

1917.

NEW ZEALAND

MEAT EXPORT.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING *RE*
WITHDRAWAL OF SHIPS, ETC.*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand, to Sir JOSEPH MACLAY, Con-
troller of Shipping, London.

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,—

Savoy Hotel, London W.C. 2, 27th March, 1917.

I have just received a cablegram from the Acting Prime Minister at Wellington informing me that the Board of Trade have diverted to American trade one of the New Zealand Shipping Company's steamers (the "Ruahine"), and one of the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company's steamers (the "Waimana"). Both these vessels are regular New Zealand traders, and had been definitely allotted to New Zealand for May loading. The Acting Prime Minister further states that the withdrawal of these ships from the New Zealand meat trade will have a very serious effect on the already heavily increasing accumulation of meat in the New Zealand stores.

Having regard to the urgent requirements of meat for the Army and Navy, more especially in view of the demand of the Imperial Government for beef, I desire to enter a very strong protest against the action of the Board of Trade, and shall be glad if you will be so good as to give this matter your personal consideration with the object of having the instructions either withdrawn and the vessels placed in the New Zealand trade as originally allocated, or else, if this is not possible, then to substitute two other insulated steamers for the two New Zealand boats above referred to.

The favour of an early reply will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
W. F. MASSEY.

Sir JOSEPH MACLAY, Controller of Shipping, to the Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister
of New Zealand.

Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, London S.W.,

DEAR MR. MASSEY,—

29th March, 1917.

I have to acknowledge your letter of the 27th instant. When you called upon me on the 16th February you expressed apprehension as to the effects on New Zealand interests if tonnage were withdrawn from the trade, and both then and subsequently, on the two occasions when I have asked Sir Kenneth Anderson and Sir Lionel Fletcher to call upon you for that purpose, the gravity of the conditions making necessary the transfer of steamers from the more distant to the more adjacent sources of supply, in order to augment our essential imports, has been explained to you. Whilst you deplored the necessity, I had not understood that you demurred to measures which in the view of the Government are imperatively necessary.

What has been done has, I do assure you, been done because the national safety requires it. An adequate food-supply is a matter of life and death for our people, and as against this no consideration of commercial detriment can for a moment be weighed.

The withdrawals of the "Ruahine" and "Waimana," as well as others of later date, both from the New Zealand and Australian trades, have been made at the instance or with the full concurrence of the Board of Trade, which is the authority responsible for supplies of meat to the Navy and Army. They have, in fact, therefore been made to safeguard the very object which has avowedly prompted your protest.