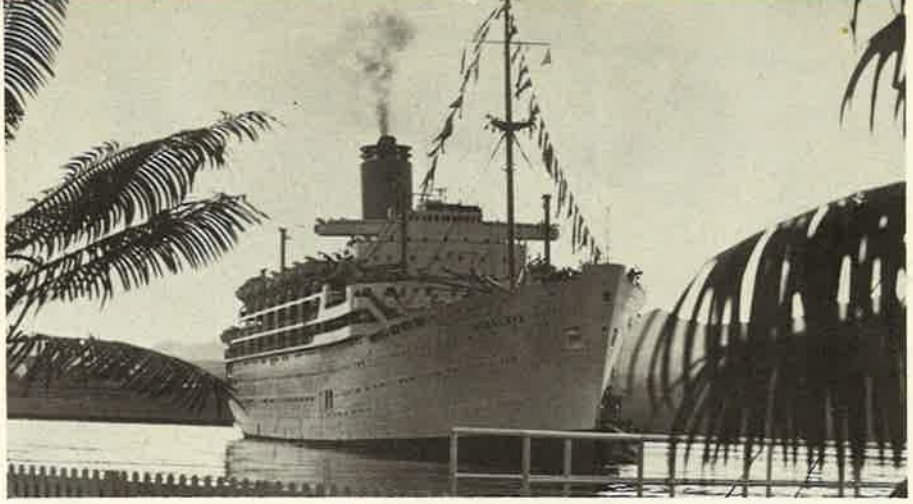


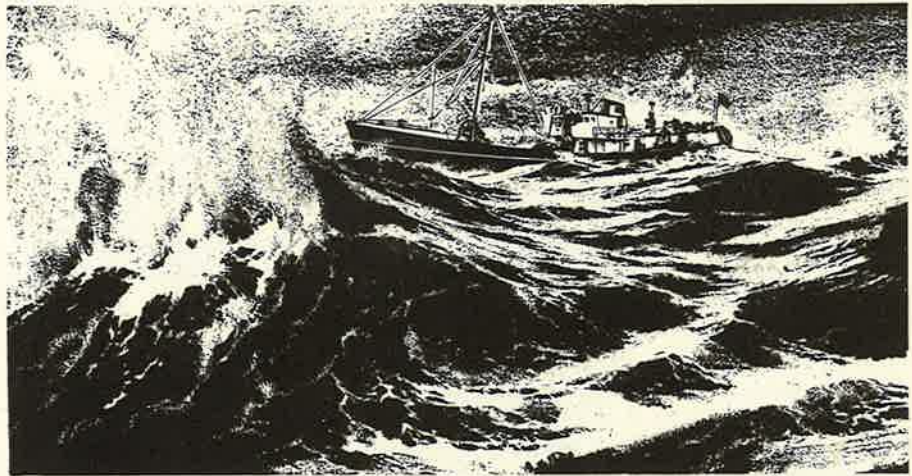
Shipping in all parts of the world, like the liner in tropical waters and trawlers fishing in icy seas, are kept in touch with Britain through the Post Office long-range radio services. Maritime



Calling ships of the world

services are now being reconstructed in an extensive plan to keep all services provided by Post Office coastal stations in line with recent international developments in radio communication.

JL Hyatt



THE LONG-RANGE radio services provided by the Post Office for worldwide shipping are undergoing extensive reconstruction to meet both the present growing demand and forecast future requirements in this field. Paradoxically expansion of these high-frequency (HF) maritime systems is taking place against the background of a declining demand for HF circuits in fixed communication services between land-based radio stations in Britain and other countries in the face of competition from satellite and submarine cable links.

Although it is likely that a satellite service for ships will eventually be introduced, it will be many years before the present terrestrial maritime services are no longer required. Very many ships make little use of radio communications and these are unlikely to opt for satellite equipment until it is absolutely necessary or until costs become competitive with those of terrestrial systems.

Ordinary wireless telegraphy (Morse) is still by far the most widely used method of long-distance maritime communication and demand is increasing at an annual rate of 7-8

per cent. At the same time radiotelephony is becoming increasingly important, with demand growing at a rate of about 30 per cent each year. The Post Office is also introducing radioteletypewriter facilities for use by ships. To meet these requirements a three-phase programme is being undertaken to reconstruct the entire long-range service.

Phase 1: An interim programme, begun in 1971 and now nearing completion. This was planned to give additional transmitter and receiver capacity when the Long Range Area Communication scheme, operated jointly by the Post Office, Ministry of Defence (Navy) and some Commonwealth countries, came to an end in the summer of 1971. Under this scheme the Post Office long-range station at Burnham-on-Sea dealt with telegraph messages for British and Commonwealth ships in the Atlantic and Mediterranean but messages for British ships in the more remote areas were relayed over land lines for transmission through overseas radio stations run by the Navy.

The ending of the naval scheme meant that British ships had to be

worked direct by radio from the UK. So as to meet this requirement 11 redundant transmitters at Dorchester radio station hitherto used for the fixed services were fitted with omni-directional aerials suitable for working to ships in all parts of the world and commissioned for the maritime service. Twelve additional receiving positions, installed in a prefabricated building, were brought into use at Burnham.

Phase 2: Long-term transmitter provisioning programme. Phase 1 gave immediate relief but did nothing either to meet the growing demand for long-range radiotelephone and radioteletypewriter circuits and the continuing development of wireless telegraphy, or to provide adequate spare and reserve transmitters in an era of generally unattended transmitting stations. Many of the existing transmitters were also obsolescent and had reached the end of their economic lives. A programme was therefore drawn up to meet the longer term requirements using as far as possible transmitters in the fixed service made redundant by the introduction of satellites.

The proposed development will be met in part by making use of 12