

United States Government Shipbuilding, Commandeering and Purchasing.

The U.S. Shipping Board sent the following statement relative to the shipbuilding programme to the Secretary of the Treasury recently for transmission to Congress:

SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME.			
	No.	Tonnage.	Estimated cost.
Ships contracted for.	433	1,919,200	\$285,000,000
Ships ready to be contracted for when funds are available	452	2,968,000	455,500,000
Ships under negotiations	237	1,281,400	194,000,000
			\$934,500,000
Miscellaneous vessels	150	1,800,000	300,000,000
Organization and other miscellaneous expenses			35,000,000
Amount authorized by Congress, June 6, 1917, (\$300,000,000 appropriated)			550,000,000
Amount to be authorized for building programme immediately in sight, making no allowance for changes in cost of labor or material			719,500,000
COMMANDEERING PROGRAMME.			
For commandeered ships, amount required			\$515,000,000
For commandeered ships, amount authorized by Congress, June 6, 1917			250,000,000
Balance requiring authorization by Congress			\$265,000,000
PURCHASE PROGRAMME.			
For vessels to be purchased other than under construction or commandeered			\$150,000,000
SUMMARY.			
Total amount, in round figures, to be purchased in addition to amounts already authorized			\$265,000,000
For construction of new vessels			719,500,000
For purchase of new vessels			150,000,000
Grand total			\$1,134,500,000
Amounts desired to be appropriated for remainder of fiscal year 1918:			
For commandeered vessels			\$365,000,000
For building programme			400,000,000
For purchase of vessels			150,000,000
Total			\$915,000,000

Details of the Programme.

Washington, D.C., press dispatch, Sept. 7.—“The U.S. Government will build a great fleet of merchant vessels of from 10,000 to 12,000 tons, capable of attaining a speed of 16 knots or better, in its effort to defeat the German submarines, supply its troops in Europe and carry foodstuffs and munitions to the allies. Contracts already entered into for ships of smaller capacity and lower speed will be carried out, but practically all of the millions which Congress has been asked for, in addition to the original appropriation of \$500,000,000 for construction, will be devoted to the fast ships, unless plans now in the hands of the Shipping Board go awry. Delay in the letting of contracts for fabricating yards to be owned by the Government, it is stated, was caused in part by the fact that, under the new plans, changes would have to be made. It is possible also that additional yards will be constructed in order to turn out the new fleet in the shortest possible time. Not less than 150 cargo ships, aggregating from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 tons, will be built under the Shipping Board's new plan, and not one of them will make less than 16 knots an hour, while many of them will be capable of 18 knots or more.

“Diesel engines and engines of that type will be used as far as is possible. It is said that a number of the Diesel engines have been brought to this country, and that certain manufacturers have been hard at work for some time developing a standard engine along the same lines. They permit of greater speed and a tremendous saving in fuel. The original contracts were for ships of from 5,000 to

7,000 tons, which would be capable of considerably less than 16 knots an hour, and which, with the development of the German submarines, might well have been helpless unless guarded by large fleets of fast cruisers and destroyers. Careful investigations made by Chairman Edward N. Hurley, of the U.S. Shipping Board, and Secretary Redfield, of the Department of Commerce, however, showed that vessels capable of 16 knots an hour or more were practically free from successful submarine attack, and that none had been sunk since the latest inventions to cloud, by smoke bombs or otherwise, the ‘eye’ of the submarine, had been used. A comprehensive report of this situation was prepared, and, as a result of that report, the new plan of construction was formulated.”

Government Shipbuilding Yards.

Washington, D.C., press dispatch, Sept. 13.—“Contracts for construction of a government-owned shipbuilding yard at Hog Island, Pa., and for the construction therein of 50 fabricated steel merchant vessels, were let by the Emergency Fleet Corporation today to the American International Corporation. These contracts are the first actually signed for the three new plants in which the government will have built a large number of fabricated ships. The Hog Island plant will cost slightly less than \$20,000,000. The other contracts will go to the Submarine Boat Corporation for a plant at Newark, N.J., and to the Merchants' Shipbuilding Co. for one at Chester, Pa. The first of the 50 ships will be completed by the American International Corporation within 10 or 11 months, and the entire number will be finished probably within 15 or 16 months. Long before they are finished, however, the Shipping Board, in all likelihood, will have asked for additional money to build more ships.”

