

(c) CEMENT

Production of cement in New Zealand remains inadequate to meet the heavy local demand. The three cement-manufacturing companies have plans in hand for extending their plants and technical experts from overseas are assisting in the schemes under way for achieving greatly increased output. Production from these extensions cannot be expected for two or three years, and in the meantime licences to import cement are being granted.

(d) ROPE AND TWINE

Because, on the one hand, baling-wire has again not been available in the full quantities desired, and, on the other that some farmers appear to prefer twine to wire, demand for baling-twine has remained heavy. Nevertheless, the demand for twine was met, and large quantities of rope and lashings as well were produced by the local manufacturers.

Raw material supplies for these purposes included the 1,500 tons additional output this year in locally-produced phormium fibre, but even that enhanced volume is below our requirements, and sisal from British East Africa still has to be imported. Fortunately, expense and delay affecting our sisal imports have been reduced by the avoidance this year of transhipment.

Local manufacturers continue to extend the range of soft fibre products which they are marketing. Included in these products are jute and cotton twines of varying thicknesses in spools, balls, and cones; jute and cotton piping cords; linen-flax thread, seaming, mattress, and ham twines; and twines in which linen flax and jute are combined. The linen thread being used is spun from flax grown in the South Island and marketed by the Linen Flax Corporation.

(e) PAPER BAG AND BOX MAKING

The rationing of the output of Whakatane Board Mills, Ltd., among New Zealand users, which had been under the direction of the Factory Controller since October, 1945, was discontinued during the year. Imports of board from soft currency sources have been available to supplement local output in sufficient volume to meet demand adequately. Cartons and containers have also been in good supply.

Supplies of paper for the bagmaking industry have been satisfactory, and backlogs of orders no longer exist. The production of multi-wall paper bags was begun in Auckland during the year.

Bags and containers of transparent and moisture-proof materials are being produced in increasing quantities to meet rising demand through the use of automatic packing and wrapping machines.

(f) PRINTING, PUBLISHING, AND BOOKBINDING

The policy of dollar conservation keeps the supply of newsprint below the level of pre-war imports. Paper requirements for printing-houses and others are available in satisfactory quantities from soft currency sources, but shortages of staff still present a problem to many firms. Extension, replacement, and modernization of plant continues, although it has been necessary to curtail imports from Canada and the United States.