

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF **COMMERCE**

Federal Maritime Board Maritime Administration

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MARITIME UNDERTAKES
TWO INVESTIGATIONS

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The Federal Maritime Board has acted to initiate an investigation into terminal practices in Atlantic and Gulf Ports of the United States affecting the oceanborne trade and commerce of the Nation, it was announced today by Clarence G. Morse, Board Chairman.

This investigation (Docket 816) has been undertaken in response to requests to the Federal Maritime Board from numerous port interests who urged that the Federal Maritime Board look into the reasonableness and lawfulness of charges and practices of Atlantic and Gulf terminal operators.

Among other things, the Board will examine the feasibility of rules designed to prescribe uniform definitions and application of terminal services and charges.

The Federal Maritime Board will attempt to determine whether the regulations and practices of terminal operators, including their charges, are just and reasonable within the meaning of the various shipping acts and statutes. In particular the Board will examine practices governing dockage, wharfage, free time and wharf demurrage, and the handling of cargoes on the piers, and will inquire into agreements entered into by terminal operators and others to determine their compliance with the law and regulations that seek to assure that all American shippers and port interests shall receive just and fair treatment.

All persons in the Atlantic and Gulf port areas carrying on the business of furnishing wharfage, dock, warehouse or other terminal facilities in connection with a common carrier by water have been named as subject to the investigation, including railroad pier operators.

In a completely separate action, the Federal Maritime Board also moved to investigate the status of express companies, truck lines and others who purport to be common carriers by water but who do not control the means by which such water transportation is effected.

In the inquiry into the matter of express companies, truck companies, and others who offer services to shippers that call for overseas shipments, the Federal

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Maritime Board took action (Docket 815) in view of the growing number of companies who have been claiming status as common carriers by water. This status has been claimed on the basis of recent decisions of the Board requiring that such carriers file tariffs and otherwise comply with the Shipping Act, 1916.

The Board's investigation will center upon van lines and express companies who offer to carry goods overseas, although such companies do not own or operate ships. In some cases, they enter into agreements with water carriers for the overseas movement. These agreements enable these non-vessel owning carriers to obtain ocean transportation at charges and conditions different from those accorded to the ordinary shippers, generally on the basis that both carriers are common carriers by water who are dividing a through rate. Docket 815 is aimed at clarification of the status of such companies and their agreements.

All non-vessel owning carriers who have filed a schedule of freight rates with the Board and all parties to agreements to move freight overseas for such carriers have been made subject to the investigation.

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