

Dominion, had entered into a contract with the Imperial Board of Trade for the sale of the whole of the meat-output in New Zealand during the war period. The Dominion producers have fulfilled their side of the contract to the very letter. They have been exceedingly energetic in their endeavours to produce as much meat as possible, thinking it was urgently required for the Army and civilian population, and naturally assuming that as the meat was produced and placed in the freezing-stores ships would be provided for taking it away.

I would point out that the meat is not paid for until it is placed on board ship, and that the Imperial Government pay for its storage until shipment takes place. I have no doubt whatever that the cost of storage of this year's meat, which, as I have said, is a charge on the Imperial funds, will run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds, so that I think you will see it is not only a matter of equity and fair treatment to the citizens of New Zealand, but both countries are financially interested in getting the meat out of the stores and on board ship as soon as it is possible to do so. From the telegrams which I am receiving I am confident that a bitter feeling is being created in New Zealand by what is taking place in connection with this matter, and many references are already being made to the proverbial "scrap of paper."

Yours faithfully,

W. F. MASSEY.

The Right Hon. Walter H. Long, Colonial Office, Downing Street, S.W. 1.

The Right Hon. W. H. LONG, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,—

Downing Street, 19th April, 1917.

I have just received your letter with regard to the meat question. Believe me, I most deeply sympathize with the very great and serious hardships with which New Zealand is faced over this matter—hardships which, as you know, we all most deeply deplore after all the sacrifices which the Dominion made in the cause of the Empire.

Before receiving your letter I had already written to the Shipping Controller pressing him to do all in his power to find a few ships for New Zealand, and in my letter I represented to him most fully the arguments which you put forward in your letter. I only hope that my efforts may meet with success, and as soon as I hear from the Shipping Controller I will at once write to you again.

I am telegraphing again to Australia, and sending a copy of your letter about meat to Shipping Controller.

Sincerely yours,

WALTER H. LONG.

SIR JOSEPH MACLAY, Controller of Shipping, London, 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,—

23rd April, 1917.

Many thanks for sending me copies of the two telegrams received from the Acting Prime Minister, though I was already fully alive to the acute character of the trouble cast upon your people by the needs of the war.

I am afraid there is no hope of any decisive relief in the near future, but we have done, are doing, and shall continue to do all we possibly can, subject to the needs and emergencies of the war, to relieve the situation. In evidence of this I may say that we are trying to arrange for the despatch of three steamers in ballast to Australia next month, and at present there are no further diversions in contemplation.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

The Right Hon. W. F. Massey, Prime Minister's Office, Savoy Hotel, W.C.

The Right Hon. W. H. LONG, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to the Right Hon. W. F. MASSEY Prime Minister of New Zealand.

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,—

Downing Street, 24th April, 1917.

I have gone most thoroughly into the shipping question with the Shipping Controller, and I am satisfied that the present position with regard to food is so critical that the only possible policy is to get the necessary food and corn here as speedily as possible. This is the justification for the preference we give to the South American meat-supplies, on account of the quicker voyages, which mean doubling the amount of imports with the same amount of shipping.

It is really a question whether the food-supply of the Army at the front is to be imperilled. If our men are not to go short of food it is absolutely essential that food-supplies should be obtained, whether they can be brought to this country or to France, by the shortest possible voyages, in order to put to the best use the remaining ships, which, as you know, are not nearly sufficient for our requirements. May I make a suggestion that you should point out to the New Zealand people that this is really the case? If it were frankly explained to them that the sacrifice they are called upon to make is in the interest of their men at the front I feel confident that the present position will be cheerfully accepted, like every other sacrifice that they have been called upon to bear.