

advised as to the other rates at the end of July they stated that butter and cheese rates would follow, but we have not been advised of them yet. The previous rates were 5s. 4d. per box and 1½d. per pound. I cannot say what they are to-day.

92. *Mr. Powdrell.*] Are these the rates fixed for the new season's produce?—Presumably they will last over the new season while requisition continues in regard to insulated space.

93. *Mr. Masters.*] Which ends in March?—The 30th April; but one can never say, in view of the position with the Imperial Government and the aftermath of war, that these rates are fixed beyond the point "until further notice."

94. *Mr. Powdrell.*] The boats are requisitioned until the end of April?—Yes.

95. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] What prospects are there of full cargoes back from eastern North American ports through the Panama Canal to New Zealand?—For some of the companies that have got loading-rights in that trade the prospects of back loading are good. Some companies have no difficulty now in getting cargo; others may have a difficulty. As far as the New Zealand trade is concerned, there have been fair opportunities of bringing steamers back from America to New Zealand and Australia.

96. Are there full cargoes going to those ports?—No; but some wool may go.

97. Is that cargo one which warrants a reasonable rate of freight from New Zealand to eastern American ports?—I do not know whether we could get a full general cargo from this side for America, excepting, perhaps, in the wool season. I think the boats would have to go on to London, or the bulk of them.

98. With reference to that clause in the bills of lading fixed up by the London Tonnage Committee as to the storage difficulties, and as to the consignees having to take delivery from the ships as fast as the latter can discharge, are the shipping companies determined to insist on that arrangement?—Yes; if the storage is not available the ships will land the cargo. There is no other recourse than to do so, although it might not be stored under cover. As far as I am aware, the clause will be adhered to by the shipping companies.

99. You are aware, of course, that that clause places shippers from this country in a very invidious position as compared with the way the business has been done in the Old Country previously?—It does; but the conditions are very abnormal. The same clause is inserted in the Australian bills of lading. I asked a prominent shipping man from Australia only yesterday if he had heard of any objections to the clause there, and he said "No," and that people were prepared to ship under it.

100. *Mr. Masters.*] They do not appear to have much option if you stick rigidly to the clause, do they?—I do not think they have; but I maintain that it is a reasonable clause under the circumstances. If you were shipowners, in view of the conditions obtaining in London, you would do exactly the same thing.

101. *Mr. J. R. Hamilton.*] Do you not think the circumstances of the shipping company and the shipper are identical?—We are much bound up in the prosperity of the Dominion, which has made us; but it must be remembered we have also helped to make the Dominion. It is a mutual benefit, but in this case we must protect ourselves. If this clause were dispensed with the alternative would be to charge a higher rate of freight; or another alternative would be to insert in the bills of lading that if the vessel were detained and made a store-ship of demurrage should be charged, and so-much money paid and spread over all the contents of the ship, which might involve hardship on other than wool-shippers.

102. Would it not be better to force the people affected to take the goods out of the ship at the other end?—I maintain we have not got the authority.

103. Why not get it?—We cannot get it. Why do you not yourselves communicate with the Imperial Government, and ask it to make rules forcing consignees to take their goods out of store? The Imperial Government has more power than shipowners, as you can readily understand.

104. *The Chairman.*] Might there not be another alternative—for the New Zealand Government to make provision for storage here until the oversea shipping companies become more reasonable?—That is quite another alternative; but I cannot agree that we are unreasonable.

105. Probably we cannot agree on that point; but, still, it may arise?—Supposing it did, what is the suggestion, sir?

106. The suggestion would be that the Government should come to the help of the producer in preventing him being forced to accept a position which he would probably find was a very unfair one?—Is that considered to be a suggestion that would bring the unfortunate shipping companies to their knees?

107. No; that may be the alternative?—In that case I suggest the Imperial Government would ship their own wool.

108. Yes? It might not be a bad thing for the New Zealand exporter to have his wool kept back until the Imperial stuff was cleared away. If the private wool were not forthcoming, the Imperial Government would come forward with its own wool then.

109. *Mr. Lysnar.*] Is the extra percentage on the freights a sort of corollary to the demurrage the Imperial authorities put on in connection with meat and other produce?—I do not think so.

110. Were you not allowed demurrage?—I do not know. The requisition agreement entered into with the Imperial Government of March, 1919, set out that no demurrage would be paid in the event of steamers being delayed in the United Kingdom. It also had a clause stating that after the first six months the demurrage question might be reopened. What has been done in that respect—whether there has been any recent demurrage or not—I do not know.

111. Do not the bills of lading provide for an allowance of 6d. a ton for demurrage?—The whole bill of lading?

112. For meat?—I do not think so. I would not deny it; but I merely state I do not remember such a bill-of-lading condition.

113. Will you turn up one and have a look at it?—Certainly; but I do not think they contain that clause. I will send a copy, and it can be put before the Committee.

114. *Hon. Mr. Nosworthy.*] Is the system of rebates being made illegal in the United States?—I have no knowledge of that matter.