

Sleek Swedish-Built Ferry to Join Alaska Marine Highway Fleet

JUNEAU—Gov. Walter J. Hickel announced last Friday that the state has agreed to purchase a Swedish-built, ocean-going passenger-auto ferry for use on the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The vessel, the 363-foot "Brittanica," will be purchased at a price of \$6,960,000 delivered in Seattle.

The contract calls for delivery in Seattle by June 1.

The Governor said the new ferryliner will join the three ships presently operating in Southeastern Alaska and on the run between Southeastern and Puget Sound.

At the same time, Hickel disclosed that the state has decided definitely on utilizing Seattle's port facilities for the southern terminus of the new Alaska-Washington ferry run.

"We have picked Seattle," the Governor said, "because it is the hub of transportation between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. This will permit the most convenient transfer of passengers from the air, rail and highway facilities in Seattle, to the Alaska-bound ferries."

Hickel said the Brittanica will operate either between Seattle and Prince Rupert, B.C., or between Prince Rupert and Haines, the northern terminus of the state ferry system. The ship may also be operated on both runs on an alternate basis.

By operating the ferry between U. S. and Canadian ports, the state is freed from restrictions of the federal maritime Jones Act which prohibits shipping between American ports on foreign

flag or foreign-built vessels.

"Let there be no mistake about this one point," Hickel said. "We will operate the Brittanica between a U. S. port and a Canadian port in order to maintain the tremendously successful marine service we have inaugurated to Puget Sound."

"However, we are as determined as ever to continue to press for a change in the Jones Act which will permit the state of Alaska to operate all of its vessels—including the foreign-built ferryliner—freely between all of our ports."

The Governor said work in Seattle to prepare the ferry for its Alaskan duty will take about two weeks. It will go into service in late June to early July.

The Governor said the Brittanica is capable of 23 knots. It will cruise at about 18 knots on its voyage from Goteborg, Sweden, where it is presently based.

The 5,300 ton twin-screw vessel is equipped with fin stabilizers and bow thrusters, and is outfitted for open seas operation. It carries a "Plus 100 A-1" maritime insurance rating with Lloyds of London.

Its two diesel engines develop a total of 17,000

State Ferry . . .

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horsepower. The ship draws about 15 feet fully laden. It has a capacity of 1,200 passengers with berths for 400, and space for 140 vehicles.

The ship, at present painted white, will get a blue paint job on its hull to match the color scheme on the other Alaska ferries.

The ferryliner is being purchased from the Sten Olson Shipping Lines, through Fearnlee and Egers, an Oslo, Norway ship brokerage.

Commissioned in 1967, the Brittanica has been operating in the North Sea between Goteborg, Sweden, and Kiel, Germany.

A Swedish crew, accompanied by five or six staff personnel from the state Division of Marine Transportation, will handle the ship on its three-and-a-half to four week voyage to Seattle.

Three refueling stops are scheduled, at the British island of Bermuda, at Cristobal in the Panama Canal Zone, and at San Pedro, California.

The roughly-11,500-mile voyage will take the Brittanica through the North Atlantic, the Caribbean sea, the Gulf of Panama and the North Pacific en route to Seattle.