

Now, that is the position to-day; and, by way of showing how serious it is to us, just let me quote the annual estimated output. The annual estimated output for New Zealand is—Frozen meat, 6,000,000 freight carcasses; cheese, 756,000 crates; butter, 880,000 boxes; wool, 558,000 bales.

So that in the case of several of these articles we have almost a year's production in store to-day in New Zealand. That is our position.

Since the commencement of the war the Imperial Government—using the common term—has purchased the whole of our meat for the period of war and for three months afterwards. It is now purchasing our butter and cheese for the present season, and we have been given to understand that in all probability the butter and cheese will be purchased for the period of the war. On that point I am not able to express a definite opinion. The wool is being purchased for the period of the war and for one season afterwards. Now, that is our position. Those products have been purchased by the Imperial Government on the understanding that they will be taken away from New Zealand. The Imperial Government now controls the shipping. And just let me admit this, that the war comes first every time. If it is necessary for the purposes of the war that our ships should be taken to carry troops from the United States, there is nothing more to be said. But the men experienced in the meat trade have told me that it was not necessary to purchase this huge quantity of meat from the United States—that there was sufficient in sight in the United Kingdom itself, and that the ships could have been provided for the purpose of carrying the balance of the meat necessary from Australia and New Zealand. I make this statement not on my own authority, but as a statement made to me by people in the trade who say they know.

Now, it will easily be seen what a very serious position we are getting into in New Zealand. This is the winter season, but the winter will presently come to an end. We look upon the middle of August as the beginning of spring. With spring there will come the usual supply of meat and dairy-produce, and of all the other things which spring brings along. What is going to happen to New Zealand then, with its stores full, and dependent as we are upon our output of produce for the money required to carry on our share of the war and the business of the country—to keep the whole country going, as a matter of fact? I want you to understand, and I want the members of the Conference to understand, that we are face to face with the most serious difficulty New Zealand has ever experienced up to the present moment.

I want to emphasize the very serious position we are in. I have endeavoured to get satisfaction from the different Departments of the State, but up to the present I have got no satisfaction—absolutely none. I cannot perhaps blame the Ministry of Shipping for the answers which I receive. I know the Ministry of Shipping did everything they possibly could to supply ships to get our produce away last year, and I hope something of the same sort will be done during this season. But the outlook is very much worse this time, from a shipping point of view, than it was at the corresponding period of last year. There is the position, and I have to explain it when I go back to my own country.

But again I say, in the opinion of many people New Zealand is not being treated fairly in connection with this matter, and I think—and I say it advisedly—more should be done to get our produce away. The whole of our output has been purchased by the Imperial Government, and it is impossible to do anything with it in any other direction.

I think you will agree with me that the position as set forth in the foregoing, both from the point of view of the producers in the Dominions and the consumers in Britain, is sufficiently serious to require thorough examination by British Ministers.

Right Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P., London.

Believe me, &c.,
W. F. MASSEY.

P.S.—The following Reuter's telegram from Washington, dated 8th August, was published in the *Times* of the following day:—

"In its report recommending Government acquisition and control of the principal stockyards and cold-storage plants in the country, the United States Trade Commission finds that the power of the five chief packing companies has been unfairly and illegally used to manipulate the live-stock market, to restrict inter-State and international supplies of food, to control the price of dressed meats and other foods, to defraud both producers and food-consumers, to crush effective competition, to secure special privileges from railroads, dockyard companies, and municipalities, and to profiteer. It says that three of the most powerful banking groups in the country are participating in this food monopoly, and names a long list of stockyards throughout the United States, over 60 per cent. of the shares of which belong to this monopolistic group.

"The Commission Report proceeds: 'Out of the mass of information in our hands one fact stands out with all possible emphasis: the small dominant groups of American meat-packers are now international in their activities while remaining American in identity. The blame which now attaches to them for their practices abroad as well as at home inevitably will attach to our country if the practices continue.'

"The Commission says that in addition to the immense properties in the United States the companies, separately or jointly, own or control more than half of the export-meat production of the Argentine, Brazil, Uruguay, besides investments in other meat-producing countries, including Australia and branches in Great Britain, France, Italy, Canada, Denmark, and Paraguay. It adds: 'Under the present shipping conditions, big American packers control more than half the meat on which the Allies are dependent.'—*Reuter*."