

thing falling on the farmer, whose produce has to pay the excessive freight that supports the whole combination.

Commending the matter to the consideration of your Minister, and freely offering further information, advice, or service if required,

We are, &c.,

pp. J. H. STANLEY AND Co.,  
G. S. MUNRO.

The Secretary, Department of Industries and Commerce, Wellington.

#### SHIPPING FREIGHTS

To the Editor, *Otago Daily Times*.

SIR,—I am very pleased to notice that Dunedin is at last waking up to the necessity of encouraging free trade in the shipping business of this colony.

We all cry out about the increase of the national debt and the heavy drain for interest on loans, but let me tell you that the present shipping monopoly bids fair to rival the national debt as a drain upon the resources of the colony.

Take the freight upon frozen mutton: In New Zealand, with a fully-developed trade, the present rate of freight is 1d. per pound, plus 10 per cent. primage, from November to May; from June to October (during the winter months when we have no supplies) the freight is  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound; while the freight on mutton from Australia to London all the year round is  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound, and most of the steamers carrying at this rate of freight actually pass our own doors on the way to London.

Wool: Sailer freights from New Zealand ports to London by the combined companies are  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound for greasy and  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound for washed, while the corresponding rates from Sydney to London are  $\frac{5}{8}$ d. and  $\frac{7}{8}$ d.

Rabbitskins: Sailers' freight from New Zealand ports to London is  $\frac{5}{8}$ d. per pound, equal to £5 16s. 8d. per ton of 2,240 lb., while freight from Sydney to London on this line is obtainable at £2 and £2 5s. per ton of 2,240 lb.

Sheepskins: Sailers' freight from New Zealand ports to London is  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, equal to £4 13s. 4d. per ton of 2,240 lb.; while freight from Sydney to London on the same goods is obtainable at £1 15s. and £2 per ton of 2,240 lb.

The same comparison applies to all descriptions of produce; and I repeat that the drain on this colony of the shipping monopoly bids fair to rival that of the national debt, as the foregoing figures conclusively prove.

The combined companies reply that notwithstanding these apparently excessive rates the companies are not paying. Then, all I can say is that there must be gross mismanagement, and the sooner they retire from the business the better for the colony.—I am, &c.,

23rd December.

EXPORTER.

DEAR SIR,—

Dunedin, 17th March, 1897.

Referring to our letter of the 20th January last, on the subject of freights, we notice the Premier during his late visit to Australia has been making inquiries into this matter, and, no doubt, has ascertained the *bona fides* of the statements contained in our letter referred to above.

Since writing you on the 20th January last we have been the means of reducing the freights on wool to London by 25 per cent. This step was brought about by our putting the barque "Peru" on the berth at Dunedin and the barque "Laira" on the berth at the Bluff at reduced rates of freight. Notwithstanding strong opposition from the monopoly, we have succeeded in loading our vessels; but we have had to suffer from slander and the meanest possible tactics because we dared to attack the present strong monopoly.

Frozen Meat: We are now endeavouring to bring about a reduction in the freight on this article. Australia is only paying  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. freight, and we have the offer of a steamer to load next month at this rate, and we have the meat purchased to load her; but the influence of the monopoly is stronger on the board of directors of the Freezing Company than that of the shareholders, and they decline to freeze the meat for shipment by our steamer. These difficulties require drastic remedies, and we will be glad to assist your Government in every way possible to free the colony of the present monopoly and get better terms for freights.

The writer, Mr. Munro, will be in Wellington shortly, and would be glad to discuss the freight question fully with you if it would be convenient and if you think any good could be done.

Yours, &c.,

pp. J. H. STANLEY AND Co.,  
G. S. MUNRO.

The Secretary, Department of Industries and Commerce, Wellington.

HON. PREMIER,— Department of Trade and Customs, Wellington, 14th March, 1897.

I have the honour to submit, for your information, the following reports on matters inquired into by me in Australia, in accordance with your instructions:—

A. Rates of freight on produce shipped to the United Kingdom. (The New Zealand rates are also stated for comparison.)