

This completely freezes innovation. If we are going to bring to bear the best of modern technology in coping with the Nation's housing problems, particularly the problems of low-cost housing, we have to have building codes and building regulations which permit to the maximum possible extent the development of new ideas. This can only be done if we know how to specify the performance requirements of a building and have related test methods to determine whether or not a proposed structure will conform to these requirements. It is this problem that we are working with. We are outlining now some specific activities, some short term, some long term, where we can begin to get performance-type building codes rather than design-type building codes. This is a specific problem area.

Mr. DADDARIO. The objective would also be to do this at a lesser price than presently?

Dr. ASTIN. Definitely, yes. Through innovative use of modern technology I am sure that much more can be done in getting better housing for less money.

Mr. DADDARIO. Do you have any estimate, Dr. Astin, of how much lower? I think this is important because the way you are going to get building codes down is by public opinion being drawn to this particular fact.

Dr. ASTIN. Well, I have no good way of making an estimate as to how much the possible lowering of cost would be. I am sure that there could be some significant reductions if we could get away from many of the restrictions of present designed base building codes.

Mr. DADDARIO. Do you contemplate it to be in the order of 10 percent, 20 percent, or do you have no judgment at all on it?

Dr. ASTIN. I would rather not make an estimate on it at this time, sir. I think it would be large enough to devote considerable amount of effort to try and bring this about. In other words, I think the gain is well worth whatever it costs to develop performance based building codes.

Mr. DADDARIO. You are talking about better houses at a lower price tag?

Dr. ASTIN. That is right, yes, sir.

I would now like to speak to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Federal Council for Science and Technology's Committee on Federal Laboratories.

The Committee on Federal Laboratories is the current designation for a continuing Federal Council Committee which, under a series of different names, has concentrated from the time of its formation in 1959 on achieving the most effective operation of Federal laboratories from a management point of view, as contrasted to other Federal Council committees which deal primarily with programs and policies. Perhaps the best way to explain the functions, operation and concerns of the Committee on Federal Laboratories is to trace its development and activities starting with a predecessor group to the Federal Council, the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific Research and Development.