

## XI. SHIPPING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The N.Z.G.M.V. "Maui Pomare" has continued to ply in the Cook Islands trade, but again the limited cargo space available proved inadequate for the needs of the Group. The year 1945 more nearly approached being a normal orange year, and it was arranged for s.s. "Waipahi" to make a special round trip to all islands to uplift the oranges available in excess of the capacity of the "Maui Pomare."

From April, 1945, to January, 1946, calls for cargoes were made by overseas vessels as follows :—

	Niue.	Rarotonga.	Outer Islands, Lower Cook Group.
"Maui Pomare" ..	5	9	4
"Matua" ..	3	..	..
"Yoho Park" ..	..	1	..
"Waipahi" ..	..	1	1

The "Maui Pomare" was withdrawn for annual refit and survey late in January, 1946, and Rarotonga and Niue then had no further service until April. From then to the end of June, 1946, it has been possible to arrange two calls of south-bound trans-Pacific vessels at Rarotonga, in addition to the service of the "Maui Pomare." During the present (1946) Cook Islands orange season, while the "Maui Pomare" has been filled to capacity, the Union Steam Ship Co., Ltd., have arranged calls of the "Matua" to Niue, as in 1945, although the islands on that vessel's regular itinerary could have supplied her with full cargoes.

Owing to storms during January of 1946 when orange-trees were in blossom, citrus cargoes for the current season are small. Replantings now being made, however, show concrete promise of reaching and probably exceeding the goal set, which is the 93,000 case per season average of the years 1938-40. This, with other products, will provide both encouragement and need for better shipping. The "Maui Pomare" was invaluable during the war years when no other vessel could be spared to maintain a service to the Cook Islands, but a more up-to-date and faster ship with greater capacity and ability to maintain a more frequent schedule is now required. The problem is complicated by the seasonal nature of the trade—a large cargo capacity is requisite during the orange season to uplift all oranges for the New Zealand market, while between orange seasons the Group is not able to furnish paying cargoes of other fruit or produce. During a recent visit to the Cook Islands by Mr. A. G. Osborne, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, he was able to announce that inquiries were being made in London for a vessel of considerably larger size than the "Maui Pomare" and with better facilities for cargo handling than those of this vessel, which are limited by her two hatches.

The "Maui Pomare" now operates completely free of engine troubles, though other repairs consume much time, and unsuitability of design accentuates the losses in serving these distant and widely separated islands. Yet it should be recorded that the "Maui Pomare" is providing for some of New Zealand's island dependencies a service that without her would have been much less satisfactory. Passengers and cargoes carried by the "Maui Pomare" during 1945 were :—

### Passengers—

To and from New Zealand ..	..	..	399
Inter-island ..	..	..	127

### Cargo—

Copra ..	..	..	1,081 tons.
Bananas ..	..	..	12,347 cases.
Parcel mails (baskets and other plaited ware) ..	..	..	1,527 bags.
Citrus fruits ..	..	..	43,459 cases.
Tomatoes ..	..	..	29,266 boxes.
General ..	..	..	4,854 tons.