

VESSELS FOR WESTERN PACIFIC ADMINISTRATION

Towards the end of the shipbuilding programme the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific placed an order for five special-purpose wooden vessels for servicing the Pacific islands. They were 60 ft. long with a gross tonnage of 58 tons and propelled by a Gardner four-cylinder Diesel engine of 102 b.h.p. They were well equipped and had a speed loaded of 8 knots.

VESSELS FOR EASTERN GROUP SUPPLY COUNCIL

Towards the end of the programme also and at the completion of the fifty 45 ft. wooden tugs for the Americans, the British Ministry of War Transport placed an order for twenty-four similar tugs for use in Eastern Group countries. At the present time twelve of these are almost completed, and the balance of twelve was cancelled by the Authorities. These vessels were identically similar to the American vessels and were propelled by "Atlas" Diesel engines of 120 b.h.p.

SHIP REPAIRS

One must not imagine that the full labour quota—approximately 4,000 men—was always available for ship-construction. The ship-construction industry provided a nucleus of labour for ship repairs in New Zealand, on which our war effort was no less outstanding than on that of shipbuilding. A large influx of American vessels, plus some units of the British Pacific Fleet, made it necessary to allocate all usage of slips and docks through a Central Docking and Repairs Committee at Wellington, consisting of representatives of the shipping companies together with Navy and Marine Departments, also the New Zealand representative of the British Ministry of War Transport, Sir Alex. Roberts. This Committee was instituted to ensure that dockings were scheduled in such a way as to give a minimum of delay in all cases and to facilitate the quick turn round of vessels carrying food to the United Kingdom and to the troops, both British and American, in the Pacific. A Ship Repairs Costing Service was instituted under the Marine Department, this providing full supervision of the work to ensure that only the most necessary work was given effect to owing to shortage of materials and to check up on actual cost of repairs to each vessel. The total ship-repairs programme undertaken by the Ship Repairs Costing Service is indicated in the following expenditure on ship-repair work as from 1st January, 1944, to 15th August, 1945:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
For New Zealand requirements—						
Navy	218,343	10	9			
Other vessels	249,208	15	6			
				467,552	6	3
For U.S.A. requirements—						
U.S.J.P.B.	677,313	16	9			
War Shipping Administration	12,055	4	5			
				689,369	1	2
				<u>£1,156,921</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>

The colossal ship-repair work carried out during the war years was a splendid effort and was assisted by the co-operation of Commander A. C. Bushey, United States Navy, the U.S.J.P.B. in Wellington, and the representative of the War Shipping Administration. The New Zealand work was very ably organized as for Navy work by Captain Bodell (New Zealand Navy) and by the Survey Staff of the Marine Department under Mr. G. E. Breeze, Chief Surveyor of Ships.

Many of our ship-repair jobs during the war have been praised by the various shipping authorities. Notable amongst these were the "Fordsdale," which required five refrigerated holds completely dismantled, retimbered, and reinsulated, also the