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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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LOUISIANA FIRM TO CONSTRUCT FISHERY OCEANOGRAPHIC-RESEARCH VESSEL

A $1,773,948 contract for construction of a fishery research vessel for use primarily in the Northwest Atlantic is being awarded to the Southern Shipbuilding Corporation of Slidell, Louisiana, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced.

Bids were opened on April 14, 1961. There were five bidders. The vessel was designed by Dwight S. Simpson and Associates, naval architects and marine engineers of Boston, Massachusetts. The vessel will replace the Albatross III which was deactivated more than a year ago.

This vessel is one of the first to be constructed under the new national oceanographic program which has received endorsement and impetus by the President. It is a program under which concerted attention will be given to the whole national effort in basic and applied ocean research.

One of the objectives of the fisheries part of the oceanographic investigations is to help the domestic industry in the quest for the three billion additional pounds of fish the Nation will be consuming 20 years hence. Another is to add to the accumulating oceanographic knowledge through water temperature findings, data and chemical content of sea water at various places and under various conditions, factors affecting plant and animal life in the sea, information on surface and subsurface water movements and many other kinds of oceanographic data acquired automatically in fishery biological studies.

The naval architects designed the vessel to meet the needs set forth by the fishery scientists of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service. A vessel design committee (composed of biologists) conferred often with the architects to help design a ship which will be functional both from the standpoint of a floating laboratory and an ocean-going ship. Its task will be to perform the numerous studies necessary to determine the distribution and the variation in abundance of the bottom fish of the Northwest Atlantic and to conduct various phases of oceanographic research.

It will be a stern trawler, the first to be built in the United States and to operate from a North American port. It is patterned after the new German and Danish stern trawlers, and will be equipped with a ramp to haul the loaded nets aboard. This permits the continuance of exploratory or experimental fishing during heavy weather.

The ship will be of welded steel construction, single bottom and with single screw and rudder. It will have one continuous deck, two partial decks and two superstructure decks, with laboratories and scientific equipment. Adequate berth and mess space will be provided for 16 scientists and 25 crew members.

The vessel will have an overall length of 187 feet. Length at the waterline will be 173 feet nine inches. The beam is 33 feet. The ship has a ready-for-sea-displacement of 1,000 tons, will travel 12 knots an hour and has a range of 9,000 miles. It will carry 80 tons of fresh water. It is designed for use in general fisheries and oceanographic research in any navigable waters in the world in all seasons and in all reasonable conditions of weather and temperature.

The cost of $1,773,948 includes basic laboratory and research facilities. Following construction, which is estimated at 15 months, the vessel will be based at Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

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