

equipment, and, with minor items which may from time to time be found necessary, will, we think, make a great improvement in the working of the machinery.

(4) The committee have had good opportunity to form an opinion as to the capabilities of the engine-room staff, and do not recommend any alteration to existing arrangements. The recent work of overhauling the main engines has been of a highly skilled nature and has been well done, and we understand that the engineers during this overhaul have cheerfully worked overtime for long periods whenever the job required it.

The relations between the engine-room staff and the deck staff were fully discussed with the master and the chief engineer after receipt of your instructions, particularly as affecting the safe carriage of bananas and the comfort of passengers, and we feel confident that the service in these respects can be safely entrusted to the present organization.

(5) Regarding the erratic prices that have at times been received for bananas, particularly on her last voyage (arrived Lyttelton on the 3rd May), we can only say that the conditions in the holds during that voyage were entirely satisfactory, and that there is reasonable ground for assuming that, as far as the vessel is concerned, the fruit can be carried under proper conditions in the future.

From the information at its disposal the committee consider that the transport and handling-conditions at the islands are distinctly adverse compared with those existing in the larger banana-producing countries, and from the appearance of the fruit on various voyages we are quite sure in our own minds that for ocean carriage an improvement in the grading and packing is desirable and necessary for complete success.

The committee, in seeking the causes of trouble on the vessel at various times, have looked into the circumstances surrounding the placing of the contract. Tenders were called on rough outline specifications and plans. Tenders were invited and examined in England. The contract was subsequently entered into in New Zealand. Under these methods of purchasing a vessel it is to be expected that the owner will be called on to face considerable outlay in the early part of her career in adapting her exactly to requirements. This will apply specially to post-war conditions, when tendering is keen and ship and machinery designs are undergoing rapid changes.

The unfavourable comments which are made from time to time with regard to the vessel have very small justification in fact, and the Cook Island Department are having no more trouble than many other owners of motor-vessels. While very considerable modification and improvement has been made to the equipment, with very satisfactory results in the working, the actual failures of machinery during the vessel's first year of operation have not been very serious, and have been only one factor in a number contributing to loss of fruit or low prices for portions of same.

Yours faithfully,

J. E. L. CULL, Chairman	} “Maui Pomare” Technical Advisory Committee.
A. GAVEY, Member	
CHAS. Wm. TURNER, Member	
G. E. BREEZE, Member	
F. W. GRAINGER, Member	

OPENING-UP OF TRADE ROUTES.

Niue – European and Continental Ports.

Besides the direct service established with southern ports, a through bill of lading has been arranged with the Clan line for copra from Niue to British and Continental ports, via Apia, which is being fully availed of by the Niue growers. This obviates the longer route via New Zealand ports, and permits of a reduced through freight of 115s. a ton to the consuming markets.

The small quantities of Niue copra previously consumed in New Zealand cannot be carried with fruit shipments by the “Maui Pomare,” but a through bill of lading, via Apia, has been arranged with the Union Steamship Co., Ltd., at a through freight rate of 78s. a ton.

Norfolk.

The hitherto unexplored trade and passenger service with Norfolk is steadily increasing, and the interest of the New Zealand public in this island, both for pleasure and as a field for settlement, is remarkable.

Owing to the growing shipping requirements of Niue and Samoa, efforts are being made to induce private shippers to take over the Norfolk service and thus release the “Maui Pomare” for our own territories. It would be unfortunate if this promising trade that has been built up by the Government with Norfolk Island were lost to the Dominion owing to lack of private enterprise.