and eventually delivered into the hands of the American Standards Association.

Such procedure would be a vital mistake, for no private group, especially one financed largely by gigantic corporations, could ever command the confidence that the public has in the National Bureau of Standards.

To be more specific, I would like to refer to the enclosed Commercial Standard for Prefabricated Homes. This represents a cross-section opinion of the industry members, building inspectors, consumer groups, and the best thinking of all the Government agencies interested in housing, plus the valuable scientific information of the Bureau of Standards on structural values, insulation, heating, etc.

It was this standard which permitted Housing Expediter Wilson W. Wyatt to distinguish the 820,000 permanent prefabricated homes which are called for in his two-year program, and it will be this same standard that will help thousands of American home buyers to distinguish a well-made permanent home, backed up by a responsible builder.

This standard alone will save American home buyers a hundred times over, the cost of maintaining the entire Trade Standards Division, and it brings the Bureau of Standards to them as a practical functioning service, and not as just another agency delving into highly complex scientific problems of uncertain practical application.

Instead of being curtailed, it seems that this service and its companion service, the Division of Simplified Practice, should be expanded in the interest of developing our domestic commerce.

Commercial Standards comprise the application of scientific findings and test data to everyday commodities, and their development therefore seems

2913

Hon. Henry A. Wallace

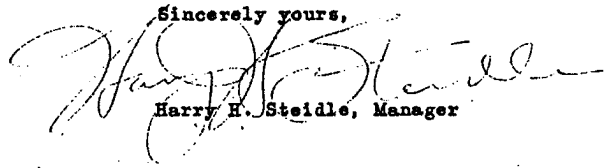
-2-

April 15, 1946

logically a function of the Bureau of Standards. Transfer of this important service to any other Bureau or Department would weaken its effectiveness, and its deliverance to any private organization would be a betrayal of the best interests of the American consumer.

If I can help throw any further light on this important matter, I assure you I am at your service.

Sincerely yours,



Harry E. Steidle, Manager

Enclosure

Copy to:
Dr. E. U. Condon

HHS:RB