

damage on the occasion of one or two mishaps; a fact which led to a revolution in shipbuilding—mild steel being now universally used in the construction of steamers.

FROZEN MEAT TRADE.

No flowery speech is necessary in introducing the subject of an industry which has developed with such extraordinary rapidity, and attained such magnitude, as the export of frozen meat from New Zealand.

This industry, started by the settlers (who themselves formed the original freezing companies) has attained its present dimensions by the aid of private enterprise alone, and to it the splendid fleets of steamers now trading between England and New Zealand may be said in a great measure to owe their existence.

The introduction of meat into the London market in a frozen state can hardly be said to have advanced beyond the experimental stage until 1881, in which year upwards of 17,000 carcasses of frozen mutton were delivered in London from Australia, as well as a limited quantity of beef. Of this quantity only one-third arrived in good condition, another third being described as irregular in condition while the balance was unsatisfactory. No more frozen meat was exported from New Zealand in this year, but in 1882 two shipments were made, comprising a little under 9,000 carcasses, which reached England in good order. In 1883 nearly 130,000 carcasses of mutton and a small quantity of beef were shipped from New Zealand, while only about half as much was shipped from Australia.

The first shipment from New Zealand was made by the New Zealand and Australian Land Company,

In 1880 the *Te Anau*, of the Union Co.'s increasing fleet arrived, and shortly after her came the *Hero*. In succession followed from Messrs. Denny's yard, in 1882, the *Manapouri*, *Mahinapua*, *Wairarapa*, *Omapere*, *Hauroro* and, in 1883, the *Tarawera* and *Waihora*. After the arrival of these steamers, the *Wellington*, *Ladybird* and *Albion* were disposed of. With the idea of developing a remunerative trade with the South Sea Islands, the directors purchased, in 1881, the *Southern Cross*, and speedily replaced her by a larger and better style of boat.

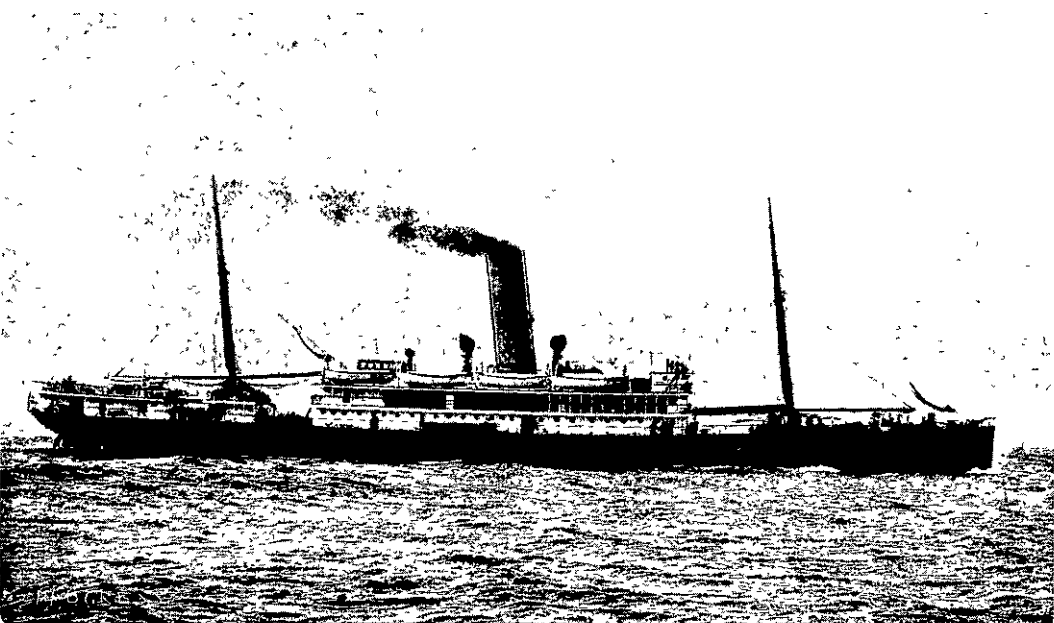
Early in 1881 the Northern Ship Company was formed, its fleet consisting of eight or nine small steamers. The trade of the Company is now confined to the northern portion of the North Island, the coast line of which is studded with fine harbours offering every facility for shipping operations. One of the earliest acquisitions of the Company was the *S.S. Wellington*, purchased from the Union Co., who had employed her in the coastal trade between Auckland and Port Chalmers. Capt. Alex. McGregor was the first managing director, and he was succeeded in 1888 by Mr. Charles Ranson, who still holds the office of manager. Under his management the Company has made great progress, several small companies having been absorbed, new steamers built and the Company's operations extended in various directions. The fleet now comprises 27 steamers, the largest being the *Rarawa*, a vessel of 1100 tons, built at Dundee, and engaged in the service between *Onehunga* and *New Plymouth*. For some years past, a dividend of 7% per annum has been paid; the Co.'s stock being regarded as a very safe investment. The Company enjoys the confidence of merchants and the travelling public and has always taken an exceptional interest in the development of the districts to which it trades.

