

SECTION 3—CHEMICALS, RUBBER, AND TOBACCO

Considerable improvement has been shown during the year in deliveries of chemicals from overseas. The United Kingdom has been able to increase allocations of caustic soda to this country, but for so long as we were unable to obtain our full requirements from that source, purchases had to be made in the United States and Europe. Of particular importance to our dairy and glass-manufacturing industries is the improvement in supplies of soda ash. The United Kingdom is now able to meet our requirements for this in full.

(a) SOAP AND CANDLE MAKING

Manufacture of soap was maintained at a high level during the year, and in addition to meeting New Zealand's requirements our factories were able to increase substantially the volume available for export. With adequate quantities of candles in stock, however, there was little demand for further production of this product.

(b) COSMETIC AND TOILET PREPARATIONS

The range and quantities of goods of these classes produced in New Zealand have been extended further during the past year.

(c) PLASTICS

Eight hundred persons are employed by the 49 units engaged in the manufacture of plastics. The undertakings vary in size from large plants carrying on injection and compression moulding and extrusion to small factories engaged on a simple phase of production. The larger units have their own tool-shops in which to manufacture dies used in moulding and extrusion operations. The range of goods being produced continues to increase, but this extension is in the utility lines. The number of novelty articles on which there was a tendency to concentrate at first has declined.

(d) PAINT AND VARNISH MANUFACTURE

During the past year, materials required for paint-manufacture were in better supply than for a number of years. This, combined with extensions both to premises and plant which local manufacturers have undertaken, has resulted not only in greater stocks being available to consumers, but also in those stocks being of better quality than in the recent past. Progress in overtaking arrears of maintenance of wooden buildings should now be facilitated.

To supplement quantities of locally-grown linseed for the production of linseed-oil in New Zealand, supplies of seed were imported. This production was itself supplemented by imports of linseed-oil from Canada, India, and Uruguay, and the general supply position became such that the Factory Controller was able to relinquish control over the distribution of the local product.

A proposal of interest which is now being investigated involves the manufacture locally of sufficient quantities of white lead to meet New Zealand's requirements.

Materials necessary to produce our lacquer requirements are now available and the Factory Controller is no longer required to control the use of this product.

(e) GLUE

With supplies of animal-glue pieces from local sources again improving, it is hoped that the necessity to import finished glue will soon cease. For a period, labour shortages in the freezing industry reduced supplies of raw materials below the needs of the New Zealand glue-manufacturers.