



Shopper sorts through a rack of children's clothing trying to get the best buy. (Photo: CGPC)

Cette personne compare des vêtements d'enfant en espérant réaliser un bon achat. (Photo: CPGC)

serve on more than a dozen committees of the Canadian Government Specifications Board (CGSB), including one on care labelling (the labels covering color fastness and shrinkage which are now affixed to most items of clothing when purchased). Ms. Mitton herself, as well as serving on half of these CGSB committees, sits on 12 committees of the International Standards Organization (ISO) and 15 others of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

Anticipating that the consumption of synthetic fibres on this continent would soon surpass that of even cotton or wool, and in view of the fact that natural fibres cannot be grown in Canada, a major project on the photochemistry of synthetics was undertaken in the 1960's. At the present time, the section is concentrating on developing better stabilizers which can be added to both fibres and plastics to make them last longer. This has a dual purpose: to conserve the petroleum from which they are made and the energy required to produce and process them.

The hazard of textile flammability and the problem of testing the extent of this hazard has been of concern to the laboratory for a number of years, as well as to legislators, consumers, retailers and the industry itself. Currently, the fundamentals of carpet flammability are being worked out and the section has developed a carpet flammability tester which is undergoing extensive evaluation in government and commercial laboratories. Already, it has been found to fulfill most of the requirements of a standard test method and gives results comparable or superior to those from more elaborate and expensive equipment presently in use. In addition, three new techniques for measuring the ease of ignition of carpets have been developed and submitted to the International Standards Organization for interlaboratory evaluation.

Over the years, specific projects have evolved and then been replaced as requirements in the commercial world have changed. Scores of enquiries continue to be handled by the section "on the spot" and dozens of requests are received for technical assistance ranging from domestic carpet problems to the characterization of new yarn types by scanning electron microscopy. "This kind of interest on the part of industry," concludes Margaret Mitton, "coupled with the acceptance of our research data by the scientific community at large, indicates that we are indeed fulfilling our objectives — and assisting the consumer at the same time." □

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