

An aerial photograph of a port area at sunset. The water is a deep orange, and the land is dark. Several large structures, possibly piers or docks, are visible in the foreground. The sky is a bright orange, and the overall scene is bathed in the warm light of the setting sun.

PORT OF HOUSTON

OCTOBER 1985

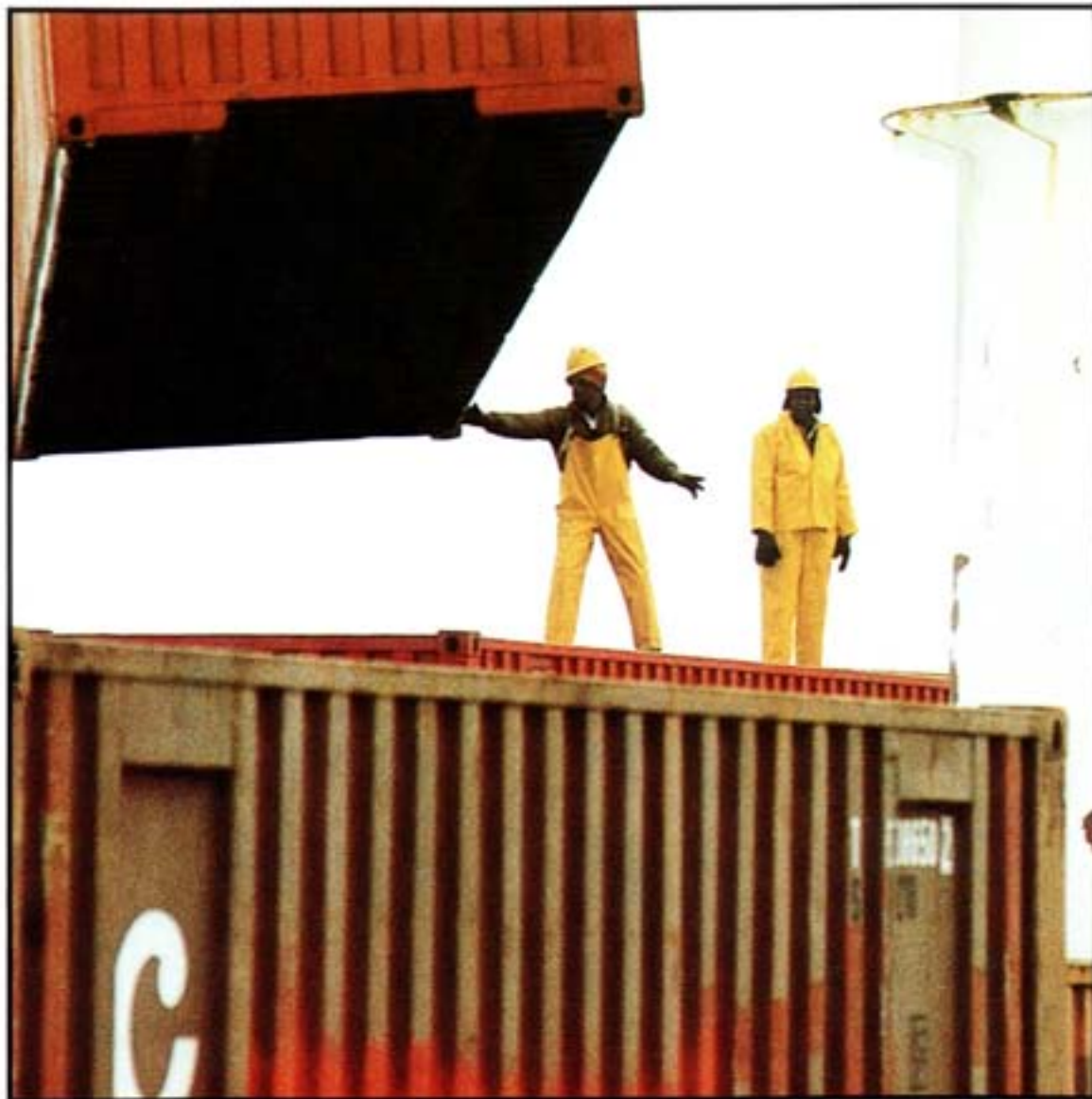
M A G A Z I N E

*The Port of Antwerp:
Belgian port highlighted*

*Fentress Bracewell: Former
commission chairman honored*

*Scandinavia: Four-nation
trade mission featured*

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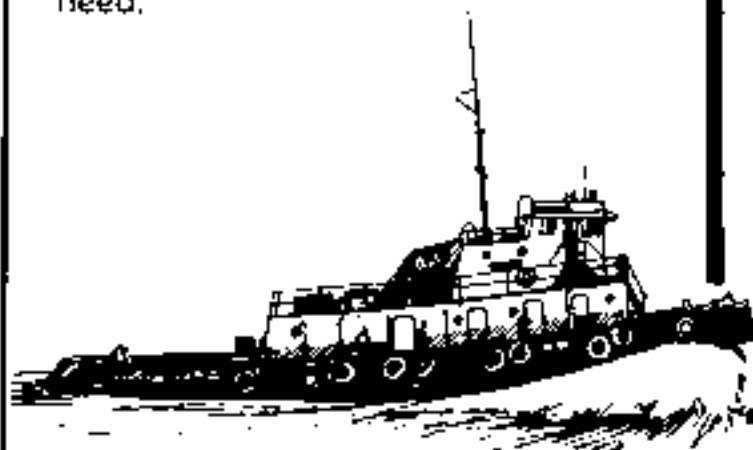


