

49. Are they for the New Zealand trade exclusively?—Yes. At present we have nineteen available, and we ought to get delivery of the other before the end of the year. Twenty steamers, at two voyages a year, give a capacity of 3,786,000 carcasses.

50. That is making no allowance for butter?—No; I can give you an approximate deduction for that item afterwards.

51. Your estimate relates to meat?—Yes. The New Zealand Shipping Company have eighteen steamers, including four building, two of which they believe they will have before the end of the year, and two early in the next season. At two voyages a year that gives a total capacity in the case of that company of 3,316,000 freight carcasses.

52. Are the steamers of that company also exclusively trading to New Zealand?—Yes. Shaw-Savill and New Zealand Shipping Companies are in the New Zealand trade exclusively. Then we come to the Cunard Line, which trades with New Zealand and Australia as well; and I think we might estimate that for next year they can deal with about 2,413,000 carcasses for New Zealand. The Federal Line, of course, serves Australia and New Zealand, and it is a little difficult to say how much will be for New Zealand, but we might put it down at 2,000,000. In all, I should estimate the freight capabilities for New Zealand at 11,515,000 carcasses. We have to make the deduction for dairy-produce off that space.

53. How many boats are there in the Federal Line?—It would not be much assistance, but the number would be eighteen.

54. And how many in the Cunard Line?—Twenty-four.

55. That is for Australia and New Zealand?—Yes, the total fleet for 1921. For the dairy-produce my estimate is equivalent to 1,550,000 freight carcasses, which would leave approximate space for 10,000,000 freight carcasses of frozen meat.

56. How many freight carcasses did you lift last year?—I am afraid you have me rather unprepared, but, speaking from memory, I should say about 7,000,000.

57. And the year before?—I do not remember at the moment, but think about 5,000,000 freight carcasses.

58. What were you lifting in 1914, before the war?—It was a varying quantity, but it would be from 5,500,000 to 6,000,000.

59. *Mr. Field.*] There is a general impression in the public mind that the shipping companies are combining to keep up the rates of freight: have you any statement to make on that subject?—Do you refer to meat freights, or to general-cargo freights?

60. To all the increased freights generally?—So far as meat freights are concerned, and butter and cheese freights, they are fixed by the Imperial Government, which has requisitioned the space. The general-cargo rates are fixed by the shipping companies themselves. It is perfectly true that we do meet in conference, and agree to the general-cargo rates for a season.

61. Then there is something in the suggestion that there is no real competition amongst the companies?—There is keen competition individually amongst companies to get as much cargo as they can. We certainly do agree season by season what rates of freight are going to be charged; but as to an agreement to keep rates unnecessarily high to that extent the general public is wrong, and it is extremely ignorant as to the relative rates charged in other parts of the world.

62. You say that the Imperial Government are fixing the rate of freight on meat: does not that only last during the commandeering?—To the 30th April next; after which date it will be a matter of arrangement between the shipping companies and the freezing companies and dairy associations.

63. Are there likely to be any other shipping companies coming into the New Zealand trade, from Japan and elsewhere?—There does not seem room for them. I have no knowledge of other companies coming into the trade other than those already trading here now.

64. You have not heard of any Japanese ships coming here?—No.

65. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] Do you think the enormous increases in freights are warranted by the increased costs?—Undoubtedly.

66. How do you account for the enormous profits the shipping companies are supposed to have been making?—"Supposed to have been making": that is just the point. There is no doubt that very large profits were made by shipping companies, but not those trading to New Zealand. The ordinary tramp steamer which traded where it liked, and was not under Imperial Government control, made very large freights. They could go where the best freights were ruling, but we were limited to New Zealand. Like the New Zealand farmer, we were not allowed a free market for our tonnage, which was requisitioned at very moderate rates. We could have obtained higher rates elsewhere than were obtained from New Zealand.

67. Do you consider an increase of from 500 to 700 per cent. was justified on the pre-war times?—I do not know of any 500 to 700 per cent. increase.

68. That is what was charged on coal from America?—From America, yes—that may be so; but I have nothing to do with America myself. The rate of freight on coal from America to New Zealand was the extremely moderate one of £2 5s. per ton.

69. I suppose that the same rate of increase was charged from the Old Country?—No; higher rates were charged from America than from England. That I know.

70. Did not freights go up from £1 10s. to £10 a ton, and was that not an enormous rise?—I do not think they went up as high as that from Home.

71. *Mr. Lysnar.*] Take tallow—was that not a big freight?—Yes; a big freight was asked on that Home, but many shippers shipped Home via America at higher rates.

72. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] Was there not a big freight both ways on most things?—Yes. But take tallow, the freight on which is £9 15s. per ton: that is by weight, but it is represented in measurement in a steamer's hold, which is the way we must look at it, all the general-cargo rates being at present designed to return approximately £6 a ton. Hemp is carried at £15 per ton weight, which is equivalent to a bare £6 a ton measurement.

73. What would it cost to send oats to London by the ton?—I have not the rate by me, but I think it is £10 10s.

74. I have sent them Home for £1 5s. in the old days, and even not so very long ago?—In pre-war days, perhaps.