

related reasonably directly to the interests of consumers. I would like to describe them briefly now.

A program of long standing that is of incalculable benefit to consumers is the leadership, cooperation, and technical backup provided by the Bureau in developing uniform State weights and measures laws, regulations, inspection equipment and methods, and in the technical training of State weights and measures officials.

These activities affect consumers directly and vitally inasmuch as the accuracy of scales, meters, and gas pumps, of commercial weighing and measuring devices of all types, as well as the accuracy of package quantities, are dependent almost exclusively on the regulatory activity of State and local weights and measures officials who look to us for their reference standards, for technical advice and counsel on measurement problems, and even for model weights and measures laws.

One of the important links with the States in these activities is the series of annual National Conferences on Weights and Measures, sponsored by the Bureau. These conferences have been going on for more than 60 years.

Examples of publications resulting from these State weights and measures activities include: The proceedings of the annual conferences and the publication and revision of "Units of Weights and Measures—Definitions and Tables of Equivalents." This publication contains conversion factors and conversion tables for weights and measures units. It is helpful in comparing packaged products with weights listed in different units, and NBS Handbook 67: "Checking Prepackaged Commodities," which prescribes procedures to be followed in assuring accurate quantity delivery to consumers.

The Bureau provides the technical and staff services to the Department of Commerce leading to the promulgation of mandatory standards and the publication of voluntary standards that affect consumers.

The mandatory standards, provided for by law, cover flammable fabrics and door closures for household refrigerators. Two others, those for seat belts and brake fluids, originally assigned to NBS, are now the responsibility of the new Department of Transportation.

Five hundred voluntary standards have been issued including some 250 commercial standards, an equal number of simplified practice recommendations, and eight product standards. All of these, of course, are indirectly of interest to the consumer, some directly. Examples of the latter include standards for ice cream containers and metal containers for other food, aluminum chain-link fencing, body-sizing standards for apparel and patterns, attic ventilation fans in residences, aluminum tension window screens, household insecticides, venetian blinds, et cetera. New voluntary standards under development that are of interest to consumers include urethane foam bedding and seat cushioning, household water softeners, polyethylene plastic containers for petroleum products.

Voluntary standards will also be developed under the new program authorized by the recently enacted Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. These will be of very direct concern to consumers. One of the objects of this new program will be to reduce undue proliferation of quantities of packaged consumer commodities which impairs the reasonable ability of the consumer to make value comparisons in the marketplace.

The NBS carries on a relatively extensive building research program and some fire research activities. These programs and activities