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Port Commissioners



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Chairman



M.D. Perry
Commissioner



H.J. Middleton
Commissioner

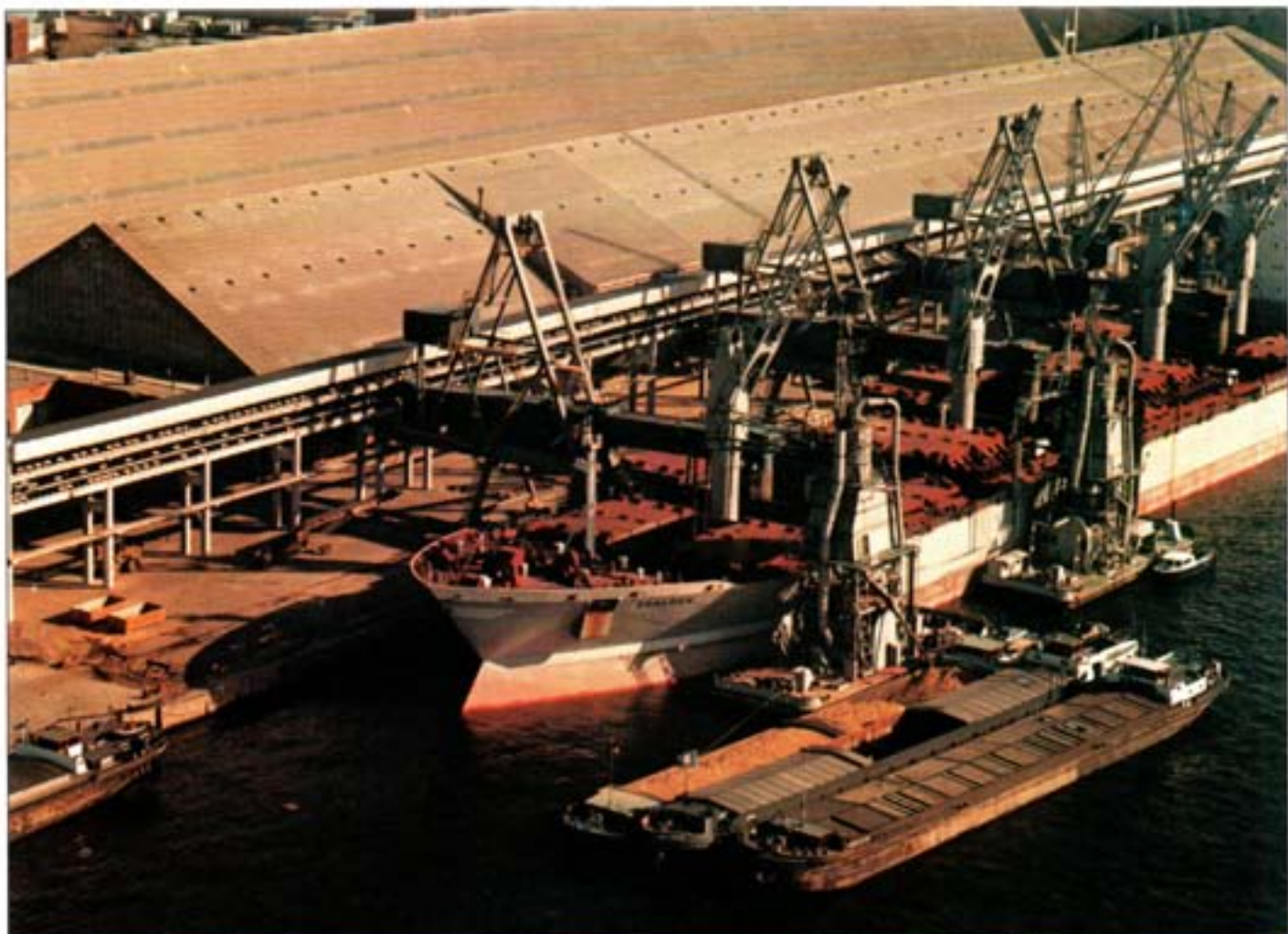


R. Gonzales, Jr.
Commissioner



A.B. Shepard, Jr.
Commissioner

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Ports of the world

Antwerp: Europe's fastest growing port

Officials from two of the world's busiest ports, the Port of Houston and the Port of Antwerp, Belgium, will be getting together later this month to plan strategies for stimulating trade between the United States and Europe, while beefing up cargo movements through their own ports.

Port of Houston Authority officials will serve as hosts to a Belgian trade delegation October 23 and 24. Headed by the governor of the Province of Antwerp, the group, consisting of representatives of the city of Antwerp, the Belgian Foreign Trade office and

several private-sector organizations, is on a six-city tour of the United States to disseminate information on ways in which the Port of Antwerp can be utilized to improve trade.

The delegation, with specialists in a variety of trade-related areas, will discuss transportation, consolidation, storage and distribution of goods; import, export, and commercial transit operations; investment and joint-venture opportunities; and tourism, according to Denis Banneel, Belgian consul general in Houston.

Houston is of particular interest to the delegation, noted Banneel, as its port

has much in common with the Port of Antwerp. Both ports are ranked among the top 10 busiest ports in the world—Antwerp is fourth and Houston ninth. And, like Houston, which is located 53 miles inland, the Port of Antwerp is situated 80 miles from the North Sea.

Additionally, Antwerp handles a high volume of iron and steel products, as does Houston, the number one port of entry for iron and steel imports to the United States.

Both ports also are extremely active in the handling of containerized cargoes. The Port of Houston's \$150-million-

ABOVE: Transshipment and unloading operations at a specialized terminal for fertilizers and cereals, both bagged and in bulk. (Photograph G. Coolens)



1984 general cargo traffic totaled 38.35 million tons (inclusive of 10.8 million tons of containerized goods).

dollar, ultra-modern facility at Barbours Cut in La Porte has put it in the driver's seat for containerized cargo on the West Gulf. The Port of Antwerp boasts a full-service container facility at the Churchill Dock, as well as more than 10 other container-handling sites along the Scheldt River.

