

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will be so good as to give this matter your personal consideration with the object of having the instructions either withdrawn and the vessels placed in the New Zealand trade as originally allocated, or else, if this is not possible, then to substitute two other insulated steamers for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upon me on the 16th February you expressed apprehension as to the effects on New Zealand interests if tonnage were withdrawn from the trade, and both then and subsequently, on the two occasions when I have asked Sir Kenneth Anderson and Sir Lionel Fletcher to call upon you for that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.

I am personally most anxious to avoid or mitigate any prejudice to the interests of New Zealand exporters, but, the situation being what it is, I am quite unable to hold out any hope that the withdrawals already made can be cancelled, or that these represent the limit of what will be necessary in this direction.

The Right Hon. W. F. Massey, P.C.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

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,

DEAR MR. MASSEY,—

3rd April, 1917.

Acting under the instructions of the War Cabinet in concert with those immediately responsible for the provision of imported frozen meat for the Army, it has been found necessary to place in the Plate trade, for one or more voyages, five insulated steamers usually trading to Australasia in addition to the four already intimated to you. By this means it is hoped, within the desired period, to make good the deficit in Army supplies and to restore to a moderately safe figure the reserve in the United Kingdom, which has now fallen dangerously low.

I would again emphasize, in view of the protest made by you on Saturday, on the score of the injury resulting to New Zealand trade from these diversions, how essential is the recognition, in the present tonnage crisis, of the principle that the vital needs of the importing country must in every case be the determining factor in tonnage disposition. The safety of the Army, which in this instance is involved in the observance of the principle, must, as you yourself were the first to admit at the Conference, prevail over all other considerations, and I can only regret, therefore, that there is no alternative to the expedient adopted.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

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

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,—

Savoy Hotel, London, 5th April, 1917.

I regret exceedingly to learn from your letter of the 3rd instant that it is intended "to place in the Plate trade, for one or more voyages, five steamers usually trading to Australasia, in addition to the four already intimated" to me. In justice to the people of New Zealand I cannot allow this proposal to pass without a most emphatic protest.

May I remind you of what has happened to the New Zealand trade already? At the early stage in the war we lost two of our ships—the "Kaipara" and the "Tokomaru"—whilst another, the name of which I have forgotten, was damaged by fire and, though I understand she was repaired, has not been seen in New Zealand waters since that time. A new ship built for our meat trade, the "Horora," was requisitioned by Australia, and has never yet reached New Zealand. The "Clan McTavish" was sunk by the German raider "Moewe." Quite recently the New Zealand Shipping Company's "Rotorua" was sunk in the English Channel, while the "Otaki," "Port Nicholson," and "Port Adelaide," all New Zealand traders, have been sunk.

I note you say that four of our ships have already been taken to carry meat from the Plate, and now it is intended to take five more. I cannot but help thinking that this will be very good news for the meat trusts, but, I am afraid, very sad news for the patriotic New Zealand settlers, who have, since the outbreak of war, been doing everything that is possible for good citizens to do in the crisis through which the Empire is passing.

I have reason to believe there are two million freight carcasses in the meat-stores of the Dominion, and I cannot think that it is necessary to cause the very serious hardship to a dominion of the Empire which the proposal of the Shipping Board involves in order to keep the United Kingdom and the Army supplied with meat.

I am proud of the fact that New Zealand, in proportion to its population, led the other dominions in the assistance she has been able to render during the war, but I am afraid that what is happening now is a somewhat poor return for her loyalty and enthusiasm. However, it will not affect the loyalty of New Zealand citizens in the very slightest, but they will feel they have been treated with ingratitude if this proposal is persisted in. I am strongly of opinion that very strenuous efforts should be made to avoid the hardship which it is proposed to inflict upon the loyal and deserving citizens of New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,

W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W. 1.

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

DEAR MR. LONG,—

Savoy Hotel, London W.C. 2, 11th April, 1917.

I am enclosing you herewith a copy of my letter to the Controller of Shipping, dated the 5th instant, with regard to the decision to divert a number of New Zealand insulated ships to the Argentine trade. I might have added to the list of our ships lost the "Tongariro," a large steamer belonging to the New Zealand Shipping Company, which was wrecked off the New Zealand coast last September, and also another large steamer wrecked near Cape Town.

It appears to me that a very important point in connection with this unfair treatment which New Zealand is receiving in this matter is the fact that the Imperial Government has requisitioned the whole of the New Zealand output of frozen meat until the end of the war, and by this decision the New Zealand producers have loyally abided. If adequate facilities are not provided by the Imperial Government for bringing the meat away the citizens of the Dominion will naturally consider that what is tantamount to a breach of faith is being committed.

The telegram from the New Zealand Government which I mentioned in the course of our conversation yesterday as having just been received did not refer specifically to the shipping question, although it dealt with another phase of the meat position.

I am, &c.,

W. F. MASSEY.

The Right Hon. Walter H. Long, Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Downing Street, S.W. 1.

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,—

April, 1917.

I have your letter of the 5th instant. However formidable the results of these diversions to the people of New Zealand, I cannot conceive of them holding the Government guilty of ingratitude because it has been compelled to take the only steps which would adequately secure the Army's meat-supply. I really cannot add more than my sincere regret for the necessity.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

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

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

DEAR Sir JOSEPH,—

Savoy Hotel, London, 17th April, 1917.

