

The group, as a whole, offers scope for potential development—perhaps the most striking example being that of pulp and paper production, for which there exists substantial raw material resources in the form of extensive areas of exotic forests.

16. The following are notes covering selected industries within this group :—

(a) WALLBOARD AND BUILDING SHEET OF PLASTER

(Year 1943–44)

Number of units engaged	..	..	..	35
Number of persons engaged	..	..	..	503
Annual value of salaries, wages, and drawings	..	..	£165,477	
Annual value of production	..	..	£702,608	

17. Softboard production has been well maintained and sufficient material for approximately 10,000 houses has been produced in the year. Production of hardboard has been hampered by machinery breakdowns, and local supplies have been augmented by large orders placed with Sweden. Production of building-board and fibrous-plaster sheet has improved in recent months with the arrival of supplies of gypsum and plaster-of-paris from Australia and the United States of America.

(b) BRICK, TILE, AND POTTERY MAKING

(Year 1943–44)

Number of units engaged	..	..	..	53
Number of persons engaged	..	..	..	1,133
Annual value of salary, wages, and drawings	..	..	£326,558	
Annual value of production	..	..	£656,874	

18. The industry as a whole has shown some decline over the past five years, particularly in brick production, where labour difficulties and increased manufacturing and transport costs have tended to restrict the usage of building-bricks. The incidence of higher transport charges no doubt has a bearing upon the current tendency towards the erection of modern kilns in areas adjacent to potential markets. Some progress is being made in the technique of production of domestic table earthenware, and it is anticipated that an increased range and design of articles will be available in the future. The manufacture of roofing-tiles is dependent on regular supplies of cement and clays, and, despite many difficulties with these materials during the past year, output was sufficient for 4,760 houses. It is anticipated that the total annual output will be sufficient for 6,400 houses when new units in this group are fully in production.

(c) CEMENT

19. There are three units engaged in the industry. Shortage of shipping has led to difficulties in freighting coal to the works and also in distributing the finished product. Local production during the past year has been insufficient to meet the country's requirements, and extensive importations were made from the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States of America. The distribution of cement-supplies has continued to be carried out by the Building Controller and District Cement Allocation Committees.

(d) ROPE AND TWINE INDUSTRY

20. Three units are engaged in the industry. Production has been maintained throughout the year, but expansion has been limited by the difficulty in securing additional raw materials and labour. *Phormium tenax* fibre production was 1,500 tons below the 1945 figure, but the industry was able to produce, over and above its normal output, 200 tons of baling-twine, which proved an excellent substitute for baling-wire. Manila and sisal fibres have continued in short supply, but efforts are being made both to increase imports from present suppliers and to find new sources of supply. Locally-grown linen flax has been used to maintain production of seaming twine and ham cords.