Antwerp is presently one of the fastest growing seaports in Europe, and in 1984, it succeeded in increasing its cargo turnover by more than 12 percent. A number of new records were set, including total tonnage of 90.3 million tons, general cargo tonnage reached 38 million tons and 1.2 million container units were handled. From 16,000 to 17,000 vessels, representing over 100 nations, equivalent to half of the world fleet, call at the port annually.

As a result of its performance in 1984, Antwerp strengthened its position as one of Europe's leading ports, and as the number one port for Europe's overseas export of general cargo. The port serves as a major gateway for West Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy.

Antwerp has developed into an important distribution center for European imports and a major consolidation center for European exports. The port has excellent communications links within the country, more specialized covered

storage facilities than any other European port, a qualified labor force and liberal customs regulations. In boasts, as a major asset, its sound and realistic tariff policy which offers highly competitive rates versus other European ports.

Antwerp is also a world center for trade and industry. The local trading companies are mostly involved in import and export and handle about 50 percent of all commercial transit operations in the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union. The Province of Antwerp is

touted as the undisputed leader in the Belgian export scene. Almost one third of all exports originate from Antwerp-based industries, and more than half of their sales go abroad.

Facility improvements at the port, along with progressive marketing/public relations tactics, have enabled the Port of Antwerp to continue growing, despite the worldwide economic slump of the early 1980s. According to a recent report of the Study Centre for the Expansion of Antwerp, vessel traffic increased an average of 15 percent in 1984, over 1983; and overall port tonnage was up seven percent, or nearly 10 million tons, over the previous year.

General cargo showed a 15 percent gain in 1984, compared to 1983, with containerized cargo alone totaling 10.8 million tons—a 22 percent increase over the previous year. Other commodities also showed positive gains: bagged cereals (53 percent), iron and steel products (40 percent), fruit (19 percent), and flour and sugar (14 percent).

Bulk traffic also increased; oil movements were up nine percent over the previous year, ores were up 33 percent; and coal ships increased by 29 percent.

The report cited better service, resulting from expansion of port facilities and improvements to the region's in-



General cargo facilities are predominant in the port. In the background is one of the two large General Motors car assembly plants in the port area.



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frastructure, as primary factors in the port's improved position in the world marketplace, as well as the business community's increasing confidence in the port's future and a resurgence in the region's industrial activities, in general.

Improvements to port facilities in 1984 included: dredging of the Western Scheldt to accommodate bulk carriers with draughts of up to 50 feet; beginning construction of the Berendrecht Lock; and extending a radar system within the port and along its access route, as well as completing two unmanned radar stations at the Antwerp lock complexes, which improved navigation control.

Port authorities also have agreed on a plan to modernize the central dock area on the right bank of the Scheldt to increase cargo-handling capacity. The project, to be implemented in three phases, will require investments of over 500 million BF, or about \$8.3 million.

Additionally, the Government Inner Cabinet has approved further expansion of the port on the left bank. This project, with a price tag of 2,535 million BF, or almost \$42.3 million, should expand the port's ability to handle general and dry bulk cargoes.

Projects aimed at improving inland access to the port also began or were completed during 1984. Work continued on

the Albert Canal, which is being widened; contracts for construction of a new inland navigation lock at Wijnegem, to accommodate push-tug traffic up to 9,000 tons, were awarded; and Belgian Railways released plans to modernize the Antwerp North Marshalling Yard. Improvements to the yard, which will require investments of 3,500 million BF, or about \$58.3 million over a five-year period, would increase the yard's handling capacity and improve operational safety.

Improvements to the region's infrastructure—construction of three new bridges, two of which were completed in 1984, and plans for a third tunnel under the Scheldt—will provide better truck access to and from port areas.

The report noted, "Constant growth in the volume of cargo, especially general cargo, has strengthened the confidence of many companies in the future of the port and has encouraged them to invest in new, mainly high-technology handling equipment."

Terminals at the Delwaide Dock, for example, have installed a new mobile Gottwald container crane; a second gantry crane; and two general cargo cranes, with a lifting capacity of 32 tons. Three cargo handlers have introduced pneumatic unloading installations for

soya products, rice, malt and tapioca. Various firms engaged in overland transportation have expanded vehicle fleets; construction of specialized, covered storage areas is on the upswing; and an ever-increasing number of shipping agents, freight forwarders and other cargo handlers are investing in digital data transmission and communication equipment to improve document processing efficiency.

