

Until all the minefields in the Hauraki Gulf are cleared up it is possible that the lights and radio beacons on Mokohinau and Cuvier Island will remain extinguished, otherwise vessels would be guided into danger by the light instead of into safe channels.

With the closing of the approaches to Auckland via the Mokohinau and Cuvier channels, alternate routes were lighted so that vessels would be clear of the minefields.

VESSELS CHARTERED

Of the 191 ships purchased or chartered, fifty-five were trading ships, thirty-seven of which were in use by the New Zealand Services and eighteen by the American authorities. One hundred and forty-eight of these vessels were actually manned by New Zealanders.

STEAMSHIPS "BALTANNIC" AND "BALTRAFFIC"

In the early stages of the war it was realized that it was vital to get our produce to the United Kingdom in the quickest possible manner, and to assist in this direction the Ministry of War Transport, England, loaned these ships to New Zealand. These two ships have refrigerated accommodation space, and were used extensively from early 1941 to convey refrigerated cargo from the minor ports to the major ports, principally Wellington and Auckland. By this means the larger overseas ships were able to make a quicker turn round, in that they omitted calling at the minor ports and concentrated their loading at the major ports. The whole expense of bringing these ships to New Zealand, running-expenses while in this Dominion, and cost of returning them to the United Kingdom is borne by the Ministry of War Transport.

NEW ZEALAND SHIPS LOST BY ENEMY ACTION

During the war period five ships the crews of which were on New Zealand articles of agreement were lost as the result of enemy action, but fortunately the loss of life was small—namely, nine. Of these nine, four lost their lives when their ships were torpedoed and the other five died while prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

"HOLMWOOD"

A steel ship of 546 gross tons, built at Goole, England, in the year 1911, came out to New Zealand early in 1923 for the Westland Shipping Co. and was engaged for some years in conveying coal and timber from west coast ports. Later she made periodical voyages to the Chatham Islands. This ship was acquired by Holm and Co., Ltd., in August, 1940, and it was while she was on her second voyage to the Chatham Islands for her new owners that the ship was captured and sunk by a German raider on the 24th November, 1940. The crew and passengers totalling twenty-nine were taken aboard the raider and were eventually landed at the small island of Emirau, in the Bismarck Group, after the members of the crew had signed an undertaking not to serve on defensively armed ships and the male passengers had agreed not to bear arms nor undertake military action against Germany or her allies during hostilities. The crew and passengers were eventually rescued from the island by an Australian ship, which landed them at Sydney on the 6th January, 1941. The crew and passengers were conveyed from Sydney on the American ship "Mariposa," and landed at Auckland on the 13th January, 1941.

The "Holmwood" was the first New Zealand ship captured and destroyed by the enemy, but fortunately no lives were lost.

"KOMATA"

A modern steel cargo-ship of 3,900 gross tons, built at Glasgow in the year 1938 to the order of the Union Steam Ship Co. of New Zealand, Ltd., was the second New Zealand ship lost as the result of enemy action, off Nauru Island. At 9 a.m. on the 8th December, 1940, a ship was sighted which appeared to be a Japanese ship of about