

3. FACTORS AFFECTING THE DESPATCH OF SHIPPING

(a) REDUCTION IN WORKING-HOURS

Prior to the war vessels were worked 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. (midnight to finish) Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. During last year the working-hours were 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (10 p.m. to finish) Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays (5 p.m. to finish). This represents a reduction of approximately 9 hours per week, or 13 per cent., on pre-war working-hours. The reduction in the working of meal-hours has also affected despatch of ships. Prior to the war it was customary to regularly work meal-hours at the large hatches, while to-day meal-hours are only worked to finish a hatch or ship.

(b) RATES OF WORK

(i) OVERSEAS VESSELS

The all-port average rate of loading overseas vessels has shown a further increase during the year and compares favourably with the rate of loading pre-war. The following are rates of work per net gang-hour for loading butter, cheese, and meat :—

Class of Cargo.	Basic Rate offered by Shipowners in Piece-work Proposals, 1938.	Rate, 1945-46.	Rate, 1946-47.
Butter (boxes)	550	673	738
Cheese (crates)	210	253	259
Mutton and lamb (carcases) ..	550	758	794

The all-port average discharging rate for overseas vessels shows a reduction from 12·79 tons per gang per hour to 12·15 tons per gang per hour. This rate is far from satisfactory and there is ample room for an improvement. Apart from the efforts of the men there are other factors affecting the rate of discharge—*e.g.*, congestion of wharf and railway sheds, change in nature of cargo from measurement to weight, &c.

(ii) COASTAL VESSELS

The following are the net rates of work per gang per hour for the past seven years :—

Year.	Union S.S. Co.	Small Coastal.
1940-41 ..	12·49	16·53
1941-42 ..	13·49	16·18
1942-43 ..	13·75	16·37
1943-44 ..	14·29	17·2
1944-45 ..	14·37	17·29
1945-46 ..	13·76	16·71
1946-47 ..	13·63	16·07

The figures show a falling off in the rate of work both for Union Steam Ship Co. and small coastal vessels during the last two years. The results are disappointing, particularly in view of the improvement which has been maintained in the rate of loading overseas ships.