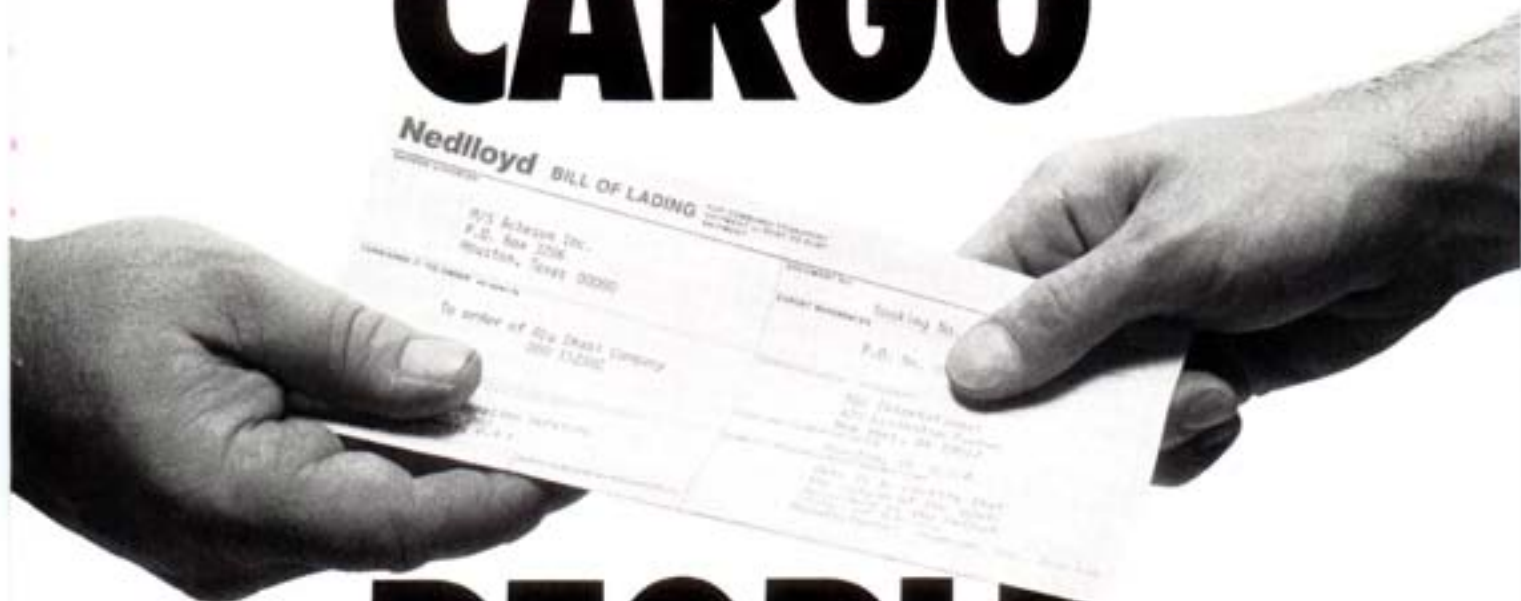
In addition, the public sector is assisting in the transition to automation, and an Antwerp Community of Port Interests (AGHA) has been established to collect data into an integrated traffic control system to improve the flow of maritime traffic movements, while providing a device for monitoring the movement of hazardous materials.

The report also credited the Port of Antwerp Promotion Association with making inroads that improved the port's business climate. Serving as a catalyst for trade development activities, the association carried out an intensive action program in Belgium and abroad, which included organizing a "French Shipper's Day" and an "Open Doors Day," with the theme "Know and Support Your Port," in Belgium; foreign trade missions to the ASEAN countries and South Africa; and participated in "Port Days" in several European cities. □



Antwerp's latest dock, inaugurated in 1982 as Delwaide Dock, has 4.7 km of quaylength and recorded a cargo turnover of 15 million tons in 1984. It hosts four container terminals and one bulk terminal. (Photograph G. Coolens)

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HOUSTON HUMMER

John Hsu believes that hard work leads to success. And, his philosophy is reflected in his life, his business and his family.

As junior vice president of Evergreen Line, Hsu is in charge of the Houston district office of the Taiwan-based line, which offers weekly service through the Port of Houston's Barbours Cut Container Terminal. Hsu instills his ideology in those around him, while echoing his company's business philosophy.

"We believe that the only way to deal with the recession that has hit the shipping business is by working harder and cutting costs. For example, in Evergreen's Taiwan headquarters, we may be scheduled to leave work at 5:30 in the afternoon, but work continues. In Taipei, our office is the only one with the lights on, and people working into the evening. We work Saturdays and Sundays, someone is always on duty." The company also maintains its own container manufacturing and refurbishing facilities, according to Hsu, and manufactures all its own chassis.

"All these factors are designed to cut costs, which is the way to survive in the business today," he said.

Evergreen's slogan—Evergreen is Evergrowing—is reflected in its relatively rapid success in the shipping business. Established only 17 years ago, the company began a breakbulk service from the Far East to the Persian Gulf. When that proved successful, in less than one year, the line anticipated the need for a liner service from the Far East to the Caribbean and Central/South America.

"As a result of the energy and oil crisis in the mid 1970s, the subject of containerization came up and the company spent a lot of time and money researching the market, then made plans to develop a worldwide network of container shipping routes," according to Hsu. Today it operates the only global service with both east and westbound routes.

Convinced that breakbulk transport



would soon be obsolete and that containerization was the way of the future, the company expanded again.

In July 1975, a regular full container liner service between the Far East and the East Coast was inaugurated. Successful expansion to the West Coast and to the Caribbean and Central/South America followed, and subsequently service to the Mediterranean. By early 1979, Evergreen's Arabian-Persian Gulf service had been fully containerized. In April of that year, service was opened to Europe and, in November of the same year, service began between Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

It was Evergreen's aggressive business techniques and management philosophies, not an ordered maritime education, that propelled Hsu into the business.

Hsu has an educational background in foreign languages and history, and speaks Mandarin, Japanese and English, which has been a natural stepping-stone to the foreign trading business. He worked in the foreign trade business for about ten years before joining Evergreen, which was looking for someone who was bilingual, seven years ago. He has not regretted his decision to enter the shipping business.

"The shipping business is very interesting and challenging. One meets different types of people and every day there are different problems to solve. In-

stead of following a dull, boring routine every day, you are always met with a challenge. The international aspect is very different from working in a traditional office atmosphere."

Directing the Houston district office, which has responsibility for a five-state region including Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Mississippi, is not Hsu's entire life, however. He is presently adjusting to the role of college father, as his eldest son recently enrolled for his freshman year at the University of Texas at Austin. Having been in the United

States only two and one-half years, his family, his wife, two boys and one girl, are still adjusting, he said, again, by working hard.

"I think my son is a little bit homesick. Since coming to the United States, he has had difficulty adjusting to the pace of the study here, especially with English, since it is not his first language. He is now planning to major in aerospace engineering," he said.

