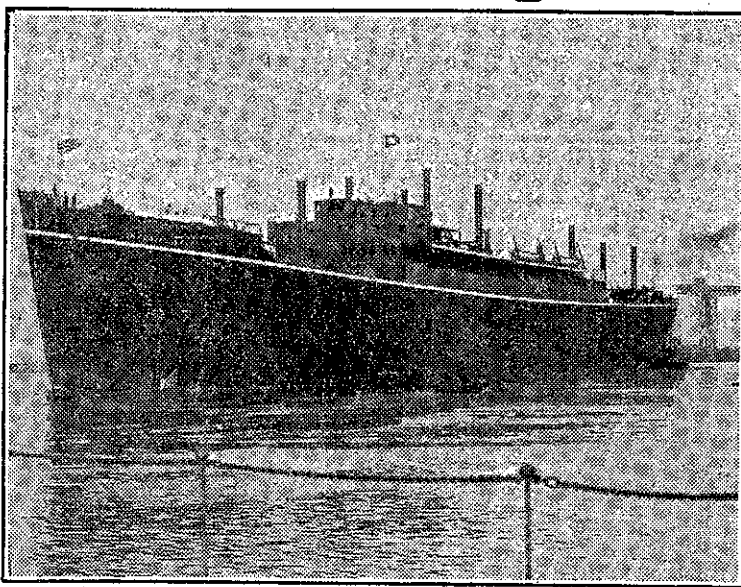


Launched From Wellington's Government House

New Zealand Star in Ireland



Above is the New Zealand Star's sister ship Imperial Star, as she appeared when launched on October 9 this year by Lady Vestey; like the New Zealand Star, the Imperial Star was built in Messrs. Harland and Wolff's yards at Belfast, and the third sister ship is also being made by them.

By the pressing of a button at Government House, Wellington, at 10.30 p.m. on Thursday, November 22, his Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, launched, in the builders' yards at Belfast in Ireland, the New Zealand Star, one of the three vessels which are being built by the Blue Star Line for the New Zealand trade. Next week a similar ceremony will take place in Australia, when His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, is to launch the Orion at Barrow-on-Furness while at a concert in Brisbane.

AT a signal from Belfast, His Excellency pressed the button, releasing an electrical impulse which was sent by cable to Auckland, where it split in two parts, one travelling via Australia, Singapore, India, Gibraltar, and London, and the other eastward, through Canada, to London. It was the longest circuit over which morse signals have ever been transmitted, and it seems probable that this record will stand for many years; it would be difficult to find two other countries such as Ireland and New Zealand so far apart, and equipped with the necessary apparatus and technical ability to better the record established last week.

All the New Zealand national stations were linked together at 10.20 on Thursday, so that listeners in all parts of the Dominion heard his Excellency's speech, and then the series of dashes, with three-second intervals, which actually launched the ship.

Transmitted by the shortwave radio telephone service, Lord Bledisloe's speech was heard by the crowd which assembled in Belfast to see the launching, as well as by the thousands of New Zealanders who were listening in. After His Excellency had spoken briefly of the value and significance to the New Zealand trade of the building of these new ships by the Blue Star Line, he paused a moment, awaiting the signal from Belfast that all was in readiness, then, "By pressing a button in the Antipodes, I now launch the New Zealand Star in the far distant waters of Northern Ireland." In pressing that little button, Lord Bledisloe released an electric impulse which was transmitted by cable to Belfast, where it closed the power circuit operating the launching triggers—starting the ship down the runway as surely as if he had been standing in the builders yard, and had pressed the button which is usually installed on the launching stage there.

This was only the second time in the world that radio has been used to launch a ship in this way. The first occasion was on June 16 this year, when General Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, launched the Dutch motorship Bloemfontein

from a shipyard in Amsterdam, while he was sitting in his office in Pretoria.

Another radio launching will take place very shortly, on Friday, December 7, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester is to launch the new Orient liner Orion at Barrow-on-Furness, while he is attending a concert given by the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Imperial League at Brisbane on that evening. This ceremony is to be broadcast in the Empire Shortwave programmes from Davenport on that day. As with the New Zealand launching, the Duke is to press a button, which will give the electrical impulse necessary to set the ship on her way. As she moves, a "tripper" will be actuated automatically, and this will break a bottle of Australian wine against the vessel's bows.

Very complete arrangements have been made for the broadcast of this ceremony, including the placing of microphones all along the slipway, to pick up the sounds as the Orion enters the water. Commander Sir Charles Craven, Managing Director of the works and shipyards of Vickers-Armstrong, is to call for three cheers, and the Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, High Commissioner for Australia, will subsequently announce from the platform that all is well, and broadcast loyal greetings to the Duke. A running commentary on the whole of the proceedings will be given by Commander D. A. Stride, recently retired from the Royal Navy, who is also a freeman of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners.

Like the New Zealand Star, the Orion is to be an Empire ship, trading between England and Australia. Her construction in the yards of Vickers-Armstrong has meant employment for thousands of people, and given a fresh impetus to the ship-building industry in the north-west of England. The Empire has not fully recovered from the depression yet, but it is encouraging to find that British shipowners have faith in the future of Empire trade, and listeners in all parts of the world will, on December 7, be the audience to a ceremony which shows a heartening tangible expression of that faith.