

(c) DOMESTIC MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

For such items as dish-washing machines and domestic vacuum cleaners, components required have been available from the sterling area, and local production has been adequate to meet New Zealand's requirements. Indeed, some dish-washing machines are exported to Australia. Manufacturers of domestic refrigerators and washing-machines, however, have been hampered in their volume of output because of their dependence on components from dollar sources. Some improvement is now being enjoyed through components becoming more freely available from Britain and Australia.

(d) ENGINEERING, IRON AND BRASS FOUNDRY, ETC.

It is in this field where supply problems have proved to be very protracted. Nevertheless, improvements are taking place. In recent months, for example, the general steel-supply position has shown most welcome improvement. Substantial offers made in increasing numbers by foreign suppliers enable us to supplement the limited quantities available from the United Kingdom and Australia. Some special steels are still difficult to obtain, but this appears to be only a temporary condition. There are indications, too, that prices from some sources are tending to fall.

As a means of alleviating the problem created by restricted deliveries of black steel sheet and galvanized sheet, some manufacturers have used as a substitute aluminium sheet, which has been more freely available.

Fencing-wire, which has been in such very heavy demand by farmers, is now coming to hand in more satisfactory volume.

Improvement, too, can be anticipated in the supply of reinforcing rods and sections when double-shift operations begin in the rolling-mill at Green Island, Dunedin. The refurbishing of the plant is well advanced in readiness for its operation under licence from the Crown by the Otago Iron Rolling Mills Co., Ltd.

Tinplate is now more freely available from overseas and it is no longer necessary for purchases to be made from the United States.

The local shortage of galvanized piping and of galvanized sheet remains acute despite all attempts to secure increased quantities from several overseas markets.

In the non-ferrous metals group there has been general improvement during the year. Ingot copper, however, cannot be freely purchased abroad, but fortunately local scrap is available to help us out of the difficulty. Ingot zinc and pig lead are in satisfactory supply from Australia and ingot antimony from the United Kingdom. Neither of these countries can meet our full needs for ferro manganese, but Norway is able to send us this material. Primary aluminium ingot is obtainable only from Canada. Aluminium and other non-ferrous processed forms can, however, be freely obtained from the United Kingdom.

(e) AGRICULTURAL AND DAIRYING MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENT MAKING

Steel shortages have restrained volume of output, but in other respects production has moved smoothly. The industry places high importance on the necessity for keeping abreast of technical developments, and no doubt this contributes to our being able to export regularly dairy machinery, particularly of types which include pasteurizers and heavy churns.

Field equipment manufactured here now includes mounted ploughs of modern design, hydraulic loaders, and heavy ploughs and disk harrows with hydraulic lift suitable for use with either British or American tractors. If steel supplies continue to improve, the coming year's output should exceed that for 1948. This extended use of tractor-drawn farm implements is complementary to the substantial numbers of tractors imported both from Britain and the United States.