With reference to your letter in reply to mine of the 5th instant, and to our previous correspondence in connection with the diversion of New Zealand insulated steamers to the Argentine meat trade, I desire to enclose copies of two telegrams which I have received within the last few days from the Acting Prime Minister, Wellington, and the General Manager of the New Zealand Dairy Association respectively. These telegrams will bear out what I have already indicated to you as to the acute position which is arising in New Zealand.

I am in communication with the Board of Trade with regard to the financial difficulty which has arisen. You will, however, observe that the Acting Prime Minister states there are now over two million carcasses of meat in store, and this large quantity is likely to be still further increased in the near future.

As you are aware, the Imperial Government has requisitioned the whole of the output of frozen meat until the end of the war, and the people of New Zealand have loyally abided by their side of the bargain. I desire again to stress the importance of the position, and to express the earnest hope that it may yet be possible to take such action as will, at any rate, lessen the serious dislocation which is being caused to New Zealand's frozen-meat industry.

Yours sincerely,

W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Controller of Shipping.

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

DEAR MR. MASSEY,—

Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W., 18th April, 1917.

I am favoured with your letter of the 17th instant. I regret extremely that we cannot do all you desire, and which we would wish, for New Zealand, but within the next day or two we shall have matters again gone into carefully to see if the position cannot in any way be improved. I think you will appreciate the difficulties under which we labour here at present, and the increase in losses gives us the utmost anxiety in our efforts to satisfy as far as possible the needs of all. No effort is being spared here in that direction.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. MACLAY.

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

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

DEAR MR. LONG,—

Savoy Hotel, London, 19th April, 1917.

I desire to thank you for your kind assistance in regard to shipping and other matters in which New Zealand is particularly concerned.

I shall be glad if you will be so good as to communicate with the Controller of Shipping and point out to him that the New Zealand Government, on behalf of the producers in the

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.

I most fully realize that the present policy, to which we have been driven, against our will, by the submarine campaign, entails very considerable financial embarrassment to the New Zealand exporters, but, as you know, I shall be most glad to do my best to obtain a money grant in advance to meet that embarrassment, so far as this may be practicable.

I am glad to hear from the Shipping Controller that, apart from emergencies, there is no immediate prospect of any further diversions from the trade between this country and Australasia, and that it is in contemplation next month to despatch three steamers in ballast from this side. This is to the good so far, but I fear that it is impossible to hold out hopes that any really decisive relief in the near future can be given. You can, however, rest assured that anything which can be done in this direction shall be done, consistently with what the successful prosecution of the war demands—more it is impossible to say, and I know that you would not wish me to say.

Very sincerely yours,
WALTER H. LONG.

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

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,— Savoy Hotel, London, 27th April, 1917.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 23rd instant, from which I note that you say you "are trying to arrange for the despatch of three steamers in ballast to Australia next month, and that at present there are no further diversions in contemplation." I venture to inquire whether the use of the word "Australia" may not be a clerical error. Sending the three steamers to Australia would be very poor consolation under the existing circumstances to New Zealand. If these steamers are really intended for Australia they can only be intended to carry wheat, as I am informed that the supply of Australia meat is exhausted.

Will you kindly inform me whether all or any of the three steamers referred to in your letter are to be sent to New Zealand for the purpose of lifting a portion of the already very large quantities that are daily accumulating in store in the Dominion, and also for bringing away a portion of the Dominion's dairy-produce to England where these foodstuffs are so urgently required?

Yours sincerely,
W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Controller of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W.

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

DEAR MR. MASSEY,— Ministry of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W., 30th April, 1917.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 27th instant.

The three ships in question will, as stated, be despatched to Australia to take on board there, in their uninsulated spaces, "priority" cargo. They will thence proceed to New Zealand to fill the balance of these spaces with "priority" cargo, and their entire insulated spaces with refrigerated cargo. This, I am told by those responsible for maintaining the supply, is the present programme, subject to any necessary modification.

I am glad to hear the coal strike has been settled; this threatened to prove a fatal obstacle to maintaining the supply of tonnage to New Zealand.

Yours sincerely,
J. P. MACLAY.

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

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

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,— Savoy Hotel, London, 2nd May, 1917.

With reference to our interview on Monday, I now have pleasure in enclosing you herewith copy of the telegram which I have received from the Acting Prime Minister at Wellington, dated the 28th ultimo, and which you will recollect I read to you.

You will see that complaint is made by the New Zealand Government that first priority cargo awaiting shipment in New Zealand is passed over in favour of Australian cargo. I shall be glad if the Ministry of Shipping will be so good as to meet the wishes of the New Zealand Government in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Controller of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W.

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

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,— Savoy Hotel, London, 9th May, 1917.

I enclose herewith further telegram which I have just received from the Acting Prime Minister at Wellington, showing the position regarding meat, cheese, and butter in store in the Dominion at the present time. I think the figures contained in the telegram will show clearly the seriousness of the position in New Zealand, and the urgent necessity that exists for providing further tonnage.

I bring this information under your notice with the earnest hope that the Ministry of Shipping will do their utmost to provide some measure of relief.

I am, &c.,
W. F. MASSEY.

Sir Joseph Maclay, Controller of Shipping, St. James's Park, S.W.

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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