New York press dispatch, Sept. 16.—“The Submarine Boat Corporation announces that it has entered into a contract with the Emergency Fleet Corporation for the immediate construction of 50 steel cargo ships, which will be supplemented later by another contract for 150 more of the same type. The ships will be built in the metropolitan district in a plant which will be among the largest in the country. The first keels will be laid in December, it is said, and the first launching will be in February. Under the corporation's plans, when the plant is in full operation, deliveries will be at the rate of one vessel every two days.”

White Oak for Ship Construction.

Shipyards building wooden ships for the U.S. Government are in the market for extra large white oak construction timber or logs of good quality. The 2,000-ton ships now building each require 2 rudderposts of this species, 14 x 24 in., 40 ft. long. Logs measuring 28 in. in diameter at the small end will cut out such timbers and are worth from \$50 to \$60 per thousand board feet measured in the log. Sticks hewed or sawed to this size will bring \$70 to \$80 per thousand board feet loaded on the cars within 100 to 200 miles of the shipyards. Sticks squared to the size mentioned above contain 1,120 board feet, and would, therefore, bring from \$78 to \$90 each, f.o.b. cars at loading point. Though these prices apply to the south Atlantic and gulf shipyards, it is probable that they would also hold good for those located in the north. The yards are also in need of other white oak structural timbers for

shaft logs, horn timbers, deck and chock rails, and keel shoes. These range in size from 6 x 8 in., x 20 to 30 ft. long, to 14 x 14 in., 18 ft. long. Farmers having white oak trees that will produce timbers of these sizes are urged to take advantage of the demand for such material and get in touch with shipbuilding concerns.

Customs Drawback for Shipbuilding in Canada.

An order in council was passed, Oct. 21, 1916, providing for the granting of a drawback of customs duty on articles used in the construction of vessels built in Canada, dating from Nov. 1, 1916, not exceeding 99% of the customs duty paid. The material concerned is to be used in the original construction in Canada of ships and vessels measuring over 500 tons gross tonnage, and when such ships or vessels are authorized by order in council to be exported for registry outside Canada, or are British registered in Canada, and built to obtain a class in Lloyd's, Bureau Veritas, British Corporation, or other recognized classification satisfactory to the Minister of Customs. Such drawback is in lieu of any drawback based on a specific rate per registered ton, and the claimant must be the builder of the vessel, and the drawback is paid only on ships or vessels which have within themselves the power of independent navigation, either by means of sails, steam or other motive power.

A further order in council was passed, Sept. 11, 1917, amending the order of Oct. 21, 1916, by providing that it shall apply to drawback on imported materials used in the original construction of ships and vessels over 80 tons gross tonnage, built in Canada, on and after Sept. 1, 1917.

The s.s. *Turret Crown*, owned by the Coastwise Steamship and Barge Co., is reported to have been sold to the Clinchfield Navigation Co., of New York, representing the Oriental Navigation Co., Nantes, France. She was built at Sunderland, Eng., in 1895, of steel with double bottom for winter ballast. Her dimensions are, length 253 ft., breadth 44 ft. 4 ins., depth 19 ft. 4 ins.; tonnage, 1827 gross, 1,142 register. She is equipped with triple expansion engines with cylinders 22, 36 and 59 ins. diam. by 39 ins. stroke, 1,100 i.h.p. at 70 r.p.m. and supplied with steam by 2 Scotch boilers 14 by 11 ft. at 180 lbs. She was equipped with new boilers in 1912 by the Western Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Co., and was purchased by the Coastwise Steamship & Barge Co., from Turret Crown Ltd., Toronto, one of the Mackenzie, Mann & Co.'s interests. For a number of years she was operated on the Great Lakes, and latterly was run between British Columbia and Puget Sound ports. She is being taken to New York and thence to Europe, where she will be handed over to her new owners.

Grain Rates for U. S. Lakes Service.—

A Cleveland press dispatch states that J. H. Barnes, director of the U. S. Food Commission's grain division, has named 4½c a bush. as the grain rate from the head of Lake Superior to Buffalo, for the regular season to midnight Nov. 30, and that this has been accepted by vessel owners. The rate for December loading and storage is to be fixed later.