

merchants' stores were closed. The efforts of Cargo Control Committees to deal with this problem considerably reduced the congestion in wharf and railway sheds. The decision of the Government to extend the licensing period to February next year should overcome the problem which existed during the last Christmas holiday period.

10. GOVERNMENT STORE, AUCKLAND

No. 3 Cargo Control Store continued during the year to be operated by the Commission as a Government store for the storage of Government goods. The store was used mainly for the storage of wheat on behalf of the Wheat Committee, for the sorting and storage of tea on behalf of the Food Controller, and as a transit store for the storage of goods for other Government Departments. In addition to the storage of Government cargo, the store was also used for the storage of goods of private consignees to prevent congestion of wharf sheds. Goods for private consignees are only stored when the Commission is satisfied that alternative private storage accommodation is not available.

During the year ended 31st March, 1948, a total of 51,544 tons of cargo was handled in the store, as compared with 28,076 tons for the eight months ended 31st March, 1947. The rate of handling per man-hour for the year ended 31st March, 1948, was 2.94 tons, as against 2.63 tons for the preceding eight months, and the cost per ton handled was 2s. 3.11d. per ton for the current year, as against 1s. 10.75d. for the preceding period.

The increased rate of handling per man-hour is attributed to the purchase of a large quantity of palette-boards and the greater use of fork hoists in the store. When fork hoists were used in the store they have been debited against handling charges at the rate of 10s. per hour, and this has resulted in an increased cost per ton handled and a corresponding greater profit against the hire of mechanical plant. The volume of cargo handled through the store during the year indicates the need for the continuation of its operation for some time to come. The store is operated at a profit and the work has been carried on efficiently by the Commission's store staff at Auckland.

11. ACCOUNTS

(a) GENERAL

No changes took place either in the nature or in the number of the Commission's funds during the year ended 31st March, 1948. The funds operated by the Commission as at 31st March, 1948, were therefore the same as those set out on page 14 of H-45 dated 21st August, 1947. Only one variation occurred in the rates of levies or assessments for the 1947-48 financial year. An increase in levies applied as from 1st December, 1947 (Order No. 37), to all ports still remaining in the Supervision Fund (see Section (g)). The year, however, has been one of great shipping activity, and this is reflected particularly in the two main operating funds—Co-operative Contracts and National Administration. The tendency noted during the first two post-war years for income to recede from the wartime peak during 1943-44 has been so sharply reversed that once again the total income for 1947-48 at £3,431,015 has approached within £153,351 of that peak of £3,584,366. The reasons for this increase are dealt with in Section (d)—Co-operative Contracts Fund. Advantage has been taken of the buoyant position to make additions to the Commission's reserve funds not only for the provision of future guaranteed-wage payments, but also to cover present commitments for watersiders' assembly halls at secondary ports and cafeteria amenities at main ports.

As comparative figures are now available for the present funds of the Commission for consecutive years, the opportunity has been taken this year to include such figures, as well as the usual percentages, in the statements of account. All inter-fund charges such as buildings maintenance levies and national administration levies have been shown under separate expenditure headings so that the effect of such transfers can be readily appreciated.