

Builders' Hardware ; Plumbers' Supplies ; Electrical Fittings

Although intermittent "bottlenecks" occur in various lines, the overall supply position keeps abreast of the demand, which can usually be satisfied by substituting articles in fuller supply.

Enamel Baths

Supplies of imported raw materials for the manufacture of enamel baths are inadequate for full-capacity production. A further contributing factor is the difficulty in retaining suitable labour owing to the unattractive nature of the work. Limited numbers of imported baths are coming forward at high cost, and various substitutes, such as concrete lined with glazed tiles, vitreous-enamelled sheet steel, &c., are being manufactured locally in a small way. The installation of a shower-room only or a galvanized-iron bath has been adopted as an expedient in many cases to allow houses to be occupied, provision being made for the installation of a bath when available.

Galvanized Wrought-iron and Steel Tubes

The shortage of steel has seriously affected the supply of associated products, particularly wrought-iron and galvanized tubes for water-services, supplies of the larger sizes required for water schemes in new development areas being particularly difficult. Deliveries of these sizes have only been on a "hand to mouth" basis and some works have been held up for long periods. Supplies of the smaller sizes of pipes have been a little better, delays occurring to a lesser extent than when larger sizes were involved. It is not anticipated that there will be any decided improvement in pipe stocks until the general steel position improves.

BUILDING CONTROL

Despite supply difficulties and restrictions imposed upon construction, of necessity, by the Building Controller, the value of work completed during 1947-48 exceeded the previous year's figure by £5·314 millions, the total being £25·763 millions (housing, £19·639 millions; other works, £6·124 millions). Anticipating that the supply position can be maintained or improved, it is estimated that a similar volume of work will be completed during 1948-49.

For various reasons, but principally because of material shortages, building permits which have been issued and upon which operations have not been commenced have accumulated to a total of £21·5 millions in value, and a considerable portion of this work will not only become a load on the building industry during 1948, but will also produce a carry over for 1949.

Deferred applications have increased in value and now aggregate £11·2 millions.

The number of permits authorized during 1947-48 totalled 42,650, classified as follows:—

(a) Building projects other than housing	17,979
(b) State and other Government housing	3,491
(c) Private housing	11,897
(d) Housing additions	9,283
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			42,650