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Fibreglass boats to be built at Hatston

NEW COMPANY WILL EMPLOY EVENTUALLY 50 PEOPLE

HALMATIC LTD., a company of the international Hunting Group having interests in shipping, oil, aviation, survey and engineering, is planning to set up a subsidiary at Kirkwall. The new company—to be known as Halmatic (Scotland) Ltd. — will be engaged in the construction of glass reinforced plastic (GRP) fishing and commercial vessels and other associated GRP products.

After 18 months of negotiations and talks with the White Fish Authority, Highlands and Islands Development Board, numerous fishermen and particularly Orkney County Development Department, whose energies undoubtedly turned the " tide " in favour of Orkney, the new company may look forward with confidence to a healthy future in both home and overseas markets.

Halmatic's main factory at Havant in Hampshire is one of the most modern in Europe for the moulding and fitting out of GRP hulls, decks and superstructures up to 85 feet in length. With over 14 years of experience in the design and production of reinforced plastic vessels, and recent approval of the Statutory Authorities for the application of GRP in Fishing Vessels, the new company will be able to offer the first purpose-built and designed GRP fishing boats in the U.K.

HATSTON SITE

The site under consideration for the new Company at Hatston, Kirkwall offers immediate potential for the company's proposed activities, having access to an adjacent slipway and deep water facilities and also scope for future development and expansion of the business.

With negotiations for substantial backing from the Highlands and Islands Development Board under way, the company will make maximum use of the skills of the Orcadians and their centuries of experience in sea lore, to exploit a worldwide interest in GRP fishing and commercial vessels.

Orkney was chosen as the most favourable site because of its unique position and its ability to provide suitable premises and the skilled labour vital to the mounting of such an operation.

Initially a limited work force of approximately a dozen locally recruited personnel will be employed. However, future plans for increased production to meet overseas demand it is hoped will enable the number employed to be increased annually to approximately 50 persons by 1974.

Throughout the research which has been carried out on the project, the fullest co-operation and involvement of established boat builders with whom the new company will be dealing, has been sought. Halmatic has been particularly encouraged by the favourable reaction from fishermen and boat-builders on the use of GRP for fishing boats and working vessels.

TO START IN JANUARY

For 1971 the Company is planning the construction of a multi-purpose 25-ton vessel and a 36-ft. general lobster boat specifically designed for the U.K. market. Production tooling for these boats will commence in January/ February of 1971 with the first boats scheduled for completion during June/July.

Designs have been chosen offering maximum flexibility in fishing methods and numerous variations will be available on standard hull forms.

The manufacture of GRP structures demands a high degree of supervision and knowledge in order to produce high quality laminates, and unlike traditional wood and steel constructional methods, quality and mechanical properties are actually " built in " by the operators during the construction process. Careful control of working practices are therefore maintained throughout the process in order to produce structures of optimum strength values.

In order that the locally recruited personnel may meet these criteria, a three-month Intensive Training Course is planned at the main Plant in Havant, Hampshire. The Training Course will be arranged in conjunction with the Shipbuilding Industry Training Board at Southampton when intensive practical and limited theoretical instruction will be given.

Future projects, now being researched, are a 70-75 ft. seine netter or purse seiner also for U.K. markets and a 70-80 ft. shrimp trawler for overseas markets.