

(c) CONGESTION OF WHARF AND RAILWAY SHEDS—SHORTAGE OF RAILWAY TRUCKS

An important factor affecting the discharge of overseas vessels and the loading and discharging of coastal ships is the congestion which has occurred in wharf and railway sheds mainly brought about through the handling of cargo on the wharves being carried on for approximately fifty-nine hours per week while delivery from wharf and railway sheds to merchants' stores is only effected on an average of forty hours per week.

During the war years Cargo Control Committees operated under the Cargo Control Emergency Regulations 1942, and these Committees performed a very useful service in directing merchants to take delivery of goods in overtime hours in order to prevent congestion of sheds. These regulations were revoked in July, 1946, and it may be necessary to either reintroduce the regulations or to give the Commission sufficient power under the Waterfront Industry Emergency Regulations to deal with the matter.

Delays to shipping are frequently brought about through shortage of railway trucks, and it is not uncommon at railway ports for labour to be sent home while ships remain idle because discharging or loading operations cannot be carried on until sufficient trucks are made available. The Railways Department has placed orders overseas for additional trucks, and as these come to hand the position will improve.

(d) SHORTAGES OF LABOUR

The centralization of overseas shipping at Auckland and Wellington and the transhipment of South Island cargo from these ports have frequently resulted in shortages of labour. Steps have been taken to increase the union membership at the main ports, but there will still be occasions during rush periods of shipping when sufficient labour will not be available. The increased union strength should, however, result in a considerable reduction in delays through labour shortages.

Every endeavour is made to obtain non-union labour, but due to the employment position in the country only a limited number of non-unionists are available.

(e) TONNAGES HANDLED PER VESSEL

The saving in space through telescoping of meat has resulted in larger quantities of freezer cargo being loaded to overseas vessels than pre-war. There is also a larger number of vessels arriving to-day in ballast for loading only, and it appears that the average tonnage of cargo discharged from overseas vessels is greater to-day than was discharged prior to the war.

While coastal vessels are taking much longer to turn round, the average tonnage per round trip is considerably greater than previously carried.

(f) DISPUTES INVOLVING STOPPAGES OF WORK

Published in the Appendix (page 71) is a table summarizing the man-hours lost through stoppages of work on the waterfront during the period of Commission control and for the four-year period 1937 to 1940 prior to Commission control.

During the year ended 31st March, 1947, the percentage of man-hours lost through disputes involving stoppages of work was 2.64 per cent., as against an average of 0.51 per cent. for the preceding six years. This substantial increase was due to two major disputes. The first dispute involving a loss of approximately 29,000 man-hours affected only the port of Auckland, where a stoppage of work occurred on account of priority being given by the Commission to the discharge of cement on the vessel "Herekino." An additional loss of approximately 250,000 man-hours involving all ports was brought about through action being taken by the union to restrict work to a five-day forty-hour