

1920.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

SEA CARRIAGE.

INTERIM REPORT

(DATED 13TH MAY, 1920).

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INTERIM REPORT.

The Select Committee appointed on 15th April, 1920, to inquire into and report upon—

- (1) The organization and control of Inter-State shipping ;
- (2) Oversea shipping in relation to Australian products for oversea markets and imports generally ;
- (3) Methods to improve mail cargo and passenger service with oversea countries,

have the honour to submit the following Interim Report :—

In view of the evidence given before your Committee, which establishes beyond question the facts that, owing to shortage of shipping on the Australian coast—

- (1) Considerable quantities of wheat are awaiting carriage from South Australia and Victoria to New South Wales and Queensland to provide flour for the people of these States ;
- (2) For some considerable time householders in Victoria and other States have not been able to obtain coal, and that at present only very limited supplies are available ;
- (3) There is an alarming shortage of coal throughout Australia for railways and other public utilities, as well as for manufacturing purposes ;
- (4) Enormous quantities of chaff and other produce are awaiting shipment at South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania for New South Wales and Queensland, which are urgently required for the purpose of feeding the starving stock in the drought-stricken areas ;
- (5) There are large accumulations of general cargo, including fruit and other perishable products, at various Inter-State ports for shipment to other States amounting to thousands of tons ;
- (6) Vast accumulations of timber are banked up at Western Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland, which is urgently required in other States ;
- (7) At least fifteen additional steamers could be fully employed on the coast, and twenty steamers usefully employed—

your Committee urge the Commonwealth Government to immediately make such arrangements as will permit of the most suitable Commonwealth Government Line vessels—in numbers sufficient to meet requirements—being employed in the coastal trade whilst the necessity for their utilization in that service continues.

W. J. McWILLIAMS,
Chairman.

13th May, 1920.