

and finishing lines. Stocks of imported Oregon are satisfactory, and Government policy requires the use of this species in construction such as schools, hospitals, and public buildings in order that indigenous timbers may be conserved for purposes where alternatives cannot be used.

Structural and Reinforcing Steel

Supplies are conditioned by availability from Australia, where production is hampered by industrial unrest. Increasing domestic consumption in Australia also reduces the quota available for export, and the tonnage made available for New Zealand is far short of requirements. Every opportunity is taken of shipping space offering. Limited relief will be afforded by orders placed in the United Kingdom and Belgium, but delivery is uncertain on account of the world-wide demand for steel.

Wallboards

The position in respect of wallboards is fairly satisfactory, although the production of Gibraltar board is limited by the availability of plaster. Supplies of gypsum from overseas for manufacture into plaster are short, shipping again being a difficulty, and the output of fibrous-plaster wallboard is seriously reduced. Some alleviation will be afforded by the importation of manufactured plaster, but rationing in accordance with the man-power employed by each consumer will require to continue. Supplies of both imported and locally manufactured hardboard are fairly satisfactory.

Sanitary Earthenware

Production by local manufacturers falls considerably short of demand. Manufacturing capacity is inadequate, and the position is accentuated by transportation and labour difficulties. The shortage of W.C. pans is retarding house completions and pans of metal construction are in some cases being approved by local authorities. The position is assisted to some degree by importations, limited quantities coming to hand at irregular intervals.

Roofing-materials

(1) *Asbestos Cement: Corrugated and Flat Sheets.*—Because of difficulty in obtaining supplies of asbestos from overseas, production of both corrugated and flat sheets is seriously curtailed, the South Island plant having ceased manufacture. The Auckland factory is operating to half capacity only. Import licences have been issued for manufactured sheets, but the quantity available through this source is inadequate to bridge the gap between local manufacture and demand.

(2) *Galvanized Corrugated Iron.*—Reconstruction in war-damaged countries is creating an abnormal demand, and production overseas is far short of world requirements. The prospect of increasing importations is remote and the tonnage available is only 20 per cent. of actual requirements.

(3) *Cement and Earthenware Roof Tiles.*—Apart from recurring shortages of cement, which temporarily slow down the manufacture of cement tiles, the output of roofing-tiles is generally satisfactory. Use is mainly restricted to urban areas on account of their bulky and fragile nature, necessitating transportation being kept to the minimum. This also ensures a greater measure of availability of corrugated asbestos roofing for rural areas.

(4) *Fabric and Aluminium Corrugated Sheets.*—The stock position of fabric roofing is buoyant, while the importation of aluminium corrugated roofing is increasing. Greater use of these materials will assist in offsetting the shortage of asbestos-cement sheets.