

While both companies and the union are anxious to cancel Sunday and holiday work, the Commission is of the opinion that during the present urgent need for coal and timber vessels carrying these commodities should continue to work extended hours.

(c) CO-OPERATIVE CONTRACTING

Summarized below is a statement showing value and tonnages handled under contract during the last two years, and total to 31st March, 1946 :—

Year.		Number of Contracts.	Value.	Tonnage.
1944-45	3,658	£ 1,794,446	4,632,131
1945-46	3,738	1,801,713	4,638,912
1940-46	17,956	8,953,180	22,643,279

It will be seen that the total value and tonnage of contracts have increased during the year, and the total value of contracts handled to 31st March, 1946, was nearly £9,000,000, comprising over 22,000,000 tons of cargo.

(i) RATES OF WORK

Overseas Vessels.—The overall rate of loading overseas vessels increased slightly during the year and is also above the cumulative average for years 1940-45. The rate of handling wool increased from 78 bales for the five-year period to 82 bales this year. Butter increased from 659 boxes to 673 boxes, and cheese from 245 crates to 253 crates. Mutton and lamb decreased from 767 carcasses to 758 carcasses, but was higher than last year's average of 749 carcasses. The rate of discharging overseas cargo was 12·79 tons per hour, as against 12·39 tons for five year period 1940-45 and 12·98 last year.

Vessels of Union Steam Ship Co. (of New Zealand), Ltd.—The rate of handling general cargo shows a slight drop from 13·96 tons per hour for the five-year period 1940-45 to 13·76 tons this year. The rate last year was 14·37 tons, so the rate this year shows a drop of over $\frac{1}{2}$ ton per hour, which is mainly due to a reduction in the rate of work at Auckland, which fell from 12·45 tons per hour to 11·29 tons per hour.

Small Coastal Vessels.—The general cargo rate has shown a reduction to 16·71 tons per hour compared with the average of 16·83 for five-year period 1940-45 and 17·29 for year ended 31st March, 1945.

(ii) COSTS OF CARGO HANDLING

Full details of the cost of handling cargo under the co-operative contracting system have been recorded since 1st April, 1943. Due to increase in wages by $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hour as from 1st April, 1945, and increase in contract rates by $10\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. (except loading coal at Westport and Greymouth— $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.) it has been necessary to increase the cost figures for years 1943-45 by the addition of $10\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. ($8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loading coal at Westport and Greymouth) where such increase is applicable.

Tables have been prepared summarizing the stevedoring costs for the various cargoes for each class of contract covering the year ended 31st March, 1946, with comparative figures for years ended 31st March, 1944 and 1945 (corrected by addition of $10\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. or $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. where applicable), and showing the average corrected cost for the three-year period.