

will deliver their cargoes at London in an average of forty-two or forty-three days, or in nearly equal time to that taken by the Peninsular and Oriental and Orient Companies' steamers.

While the Victorian butter is all shipped at one port, this company is not only obliged to send its steamers to many ports for cargo, but, in addition, has to pay coastal freight and transshipping charges on a large portion of the butter, these charges averaging together about 12s. per ton. The butter carried by one of our steamers has in some cases been obtained from as many as ten ports.

With reference to your remarks as to the number of loading-ports at which the South African steamers have to call, it may be of interest to state that during the past year the number of ports at which a steamer of this company has loaded in this colony is five, the maximum nine, and the average seven—so that the South African steamers are not at any disadvantage in that respect.

We may say that Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company and this company have entered into contracts with the National Dairy Association of New Zealand to provide a regular fortnightly fast steam service for the carriage of dairy-produce for a period of years, and any proposal which the Government may think fit to make for a reduction in the rate of freight, either by payment of a subsidy equivalent to the reduction required, or in any other manner, will receive the earnest consideration of the directors of this company.

I have, &c.,

ISAAC GIBBS,
General Manager.

The Hon. the Minister of Industries and Commerce, Wellington.

Office of Minister of Industries and Commerce,
Wellington, 8th October, 1903.

SIRS,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, referring to the freights on butter from New Zealand to London, in which you request that the matter be allowed to stand over until the full details of the arrangements recently made by the Victorian Minister for Agriculture with the White Star Line are to hand.

This arrangement was entered into some six weeks ago, and I understand there are no details beyond providing an opportunity of shipping butter from Melbourne to London and Liverpool at a freight of ½d. per pound.

In the last paragraph of your letter you go further than requesting time to obtain the details of the arrangement referred to above, and state that if it is found that shippers take advantage of the White Star service to any extent you will be glad to discuss any proposals which your Government may have to make, &c.; and in the meantime the butter season will be over, and the difference in freight for the coming season, amounting to some £35,000, will be lost to the butter-producers of this colony.

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,
Minister of Industries and Commerce.

Messrs. Levin and Co.,

Agents, Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company (Limited), City.

SIR,—

Wellington, New Zealand, 13th October, 1903.

We have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, in reference to freights on butter from New Zealand to London, and are now in a position to state what has actually taken place in Australia in connection with freight on this article.

Messrs. Dalgety and Co. (Limited), of Melbourne (the agents of the White Star Line), write, "We have at present no contract for the carriage of butter to the United Kingdom, merely having offered to the Victorian Government the steamers, in order that they may place the matter before producers. So far very little result has been achieved. Rate, ½d. per pound."

Mr. J. M. Ritchie, of Dunedin, advises us that Mr. Scott, the secretary of the Dairy Association of the South Island, has addressed him in connection with this matter, and that in reply he has given him such information as he has been able to pick up in Australia. In effect, this was what he ascertained: that owing to some friction the White Star Line had made an offer to the parties who are at present under contract for the carriage of their butter by the mail-steamers, to carry at ½d. instead of the contract price of ¾d. Nothing had come of this offer when Mr. Ritchie left Australia, and the agents of the White Star Line did not expect to get any butter, nor did they consider they were in a position to give the service required by the shippers of the article, as their dates of departure were somewhat uncertain, and at not less intervals than a month; and they now call at Natal as well as the Cape, and may presently visit another South African port, which naturally would result in irregular dates of arrival in London.

Apparently these drawbacks have prevented shippers taking advantage of the proposed service, or, at any rate, so little support has been accorded that we have received cabled advice that the White Star Line has withdrawn their offer.

From the above information you will gather that there has been no undue delay on our part in ascertaining the actual position; but, as matters have turned out, we assume it will not be necessary to go further into the question.

If you should think otherwise we shall be glad to consider any suggestion which you may have to make.

Yours, &c.,

LEVIN AND CO. (LIMITED)

(JOHN DUNCAN, Managing Director).

Agents, Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company (Limited).

The Hon. the Minister of Industries and Commerce, Wellington.

Office of Minister of Industries and Commerce,
Wellington, 16th October, 1903.

SIR,—

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, referring to the matter of freight on butter from New Zealand to London, and giving particulars of the service supplied by the White Star Line, from which I note the maximum length of time occupied in the voyage is fifty-two days, with an average of nearly fifty days.

The fact that all Victorian butter is shipped at one port has little bearing on the present position, because the steamers load at Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, which places the steamers in much the same position as the New Zealand lines.

As I mentioned in my letter of the 29th ultimo, I have no wish to follow up a controversy on this matter, which could be made interminable. What I desire is to see the same rate of freight available to the butter-producers as is enjoyed by their Victorian competitors. Can this be brought about by any reasonable means?

I have, &c.,

J. G. WARD,

Minister of Industries and Commerce.

The Manager, New Zealand Shipping Company, Christchurch.

SIRS,—

Wellington, New Zealand, 22nd October, 1903.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, quoting from a letter received from Messrs. Dalgety and Co. (Limited), of Melbourne, agents for the White Star Line, relating to the reduction in freight on butter in Victoria, and also some observations from Mr. J. M. Ritchie, of Dunedin, on the same subject.