

GOVERNMENT TO BUILD BIGGER CARGO VESSELS

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WASHINGTON, April 3.—Plans to increase the capacity of shipping under contract for the Emergency Fleet Corporation and to add further to the out-

put by building concrete ships and large steel cargo carriers at yards on the Great Lakes will be put into effect by the Shipping Board if a survey which is being made shows that it will be possible to obtain the necessary engines, boilers, and other equipment without causing a serious delay in the program.

As an initial step in this direction the corporation today authorized the construction of four 7,500-ton concrete ships at a Pacific Coast shipyard. This action was taken as a result of a report on the trials made with a concrete ship, the Faith, which was built in San Francisco by private capital.

The tests were sufficiently satisfactory to warrant going ahead with the work on a larger scale pending the opportunity for a more severe tryout. Three other concrete ships of 3,500 tons each also are being built at other yards. When the data is complete in regard to the availability of such vessels for overseas service, it will be submitted to Congress with a request for an appropriation to extend the industry.

R. J. Wig, an agent of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, who made a careful inspection of the Faith and watched the tests, has expressed the belief that the new cargo carriers will prove practical.

The construction of more wooden or steel ships of 3,500 tons also is to be

abandoned under the new program and the capacity of these vessels increased to at least 5,000 tons each. This plan is now practical in the building of wooden ships because of the decision to alter the plans first prepared, so that smaller timbers can be used. There is little or no delay expected because of the necessity for lengthening the ways on which the ships are constructed.

About 25 per cent. of the ships contracted for under the present program are of not more than 3,500 tons, and the addition of 1,500 tons capacity to each ship would add a large tonnage to the new fleet. It is estimated that the vessels can be constructed in practically the same length of time.

Contracts for most of the steel construction of not more than 3,500 tons were placed with shipyards of the Great Lakes, the limit being placed upon the size of the ships in order to get them through the Welland Canal to the Atlantic. It is now proposed to increase the tonnage of most of these vessels to 5,500 and deliver them in two sections which can be assembled at an Atlantic port. F. A. Eustace, who has been making a survey of the ability of the Great Lakes yards to turn out big ships, has submitted a plan for the construction of cargo carriers of 10,000 tons each. Experts have stated that these hulls could be sent through the canal by cutting them in two and floating them on their sides.

The ability to obtain the more powerful engines and other equipment necessary without causing delay is apparently the only obstacle confronted by the corporation in adopting all of the developments now recommended to obtain increased tonnage output.

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