"When I left the Evergreen Taipei office to accept this foreign assignment, the founder and chairman of the company, Y.F. Chang, had a one-to-one discussion with me about working in the United States. He talked about the purposes and goals of opening the Houston office. In advice and encouragement, he gave me a very important example of the management relationship we have at Evergreen. 'We are proud of the company—proud of the condition of our ships. When you visit one, you will always find it neat and clean.'"

The four 512 teu capacity ships now calling at Barbours Cut are relatively new, built in March 1984. By 1986, Evergreen will have 24 new full container ships in service, with a total of 900,000 dead weight tons. The entire fleet will total 63 container ships, with over 116,000 teu capacity. The line will be one of the leading container ship companies in the world, Hsu said. □

Houston Interamerican Chamber of Commerce honors Interamerican Consular Corps

More than 400 attended a reception held recently to honor the Houston Interamerican Consular Corps. The second annual event was sponsored by the Houston Interamerican Chamber of Commerce, a group founded to promote two-way trade between the nations of North, South and Latin America.

According to Diva Garcia, vice president of special events, the reception provided a one-to-one meeting between the corps and the chamber members. Each of the consuls was presented an honorary membership to the chamber and a proclamation from the city of Houston.

Acting as master of ceremonies, Cesar Navarro, executive vice president of the chamber, said more understanding and greater support has been shown throughout the Houston area in the past year for the organization, citing the opening of two new chambers of commerce, that of Peru and Venezuela. Navarro said that the Port of Houston is the most

important port for Latin America and is the "port of entry" for products made in those countries.

The Houston Interamerican Chamber of Commerce was formed to promote two-way trade and investment between Houston and countries of the Western Hemisphere through seminars and special events. Future events include a seminar on the oil and gas investment policies of Argentina, co-sponsored with the Council of the Americas (New York), October 4; a conference on new government regulations and developments affecting United States investments in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, co-sponsored with the National Foreign Trade Council (New York), October 8, and its regular luncheon meeting on October 10, when the featured speaker will be an official from the Port of Houston Authority. In addition, the president of the chamber was recently selected to serve on the board of directors of the World Trade Association. For more information about the group's activities, call 785-8355. □



J. Anthony Ruiz, president, Interamerican Chamber; Patricia McFarland, administrative aide-Protocol, City of Houston.



Juan Carlos Garaguso, Consul of Argentina; Jorge Lapson, Trade Commissioner of the Argentine Republic; Mauricio Avila R., consul general of Colombia in Houston.



Jesse Riveron, First Chicago International; J. Cadena, Citibank International; and Gaspar Mir, III, Peat Marwick.



Diva Garcia, vice president, special events, Interamerican Chamber; Cesar Navarro, president, Peruvian North American Chamber.

Nell Dudley, Rita Lopez, Ben Alegria and Anna Maria Alegria.



David L. Eckles, Susan S. Eckles, both of E.G. International; Cesar Estupian, Burlington Northern; Barbara Voorhees, Transnave owner's representative; and Misael Breton, Latin America representative, Port of Houston Authority.

Armando Waterland, trade development director, Port of Houston Authority; Abbie Jones; Avila; and Ruiz.





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Maritime community leaders honor Bracewell

More than 300 members of the Houston maritime community were on hand at a recent luncheon to honor the man who guided the Port of Houston Authority for 15 years as its chairman, Fentress Bracewell.

Bracewell, who served as the longest tenure of any port commission chairman, was the recipient of several mementos of appreciation including a proclamation from Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire, proclaiming the day as "Fentress Bracewell Day in Houston," and a similar proclamation from Harris County Commissioners Court, presented by County Judge Jon Lindsay.

Included in the presentations were the Port of Houston Authority, the West Gulf Maritime Association, the Houston Port Bureau, the Institute of International Education, the World Trade Association, the Port of Houston Propeller Club, the American Waterways Operators and the International Seamen's Center. All five current commissioners of the Port of Houston Authority, as well as former commissioners and former Chairman Howard Tellepsen, were present at the event.

Bracewell, who also served as a port commissioner for two years before becoming chairman, was praised by all presenters for his unselfish service to the Port of Houston Authority.

In his remarks, Bracewell commented that the cooperation and support he had received over the years has resulted in Houston becoming a "world-class port".

"An extensive building campaign over the past 30 years has resulted in a great port. I believe the port is now in ex-



Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire presents proclamation to Bracewell.

cellent hands and the diverse experience of the port officials will successfully guide it," he said.

"Houston is truly the town that built a port, that built a city," he continued. "I am confident the Port of Houston will continue to be the most important factor in the growth of the area." □



Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay offers a resolution on behalf of county commissioners.



Port of Houston Authority Chairman Archie Bennett honors former chairman.

Port of Houston Authority travels

A delegation from the Port of Houston Authority travelled to Scandinavian countries recently on a sales mission for the Port of Houston Authority. Included in the stops on the trip were Stockholm and Gothenburg in Sweden; Bergen and Oslo in Norway; Copenhagen, Denmark and Antwerp, Belgium.

The delegation consisted of Commissioner Marcella Perry, Executive Director Richard P. Leach, and Director of Trade Development, Armando S. Waterland.

Several luncheons and receptions were held to meet with top shipping industry people at each of the stops, in addition to many sales calls. The PHA film, "The Fabulous Fifty Miles," was presented to each of the groups and was well received.

Commissioner Perry noted that the officials at each of the stops were impressed that Houston's "top brass" would travel to meet with them and discuss mutual shipping interests.

The Scandinavian trip is one of several planned by the Port Authority throughout the year to keep in touch with leading shipping executives around the world. □

In Gothenburg. . .



Shg Tednell, Uddeholms-Agenturen; Karl-Erik Ryden, Uddeholms-Agenturen; Lars-Olof Johansson, Volvo Transport; and Curt Svanberg, Strandbergs.



