

impeded by cement shortage, while asbestos-cement-sheet output has been drastically curtailed through world shortage of asbestos fibre. Limited fibre-supplies have been received, and prospects of continued deliveries are more promising than was formerly anticipated.

(b) BRICK, TILE, AND POTTERY MAKING

	1938-39.	1945-46.	1946-47.*
Number of units engaged	60	54	..
Number of persons employed	1,117	1,374	1,488
Salaries and wages paid	£250,968	£447,032	£495,000
Value of output	£569,634	£869,141	£999,000

* Interim figures.

The brick industry has been unable to meet demand principally through its inability to compete with other industries for available man-power on account of the heavy and unattractive nature of the work in brick and pipe manufacture. Irregular coal deliveries and disruption of electrical supplies also prejudiced production in some centres.

So as to minimize the labour needed in this industry modern tunnel-kiln-production methods are being installed in some units to secure the advantage of mechanizing all operations from forming the brick to stacking the final product in the yard.

Production has been extended to include mosaic tiles, whilst preparations are in hand to produce hearth and wall tiles in the near future. Further progress has been made in the technique of production of domestic table ware, and a wider range of shapes of better quality is being manufactured. Output of sanitary earthenware and insulators has been maintained, and the output of smaller electrical porcelains has been increased.

The chief pottery and ceramics manufacturers have recently combined to form the Pottery and Ceramics Research Association, which has engaged an experienced pottery expert from the United Kingdom, who, in conjunction with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, concentrates on technical, material, and production problems confronting the industry.

(c) CEMENT

Production of the three units engaged in the industry has again been insufficient to meet full requirements. Transport difficulties continue to preclude delivery of adequate tonnages to usage centres, and inadequate deliveries of coal to the works has, on occasions, curtailed output. Provision has been made for the importation of 1,000 tons of cement from the United Kingdom, and inquiries are being made with a view to locating further supplies comparable in price with that ruling for the local product. Distribution is still being carried out by the Building Controller and the District Cement Allocation Committees.

(d) ROPE AND TWINE

Whilst production of rope and binder twine has been maintained at normal scale, the call for increased supplies of baling-twine to make good the shortage of wire necessitated a marked increase in production of this line. Increased demand was met to an appreciable extent by the units engaged in manufacture, and farmers were able to obtain their requirements almost to the full extent. Shortage of phormium-supplies prevented orders for baling-twine from being completely met. The supply of phormium for rope and binder and baling twine continues to be short of the full requirements, but an increase in production in the coming year is assured and will assist the position to some extent.

Allocation of sisal from British East Africa was more satisfactory, but direct shipping is still not regularly available and transshipments via Australia have been slow and expensive.