Denver, Colo. — The controversial "Abrasion and Impact, Prequalification Test" — intended to test fireproofing materials in a more realistic format — had been put aside by the International Conference of Building Officials.

Known in some quarters as the "Goldberg Scratch Test," after a San Francisco government construction official, the proposals were part of the code change agenda by ICBO at its meeting last month.

The recommendations proposed by the Code Changes Committee were strenuously debated by representatives of the fireproofing industry in floor debates. In the ensuing vote on acceptance of the recommendations, the Code Committee's proposals were defeated.

With feelings understandably running high on the issue, reconsideration was requested the following morning. The request was likewise defeated.

The current controversy developed out of a test that was developed in California which sought to place additional testing on fireproofing materials which would reflect the degree to which these materials are subject to damage and construction abuse in normal practice and their resistance to such abuse.

ICBO now has a field inspection procedure covering thickness and density under U.B.C. Standard 43.9. At the ICBO meeting, members voted to retain continuous site inspection on sprayed fireproofing with the clarification that this was not intended to signify that a resident inspector was required full time on site for inspections.

It was emphasized that ASTM
E-119, the current standard test, provides only one piece of information on sprayed fireproofing. This is the degree of fire resistance as part of the structural system.

The “Goldberg Scratch Test” allegedly was designed to carry testing out to the point of attempting a reproduction of actual field conditions. Like ASTM E-119, the scratch test was to be a prequalification test and not intended as a field test.

Actual performance of the test, it was emphasized, produced a most favorable result for cementitious type fireproofing materials. Fibrous-type fireproofing materials tended to produce less attractive results.

The difference, said fiber-type manufacturers, could be traced to the tests themselves which prevented the mineral fiber materials from passing the tests because of the dissimilarities between the integrity, physical and chemical compositions of the opposing materials.

iaWCC/GDCI’s Board of Directors approved of a policy position opposing the adoption of the abrasion and impact prequalification test requirements. The Board felt that the proposed tests were inconclusive and thus would contribute little to improving the quality and performance standards of sprayed fireproofing.

Don Little, chairman of the iaWCC/GDCI Technical Committee No. 4 (Sprayed Fire Protection), appeared at the Denver meeting and spoke as a representative of the association on its policy position which had been approved at the iaWCC/GDCI convention in San Francisco.

At the same meeting, a number of fireproofing contractors as well as manufacturers were present and they also addressed the meeting in behalf of or in opposition to the prequalification test procedure proposals.

In a late breaking development concerning ICBO, the iaWCC/GDCI has been officially notified that Don Little, who is President of Donalco Ltd, in Ontario, has been named as an advisory member to ICBO’s Fire & Life Safety Subcommittee.