

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

DEAR MR. LONG,—

Savoy Hotel, London, 11th May, 1917.

I enclose herewith copy of a telegram which I have received from the Acting Prime Minister at Wellington, dated the 8th instant, which shows the position regarding meat, cheese, and butter in store in the Dominion at the present time. The figures are official, and show clearly the seriousness of the position in New Zealand, and the urgent necessity which exists for providing further tonnage.

I may say that I have brought the matter under the notice of the Shipping Controller, and I shall be very gratified if you will be so kind as to do anything you can to co-operate in the direction of affording some measure of relief to New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

W. F. MASSEY.

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

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. 1,

14th May, 1917.

DEAR MR. MASSEY,—

With reference to your letter of the 2nd instant, enclosing copy of telegram in which the New Zealand Government complains that first priority cargo awaiting shipment from New Zealand is passed over in favour of Australian cargo, I am happy to be able to say that your wishes have already been anticipated, in so far that the Australasian Refrigerated Tonnage Committee have by cable already laid down the principle that Australian first and second priority cargo may be shipped in vessels proceeding to New Zealand provided sufficient space is left for New Zealand.

To make assurance doubly sure, however, I am asking the Committee to send a further message emphasizing this point: that New Zealand first and second priority cargo must rateably receive the same reservation of space in ships proceeding via Australia as Australian cargo of similar grade.

Attached is verbatim extract from Committee's minutes dated Friday, the 4th May.

With reference to your letter of the 9th instant, enclosing copy of cable, dated the 8th instant, as to the acute congestion in meat-stores, I only wish I could hold out any substantial prospect of relief. The plain fact is that the situation in regard to the supply of tonnage must get worse before it gets better, and that further inroads must immediately be made on the fleets trading to Australasia in order to provide for imperative national needs nearer home. These steps are taken with the greatest possible regret and reluctance, and I should like to pay my tribute to the unrelenting eloquence and force with which you have kept before us the hardships resulting to New Zealand, and the appreciation which we all feel here for the invaluable information with which you have always kept us furnished.

If anything could heighten our sense of the services which New Zealand has rendered to the common cause it would be the cheerful readiness with which they have acquiesced in these further sacrifices.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

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