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CONVERSION OF ADMIRALTY TANKERS TO M.L.C. CARRIERS.

CONFERENCE AT MESSRS. CAMMELL LAIRDS., BIRKENHEAD.

ON 11th. DECEMBER, 1940.

PRESENT:- Mr. McMurray., D.N.C. Department.
Mr. Smithers.,
Mr. North.,
Representatives of Messrs. Cammell Laird & Co.
Messrs. Swan Hunter.
Messrs. Stothert & Pitt.
Messrs. Cowan & Sheldon.

Messrs. Harland & Wolff telegraphed that there was not sufficient notice for them to send representatives.

Mr. McMurray explained that the Admiralty requirement was to convert these Tankers so that 15 M.L.C's can be carried as deck cargo, 9 in the After Well and 6 in the Forward Well. The ship's normal functions as a tanker to still be maintained. Gantries to be erected immediately before and abaft the bridge structure for unloading. The M.L.C's to be carried on rollers built up at a height sufficient to clear obstructions. The M.L.C's to be capable of being moved forward and aft on the rollers to positions under the gantries for lifting off. Speed of unloading to be regarded as essential, the ship to be capable of being cleared in 30 minutes.

This practically involved clearing the wells of all obstructions above the line of keels of the M.L.C's when stowed and it was obvious that there would be considerable difficulties. These were fully discussed and the Shipbuilders were asked to investigate in detail the following points for their respective ship.

- (1) Gangway pipes to be dropped to deck level.
- (2) Pump room entrance, a sunken lobby with hatches being suggested.
- (3) Valve at present about 5 ft. high to be reduced.
- (4) Cross over pipes will probably have to be lowered.
- (5) Existing masts and derricks not possible and the following measures will have to be investigated to overcome this.
 - (a) 5-ton Auxiliary hoist on Gantries.
 - (b) Pole masts on Gantries for steaming light and wireless.
 - (c) Foremast to be moved as far forward as possible, or two derrick posts arranged forward.
 - (d) Light derrick required for Ford.hold.
 - (e) A Mast amidships may have to be considered.
- (6) Forward winch to be moved forward, probably on to Fo'cle head. After winch to be dispensed with.
- (7) P.V. Arrangements require investigation.
- (8) Bridge front to be recessed to take Messrs. Stothert & Pitt's winches. In this connection Shipbuilders must keep clear of centre line which is required for wires.

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- (9) Gantry supports give a downward thrust of approximately 62½ tons outboard and a upward pull of 15 tons down thrust 40 tons on the inboard leg. Shipbuilders to stiffen their structure to suit.
- (10) Shipbuilders will provide approximately level seats for gantry feet to be bolted to.
- (11) 160 K.W. generator required for each ship to be supplied by Admiralty. Shipbuilders to investigate suitable position for this (See later note).
- (12) Shipbuilders to erect suitable braced structure to take roller paths on which M.L.C's will run, the rollers and connecting angles being supplied by Messrs. Stothert & Pitt.
- (13) Fore and Aft Gangway/M.L.C's essential for working ship. Shipbuilders to investigate; the gangway to continue over gantries.
- (14) Shipbuilders to decide height of M.L.C's to meet other requirements and to inform Messrs. Stothert & Pitt to enable them to fix height of their gantries. It was decided that a varying height of 3'6" to 4'6" to underside of M.L.C's would probably have to be accepted. In this connection it was observed that the outboard M.L.C's should be kept as low as possible. To suit the arrangements of gantries the Centre Line row of M.L.C's could be about 1 foot higher if necessary.
- (15) Shipbuilders to investigate the possibility of increasing complement by 12 men. As regards increased life saving it was assumed that Carley Floats would be accepted.
- (16) It was estimated that the gantries would weigh 100 tons each and the M.L.C's loaded 35 tons each. An additional deck load of approximately 700 tons will therefore be involved. A rough estimate indicated a loss of G.M. of just over 1 foot (G.M. Deep, at present about 4 feet). The Shipbuilders were asked to estimate the reduction of carrying capacity if present G.M. is maintained.
- (17) Oiling at sea arrangements to be retained and modified to suit new arrangements.
- (18) Decontamination arrangements to remain.
- (19) Securing arrangements of M.L.C's appear to present difficulties and requires investigation.
- (20) Vapour pipes to be reduced in height as necessary.
- (21) Windsail arrangements require modification.

Messrs. Stothert & Pitt stated that they anticipated being in a position to deliver their gantries by about end March. Three weeks are required for erection on board so that under most favourable conditions completion by end April would be indicated. Messrs. Cammell Laird's present completion date for 1054 is end April and Messrs. Swan Hunter's present date for their vessel is end March.

Mr. McMurray stated that the Shipbuilders could proceed on the assumption that these modifications would be carried out and that the job would be of 1A Priority. Attention was directed to Mr. McCarthy's remarks on labour and the Shipbuilder stated that they would reply to this when they had considered the details of modifications and at the same time would give their estimated dates of

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completion of these alterations.

It was observed that difficulties and excessive delay might arise in providing flame proof electrics if the vessel was to carry spirit. It was agreed that as regards the additional 160 K.W. generators it would be necessary to take machines readily available to avoid delay. Mr. McMurray undertook to raise these questions at Admiralty and obtain an immediate decision.

It is probable that the M.L.C's carried on these tankers will have to be selected craft with modified rubbing fenders, and slinging arrangements and additional provision for lashing down.

Messrs. Cammell Laird agreed to send advanced prints of their proposals to Messrs. Harland & Wolff, Belfast, when submitting to D.N.C. Department for approval.

The position of the Oil Companies and Board of Trade in connection with these modifications was not clear and Mr. McMurray undertook to make enquiries.



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