

FOOTWEAR

A notable event in the footwear-manufacturing industry during the past year was the removal of the industry from the provisions of the Industrial Efficiency Act, 1936.

Production during the year has been maintained at a fairly high level and the industry has experienced little difficulty in obtaining supplies of material. With the exception of children's shoes in the infants' sizes, which are not made to any great extent in New Zealand, and in a lesser degree youths' and maids' utility footwear, the industry has been able to meet the demand for all classes of leather footwear, and it is hoped that, with the introduction of new machinery, the local industry will be able to increase the types and variety of footwear available. To meet the deficiency in local production of the types referred to above, arrangements were made with the Customs Department to permit importation, and it is expected that the quantities to be imported, together with local production, will ensure adequate supplies being available.

Statistics of production are as follows :—

—					Year Ended 31st May, 1948.	Year Ended 31st May, 1949.	Eight Months to 28th January, 1950.
Leather footwear	..	..	..	..	Pairs. 3,407,615	Pairs. 3,033,417	Pairs. 2,149,880
Slippers	..	..	..	..	2,153,201	1,933,260	1,310,565

TANNING

The tanning industry in New Zealand has been able, in past years, to meet the country's requirements of leather in all but a few qualities, but, unfortunately, production has not been maintained in some types. Consideration must be given to the extent to which importation will be necessary to ensure that adequate supplies are available to meet the needs of the footwear and other industries.

SUNDRY LEATHER AND TRAVEL GOODS

(a) *Hand-bags*.—Ample supplies of hand-bags are available in a wide range of style and design—manufacturers generally have maintained production at a high level and no trouble has been experienced in meeting the demand. There are indications at present that the 1950 demand will be lower than that of 1949.

(b) *Leather Dress Gloves*.—While the manufacturers of dress gloves to some extent are able to use locally-produced leathers, the material required for the best quality continues to be imported. Total production locally was not sufficient to provide sufficient gloves to meet all requirements, so that provision was made for the importation of reasonable quantities to make up the deficiency in local production.

(c) *Travel Goods, &c.*—Production of travel goods and novelty items made from leather continues at a high level and a wide and varied range of articles is available at reasonable prices.

IRON AND STEEL

A rapid improvement in the world steel position took place during the past year, and apart from a few types such as galvanized sheet, tube, and tinplate which remain difficult, our steel problems have eased. Deliveries of Australian steel did not increase to the extent expected, but the United Kingdom is now able to supply virtually all our requirements, mainly direct from mill sources.