

SHIPPING.

As intimated in my previous report, the arrangements in connection with the shipment of frozen meat between New Zealand and Great Britain were carried out by private contracts between the respective shipping companies engaged in the New Zealand trade and the freezing companies until March, 1915, when the whole of the insulated tonnage in steamers engaged in the Australasian trade was requisitioned by the Imperial Government.

The interests of the various shipping companies in existing contracts with freezing companies disappeared in consequence of the requisition referred to, and so far as insulated space is concerned, the companies were conducted as one concern and all space pooled for allocation to shippers. This allocation has been undertaken by committees appointed in London, Australia, and New Zealand, the New Zealand Committee receiving its directions from the London Committee and acting in co-operation with the Australian Committee.

The personnel of the New Zealand Overseas Shipowners' Committee at present is as follows: Messrs. James Findlay (Chairman) and A. E. Pearce, representing Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company (Limited); Messrs. A. W. Bennett and G. B. Bullock, representing the New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited); Messrs. W. Wallis and R. A. Anderson, representing the Federal Shire Line; Messrs. J. R. Rooper and H. Beauchamp, representing the Cunard Line; and Mr. R. Triggs, representing the New Zealand Government. The Committee meets daily, and the amount of business conducted has been very considerably extended as a result of the requisition of wool, hides, butter, and cheese by the Imperial Government.

The Department is in close co-operation with the Committee in connection with the allocation of space, and furnishes important information regarding the quantities of meat held in store at the various freezing-works, and also the quantities of greasy, slipe, and scoured wool and hides available for shipment from time to time.

LOSS OF SHIPS.

Although the amount of shipping available during the past season has been somewhat less than that for the previous year, the Dominion's requirements in the matter of ships have been fairly well met, and the whole of last season's dairy-produce has been shipped.

In addition very little remains of the frozen meat in store at the close of last season, and only approximately 6,000 bales of wool.

The quantities of meat, cheese, and butter in store on the 31st March, 1916, 1917, and 1918 are given below, and furnish some idea of the increasing difficulties experienced in connection with shipping:—

Date.	Frozen Meat (60lb. Carcases).	Cheese (Crates).	Butter (Boxes).
31st March, 1916	2,152,250	73,927	87,678
31st March, 1917	2,409,541	185,417	224,506
31st March, 1918	3,398,364	363,790	350,315

The following statement, showing the number of insulated steamers which have sailed from the Dominion during the years 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917, and their total carrying-capacity, also furnishes a very clear indication of the universal shortage now being experienced:—

Year.	Number of Steamers.	Total Insulated Capacity: 60lb. Carcases.
1914	99*	8,800,700
1915	84	7,682,000
1916	78	7,322,500
1917	62	5,626,350

* Including eight steamers used as transports for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in October 1914, only a small portion of the insulated capacities of which was available for New Zealand produce.