

week as a protest against decision of the Chairman of the Commission regarding guaranteed wage payments. This dispute covered a period of approximately seven weeks and resulted in serious delay to overseas and coastal ships and an accumulation of cargoes at all main ports.

#### (g) SHIP REPAIRS AND ANNUAL SURVEYS

During the war years, in order to keep vessels in commission, major overhauls were deferred, and during 1946 annual surveys of coastal shipping occupied considerably more time than the average taken prior to the war. Breakdown of winches and shore cranes were also more frequent in 1946 due to the round-the-clock working of ships during the war. This position should be remedied within the next twelve months.

#### (h) SPELLING

It has been the practice for some years at main ports for men employed in refrigerated chambers to work hour-about. This practice has spread to general cargo vessels, and the extension is no doubt due to the long hours of work performed by waterside workers at main ports during the war years. While the Commission considers that reasonable rest periods should be allowed to workers, the systematic spelling now in operation cannot be justified. Discussions are taking place between the Commission, the union, and the employers with a view to obtaining the co-operation of all parties to eliminate unreasonable spelling and introduce reasonable rest or "smoke-oh" periods. The provision of modern canteens on the waterfront at the various ports will materially help in the elimination of the spelling abuse.

#### (i) CENTRALIZATION OF OVERSEAS SHIPPING AT MAIN PORTS

The centralization of overseas shipping at main ports from an average of six ports per vessel pre-war as against an average of three ports last year has resulted in a quicker turn round of overseas ships. It should be appreciated, however, that with the cancellation of shift and Sunday work the majority of steaming-time between ports takes place outside working-hours. Further, when a vessel loads completely at one port men employed are inclined to become tired after working continually in the freezer for a fortnight or more eleven hours per day, Mondays to Fridays inclusive, and four hours on Saturday.

### 4. CO-OPERATIVE CONTRACTING

#### (a) VALUE OF CONTRACTS AND TONNAGES HANDLED

Summarized below is a statement showing value and tonnages handled under contract during the last two years, and total to 31st March, 1947 :—

Year.	Number of Contracts.	Value.	Tonnage.
		£	
1945-46 .. .. .	3,738	1,801,713	4,638,912
1946-47 .. .. .	3,717	1,811,214	4,818,915
1940-47 .. .. .	21,674	10,764,967	27,462,194

The total value of contracts during the year 1946-47 is approximately £10,000 greater than the preceding year, while the tonnage handled has increased by approximately 180,000 tons. The reduction in tonnage cost is due to the less amount of overtime worked during the year. The total value of contracts handled up to the 31st March, 1947, was approximately £10,750,000, comprising approximately 27,500,000 tons of cargo.