

tion Company, 122, Leadenhall Street, E.C.; Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, 34, Leadenhall Street, E.C.; American and Australian Line, 122, Pall Mall, S.W.; P. Henderson and Co., 15, Vincent Place, Glasgow; Ocean Steamship Company (Limited), 1, India Buildings, Liverpool; J. P. Corry and Co. (Star Line), 9 and 11, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.; Elder, Dempster, and Co., African House, Water Street, Liverpool; J. Bertram and Sons, 7, Bertram Street, Borough, S.E.; Bucknall Bros., East India Chambers, 23, Leadenhall Street, E.C.; G. Wills and Co., West India House, 96, Leadenhall Street, E.C.; G. S. Yuill and Co. (Limited), 120, Fenchurch Street, E.C.; Federal Steam Navigation Company (Limited), 2, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.; Cayzer, Irvine, and Co., 115, Leadenhall Street, E.C.; Furness, Withy, and Co (Limited), 4, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.; New Zealand and African Steamship Company (Limited), 2, Fenchurch Avenue, E.C.; Secretary, Baltic Mercantile and Shipping Exchange (Limited), 24-28, St. Mary Axe, E.C.; Secretary, Lloyd's, Royal Exchange, E.C.

63. In addition to the forty-two shipping companies, the Agent-General advised by cable that he had sent a similar notification to Lloyd's and to the Baltic Shipping Exchange?—Yes.

64. So that practically the whole of the shipping interests over the wide world would know of this tender being required, through those sources?—Yes.

65. Now, did any one either in or out of the colony make any request for any extension of time for sending in tenders in connection with this service?—No.

66. Neither verbally nor in writing?—No.

67. Now, with regard to the rates of freight, Mr. Munro; I am going to keep entirely clear of the South African service. Is it within your knowledge that a strong effort has for years been made by many of the producers of New Zealand to get a direct service to the west-coast ports of England?—Yes.

68. Were any of the steamers of the direct lines at any time put on for those west-coast ports?—Yes, they put on two steamers. The Shaw-Savill Company put on one and the New Zealand Shipping Company put on one.

69. Is it a fact that the rates of freight they proposed to charge were considerably higher than the freight to London?—Yes, 25 per cent. higher.

70. Would it have been possible for the ordinary exporter to carry on trade with the west-coast ports with the 25 per cent. higher freight than to London?—Well, it was a very severe handicap. It would nullify the benefits of the service if the exporter had to pay 25 per cent. additional freight.

71. As the matter has been referred to, I will ask, are the west-coast steamers allowed under the contract to call at more Australian ports than the South African steamers under contract?—No, exactly the same.

72. Will you refer to the commencement of this business, and look at the Industries and Commerce report for 1902?—Yes.

73. What was the statement made in that report regarding the west-coast service?—This is the extract I have on the file: "In my opinion steps should be taken to secure the discharge of frozen meat at Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, and Glasgow, and also at South African ports. This would relieve the pressure in London, open up other extensive markets, and to some extent do away with the enormous number of London brokers and salesmen, who, by their competitive efforts, are prejudicing the values that should obtain. By making London the one port of discharge it is no doubt a great advantage to the steamboat companies who freight the meat, yet freights on this produce are no lower, relatively, from New Zealand to London than from those countries which have the opportunity of shipping their meat to other ports. Unless some combination is effected regarding the disposal of New Zealand meat the Government should, in my opinion, for the benefit of producers, consider the situation with a view to bringing about better conditions, both as regards disposal and regulation of supplies. Any increase in the number of ports of delivery of frozen meat would carry the same advantages to our exports of butter, cheese, frozen rabbits, flax, and other produce." That is in the annual report of 1902.

74. Was that report circulated in the Parliament of the colony?—Yes.

75. Did the Department circulate the report generally in the ordinary way in the colony in addition to that?—Yes.

76. Will you refer to the annual report of 1903? What statement is made there regarding the possibility of trade with the west-coast-of-England service? The paragraph is headed "A Wider British Market wanted"?—Yes, the report states, "Under the previous heading I remarked on the urgent need of increasing the ports of discharge for frozen meat. But this observation does not apply to meat alone; it most vitally affects the dairy-produce business and the export of such important lines as wool, flax, and tallow. It is absolutely necessary that a more extended distribution of New Zealand produce throughout the United Kingdom should be organized as quickly as possible. Facilities should be given for the shipping of products direct from this colony to Liverpool, Bristol, Cardiff, and other British ports outside London. The first step to be taken is to make some arrangements by which shippers will have an opportunity of delivering produce without transshipment at Liverpool, Bristol, and elsewhere. A considerable portion of the time of an official from the London office could be profitably spent in the provincial markets educating merchants and consumers as to the superior quality of New Zealand produce. The progress of the colony is now so directly dependent on the success of the butter, cheese, and meat industries that the Government should lose no opportunity of promoting sales and opening up every available market, more especially in the United Kingdom. Some people may argue that such a course of procedure is unnecessary, as London and provincial merchants are quite alive to the quality and supplies of produce available in New Zealand, but such a contention would assuredly not be voiced by a disinterested person. My suggestion, if acted upon, would supplement the presumed existing knowledge and eliminate the element of chance. The