

(b) OVERLOADING OF PORT FACILITIES

During the calendar year ended 31st December, 1949, the total cargo handled through all New Zealand ports was 8,636,000 tons. Although this is only 14,000 tons greater than for 1948, it is an increase of 953,000 tons on 1946, the first post-war year, and 471,000 tons greater than 1938 figures. Harbour Boards, particularly at Auckland, have not yet been able to increase berthage space, shed accommodation, and other port facilities to enable this increase in cargo tonnage to be handled normally.

Another factor is that the increased size and over-all length of new overseas vessels has resulted in only one of the newer types of vessel being able to berth at wharves at the Port of Auckland where previously two overseas ships could berth.

(c) CONGESTION OF WHARF AND RAILWAY SHEDS: SHORTAGE OF RAILWAY TRUCKS

There were numerous occasions during the year ended 31st March, 1950, when shortages of railway trucks have restricted the maximum output of work on ships. This position will not be improved until greater supplies come to hand of railway wagons on order from overseas and until there is an improvement in the repairing and servicing of existing wagons.

Congestion of wharf and railway goods-sheds has again resulted in delays to shipping during the year. The position became acute at Auckland at the end of the import licensing period in February last. The determined efforts of the Auckland Harbour Board and Cargo Control Committee resulted in a quick improvement in the position. The release by the Government to the Auckland Harbour Board of further off-wharf storage has materially assisted in preventing further serious shed congestion. The Wellington Harbour Board has almost completed the construction of one new shed (shed 39), and has also let a contract for a large modern shed at Aotea Quay (shed 51). This shed is expected to be completed at the end of 1951, and will largely overcome delays which have been experienced during the year through shed congestion during peak periods of shipping.

(d) INCREASES IN TONNAGES HANDLED PER VESSEL

The increase in the size of new overseas ships has resulted in the handling of greater inward and outward tonnages per vessel trading to the United Kingdom. The average tonnages handled (discharged and loaded) per vessel, which increased from 14,485 tons in the calendar year 1946 to 17,285 tons in the calendar year 1948, further increased to 18,502 tons last year. It is estimated that this latest increase accounts for an additional two and a half days in the turn-round of overseas ships.

The Government has decided to cease the telescoping of mutton and lamb as from 1st October next. This will result in approximately 30 per cent. less quantity of mutton and lamb being shipped in each vessel, and it will require an additional fifteen ships to carry the same quantity in full carcasses. It is estimated, however, that there will be a saving of at least two days in the loading of overseas ships, and provided the Railways Department is able to maintain a regular flow of refrigerated produce to vessels, the Commission considers that with the present availability of labour and berthage facilities, no difficulty should be experienced in loading the additional vessels.

(e) MULTIPLICITY OF MARKS

The increase in the number of small packages, the multiplicity of marks of cargo discharged, and the indistinct marking of packages results in additional time in the sorting and stacking of cargo in wharf sheds. Shipowners have been requested to confer with consignors to bring about a reduction in the number of separate marks of standard lines. Some improvement in this respect has already been achieved.