recently built, bear names that will appeal to many of the early settlers in the colony.

A comparison of the old and new fleets of the New Zealand Shipping Co. :—

1886.				
SAILING SH'PS.				
Hurunui ..	..	..	1012	Tons Reg.
Mataura ..	..	..	863	" "
Opawa ..	..	..	1076	" "
Orari ..	..	..	1011	" "
Otaki ..	..	..	1014	" "
Pareora ..	..	..	879	" "
Piako ..	..	..	1075	" "
Rakaia ..	..	..	1022	" "
Rangitiki ..	..	..	1188	" "
Turakina ..	..	..	1189	" "
Waikato ..	..	..	1021	" "
Waimate ..	..	..	1124	" "
Waimea ..	..	..	848	" "
Waipa ..	..	..	1017	" "
Wairoa ..	..	..	1015	" "
Waitangi ..	..	..	1128	" "
Wanganui ..	..	..	1077	" "
STEAMERS.				
Aorangi ..	..	..	4163	Tons Reg.
Kaikoura ..	..	..	4474	" "
Rimutaka ..	..	..	4473	" "
Ruapehu ..	..	..	4163	" "
Tongariro ..	..	..	4163	" "
			38,985	Tons in 1886

1906.				
Kaikoura ..	6998	Tons Reg.	Twin Screw	
Kaipara ..	7392	" "	Twin Screw	
Orari ..	8000	" "	Twin Screw	
Papanui ..	6582	" "	" "	
Paparoa ..	6563	" "	Twin Screw	
Rakaia ..	5628	" "	" "	
Rimutaka ..	7765	" "	Twin Screw	
Ruapehu ..	7801	" "	Twin Screw	
Tongariro ..	7600	" "	Twin Screw	
Turakina ..	8210	" "	Twin Screw	
Waimate ..	5610	" "	" "	
Wakanui ..	5824	" "	" "	
Whakatane ..	5902	" "	" "	
Building, Twin Screw ..	8000	" "	" "	
			97,875	Tons in 1906.



HUDDART, PARKER AND CO.'S NEW STEAMER RIVERINA, 4,758 TONS, BUILT IN 1905 BY SIR JAMES IAIN AND SONS, SUNDERLAND. Photo supplied by Messrs. Huddart, Parker & Co.

under the auspices of Mr. Brydone, the general manager of the Company, in the *Shaw, Savill Co.*'s ship *Dunedin* from Port Chalmers, the vessel being fitted with a *Bell-Coleman* machine. The success of this shipment gave the signal for the almost simultaneous erection of freezing works in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Napier; and from that time the history of the trade has been one continued advance, with scarcely a check.

At the year ending 30th June, 1906, the frozen-meat export from New Zealand amounted to upwards of 519,867 carcasses of mutton and lamb. The following is a comparative table showing the returns between the export of frozen meat in 1905 and 1906 :—

1905, at 30th June.			
	Cwts.	Value.	£
Frozen Beef ..	15,867	15,475	
Frozen mutton ..	75,865	111,889	
Legs and pieces ..	1,894	2,895	
Frozen lamb ..	70,707	135,602	
1906, at 30th June.			
	Cwts.	Value.	£
Frozen beef ..	41,743	49,977	
Frozen mutton ..	101,074	136,065	
Legs and pieces ..	4,214	5,654	
Frozen lamb ..	96,406	166,114	

Excess in value of frozen-meat export over the year 1905, £81,939.

