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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEPHONE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 26, 1955

SUBJECT: Meat Shipments from New Zealand to the USSR

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Albert Benjamin, New York, (Bowling Green 9-5780)

Mr. Thomas Beale, Officer in Charge, U.K. and
Ireland Affairs, BNA

COPIES TO: BNA* Mr. Kavanaugh
Embassy Wellington

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Mr. Benjamin, who is an importer in New York, telephoned to complain about shipments of meat (boneless bull and ewe mutton) from New Zealand to the USSR. Mr. Benjamin alleges that the New Zealand meat trade had refused to ship him meat while at the same time shipping to the Soviet Union. Mr. Benjamin explained that he had been assured by the Campbell Soup Company they would take meat if he could obtain it from New Zealand.

Mr. Benjamin said that he objected to the fact that New Zealand was dealing with the Soviet Union. He also said that he considered such action a violation of the Trade Agreement Act. When I pressed him for information as to how the action of New Zealand violated any agreement with the United States he said that he did not know specifically but he felt quite certain that there was such a violation.

Mr. Benjamin said that he had discussed the subject of the New Zealand shipment to the USSR with Mr. Woodward of the New Zealand Embassy. According to Mr. Benjamin Mr. Woodward was not familiar with the facts of the case. I told Mr. Benjamin that I would inquire into the subject.

On May 3 Mr. Benjamin called again on the same matter. He did not refer again to the question of violation of any agreement between the United States and New Zealand; instead, he read from an article which he said had appeared in the New York Herald Tribune on March 24. The article in question

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reported that shipments of ewe mutton were being made to the USSR. I asked Mr. Benjamin whether it was not a fact that the type of meat being taken by the USSR was of a very low quality. He said that any statement to that effect was a lie. I told Mr. Benjamin that I had talked with Mr. Woodward of the New Zealand Embassy but that he had not yet heard from his Government. After further conversation with Mr. Benjamin, during which he indicated that he might find it necessary to take the problem up with members of Congress, I told him we would inquire of our representatives in New Zealand concerning the facts of the case.

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Central File: Decimal File 461.445, International Trade And Commerce. Trade Relations, Treaties, Agreements. Customs Administration., Trade Between Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics And New Zealand, Import Tariff. Import Duty., April 26, 1955. 26 Apr. 1955. MS Commercial and Trade Relations Between Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union and the U.S., 1910-1963: RG 59, State Department, Central Files, Commercial Relations (411.61 and 461.11), United States-Soviet Union, 1950-1963. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5106461425/GDSC?u=camb55135&sid=bookmark-GDSC&pg=1. Accessed 1 May 2024.