Ian-Axel Hofstedt, Axel Hofstedt, AB; Kjell Alice Anderson, ACL; and Lars Malmgren, Scanfreight.



Leif Mathiasson, Speditions Service; Shg Tednell, Uddeholms-Agenturen; and Skn Svanksson, Svantessona Wallenus.



Jan Aronsson, Strandbergs; Kerstin Bergguist, Volvo Transport; Goran Falk, Volvo Penta; and Leif Mathiasson, Speditions Service.



Berhi Jonsson, Scanfreight; and Martin G. Forester, American Consul General.

to Scandinavia on sales mission

In Gothenburg. . .



Ian-Axel Hofstedt, Axel Hofstedt, AB; Eva Karlsson, ACL; and Kjell-Alice Anderson, ACL.



Commissioner Marcella Perry, Port of Houston Authority; Jan Leach, Port of Houston Authority; and Christina Bhanji, Johnson Shipping.



Stellan Daun, Transocean; Berhi Jonsson, Scarfreight; and Pei Bjurston, Port of Gothenburg.

In Oslo. . .



Peter Harden and Mike Elliott, Barber Blue Sea; and R.P. Leach, executive director, Port of Houston Authority.



Tore Andresen, managing director, Jahre Shipping; and Per Torgersen, member of the board, ACCO Shipping.

In Copenhagen. . .



Kim Moller, The East Asiatic Company; and Klaus Kjaerulff, A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM.



Peter K. Miller, Maersk Line; John Guldbrandsen, Maersk Drilling; and Find Hansen, Rederiaktieselskabet Ove Skou.



Ulla and Otto Danielsen, both of Rederiet Otto Danielsen.



Elo Nielsen and Steen Petersen, both of Dannebrog Rederi A/S.



John Guldbrandsen, Maersk Drilling; Find Hansen, Rederiaktieselskabet Ove Skou; Niels Christensen, A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM.



Axel Madsen, Texaco; and Henrik Schrum, A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM.



Jorgen Falkenstein, Dampskibsselskabet Norden; Erik Behn, president, A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM; and Axel Madsen, Texaco.



Peter Albeck and Ole Rich, both with A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM; L.G. Christensen, L.G.C. Consult; and Wung Sung, Dannebrog Rederi A/S.

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Mr. Hjorth, Industriradet; S. AA. Lauridsen, Dansk Landbrugs Grovareselskab; and Bo Green, Grosserersocietetet.



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Poul Rasmussen, Maersk Line; Erik Behn, A/S Dampskibsselskabet TORM; and Hans G. Anderson, Rederiet A.P. Moller.



Jan Leach, R.P. Leach, executive director, Port of Houston Authority; and Axel Madsen, Texaco.



Peter Rosendal, Transportradgiver; and Max Hansen, Tecomar.



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Bellaire Sesquicentennial project

Trolley comes through Barbours Cut Terminal



From left: Bill Goins, Kerr Steamship; Moppy Gay, co-chairman, Bellaire Sesquicentennial Commission; Barbours Cut Container Terminal Manager John Horan; Bellaire Sesquicentennial Commission Co-Chairman Barbara Young; Sam McKinney, mayor of Bellaire; Louise Ware, Metro; Jack Yuill, member of the trolley committee of the Bellaire Sesquicentennial Commission; and Port of Houston Authority Commissioner Howard Middleton.

A Portuguese trolley car, to be a museum in the city of Bellaire, as part of its Texas Sesquicentennial project, was unloaded in August at the Port of Houston Authority's Barbours Cut Container Terminal.

Approximately 100 area officials from the cities of Houston, Bellaire and La Porte and Harris County as well as PHA officials and representatives from Spanish Line and Kerr Steamship, the vessel's agent, attended the welcoming ceremonies, and enjoyed the music of the "Good Times Brass Band," on hand for the occasion. Also in attendance were Bellaire citizens and Sesquicentennial Commission members from Bellaire and Austin.

The acquisition of the trolley car,

which arrived from Cadiz, Spain, via the Spanish Line vessel, the *CAMINO II*, is the major project of the Bellaire Sesquicentennial Commission. Its goal was to purchase a trolley car with a clere story, or upper deck, on a double truck, resembling the one that served the community from 1910-1929.

The trolley ran from the Houston city limits, then at Fannin and Eagle, where the South Main Sears store stands today, over thirty miles of prairie, into Bellaire. It became an important connection between Houston and Bellaire. Bellaire was founded in 1909, consisting of truck farms for oranges, figs and other produce. The trolley is also reported to have proved invaluable for pulling cars out of ditches during flooding.

The trolley car is in working condition, most recently seeing service in O'Porto, Portugal. However, it will not be put into service in Bellaire, but opened as a museum in early 1986, housing memorabilia of the early 1900s.

The car, which was made in America in 1904 and then shipped to Europe, weighs 16 tons and has dimensions of seven feet by 34 feet by 11 feet. It was purchased at a cost of \$29,000. The entire project is expected to cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 and will include permanently securing the car on a covered concrete slab on the Bellaire Boulevard esplanade.

According to Moppy Gay, co-



Interior of vintage trolley car.

chairman of the Bellaire Sesquicentennial Commission, the Bellaire Trolley #124, as it will be renamed, will be located in the center of the city of Bellaire, within walking distance of schools, and when completed as a museum, will be open to the public. The commission will continue fund raising efforts to repay a loan for the purchase and for further improvements, Gay said. □



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Houston Port Bureau plays vital role

Since its organization in 1929, the Houston Port Bureau has played a vital, far-reaching role in the growth of the Port of Houston, promoted transportation through the port and protected it from encroachment on its cargo sources.

The Bureau's history is an interesting one. Initially, the Bureau included a sales force. It was also responsible for the traffic management of the port's operations.

