

U.S.S. "John Deere," which was made the subject of tremendous repairs at Port Chalmers. The Netherlands East Indies vessel, "Khoen Hoea," also underwent extensive repairs in Lyttelton; and the repairs carried out on the "Trocas" at Auckland call for special mention.

UNITED STATES APPRECIATION

Rear-Admiral E. W. Mills, United States Navy, Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Ships, Washington, wrote in a letter that the Bureau noted with pleasure the many expressions of satisfaction received from the commanding officers of naval vessels undergoing repairs in New Zealand. The high quality of workmanship, the expeditious completion of important repairs, the excellent co-operation existing between United States naval activities, New Zealand governmental agencies, and civilian contractors were most useful contributions to ship-maintenance in the area. The Chief of the Bureau of Ships desired to express his appreciation for the uniformly excellent results achieved in ship-maintenance at Auckland and in the New Zealand area.

This report touches the fringe only of our ship-repair and shipbuilding industry during the World War II, but is an attempt to place on record an outstanding achievement.

VESSELS CHARTERED AND PURCHASED FOR DEFENCE PURPOSES BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT

At the outbreak of war it was found that the vessels then under the control of the Navy Department were insufficient for its wartime needs. Vessels of all types were required, ranging from small private launches to sea-going cargo-carriers, and the Marine Department was brought into the picture for the purpose of inspecting and valuing the various craft required by the Navy.

The inspections and valuations were carried out from one end of New Zealand to the other and hundreds of craft were inspected and rejected, the cause of rejection ranging from unsuitability for the purpose in view to unseaworthiness and old age. On some few occasions the Navy Department inspected and requested the requisitioning of their own craft, but, apart from a few barges and other similar craft, all requisitioned vessels were passed for service by this Department.

After the vessels had been inspected, various alterations were found necessary to fit them for the work, and such alterations were supervised by the Department's Surveyors of Ships, and in many cases the vessels were placed in commission after extensive repairs and renovations had been carried out.

The value of the vessels requisitioned ranged from £200 to, in some cases, more than £100,000.

There were two forms of requisitioning, one being requisitioning for purchase, whilst the other was requisitioning for charter. Many cases of hardship were placed before the Department, and, wherever possible, alternative arrangements were made, with the result that as little dislocation of normal trade as possible was encountered.

The uses to which the vessels were put were many and varied and their spheres of activity were widely spaced, some being used in New Zealand waters, some in the forward bases at the islands, and the dredge owned by the Lyttelton Harbour Board was requisitioned under charter for the purpose of work to be carried out in the Middle East. This vessel was ready for despatch when Japan commenced hostilities, and owing to the danger of a trip through hostile waters the charter was cancelled and the vessel did not leave New Zealand waters.

It was also intended to send the crane-ship "Rapaki" overseas, but in view of developments this trip did not eventuate, although the vessel actually made a start on her long voyage. This vessel was eventually chartered for the American authorities and spent many useful months in the Pacific.