

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

SEA RESCUE SERVICE

Under the heading "The sea rescue service in the North Sea and the Baltic", the *Revue internationale* of April 1960 (English Supplement, August 1960) published an article by Mr. Hans Hansson, Director of the Swedish Sea Rescue Service, in which the efforts made in the XVIIIth century to create effective rescue craft are recalled, and the activity of his service is described. He also mentioned rescue operations effected by German and Polish lifeboats. Today in most of the countries bordering the North Sea and Baltic, naval and air forces can make available fast craft capable of bringing effective aid within a very short time. Mr. Hansson also stressed the importance of a sea rescue service organised on a basis of international co-operation, which would operate in time of peace as in time of war, and would be based on conclusive experience gained by the sea rescue services in the North Sea.

A little later a suggestion was made that an effort on the international level should be made in this sphere and that a combined type of "meteorological-rescue" craft be made available in the North Sea. The Governments of Denmark, Norway, the German Federal Republic and Sweden declared themselves prepared to take the necessary steps. The idea took shape and a craft was put into commission. According to the resolution, however, passed at a conference meeting at Gothenburg in September 1961 at which the representatives of the governments concerned and experts were present, this service was to cease operating at the end of March 1962 to resume in the following winter. It is indeed to be hoped that it will become permanently established and that the necessary funds will be found for that purpose.

We are grateful to Mr. Hans Hansson for letting us have the text of the recommendation adopted at that conference by the re-

representatives of the countries concerned, and which we publish below. As can be seen it fully demonstrates the need for international effort in sea rescue.

RECOMMENDATION :

After full discussion and upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it is resolved that the following recommendation shall be made to the governments of Denmark, Norway, The Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden :

A conference held in Gothenburg 22nd and 23rd September with delegates representing Governments, Administrations and Institutions in Denmark, The Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Sweden on the question of placing a combined weather and rescue ship in the center of the North Sea.

having considered that such ship has already been in service each year since 1959 during three months-periods January-March, and having discussed the technical and financial views of the matter,

(1) recommends to the four countries in question to place a combined weather and rescue ship in October this year on a position of 56°30' N and 03°00' E for service during six months this winter period and to make the same arrangement for the winter period 1962-1963 ;

(2) recommends that the ship shall make regular weather observations every third hour and report to the Norwegian Weather Service ;

(3) recommends that the ship shall keep permanent watch on the international distress frequency 2182 kc., and if possible on other frequencies ;

(4) recommends that the ship shall make hydrographic observations according to wishes from the Hydrological Services in the four countries ;

(5) recommends that the ship shall transmit radio signals for direction finding and take radio bearings when needed for ships in distress ;

MISCELLANEOUS

(6) recommends that the observations made on board the ship concerning the actual weather situation shall be broadcast in the national weather reports ;

(7) expresses the opinion that after experiences have been gained during the two aforementioned periods a decision should be made whether, if possible, a ship specially built and fitted for this service could be put in a permanent service ;

(8) recommends that other nations around the North Sea be invited to support and take part in this service for the benefit of the meteorological service and of the safety of navigation, fishing and aviation ;

(9) draws the attention of the proper authorities and of the shipping associations to the fact that the shore-based direction finding service in the United Kingdom has been discontinued from 1st September, 1961 ;

(10) recommends that the continued co-operation between the four aforementioned countries shall follow the lines laid down in the appendix to these minutes.

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We would add that should this sea rescue service become permanently established in which the four States we have mentioned have participated in preceding years, great importance would also be given to the equipment of this craft as regards medical and first aid treatment. Its crew would be instructed to be able, if required, to provide first aid in accidents at sea and some of whose members would be trained as frogmen in order to come to the aid of ships in distress. Furthermore, the craft would be fitted out with medications and medical equipment.

Finally, as regards the financing, Mr. Hansson himself considers that the best solution would be for this to be done by private donation by a wealthy individual, by a group of persons or by some society interested in humanitarian activities.