In 1936, the Port Bureau became the Houston Port and Traffic Bureau as a result of a reorganization. In addition to sales, this revised organization was responsible for coordinating the rate and traffic activities of the major interests using the port. Later, in 1959, the sales force joined the Port of Houston Authority and the Bureau's name was changed back to Houston Port Bureau, and it was incorporated under Texas laws. It has operated under this charter since that time.

According to George Strange, general manager, the Bureau's scope and function continues to grow today.

"The object of the Bureau is to promote adequate national and international inland and foreign transportation, to and from the ports it represents, and to do whatever is necessary in order to motivate import and export commerce," Strange said.

Additionally, the bureau is responsible for keeping its finger on the pulse of legislative issues that might affect the port in order to keep Houston competitive with other ports in the Gulf and elsewhere.

"Most recently we fought the passage of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980, and we are continuing to urge its repeal. Because of actions by the Interstate Commerce Commission (due to its interpretation of the act) and the Motor Carrier Act of 1980, the Bureau has been forced to study its possible impact upon the Port of Houston," he said.



George Strange,
general manager,
Houston Port Bureau

The Bureau finds it more demanding now, according to Strange, to participate in rate-making matters by either supporting or opposing or endeavoring to see that a level of competitive rates is established.

"It is a matter of negotiating and selling to the carriers the establishment of proper levels of transportation charges, whether they be published jointly, independently or through contracts. If the Port Bureau does not take necessary action on every proposal, independent rate publication or rail contract rate, it is highly likely that Houston may not remain competitive with other ports," he said.

The Bureau is also charged with the responsibility of interacting with the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Maritime Commission, the Texas Railroad Commission and other state and federal regulatory bodies in developing an understanding of the transportation requirements of industry. Bureau officials also work to secure the modifications of laws, rulings and


regulations found to be harmful to ports and industry and promote international commerce.

Governed by a board of directors comprised of bankers, shippers, port authority officials, attorneys and maritime community leaders, the Bureau currently has a membership of over 160 individuals. Companies also receive monthly reports on its activities related to the industry. In addition to the Port of Houston, it represents the Port of Freeport and the Gulf Ports Association. Since January 1983, it has also operated a subsidiary, the Marine Exchange, which reports ship movements in and out of the Port of Houston and other West Gulf ports.

"In 1984, the Bureau responded to its membership with over 3,900 requests for information on legislative and other matters, rate quotations and general information. We will continue as we have for 56 years, to take action whenever possible to protect the membership's interest, that of the Houston business community and the ports and organizations we represent in international trade and transportation matters," Strange said. □

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Firefighting on the channel

Port's fire/safety program is compact, efficient

When the oil tanker *AMOCO VIRGINIA* burned in the Houston Ship Channel in 1959, Capt. Ray Dial was there. He was a crew member of the *CAPTAIN CROTTY*, the Port of Houston's old fireboat.

The *VIRGINIA* fire, which took several days to extinguish, was a bad one, Dial said. "From our point of view, probably one of the worst. It burned for awhile, then blew from the hold. It didn't sink, but there were great big holes in the deck."

The *CAPTAIN CROTTY* is gone now, retired in 1983 after 33 years on the Houston waterway.

But Dial still fights fires on the chan-

nel. Today he's the captain of the *J.S. BRACEWELL*, which is stationed at the PHA Manchester wharves. It's one of three fireboats making up the port's modern firefighting fleet.

Dial says he's seen many changes in the way fire protection is handled during his 33 years at the port, most of them for the better.

"I think everyone's gotten more safety minded on the channel than they were years ago," Dial said. "Fire prevention is stressed a lot more than it used to be."

John Zumwalt agreed. He's the president of the International Association of Firefighters, Local 16, and an engineer aboard the *CAPTAIN W.L. FARN-*

SWORTH, the port's Greens Bayou-based fireboat.

"We don't have a great number of fires here," Zumwalt said. "And there are good reasons that we don't. One is the great skill of the ship channel pilots in avoiding collisions, another is the safety consciousness of everyone who works at the public port facilities and at the private industries based along the channel."

The Port of Houston's fire and safety program is compact, but efficient, said Ted Walters, deputy director of port operations, and the man in charge of the port's fire department.



The *J.S. BRACEWELL*, stationed at the old Manchester wharves, is one of three fireboats which make up the port's firefighting fleet.

"We have three fireboats, the *J.S. BRACEWELL*, in the Turning Basin area, the *CAPT. W.L. FARNSWORTH*, under Capt. M.E. Cannon, at the Bulk Materials Handling Plant (Greens Bayou), and the *HOWARD T. TELLEPSEN*, under Capt. M.L. Deshazo, at the Barbours Cut Container Terminal," he said. "We've also got an extra detail at Barbours Cut consisting of a fire engine and a hazardous materials handling unit."

In addition to the boat and fire engine crews, the port also has one full-time fire inspector, Al Hawkins, who's been on the job since 1963.

"Hawkins is a first responder, meaning that he's the first one on the scene to determine what needs to be done when there is an incident," Walters said. "But primarily, he shoulders the responsibility for maintaining and inspecting all fire protection equipment on the wharves. He inspects all of our tenants and enforces the city of Houston fire codes and the appropriate Coast Guard rules."

The upper reaches of the port actually fall under the jurisdiction of the Houston fire department, and the city's force would be the major department responding to a big fire in the Turning Basin area of the port.

"Because of the small size of the port's force, it would be impractical to expect it to handle a major blaze," Walters said. "By design, we're there to assist, and providing water is a big part of the job. We can deliver an almost endless supply."

The 11-year-old, 80-foot-long, *FARNSWORTH*, the oldest and largest of the three boats, pumps 6,000 gallons of water per minute directly from the channel. The other two vessels, which were built in 1983 and are 68 feet long each, can handle 4,000 gallons a minute. In addition, all three carry tanks of foam for extinguishing petroleum or chemical fires.

