

I n t e r n a t i o n a l  
**BULK JOURNAL**

July 1998



**SPECIAL FEATURES:** The Netherlands  
Turkey, Sugar, ISM  
Ships' Agents

**PLUS FERTILISER SUPPLEMENT**

**IBJ**

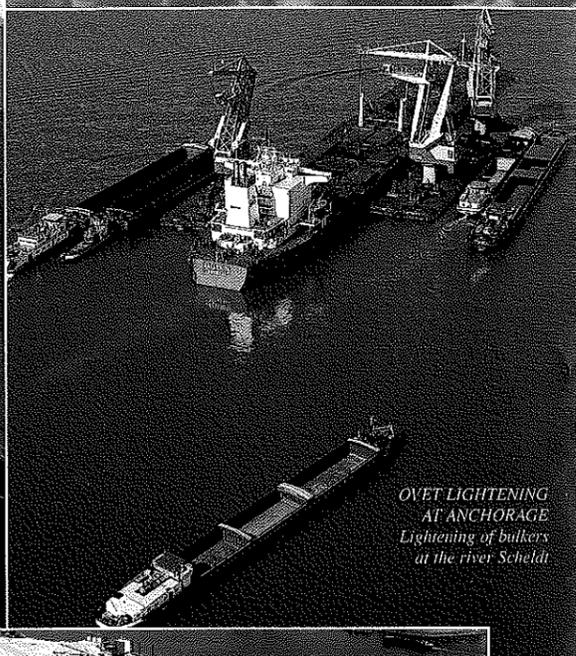
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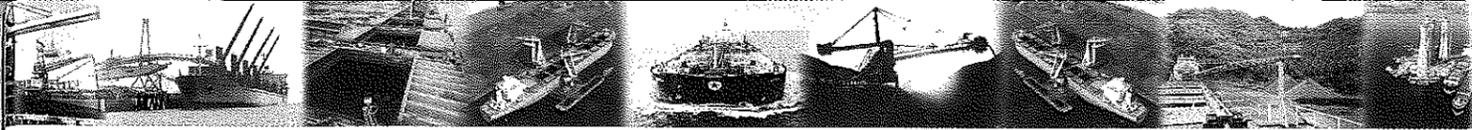
OVET LIGHTNING  
AT ANCHORAGE  
Lightening of bulkers  
at the river Scheldt



OVET FLUSHING TERMINAL  
900,000 tonnes stockyard  
1,000 meters of quay  
ships upto 15.20 saltwater draft



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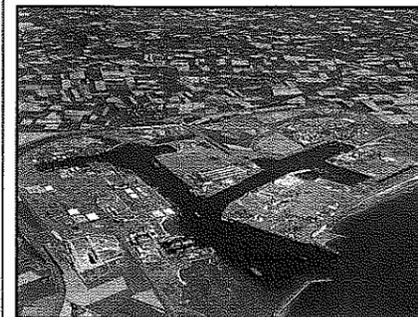


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**South Korean steel slump worsens**



The cover picture shows the Dutch port of Vlissingen. The most northern of the Zeeland Seaports, it has recently seen growth in the bulk handling sector, particularly coal. The port also enjoys continued success as a cargo gateway and as a centre of industry. Zeeland Seaports can be contacted on +31 (0) 115 647400.



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### PLUS FERTILISER SUPPLEMENT

# IBJ

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## COMMENT

## Safety still an issue

THE issue of bulk carrier safety stubbornly refuses to go away. Implementation and enforcement of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code as from the beginning of this month (see p52) may go some way towards addressing the management aspects contributing to improved safety. In particular the requirement for proper planned maintenance systems may help to ensure that parts of ships' structures are better maintained and that corrosion and damage is more effectively rectified.

However, the debate over the basic structural integrity of bulk carriers is set to continue. New issues raised by the report of the assessors looking into the loss of the UK combination carrier *Derbyshire* in 1980 have highlighted a number of concerns. The major matters arising out of the report include the strength of hatch covers, protection of the forward hatch covers from heavy seas over the bow and the forward reserve buoyancy. These and other recommendations have already been passed on to the IMO by the UK and the IMO is to set up a working group to look at the findings of the report. International Association of Class Societies has also established a working group to look at issues arising from the *Derbyshire* assessors' report.

Leading class societies have been at the forefront of efforts to improve the rate of bulk carrier casualties arising from structural failure and have implemented a number of new rules in recent years, such as enhanced surveys, backed up by new international legislation agreed at the IMO. These measures have had some success in reducing the number of casualties but there remains a worrying residue of losses attributable to structural failure, with five in the past two years.

The critical age group for bulk carrier casualties appears to be ships in the 14-18 year-old range. Although fewer in number, the basic characteristics of structural failure have remained generally unchanged. This suggests that the problem is unlikely to disappear without further action.

