

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Waterfront Control Commission was appointed in April, 1940, and an annual report was submitted to Parliament covering the activities of the Commission up to 31st March, 1941. The Director of Publicity at the request of the Navy Office, which considered the information might be of some use to the enemy, has each year since 1941 prohibited the publication of an annual report. With the cessation of hostilities the Navy Office withdrew its objection, and the Commission is glad to be able to submit a report covering its activities up to 31st March, 1945.

Comprehensive tables covering the five years of the Commission's operations are included in the Appendix attached hereto showing full details of tonnages handled, rates of work, profit distribution and costs per ton under the co-operative contracting system, average wage at the main and secondary ports, wages paid by each shipping company or agent, and summarized accounts of the various funds controlled by the Commission, these accounts having been audited by the Controller and Auditor-General.

## 2. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The functions of the Commission as prescribed under the Waterfront Control Commission Emergency Regulations 1940 are to do all things necessary for the purpose of ensuring the utmost expedition in the loading, unloading, and storage of cargo at any port, and the results show that in expediting the despatch of shipping the Commission has fully justified its existence.

A table is published in the Appendix (page 74) showing the reduction effected in the time spent in New Zealand by overseas vessels, and from that table it will be seen that overseas ships during the war years have been turned round in approximately half the time taken prior to the war. This quick turn round of overseas vessels is due to the reduction in ports of call, working "round the clock" Sundays and holidays, and the increased rate of work under the co-operative contracting system.

## 3. MEASURES TAKEN TO EXPEDITE DESPATCH OF SHIPPING

### (a) CENTRALIZATION OF SHIPPING

Following representations from the British Ministry of War Transport, the Overseas Allotment Committee arranged for a reduction in the ports of discharge and loading and the centralization of cargo-handling operations at the main ports. Overseas cargo is discharged at one or two ports and transhipped by coastal vessels. Two small vessels with freezer holds were made available by the British Ministry of War Transport for the shipping of freezer cargo from small and secondary ports to the main ports for loading to overseas vessels. A perusal of table in the Appendix on page 74 will show that prior to the war, vessels visited an average of 6.13 ports for discharge and loading. For the year ending 13th March, 1942, this average was reduced to 2.8 ports, for the year ending 31st March, 1943, the average was further reduced to 2.4 ports while for the year ending 31st March, 1944, a further small reduction in the average was made to 2.16 ports. The year ending 31st March, 1945, shows an increase in the average to 2½ ports.

Centralization of shipping has been one of the main factors in speeding up the turn round of overseas vessels. So far as British ships are concerned, the additional costs brought about through centralization are met by the British Ministry of War Transport.

### (b) WORKING "ROUND THE CLOCK" AND SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Shortly after the appointment of the Commission, arrangements were made for work to be performed on Saturday night between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. and between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. on Sundays and holidays. In view of the critical shipping position at that time, a conference of all interested parties was called by the Commission in March, 1941, and an agreement was entered into whereby all overseas vessels would work round the clock under a shift system, and vessels of the Union Steam Ship Co. of N.Z., Ltd., would also work under that system provided there was more than 48 hours' continuous work. The hours of work were fixed as follows:—

Day shift	..	..	..	..	..	8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Night shift	..	..	..	..	..	11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

The breaks between the shifts were required for shunting purposes.

These extended hours and shift system increased the working-hours per week from 68 to 140 and was the principal single factor in expediting despatch of shipping. The system was put into operation with very little difficulty. In June, 1942, it was found that the coastal-ship tonnage available was insufficient to move overseas transhipments and coastal cargoes, and the Commission issued an order requiring all coastal vessels over 350 tons net register to be worked continuously round the clock. The need for this was brought about through the centralization of discharge of overseas cargoes and also the fact that large quantities of coal and timber required to be shipped from the South Island to the North Island.

In view of the continuous long hours being worked at main ports, and having in mind the improvement in the war situation, the Commission as from 3rd January, 1944, reduced the day-shift hours to 9 p.m. Mondays to Fridays inclusive and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

The shift-work agreement reached between the parties in March, 1941, provided that shipping companies would supply a hot meal free of cost to men employed on night-shift work. Considerable difficulty was experienced in providing suitable meals at Auckland and Wellington, and shipping companies who made their own arrangements with the catering companies were called upon to pay excessive charges, sometimes as high as 6s. and 7s. per meal, and complaints were also received regarding the quality of the meal supplied. The Commission accordingly made arrangements with one catering company whereby a substantial meal was provided between the hours of 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. at the ports of Auckland and Wellington at a cost of 3s. 6d. per meal. Despite rationing difficulties and wide variations in the number of men to be catered for each night—from 100 or less to more than 1,200—excellent meals and service have been given. As these meals have been provided at short notice from temporary kitchens with limited facilities and without complaints from the men, it will be appreciated that the service has been very efficient.

There exists a real need at main ports for a permanent well-equipped restaurant within the confines of the wharf where good meals can be supplied both during day and night hours.

A return is published in the Appendix (page 75) showing the number of vessels (other than United States Army and Navy) which worked under the shift system and extended hours for year ending 31st March, 1945.