

had failed and should be abandoned. Before arriving at a final decision in this matter the Government desired to know whether members of the union were in favour of the continuance of Commission control of the waterfront and the benefits resulting therefrom, and if so, whether they were prepared in future to accept and abide by decisions of the Waterfront Industry Authority and to honour the pledges given on behalf of the union. To prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding as to the wishes of its members, the Government suggested that the union take a secret ballot of its members on these matters.

2. DESPATCH OF SHIPPING

It is gratifying to record an improvement under this heading, as it is the principal function of the Commission to ensure the utmost expedition in the discharging and loading of ships. This improvement applies more especially to overseas vessels, the quick turn-round of which is particularly vital not only to the economy of New Zealand, but also to that of Great Britain. Published in the Appendix (page 71) is a table showing the time spent in New Zealand by overseas vessels during the year ended 31st March, 1949, with comparative figures for each year back to 1942 and for the six months ended 30th June, 1941 and 1939. The following are the main points of interest :—

- (a) Number of “all vessels” for 1948–49 at 163 is approximately the same as for 1947–48 (160).
- (b) Number of ports visited by “all vessels” during 1948–49 at 3.50 is approximately the same as for 1947–48 (3.54).

(The similarity of data under the foregoing two headings would appear to indicate that their normal post-war levels have been arrived at.)

- (c) Days on coast for “all vessels” for 1948–49 show a reduction of 3.84 as compared with 1947–48. The improvement is even more marked in the case of vessels loading and discharging. Here the improvement for the year is 4.98 days. As a class these vessels comprise over 60 per cent. of those covered by the return and include all vessels which would normally spend the longest periods on the coast. The real value of the improvement in turn-round time during 1948–49 is increased by the fact that over the past three years there has been a rise of almost 20 per cent. in the average total tonnages of cargo carried per vessel between New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The following are the main factors which at present affect the turn-round of shipping :—

(a) RATES OF WORK

Tables are included in the Appendix (pages 30–51) showing the quantities of cargo handled and the rates of work per net gang-hour for all vessels worked under the co-operative contracting system for the years 1940–48 and for the year ended 31st March, 1949. The Commission's records show that not less than 80 per cent. of the wages paid to waterside workers throughout New Zealand are in respect of cargo handled under the co-operative contracting system. These tables, therefore, can be regarded as a true indication of the general standard of work on the New Zealand waterfronts.

(i) OVERSEAS VESSELS

Increases in the all-ports average rates of work are shown for all classes of cargo loaded except wool, which has remained at the same rate of work as for previous years. The rate of handling mutton and lamb increased from 801 carcasses per gang per net hour in 1947–48 to 829 carcasses for 1948–49. Butter increased from 714 boxes to 722 boxes per net gang-hour. Cheese increased from 260 crates to 271 crates per net gang-hour. Frozen sundries increased from 458 freight carcasses to 476 freight carcasses per net gang-hour. These increases, however, have not applied to all individual ports. At the