The new Chapter XII of Solas stipulates that new, single-skin bulkers greater than 150 m in length, laid down on or after July 1, 1999, should be capable of withstanding any hold flooding from both structural and damage stability aspects. New rules for existing bulk carriers require strengthening of the bulkhead between Nos 1 and 2 holds.

Gradually the net is tightening on substandard bulk carriers and it will become progressively more difficult for ships that do not meet these new rules to continue operating on any of the main bulk trade routes. But it will be several years before the whole of the world bulk carrier fleet is fully compliant with the latest structural requirements.

There is therefore a clear message that although positive progress is being made to improve the general standard of bulk carriers, in the words of Lloyd's Register's Chris Wade: "It is premature to think that we have resolved the problems of bulk carrier safety."

IBJ

## Indian government set to shed 10,000 coal sector jobs

INDIA'S Ministry of Coal has decided to reduce the work force of Coal India Limited (CIL) by 10,000 by the financial year 1999-2000, through the aegis of a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS). The VRS is being offered to 4,000 workers in the current year itself.

The ministry has drawn up a detailed VRS programme expected to cost Rs1.6bn from the National Renewal Fund, against allocation of exactly half that amount last year.

CIL is targeting mines that have either been closed or are making losses. "We will merge those mines which are making heavy losses with those doing better," said a ministry source.

"This will be used for either

relocation or retrenchment of workers."

The VRS scheme is being opposed by trade union leaders such as M K Pandhe of the Confederation of Indian Trade Unions (CTU) on the grounds that CIL is abandoning mines which still have the potential to yield more for several years.

The VRS scheme is being offered to workers who refuse to relocate after operations have been suspended in a loss-making mine.

The focus of the scheme are Eastern Coalfields Ltd and Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, which were allocated Rs800m each during the previous financial year.

Sbirish Nadkarni

## TRADE

## Steel demand forecast at 689mt in 1998

WORLD steel consumption of finished steel products for 1998 is forecast at 689.1mt, according to the International Iron and Steel Institute (IISI) Secretariat's short range outlook of steel consumption.

This figure is slightly lower than the same forecast last year, owing to the impact of the financial crisis afflicting the markets of southeast Asia.

Steel demand is strengthening in the European Union (+8.8%) and other European countries, and remains buoyant within NAFTA (+4%). The surge in consumption in South America last year will level off but consumption will remain strong. Similarly, despite a strong performance during 1997, demand in China is expected to soften during 1998 (-2%), with exports expected to rise and imports to fall. Demand in Japan was sluggish in 1997, and it is set to fall further in 1998 (-1.1%), with a more dramatic drop in the Republic of Korea (-10%). Consumption in both countries is burdened by the subdued export markets in southeast Asia, reflecting depressed construction and automotive sectors. However, the shipbuilding sector is performing strongly in Japan and South

Korea, and is expected to continue to do well in 1998. Demand in India remained steady in 1997, with 2.8% growth, which is expected to continue in 1998. With the Taiwanese economy booming, demand grew strongly in 1997 and further growth of 6% is forecast for 1998. Consumption in Australia and New Zealand is set to remain flat.

## Canadian coal to Japan price drops

THE Japanese fiscal year 1998 (April-March) coal price negotiations between Canada and Japan resulted in price decreases for all types of coal. The negotiations also resulted in a reduced reliance on the benchmark system, with prices and volumes settled largely on an individual basis.

Following negotiations with Japanese steel mills, hard coking prices fell by around 5% compared with the 1997 benchmark price of \$52.96.

## UN releases African crop report

THE United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has released its report on current production and crop prospects.

Its South African report states that the 1998 coarse grain crop is almost

complete in the sub-region and has produced an estimated below average output of 15.5mt compared with 17mt in 1997. However the negative effect of the El Nino has been smaller than earlier anticipated. The situation varies sharply between countries, as confirmed by recently completed FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions in several countries of the sub-region. In Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Swaziland, growing conditions were generally favourable, with normal to above-normal rainfall in most parts. Despite localised crop damage due to excessive rains, initial estimates point to above-average harvests in these countries. Production is estimated to be below average in Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as a result of irregular rainfall with prolonged dry spells, which affected yields. Plantings were also reduced in several countries as a result of the drought warning and the late onset of rains. In Zambia, output is estimated to be well below average as a result of abnormally high and incessant rainfall, which caused extensive flooding in northern areas while the southern part experienced near drought conditions.

