

New Zealand was again visited last year by two cruise-ships of the Matson Line, and further visits from cruise-ships are planned and expected for the coming season. The prospects of traffic from America are undoubtedly enhanced by the inauguration of a new steamship service from San Francisco and Los Angeles to Auckland. This new service is being supported by extensive publicity in America.

Traffic from the United Kingdom during the past year was affected at a critical period by the departure from the gold standard. More or less temporary difficulties were caused, and definite cancellations of bookings resulted. The maintenance of an exchange rate favourable to visitors from the United Kingdom has no doubt, however, served to encourage traffic. The High Commissioner's Office in London is now in closer association with shipping companies and travel organizations, and during the past year several further important overseas travel firms located in the United Kingdom have been added to the list of those which the Department represents in New Zealand, and through which business is arranged on commission.

Tourist business from Australia is always looked upon as being of major importance, and it is from the Commonwealth that we secure the majority of our overseas visitors. Improved publicity methods in the Commonwealth, supported by better "selling" arrangements through the Department's agents and offices, have offset the general tendency for reduced travel. Our efforts, however, have been faced with difficulties in the matter of adverse exchange, the closing of the State Savings-bank of New South Wales, increased taxation, the threat of shipping strikes in late spring and early summer, and the absence of direct shipping from Melbourne. Despite these difficulties, the Department's Australian organization personally dealt with over seven hundred people during the past year, and sold shipping tickets and travel to a total value of over £23,000. These figures are actually greater than in earlier years. The average individual value of the tours sold, however, has shown a decline, and reflects the tendency towards a shorter trip and a cheaper holiday.

Our agency arrangements in Australia have been improved by the addition of representatives in more important centres not previously touched. During the past year the Commissioner in Australia had the opportunity of visiting the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, and appointed agents in several centres in that region. Definite business results have followed.

With an improvement in economic conditions in the Commonwealth the tourist business which New Zealand is able to secure from Australia should increase materially. Through increased publicity and extended agency arrangements the Department is now doing everything which can reasonably be expected to develop the traffic.

A further field of opportunity for tourist development work exists in India and other Eastern countries. To a limited extent it has been possible to do publicity work in that region during the past year, but more extensive activities through film publicity and direct mail advertising are planned for early adoption.

PUBLICITY.

A further substantial reduction in the amount available for overseas publicity was last year made necessary for financial reasons.

In view of the very wide field available to be covered it will be readily understood that the appropriation makes it inevitable that our publicity in many areas is negligible. It is fortunate, however, that certain overseas shipping and railway companies spend considerable sums in advertising the Dominion's attractions, while the Produce Boards have continued to carry out extensive trade publicity work in the United Kingdom. The Publicity Officer in the High Commissioner's Office, London, has again assisted and co-ordinated much of the work of the Produce Boards.

Following the advent of sound films, which have practically superseded the silent picture in all theatre circuits, the Department produced, with the assistance of Messrs. Filmcraft Ltd., seven sound "synchronized" pictures as well as two taken in the field with "sound" directly recorded. These turned out quite successful, and were very favourably commented upon both in New Zealand and abroad.

Arrangements were made with the Greater Australasian Films Corporation, of Sydney, by which positive copies of these sound films have now been released throughout Australia and New Zealand on a basis which will provide the Department with some return on its outlay, in addition to the excellent publicity value of this release.

In addition, copies of some of these films have been sent for showing in India, while others are in circulation in Canada and South Africa. All of the sound films have been despatched for release in the United Kingdom.

On the industrial side arrangements have been made to take a picture with sound effects of the meat industry, which is expected to prove of great value in advertising the prime quality of New Zealand meat to overseas buyers. Other trade publicity films are planned for production during the coming summer.

The Department, in conjunction with Messrs. Filmcraft Ltd., is at present engaged in the production of a feature picture to be entitled "New Zealand To-day." This film, which is being taken with sound effects and with certain sections in colour, will present a practically complete picture of New Zealand's development, both socially and industrially, covering particularly the main primary industries, the sport, and the scenery of the country. In addition to its great publicity value, a certain amount of revenue should be received from its release.

The valuable outlet afforded by the showing of films on board various passenger vessels has been availed of during the year. Both "sound" and "silent" films have been made use of, and reports as to these have generally been of a complimentary nature.