INAUGURATION OF REGULAR MAIL SERVICE.

In 1883 the New Zealand Shipping Co. instituted a regular steam service to and from London, and the *British King*, 3,559 tons, was specially chartered for the purpose. This, the initial steamer, left London on 25th January of the year mentioned and was followed by the *British Queen*, 3,558 tons. Then the old *Catalonia*, of the *Cunard Line*, followed under the auspices of the Shipping Co., and to give some idea of the cost entailed in providing the colony with a steam service, we should mention that on the first voyage of that steamer her charterers were mulcted in the sum of £25,000—an enormous loss considering the capacity of the "old timers" and the disproportionate dues ruling in their day. The Company, having decided to build steamers of its own, placed an order with John Elder and Co., of Glasgow, for five passenger steamers, but until these were available the Company chartered the *White Star* liners *Ionic*, 4,753 tons, and *Doric*, 4,744 tons, then on the stocks. A regular service was kept running by the above mentioned steamers, until the first of the Company's own steam-ships was ready. This was accomplished by the *ss. Tongariro*, 4,163 tons, arriving in the colony on 11th December, 1883, and being followed by the *Aorangi*, *Ruapehu*, *Rimutaka*, and *Kaikoura*. These steamers are now, however, all out of the present service, (all except one having been sold to other owners) but the directors, recognising the favourable reputations the steamers earned for themselves, have decided to retain the names in the Company, and consequently the steamers now running, although

Early in 1883 the Union S.S. Co. embarked in the Melbourne-Fiji trade, taking over the steamer *Suva*. It was found, however, that a larger and different construction of boat was needed for the requirements of the Island service, and, as trade developed, steamers in every way adapted to the needs of the trade were placed in the service, and at the present day magnificent vessels like the twin-screw *Navua* and *Atua*, and the converted *Manapouri* carry on the trade. The only further addition to the fleet in 1883 was the *Takapuna*. In 1885 the Union Co. added to their fleet the *Ohau*, another *Taupo*, *Tekapo*, and the splendid *Mararoa*. In the same year the Company took over the business and plant of a Wellington Company known as the *Black Diamond Line*, engaged in the carriage of coals from the West Coast of the South Island. This purchase comprised five small steamers—*Mawhera*, *Koranui*, *Grafton*, *Manawatu* and *Maitai*. Shortly afterwards the Company took over from the Westport Company three colliers, the *Wareatea*, *Kawatiri* and *Orowaiti*. In the same year the fleet was increased by the *Kanieri* and *Wainui*. In 1887 the *Pukaki* made her appearance, and in the following year the Company took over from the original owners, the steamers *Brunner*, *Oreti*, and *Maori*. Later on the *Rosamond*, a useful collier still doing good work, was purchased, while in 1889 the fleet was increased by the *Taieri*, late *Carntoul*.

In 1890 the fleet was strengthened by the purchase of the *Dingadee*, *Banks Peninsula*, and *Monowai*.

In 1891 a most important step was taken by the directors in the purchase of the plant and business of the *Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company*. The property acquired comprised eight steamers, the *Talune*, *Oonah*, *Pateena*, *Flinders*, *Mangana*, *Flora*, *Moreton*, and *Corinna*. The fleet was further increased by the *Taviuni*, *Ovalau*, *Rotokino*, *Janet Nicoll* and *Upolu*, the latter a steamer specially built for the development of trade with the South Sea Islands.

Then followed for a short period, an abatement of the extensive building programme which the Union Co. had put into effect since its inception. With the advent of the *Moana* this Co. adopted a new style of ship which has dominated the construction of its modern fleet. Although these new vessels have succeeded one another right up to the time of the turbine-propelled *Maheno*—that acme of perfection in modern steamship construction—