

### *Timber*

With production still increasing, mainly in exotics, the timber position is relatively satisfactory. The installation of kiln drying and treatment plants is proceeding rapidly, thereby permitting greater quantities of exotic timbers to be treated and used for construction, which formerly used indigenous timbers. Local shortages occurred from time to time in joinery and finishing lines. The building industry is of necessity adapting itself to the fuller use of exotic timbers, particularly in housing construction, and many of the difficulties and objections to their use are being overcome by up-to-date methods of grading and treatment.

### *Structural and Reinforcing Steel*

While Australian deliveries have not improved, the situation generally is becoming easier because of shipments obtained from the United Kingdom and Belgium. Further supplies have been arranged from these sources, and from the United States to the extent of available dollar funds, and it is anticipated that it will be possible to maintain reasonable progress on most approved works. Demand, nevertheless, is greatly in excess of the quantities available and many projects involving the use of steel have had to be deferred pending a substantial improvement in the position. It is hoped that with a further easing of the supply of steel some of these deferred works can proceed.

### *Wallboards*

Consequent upon increased deliveries of plaster, the supply position of plaster-based wallboards has improved considerably, manufacturers working to capacity. Locally produced softboard is in free supply, while hardboard output is reasonably satisfactory.

### *Sanitary Earthenware*

Since the war lack of these supplies formed a serious bottleneck in all housing progress, and this matter was taken up immediately on my arrival in Great Britain. With the assistance of increased importations, general supply has now much improved.

### *Roofing-materials*

(a) *Asbestos Cement: Corrugated and Flat Sheets.*—Reasonable supplies of asbestos fibre have come to hand and the production of both corrugated and flat sheets has improved considerably, although the current shortage of cement is a retarding factor. Quantities of imported manufactured sheets continue to arrive frequently, and the position should be satisfactory subject to adequate supplies of cement and asbestos fibre being maintained.

(b) *Galvanized Corrugated Iron.*—There has been little if any improvement in deliveries of galvanized corrugated iron and supplies that became available have been sufficient only to permit repairs to existing roofs. Prospects of increased deliveries are not encouraging.

(c) *Cement and Earthenware Roofing-tiles.*—The position generally is satisfactory, despite limited supplies of cement being available to concrete-tile manufacturers.

(d) *Fabric and Aluminium Corrugated Sheets.*—Ample stocks of fabric roofing are available and increasing quantities of aluminium sheets are coming forward regularly.

### *Builders' Hardware, Plumbers' Supplies, and Electrical Fittings*

It is anticipated that the present satisfactory supply position will be maintained.