

I am personally most anxious to avoid or mitigate any prejudice to the interests of New Zealand exporters, but, the situation being what it is, I am quite unable to hold out any hope that the withdrawals already made can be cancelled, or that these represent the limit of what will be necessary in this direction.

The Right Hon. W. F. Massey, P.C.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

Sir JOSEPH MACLAY, Controller of Shipping, London, to the Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, London S.W. 1,

DEAR MR. MASSEY,—

3rd April, 1917.

Acting under the instructions of the War Cabinet in concert with those immediately responsible for the provision of imported frozen meat for the Army, it has been found necessary to place in the Plate trade, for one or more voyages, five insulated steamers usually trading to Australasia in addition to the four already intimated to you. By this means it is hoped, within the desired period, to make good the deficit in Army supplies and to restore to a moderately safe figure the reserve in the United Kingdom, which has now fallen dangerously low.

I would again emphasize, in view of the protest made by you on Saturday, on the score of the injury resulting to New Zealand trade from these diversions, how essential is the recognition, in the present tonnage crisis, of the principle that the vital needs of the importing country must in every case be the determining factor in tonnage disposition. The safety of the Army, which in this instance is involved in the observance of the principle, must, as you yourself were the first to admit at the Conference, prevail over all other considerations, and I can only regret, therefore, that there is no alternative to the expedient adopted.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

The Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand, to Sir JOSEPH MACLAY, Controller of Shipping, London.

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,—

Savoy Hotel, London, 5th April, 1917.

I regret exceedingly to learn from your letter of the 3rd instant that it is intended "to place in the Plate trade, for one or more voyages, five steamers usually trading to Australasia, in addition to the four already intimated" to me. In justice to the people of New Zealand I cannot allow this proposal to pass without a most emphatic protest.

May I remind you of what has happened to the New Zealand trade already? At the early stage in the war we lost two of our ships—the "Kaipara" and the "Tokomaru"—whilst another, the name of which I have forgotten, was damaged by fire and, though I understand she was repaired, has not been seen in New Zealand waters since that time. A new ship built for our meat trade, the "Horora," was requisitioned by Australia, and has never yet reached New Zealand. The "Clan McTavish" was sunk by the German raider "Moewe." Quite recently the New Zealand Shipping Company's "Rotorua" was sunk in the English Channel, while the "Otaki," "Port Nicholson," and "Port Adelaide," all New Zealand traders, have been sunk.

I note you say that four of our ships have already been taken to carry meat from the Plate, and now it is intended to take five more. I cannot but help thinking that this will be very good news for the meat trusts, but, I am afraid, very sad news for the patriotic New Zealand settlers, who have, since the outbreak of war, been doing everything that is possible for good citizens to do in the crisis through which the Empire is passing.

I have reason to believe there are two million freight carcasses in the meat-stores of the Dominion, and I cannot think that it is necessary to cause the very serious hardship to a dominion of the Empire which the proposal of the Shipping Board involves in order to keep the United Kingdom and the Army supplied with meat.

I am proud of the fact that New Zealand, in proportion to its population, led the other dominions in the assistance she has been able to render during the war, but I am afraid that what is happening now is a somewhat poor return for her loyalty and enthusiasm. However, it will not affect the loyalty of New Zealand citizens in the very slightest, but they will feel they have been treated with ingratitude if this proposal is persisted in. I am strongly of opinion that very strenuous efforts should be made to avoid the hardship which it is proposed to inflict upon the loyal and deserving citizens of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W. 1.

The Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand, to the Right Hon. W. H. LONG, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

DEAR MR. LONG,—

Savoy Hotel, London W.C. 2, 11th April, 1917.

I am enclosing you herewith a copy of my letter to the Controller of Shipping, dated the 5th instant, with regard to the decision to divert a number of New Zealand insulated ships to the Argentine trade. I might have added to the list of our ships lost the "Tongariro," a large steamer belonging to the New Zealand Shipping Company, which was wrecked off the New Zealand coast last September, and also another large steamer wrecked near Cape Town.