

This hope has been realized in so far as the provision for the carriage of general cargo has been concerned, and the number of steamers recently available have been sufficient to make a most satisfactory clearance of the congestion which had previously existed throughout practically every port in the Dominion.

The same relief, unfortunately, was not forthcoming in the case of refrigerated cargo, and the congestion in respect to frozen meat has been very severely felt.

The main factor causing the shortage of insulated tonnage is referred to in the reply from the High Commissioner to one of the very many cablegrams despatched on the subject:—

*Cablegram sent to High Commissioner, dated 20th February, 1919.*

Insulated tonnage: Position of freezing industry is becoming very serious owing shortness of shipping facilities. A number of freezing-works are already closing down, and there is a large quantity of stock available, which must suffer deterioration unless it can be properly treated. Please make urgent representations to Shipping Controller to provide additional insulated tonnage at earliest date possible and telegraph reply. Would also appreciate a forecast of tonnage to be made available for loading in the Dominion during April, May, and June.

*Cablegram received from High Commissioner, dated 25th February, 1919.*

Insulated tonnage: With reference to your telegram 20th February, have made representations to Ministry of Shipping, and am verbally informed that programme given my telegram 18th January remains unaltered, and that space mentioned will be available, but that delay occurring owing to labour troubles and epidemics. Same causes prevent reliable forecast tonnage likely to be made available for months mentioned. I am informed that up to end April sixteen insulated steamers will be diverted to Australasian trade.

It is fully anticipated, in view of the statement in the latter message to the effect that the programme outlined in January last remains unaltered and that the space mentioned will become available, the position will steadily improve, and the quantity of meat in the various stores throughout the Dominion be so reduced by the end of the year as to permit of killings next season proceeding without serious interruption.

On the 15th February, 1919, the release of liners from requisition by the Ministry of Shipping commenced, and vessels became entitled to release on the first occasion after midnight on that date on which they had completed discharge of a cargo in any Home port.

The release of any such vessel to an owner was made subject to his prior notification of the acceptance of the terms and conditions for the release of vessels under requisition, and it was provided by the Ministry of Shipping that the release did not in any way impair the powers of the Government to continue or reimpose the requisition should the national interests require the adoption of such a course.

In addition, the Government control over the insulated space in vessels on their homeward voyages was continued in effect until terminated by three months' notice, and as regards vessels in the Australasian and South American trades the insulated space will continue to be allotted according to the instructions of His Majesty's Government.

The New Zealand Overseas Shipowners' Committee, which has been responsible for the allocation of space in steamers loading in the Dominion since the requisition of steamers commenced, has met regularly during the past year, and the personnel of the Committee is as follows: Messrs. James Findlay (Chairman) and A. E. Pearce, representing Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company (Limited); Messrs. A. W. Bennett and G. B. Bullock, representing the New Zealand Shipping Company (Limited); Messrs. W. Wallis and R. A. Anderson, representing the Federal Shire Line; Messrs. J. R. Roper and H. Beauchamp, representing the Cunard Line; and Mr. R. Triggs, representing the New Zealand Government.

This Committee meets daily, and although at times the number of ships available for allocation has not been great the amount of business conducted has been very considerable, and every endeavour has been made to allocate the space available according to the requirements of the various districts.

The Department is in close co-operation with this Committee, and furnishes the information regarding the quantities of meat held in store at the various freezing-works, and the quantities of greasy, sripe, and scoured wool available for shipment, on the basis of which the allocations are undertaken.