

11. SHIPPING

One of the activities of the Board since its inception has been the disposal of a considerable amount of shipping, in the shape of steamships, motor-ships, launches of various types and sizes, lighters, barges, Naval ships, and other craft that have become surplus since the end of the war. About half of these had been requisitioned during the war from private owners for the use of the New Zealand Services, the American Forces, and some Civil Government Departments. The remainder consisted of ships which had been built in New Zealand for war purposes or had been acquired from overseas by lend-lease or other arrangements.

In the disposal of these assets the Board has acted through the agency of the Marine Department, which has conducted the negotiations for sale, and, for the most part, kept custody of the ships, the majority of which were located at Auckland.

Requisitioned ships have been sold under an arrangement whereby the former owners were given prior right of purchase at a price based on the amount paid by the Government for the ships. If, after negotiation, a former owner fails to buy, the ship is sold by public tender. Ships other than those purchased from private owners are disposed of by tender. Selling-prices are fixed by valuation made by the Surveyors of the Marine Department and by outside valuers experienced in the construction of the particular type under disposal.

Some of the ships that were requisitioned from private owners have been retained by the Services and by Government Departments. The disposal of those that have become surplus is now almost complete. The negotiations for the sale of these craft have in many cases been very protracted, and in some instances were rendered more difficult by the fact that vessels were of unsuitable type and were handed back by the United States authorities and the Service Departments in poor condition, and that some were located as far afield as Fiji and Australia.

The locally built ships and those from other sources, having been provided for special war purposes, were generally of types that were not easily adaptable to private or commercial use and were thus not easy of disposal. Of 9 Naval minesweepers sold, 5 went to Australian fishing interests and 1 to UNRRA, which also purchased 3 tugs and 8 tow-boats. The ships sold include the old cruiser "Philomel," the Naval oil-carrier "Nucula," the s.s. "Janie Seddon," and the former Wellington Harbour ferry steamers "Duchess" and "Muritai."

Up to date some 174 vessels, large and small, have been disposed of, the total realization being approximately £412,000. An analysis of the classes of vessels sold is as follows :—

Steamships	..	..	..	..	..	15
Motor-ships	..	..	..	..	..	9
Minesweepers	..	..	..	..	..	9
Tugs and tow-boats	..	..	..	..	..	16
Powered lighters	..	..	..	..	..	2
Fairmiles	..	..	..	..	..	10
Barges and lighters	..	..	..	..	..	15
Launches and other small vessels	..	..	..	..	..	98

174

There are now only a few vessels for disposal, and the Board desires to take this opportunity of expressing its thanks to the Marine Department for its valued co-operation.