

It will be noted that, for Union Steam Ship Co. vessels, Auckland is the only port which shows a rate of work below the all-port average; and that, but for the extremely low rate of work at Auckland, the New Zealand average for this class of vessel would be greater by several tons per net gang-hour. Steady improvements in rates of work are recorded at most other ports, but more particularly at the ports of Dunedin, Napier, and Timaru.

(b) OVERLOADING OF PORT FACILITIES

During the calendar year ended 31st December, 1947, a total of 8,412,000 tons of cargo was handled at New Zealand ports, which was 729,000 tons greater than the previous year. There has been a further increase of 201,000 tons during the year ended 31st December, 1948, making a total of 8,613,000 tons. This shows an increase of 930,000 tons over the year 1946 and an increase of 448,000 over the 1938 year.

The increases in berthage space and shed accommodation, particularly at the Port of Auckland, have been insufficient to meet the large increase in cargo handled and this has resulted in the overloading of port facilities and railway services. The shortage of berthage space at the Port of Auckland has been one of the factors responsible for vessels lying idle in the stream. While full use cannot be made of Export Wharf until grit-arresters have been installed in the King's Wharf Power-station, the use of Waikato coal has enabled a number of vessels to load freezer cargo at that wharf.

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

Cargo Control Committees are performing a very useful service in preventing, as far as possible, congestion of wharf and railway goods-sheds. There have still been occasions during the year when vessels could not be worked with the maximum number of gangs due to congestion of wharf and railway goods-sheds and to the shortage of railway wagons. Additional railway wagons are due to arrive from overseas, and the position will improve as these come to hand. The use of lorries to take delivery of bulk phosphate cargoes has been of considerable assistance.

(d) INCREASE IN TONNAGES HANDLED PER VESSEL

The increase in the size of new overseas ships has resulted in the handling of greater inward and outward tonnages per vessel trading to the United Kingdom. The average tonnages handled (discharged and loaded) per vessel has increased from 14,485 tons in calendar year 1946 to 17,285 tons for calendar year 1948.

While the telescoping of meat introduced at the beginning of the war has resulted in the saving of 30 per cent. freezer space and has enabled greater tonnages of freezer cargo to be shipped in each vessel, investigations are now being made as to the practicability of reverting to the shipping of full carcasses. The Meat Board is anxious that this should be done at the earliest possible date in order to maintain overseas New Zealand's good name for meat, and in view of the fact that other meat-exporting countries will be discontinuing telescoping in the near future.

While coastal vessels are taking much longer to turn-round to-day, they are handling approximately 50 per cent. more cargo per round trip than was handled in 1939. This increased tonnage per round trip is not, however, sufficient to offset the additional time taken in turn-round.

(e) REDUCTION IN WORKING-HOURS

Prior to the establishment of the Commission in April, 1940, working-hours on the waterfront were: Mondays to Fridays, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. (less two meal-hour breaks) and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (less one meal-hour break). This was a possible total of 68 hours made up of 44 ordinary hours (including 4 hours Saturday morning paid at time and one-quarter) and 24 overtime hours for each week that a vessel worked at a port.