

## BRICKS

(Demand, 36,000,000 bricks; estimated production, 18,000,000 bricks)

Use of bricks as an alternative building-material to cement and timber could be increased considerably if local production were more satisfactory. Plant capacity is at least 36,000,000, but in no instance does any brickworks appear to produce consistently to capacity. Production difficulties are due to coal and power shortages, transport, and lack of labour because of the low wage rate compared with alternative occupations. In the South Island these difficulties are accentuated by weather conditions, which affect the working of the clay-pits.

## TIMBER

(Total demand, 418,000,000 super feet; total estimated production, 345,000,000 super feet)

The building industry is, of course, only one user of timber, but is perhaps affected more by to-day's shortage than any other. Because of transport difficulties supply in some North Island districts is bad, whilst deliveries from the South Island to the North Island are only about one-seventh of normal. Actually, in spite of transport, labour, and equipment shortages, timber-production has never been higher, but any advantage due to overall increased production is more than offset by the reduced production of indigenous timber and by the almost complete lack of stocks, as well as increased demands in other categories.

## STRUCTURAL AND REINFORCING STEEL

(Demand, 50,000 tons; estimated available for New Zealand, 25,000 tons)

The full quantity required is not offering from overseas, particularly Australia, largely because of coal and steel strikes, combined with the intensity of local demand. Even so, approximately 50 per cent. more steel could have been obtained last year if trans-Tasman shipping had been more satisfactory. Delivery of the 1947-48 25,000 tons quoted above hinges largely on the availability of shipping.

## ENAMEL BATHS

(Demand, 25,000 baths; estimated supply, 7,500 baths)

Unfulfilled orders already amount to over 13,500 baths, with the figure increasing rapidly. Whereas the sole New Zealand manufacturer has a capacity of 20,000 to 25,000 baths, the present rate is reduced to 7,500 per annum due to pig-iron and coke shortages and lack of labour. The two materials involved come from Australia, and again shortage of shipping-space has prevented supply being maintained. Labour is short, since the wages offered are unattractive when related to the heavy and dirty nature of the work. Prospects for the importation of baths are not encouraging, in spite of the availability of import licences.

## WALLBOARDS

(Demand, 60,000,000 square feet; estimated production, 60,000,000 square feet)

Production would appear to be quite satisfactory, especially when it is known that increased production of Gibraltar board amounting to 19,000,000 square feet is contemplated. However, production is spasmodic for all classes of board, due to raw material, labour, and transport difficulties. Orders are many months behind in delivery, and present production is not sufficient to allow the leeway to be made up.