

to the vision of Mr. James Fletcher, who was then Commissioner for Defence Construction in New Zealand, thoughts were given as to what could be done outside the New Zealand programme by combining engineering and shipwrighting firms and hundreds of other small engineering and woodworking workshops into syndicates for the construction of these small craft for America. New Zealand Government at once appointed Mr. James Fletcher as Controller of Shipbuilding with the organization of the Marine Department at his back, Mr. G. E. Breeze as Deputy Controller of Shipbuilding, and Mr. W. C. Smith as Chief Executive Officer of the Shipbuilding Division. Prefabrication was the theme for this project and almost the whole of the programme was completed in Auckland. American Army and Navy representatives in Colonels Warren and Dinkins (Army) and Commodore Jupp (Navy) were conjoined with the Controller of Shipbuilding, and at the culminating point as many as two hundred firms were at one and the same time employed in Auckland on the fabrication of parts for the American vessels, these being subsequently assembled at two new shipyards, one for steel ships at French Street and one for wooden ships at Fanshawe Street on the site on the foreshore previously occupied by the Kauri Timber Co. before the big fire. Shipyards and buildings were constructed hastily, and suffice it to say that so great was the progress that eight 45 ft. wooden hulls could be run down the launching ways every five to six weeks, this in addition to work on powered lighters, steel tugs, &c., that were in the yards or at the other shipyard.

Such a huge organization demanded the establishment of a subsidiary organization in Auckland. Executives of the shipbuilding firms were formed into an Allocation Committee for the allocation of contracts and subcontracts, thus the builders themselves had a big part in the organization of the industry. Mention must be made of the work performed by Mr. R. C. Porter, who gratuitously gave his services in the same way as Mr. James Fletcher in organizing the industry in Auckland. Mr. N. Burnette, of Fletcher Construction Co., was also made available full-time to the industry in a generous gesture by that firm.

The American programme was divided into two parts, first the section required urgently for the American Army in the South-west Pacific, this portion being under the guidance of Colonel Max Warren, who subsequently proceeded to Australia, and later Colonel J. Dinkins. The second, or United States Navy portion of the programme, was sponsored in the early stages by Commodore Jupp, United States Navy, and later by Commander A. C. Bushey, jun., who did some sterling work in expediting the programme at a time when matters looked black in the Pacific.

For the purpose of this report the American programme will be shown as one, and consisted of the following:—

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Steel tug-boats, 75 ft. (22 at £26,700)	587,400
Wooden tow-boats, 45 ft. (50 at £7,250)	362,500
Powered lighters, 114 ft. (15 at £71,400)	1,071,000
Barges, wood, prefabricated, 50 ft. (40 at £1,000)	40,000
Barges, wood, completed, 50 ft. (100 at £1,200)	120,000
Amphibian trailers, steel (100 at £270)	27,000
Wherries, wood, 12 ft. and 14 ft. (60 at £85)	5,100
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	£2,213,000
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The vessels completed for America can be briefly described as follows:—

The 45 ft. wooden tugs are of normal design, 45 ft. in length, with a 14 ft. beam and 7 ft. in depth. They are propelled by a Diesel engine of 120 b.h.p. In the main the planking and most of the wood was kauri, but frames are of beech, knees of pohutukawa, towing-posts and bitts are of hardwood, sheathing and false keel being of totara. The engines and the auxiliaries for these vessels were supplied by the American authorities.