

consumable commodities to the approximate value of £36,000 were not needed. When the Armistice was signed the Department was committed to incomplete contracts of the value of £145,000. These commitments were cancelled at a total cost by way of compensation amounting to £112, and by taking over from contractors goods useful to the military authorities to the value of £32,000. A surplus stock of consumable goods to the value of £9,588 was disposed of at a net loss on cost of £2,772, goods to the value of £7,854 being disposed of by the Department direct to buyers at a net loss on cost of £2,012, and goods to the value of £1,724 out of £3,766 put up for auction in response to numerous requests being sold, resulting in a loss on cost of £760.

The total cost of administration to the country of the Munitions and Supplies Department has been approximately £18,000, being an average annual cost of £5,000, a very economical expenditure for the services rendered. This expenditure covers cost of Military Supplies Purchase Branch, Priority Permit Branch, Coal Control, Petrol Control, and that branch which dealt with the allocation of inward-shipping space.

That the work of the Department met with the approval of the various business communities throughout the Dominion with which it was brought into contact is expressed by the many letters of appreciation that were received at the time the Department's activities were concluded, and the following resolution, which was passed by the Association of New Zealand Chambers of Commerce, is also indicative of the businesslike methods adopted by the Department throughout its existence:—

“In view of the announcement recently made by the Hon. A. M. Myers, Minister in Charge of Munitions and Supplies, concerning his Department and the retirement of Messrs. Kirkcaldie and Morrison, after their honorary connection with the office, the executive of the Association of New Zealand Chambers of Commerce gathers that the operations of the Department will shortly terminate, and therefore desires to take an opportunity of placing on record its appreciation of the excellent work done by the Minister and his honorary Board (Messrs. A. H. Miles, Alexander Macintosh, and George Wilson), who have so ably assisted him during the last three years. The activities of the Department in connection with priority permits, coal, petrol, and shipping control, and purchases of supplies have brought the Board into contact with the commercial community represented by this association, and it is hoped that this resolution, at the termination of their labours, will be a source of gratification to the Minister and to the Board associated with him. The executive of the Associated Chambers also recognizes that the departmental work in the hands of Mr. A. M. Adams, Chief Executive Officer, has been organized and conducted by commendable methods under which prompt and efficient attention has been consistently rendered with advantage to the whole commercial community.”

In conclusion, it is desired to take this last opportunity of placing on record the high appreciation of the excellent work performed by those who were associated with the Minister in Charge of the Department, and especially those who gave their services gratuitously through patriotic motives and whose names are appended below:—

Munitions and Supplies Board: A. H. Miles, Esq., O.B.E. (Chairman), Alexander Macintosh, Esq., and George Wilson, Esq.
 Sidney Kirkcaldie, Esq., and J. L. Morrison, Esq. (soft-goods experts).
 James Marchbanks, Esq. (engineer).
 W. H. Morton, Esq. (engineer).
 M. P. Cameron, Esq. (hardware-buyer).
 A. W. Blair, Esq. (solicitor).

PRIORITY PERMITS.

The tightening of export restrictions by the authorities in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, India, and Australia made it exceedingly difficult to obtain practically any commodities without first having the order certified to by the Minister in Charge and the degree of priority distinguished.

On the signing of the Armistice New Zealand was by no means favourably situated for many lines, such as hosiery-needles, pig iron, wire rope, &c. However, with the cessation of hostilities, restrictions on export greatly relaxed, and many lines were transferred from the prohibited lists to free lists.

The position at the moment is that there is now no further need for the certification of orders, and manufacturers are at liberty to proceed without priority permits. In advising the position the High Commissioner in his cablegram stated as follows:—

“I am desirous to convey to you a very cordial expression of Mr. Churchill's thanks for the most valuable assistance rendered by the Department and its Advisers. May I be permitted to add that the success which has resulted from our efforts was largely due to the highly efficient manner in which matters were conducted from your end. The volume of work has been enormous, and many difficult situations have frequently arisen, thereby greatly retarding my activities. Please accept my assurance that no effort has been spared to safeguard New Zealand's interests.”

It is interesting to note that during the time the permit procedure was in force 9,118 applications were dealt with, covering orders to the value of £4,553,049. In dealing with this large volume of work it is desired to acknowledge the great assistance that has been rendered by the High Commissioner's Office, together with that of my honorary advisers, Messrs. James Marchbanks (engineer) and W. H. Morton (engineer).