

SHIPPING SERVICE: M.V. "MAUI POMARE."

DESPITE the troubles and difficulties experienced in this new trade the performance of the "Maui Pomare" over the year has demonstrated that she is capable of giving good and useful service in the carriage of fruit from the islands to New Zealand, and justifies the opinion of the Technical Advisory Committee as set out in Parliamentary Paper A.—3, 1929.

The "disabilities and obscure and doubtful features" referred to by the Committee were given a good deal of attention during the year. Some have been overcome and defects remedied, but certain inherent weaknesses in design remain.

Since the extensive overhaul given the vessel's engines in June last she has maintained her scheduled itinerary without interruption. She completed seven trips to Norfolk Island and a similar number to Niue and Samoa during the year.

During the year the vessel has carried 4,451 tons of cargo between New Zealand and Samoa, 2,329 tons of cargo between New Zealand and Niue, 940 tons of cargo between New Zealand and Norfolk, and 47,000 superficial feet of timber. Included in the above were 70,894 cases of fruit, of which only $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. were lost; the balance of the shipments were landed in first-class condition.

Although intended as a cargo-vessel only, the demand for passages for officials and by pleasure-seekers has been such that the very limited accommodation provided has been taxed to its utmost, no less than 771 passengers having been carried during the year.

Samoa.—A valuable fruit trade with Samoa has been made possible, and has no doubt assisted the Territory during the present depression in the main (copra) industry. The Administrator of Samoa, under date 27th May last, wrote as follows: "The banana trade is a most valuable one to Samoa, and can be made more so. Its cessation would cause great loss, both monetary and otherwise, to Samoa, and indirectly to New Zealand."

Niue.—The Niue trade has been given a considerable impetus, and, with the exception of two abnormal years, shows a record. A valuable banana trade with New Zealand has also been made possible, and is eagerly exploited by the Niue people.

Norfolk.—A regular service with Norfolk was carried out throughout the year, and, though showing good promise, was abandoned to give a full-time service with our own Territories.

Considerable work was done on the vessel during the year by way of alterations, repairs, and additional fittings, which has placed a considerable burden on the year's accounts. Further extraordinary expenditure, apart from the engines (*i.e.*, repatriation and hospital expenses of the Native staff, &c.), has also been a necessary expenditure. Government exigencies require the vessel to work four New Zealand ports, which add heavily to the cost of this service as against a connection with one or two New Zealand ports only. Provided a reasonable number of New Zealand ports of call could be arranged, the financial position could be put on a satisfactory footing.

For the year ended 31st March, 1930, the Revenue and Expenditure Account shows an actual loss of £4,961 18s. 2d., against an anticipated loss of £6,261 as budgeted for. Actual figures were—

		Estimated.	Actual.
		£	£ s. d.
Expenditure	33,261	30,091 19 9
Revenue	27,000	25,130 1 7

The fall in revenue was due to the necessity of laying the vessel up for several weeks at the beginning of the year owing to the serious outbreak of influenza among the Native crew above referred to, and again from the 9th May to the 20th June for the purpose of placing the ship under an extensive overhaul to remedy certain structural defects in machinery, such periods being, of course, non-revenue-producing.

Nothing has been left undone in the past to keep the vessel running satisfactorily, and the assistance of the Technical Advisory Committee has been invaluable. It is quite safe to state that without this assistance the service could not have been carried on.