

## AUSTRALIAN SHIPPING.—CARGO MOVEMENT, 1923-24 TO 1927-28.

Year.	Oversea Cargo.		Interstate Cargo.
	Discharged.	Shipped.	Shipped.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
1923-24 .. .. .	4,377,171	4,981,521	6,358,191
1924-25 .. .. .	4,696,112	6,498,098	6,413,975
1925-26 .. .. .	5,342,621	5,169,407	5,735,973
1926-27 .. .. .	5,955,212	5,246,141	6,796,156
1927-28 .. .. .	5,889,127	4,686,306	6,225,088

More detailed information regarding the volume of trade at each of the principal ports is contained in Transport and Communication Bulletin No. 20 issued by this Bureau.

### § 7. Commonwealth Government Shipping and Shipbuilding Activities.

1. **Local Building Programme.**—The original Commonwealth Government programme of ship construction in Australia provided for 48 vessels, 24 of which were to be wooden sailing vessels, and the remainder steel cargo ships. Owing to certain variations the programme resulted in the building of 21 steel cargo vessels and 2 five-masted schooners with auxiliary power.

Particulars of the vessels built in Australia to 31st December, 1922, were included in a previous issue of this book (see Year Book Nos. 16, p. 273 and 17, p. 269).

2. **Vessels Built in the United Kingdom.**—In addition to the vessels previously referred to, five steamers each approximately 8,450 tons net were constructed in yards in the United Kingdom.

These vessels each have an approximate length of 520 feet by 68 feet beam, and a capacity of 900,000 cubic feet, of which 370,000 cubic feet are insulated.

3. **Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers.**—(i) *Foundation of Line.* The Commonwealth Shipping Act 1923 provided for the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers under the control of a Board of Directors consisting of not less than three nor more than five members. The date at which the Act was to come into force was fixed by proclamation as 1st September, 1923.

The whole of the right, title, and interest of the Commonwealth in and to the 50 vessels (155,302 tons net) of the Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers, and appurtenances used for the purposes of such vessels, was vested in the Board, also four other vessels (15,442 tons net) which were under construction at the time of transfer. The valuation of the vessels, tackle, apparel, gear, furniture, stores and equipment was fixed at £4,718,150, office furniture and fittings at £7,500, and stores on hand £23,700, making a total of £4,749,350.

The balance-sheet of the Commonwealth Shipping Board, covering the activities of the Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers and the Cockatoo Island Dockyard to the 31st March, 1928, shows liabilities to the total of £6,944,025 and assets £4,437,242. The operations for the five years 1923 to 1928 show an accumulated loss of £2,506,783, the loss on operations for 1927-28 being £584,377.

(ii) *Disposal of Line.* At the end of the year 1927, the only vessels owned by the Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers were as follows (net tonnage in parentheses):—*Largs Bay* (8,432), *Jervis Bay* (8,423), *Moreton Bay* (8,420), *Esperance Bay* (8,415), and *Hobson's Bay* (8,413) all one-class passenger-carrying steamers, and the freighters *Fordsdale* (5,661) and *Ferndale* (5,656); a total net tonnage of 53,420 tons.

Following an investigation by the Parliamentary Joint Committee of Public Accounts into the operations of the Commonwealth Shipping Board, it was decided to dispose of the remaining vessels of the line, and tenders for their purchase were called in January, 1928. Three tenders were submitted, and that on behalf of the White Star Line, £1,900,000, was accepted, and the sale effected in April, 1928. The contract of sale provided, *inter alia*, that the purchaser was to maintain a service equivalent to that provided under the management of the Commonwealth Shipping Board and also to maintain an efficient Australian organization.