

"Sussex": Struck mine and beached; understand being repaired in United Kingdom.

One trip—August, 1914.

"Durham":

One trip—9th September, 1916.

"Roscommon":

One trip—8th September, 1916.

"Leitrim":

One trip—25th April, 1917.

"Limerick":

One trip—18th January, 1916.

All Federal and Shire steamers are interchangeable Australian New Zealand trade; no special steamers being apportioned either service. General practice has been to load steamer in country where completes discharge, and all the above, except Australian transports, have loaded in New Zealand from time to time since the commencement of the war.

STEAMERS WHICH HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FROM AUSTRALIA TO NEW ZEALAND FOR ONE VOYAGE EACH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

1915.	1916.	1917.
"La Blanca" .. August.	"Afric" .. May.	"Port Kembla" .. January.
"Cufic" .. September.	"Borda" .. "	"Palma" .. March.
"Carpentaria" .. "	"Carpentaria" .. "	"Port Alma" .. February.
"Clan Mactavish" .. "	"Leitrim" .. August.	"Middlesex" .. March.
"Dorset" .. October.	"Roscommon" .. September.	"Ceramic" .. "
"Port Albany" .. "	"Dorset" .. May.	"Leitrim" .. April.

To remedy the difficulties in regard to the ships as shown by that statement I have handed to the Committee, I would make the following suggestions, which were fully considered and approved of by the Farmers' Union Conference. They are as follows:—

1. That this conference strongly protests against the apportionment of shipping-space for ewe and lamb mutton, particularly to Wellington exporters, and demands that the Government should see to it that it should be apportioned equitably according to the amount of produce awaiting shipment from each shipping-port. We consider that this can only be satisfactorily carried out by the appointment of an individual or a committee answerable only to the New Zealand Government, and who is not associated with either the meat or shipping industry.

2. It is advisable that the shipping should be controlled in the United Kingdom by a shipping controller answerable only to the Imperial Government, who should be kept supplied by the New Zealand Government with data regarding the produce in store in New Zealand to enable him to estimate what shipping is required at this end.

3. All the shipping companies trading to New Zealand and plying for freight and passenger traffic should be declared by statute law to be common carriers.

4. That the Commercial Trusts Act of 1910 and its amendments should be made applicable to shipping. This Act prohibits the giving of secret commissions or creating any monopoly.

5. That immediate steps should be taken by the Government of New Zealand, either alone or in conjunction with the farmers and mercantile firms of the Dominion, to acquire sufficient ships to relieve the serious shortage of shipping for both intercolonial and Home trade, and at the same time to be a controlling factor in settling the freight rates to be charged; and, if necessary, to compulsorily acquire some of the New Zealand trading-ships that have been or are being sold to outside companies.

6. Strong representations should be made to the Imperial authorities to provide a legislative enactment that will forbid the granting of secret commissions and rebates on freight and the creation of shipping monopolies in England; in other words, to adopt our Commercial Trusts Act as it stands to-day, with shipping included.

7. That the Government of New Zealand should at once communicate and endeavour to arrange for the Imperial Government's consent to discontinue the system of nomination at this end provided for in connection with the sale of meat to the Imperial authorities, as it is mainly beneficial to such firms as work in conjunction with the meat trusts.

8. That a committee or an individual answerable only to the Imperial Government, and in no way associated with any firm or company engaged in the buying and selling of meat, should be appointed to control the handling of the surplus meat in England: and, further, that this committee or individual should arrange that any meat not required for Army or Navy purposes is sold in the United Kingdom through channels which are known not to be associated with the Meat Trust, for sale to consumers at the actual cost, plus all proper charges and reasonable allowances.

9. That the Government of New Zealand should take immediate steps to communicate direct to Mr. Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the above suggestions so far as they affect the Imperial authorities, asking for his and his Government's assistance in having effect given to the resolutions of this conference, as this conference feels that very grave injustices are being done, to the detriment of the English consumers and of the Empire and its Allies in the present great national struggle.

10. That as the producers have supplied their meat at less than the market value, and as the present arrangement is playing into the hands of the trust operators through the prompt payments which they are making, and as some of our ships have been, necessarily or otherwise, diverted from the New Zealand trade, this conference urges that it would be a fair arrangement and in the public interest that payment should be made on the hooks by the Government.

In addition, I would also make the freezing companies in New Zealand subject to the Commercial Trusts Act, in order to stop secret commissions or concessions being granted to the trust or large buyers, as is done by quite a number of the works throughout New Zealand. In fact, the trust buyers practically demanded that a concession be granted them. The law should provide that no freezing-works should give a concession to any one of its clients unless it is granted to them all. Also, as I have previously suggested, all buyers and exporters of meat other than *bona fide* farmers should receive a license from the Government permitting them to buy and export meat, reserving an absolute and untrammelled power to refuse to grant a license to any person where it is ascertained or known that he is acting directly or indirectly for any of the firms who may be classified as the Meat Trust. Careful power should be exercised to have these licenses reviewed or cancelled at any time should evidence be forthcoming during their currency that they are operating for or dealing with the trust. It is a question to be considered whether the Government should not provide some legislative provision for the gazetting of the names of firms who are prohibited from time to time dealing with our New Zealand produce, and necessarily the license would have to be issued with the distinct condition that the holder was barred from doing business with any firms that are prohibited from time to time.

For the information of the Committee, I attach a copy of a prior letter signed by Mr. James Findlay, as chairman of the New Zealand Overseas Shipowners Committee, dated 3rd May, 1917, and addressed to the Hon. Minister, W. D. S. MacDonald, Minister in Charge, which I referred