"We are waterborne pumping stations instead of land-based pumpers," Walters said. "The primary duties of the boats are to do just that. If we respond to a small boat or tugboat fire, and we're the only ones there, we'll go aboard. But we won't send the whole crew out to combat an aboard-ship fire. We're there to assist the local fire departments, the crew of a vessel, or plant personnel to prevent or suppress fires depending on

the circumstances."

Even so, all the fireboat crews are highly trained firefighters, with qualifications far exceeding state mandates. In a recent example of skill and quick action exhibited by fireboat personnel, Captain Dial and Captain Cannon were praised by AgriExport officials for their expert handling of an incident at the grain elevator in late July.

"There's a high degree of professionalism," Zumwalt said. "All of us are certified marine firefighters, in addition we all attend the Texas A&M University Fire School and the city of Houston Fire Academy. We also have a training officer who has regularly scheduled programs."

Speaking as union president, Zumwalt



More firefighting equipment is available than in earlier days on the channel including manifolds, or water hookups, outside the different channel facilities which enable the fireboats to tap into a plant's internal fire sprinkler system.

said port management deserves much of the credit for the professionalism of the firefighting teams. "We're impressed with the fact that they've recognized the need for the advanced training, and with the foresighted management they have shown in having three fireboats and a hazardous materials unit.

"The port hasn't skimped when it comes to safety," Zumwalt said. "Our association has been able to work with management very closely and very well in order to see to the port's needs. I think this spirit of cooperation is one of the reasons the protection here is as good as it is."

"That relationship, combined with the helpful attitude of the private channel industries, has gone a long way to keep the port safe," he said. "We have an inspection program we rely on heavily as we work with the different facilities," Zumwalt said. "Industry is now very safety conscious. We train with the fire protection personnel in the plants, and there are more trained

people in the facilities, and more fire protection equipment than in earlier times."

Part of that equipment includes manifolds, or water hookups, outside of the different channel facilities which enable the fireboats to tap into the plant's internal fire sprinkler systems. Once attached, the boats can supply an endless stream of water.

"We check the manifolds constantly to make sure they work," Zumwalt said. "Making sure we know where they are and that they're in working order is a big part of our job."

When there is a fire, all three of the boats respond. The one arriving first determines if it needs help. If it doesn't, the others return to their bases. If it

does, all three stay until the situation is under control.

Normally, the *BRACEWELL* would be the first to arrive at a site in the Turning Basin, while the *FARNSWORTH* would be the closest vessel to a mid-channel fire. The *TELLEPSEN* is the primary responder at the east end of the waterway.

The vessel captains have to keep the boats in position while the crews spray down the fires with the powerful deck-mounted water cannon. No easy task as the water rushes out at a force of 2,000 pounds per square inch.

Demonstrations of the abilities of the small craft and their crews are impressive, and the port's firefighting system hasn't gone unnoticed. Visitors from around the world come to Houston to inspect it.

But even with the best of systems, the most effective fire fighting tool is prevention, the firemen say. "In our job," said Hawkins, "it's best to try and stop it before it happens." □

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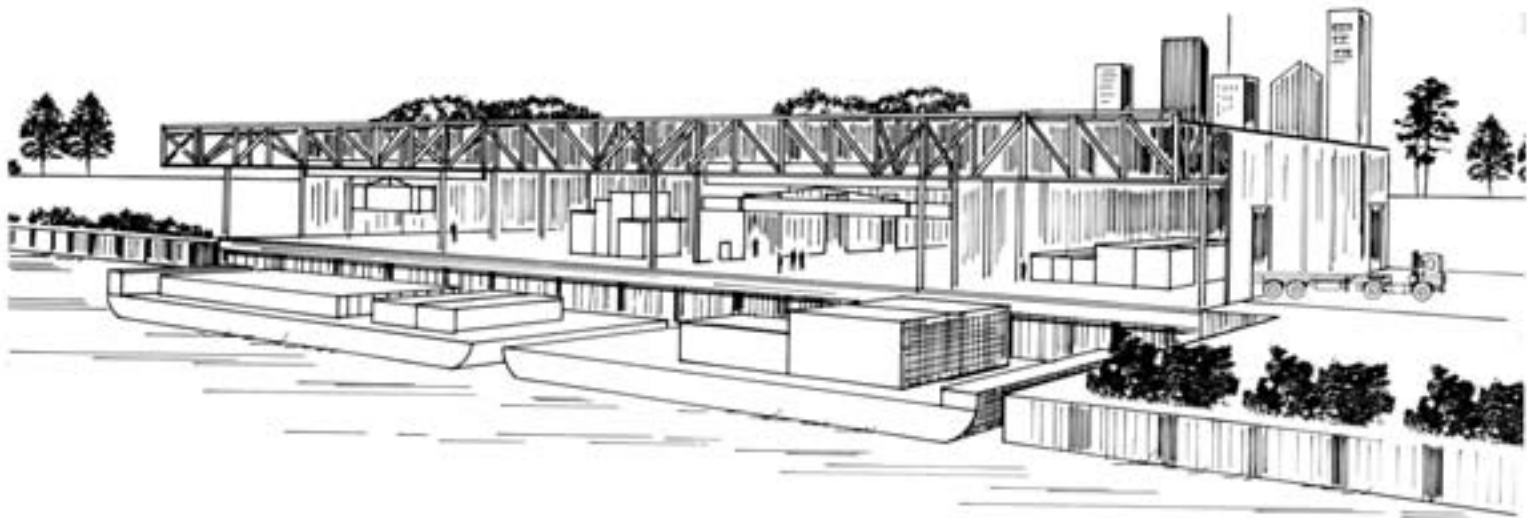
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