

EDITORIAL

STANDARDS IN NEW ZEALAND

Useful response to invitations from Standards Association of New Zealand (SANZ) for comment on its draft standards is frequently ignored. When this happens the final documents are not as good as they should be, and there is little chance that they will be widely accepted. A case in point is the recently issued N.Z.S. 1900 Chapter 9.3A*, which, notwithstanding contributors' objections, reproduces controversial and sometimes erroneous material that appeared in the draft circulated for comment.

SANZ reply to complaints about rejection of suggestions without explanation or apparent reason is assurance that all contributions received are submitted to the appropriate project committee, members of which are nominees of learned societies and of industry. The primary responsibility for the technical quality of standards is with the project committees initially, and (in SANZ's view) with the membership of the nominating organisations ultimately.

We accept the SANZ assurance; but it is unlikely to satisfy a frustrated contributor who finds in a final document the very material that offended him in the draft. Whatever reasons the project committee had for declining to give weight to his argument, he will remain ignorant of them. SANZ procedures must be developed so that they are good enough to encourage contributors, and to ensure that standards are sufficiently authoritative to deserve general acceptance.

Our Society, concerned to see that N.Z.S. 1900 Chapter 8** will contain better, more widely discussed, understood and accepted material, offered to publish members' opinions in a special section of each Bulletin. SANZ supported the idea, and agreed to ask its Chapter 8 Project Committee to consider everything we publish. We hope to be given the Project Committee's response to suggestions, when this is available, for publication. We believe that publication will overcome the difficulties and frustrations that many have experienced.

The offer to publish readers' suggestions was made in our September issue. The response so far, two notes in Vol. 3, and one article - a substantial one by a well known and respected seismologist, in this issue - has been from disappointingly few members. The silent majority is either satisfied, with no view to

express, or apathetic, unwilling to be put to the trouble of writing.

Standards are everyone's business. If you, the members, are not content to leave this important matter to others, not content to risk a result you may not approve, there will be space in the Bulletin for your opinions.

* "Concrete - Design and Construction; General Requirements; Materials and Workmanship" - Standards Association of New Zealand.

** "Basic Design Loads" - Standards Association of New Zealand.