

1. INTRODUCTION

DURING the year ended 31st March, 1947, two changes were made in the constitution of the Commission. In the first instance the Waterfront Control Commission, which comprised three full-time Commissioners and which had operated since April, 1940, and had rendered most useful service in that capacity, was replaced on 1st July, 1946, by the Waterfront Industry Commission of five members. The Government's decision to reconstitute the Commission with two members representing the employees, two representing the employers, and an independent chairman was made following an intimation by one member of the Commission that he wished to resign and following a number of requests by employers and workers for a reconstruction of the Commission along these lines. Assurances were given by representatives both of employers and workers that they would operate as a Commission in the best interests of the industry, but, unfortunately, this did not prove to be the case.

In December, 1946, there was a concerted refusal to work overtime as a protest against the decision of the Chairman of the Commission regarding guaranteed wage payments to waterside workers. Following a meeting of the Commission held in January, 1947, to discuss this dispute, the Chairman (Mr. Justice Ongley), with the concurrence of the other members of the Commission, reported that the Commission was unable to find even a basis of discussion of the dispute, that it could not make any decision, and was unable to function as a Commission. Because of the Commission's failure to function, the Chairman tendered his resignation, which was received with great regret, as he had given very valuable service in a most difficult position, and a second change was made in the Commission's constitution. Regulations were gazetted declaring vacant the offices held by members of the Commission and providing for the appointment of a sole Commissioner as an interim measure. Mr. A. E. Bockett, General Manager of the Commission, was appointed as sole Commissioner pending some agreement being reached between employers and employees and the Government as to the future of Commission control of the industry. Discussions on this matter are still taking place.

2. TURN ROUND OF OVERSEAS AND COASTAL SHIPPING

(a) OVERSEAS VESSELS

Published in the Appendix (page 70) is a table showing the time spent on the New Zealand coast by overseas vessels each year from 1939 to March, 1947. Vessels which discharged and loaded spent an average of 52 days on the coast for the year 1946-47, compared with an average of 42 days spent on the coast in 1939, while vessels which loaded only spent an average of 26 days on the coast for the year 1946-47, compared with an average of 27 days spent on the coast in 1939.

(b) COASTAL VESSELS

Coastal vessels are taking longer to turn round to-day than pre-war. An examination of voyage reports of vessels engaged in the east coast trade shows that these vessels during the year ending 31st December, 1946, took approximately twice the time for the round trip than taken during the year ending 31st December, 1939. There was, however, a 50 per cent. increase in the average tonnage of cargo handled per trip. This increase was not sufficient to offset the additional time taken in turn round, and the total tonnage handled by these vessels during the year showed a reduction of 34 per cent. on 1939 figures.