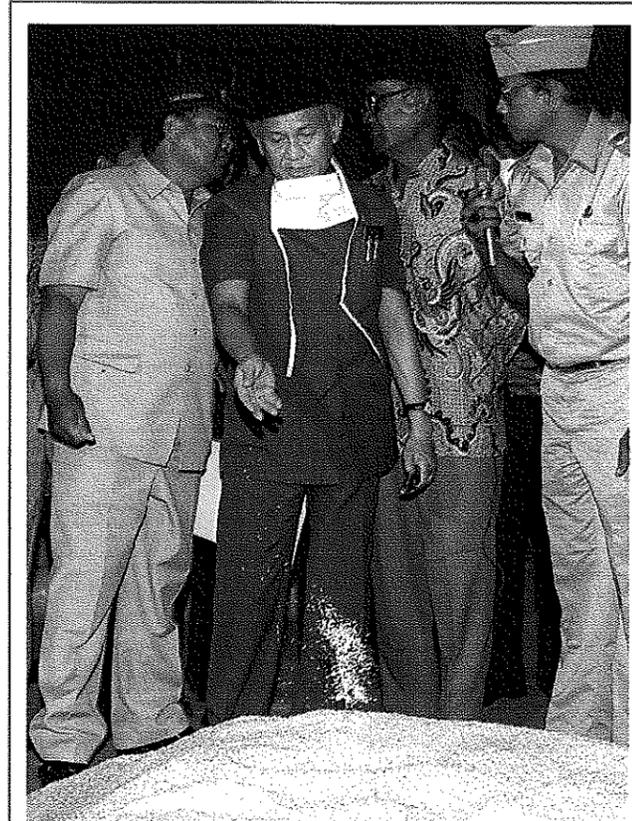
## South Korean steel slump worsens

EVIDENCE of further problems in South Korea's embattled steel industry spells more bad news for hard-pressed dry bulk shipowners.

South Korea's rapidly rising coal and iron ore imports have been one of the strengths of the bulk carrier market over the past 20 years. But the latest output predictions from the Korea Iron and Steel Association and Pohang Iron & Steel (Posco), the country's largest producer, make gloomy reading.

An indication of how far reaching the slump has become is Posco's announcement that it will be cutting production, the first reduction in the company's 30-year history.

South Korea's steel producers have been desperately attempting to expand exports to compensate for falling domestic demand. However, there is a limit to the extent the nation's steel industry can export its way out of trouble. Trade frictions are growing as other steel producers accuse South Korean rivals of dump-



Indonesian president BJ Habibie (second left), accompanied by government officials, visits a rice warehouse in the main rice-growing district of Karawang in West Java last month. Indonesia's rice output has fallen, owing to last year's prolonged drought induced by the El Nino weather phenomenon and also a decrease in the land under rice cultivation. Indonesia's present rice stocks stand at 2.5mt, which the government says will be enough for the whole year

ing, while the depreciation of the yen will increase Japanese competition.

Lower steel production in South Korea is having a major impact on iron ore imports, although the impact on coal importers may be harder to track. The country's overall coal requirements may grow, thanks to the recent expansion of coal-fired power stations.

## PORTS

## Metropolitan secures Anacortes dock deal

METROPOLITAN Stevedore Company, has become the new operator of dock two, Port of Anacortes, US.

Metropolitan is constructing a new modern shiploader, which will include a truck unloading station, encapsulated conveyor and dust suppression system.

The shiploader, capable of loading full panamax vessels, will have an

instantaneous loading rate of 1,100tph.

Metropolitan vice president, Timothy J Parker said: "We are extremely pleased to be working with the Port of Anacortes and look forward to a mutually beneficial, long-term relationship."

## Exports slump closes Prince Rupert facilities

A SHORTAGE of export grain is set to force the temporary closure of British Columbia's northern grain terminal at Prince Rupert.

Seventy grain workers are expected to be laid off in the two month closure and further redundancies are expected as a maintenance programme nears completion.

The port, which moves around 30mt of grain a year, is blaming the closure on a smaller-than-usual harvest, but some farmers are believed to be holding back supplies and waiting

for prices to improve. Grain that would have used the Prince Rupert port is now being shipped from Vancouver.

The shutdown will come as a blow to the port, which has been promoting its facilities for handling coal, grain and lumber as the closest to Asia of any port in the west coast of North America. Prince Rupert is owned by a consortium which includes Alberta Wheat Pool, Cargill Ltd and the United Grain Growers.

## Canada Marine Act passed

THE Canada Marine Act (Bill C-9) has passed its final reading in the Canadian Senate. The legislation, which was approved last December by the House of Commons, passed the Senate after four days of debate.

The legislation now awaits the formality of Royal Assent, which is expected very shortly, and most likely will officially take effect no later than January 1999.

The law will create a National Ports System consisting of 16 independently managed Canada Port Authorities (CPAs).

It will streamline the regulatory regime of the new CPAs and other ports currently administered by the Transport Canada and dissolve the Canada Ports Corporation.

It will also repeal the Public Harbours and Ports Facilities act, allow the transport minister to commercialise operations of the Great Lakes-St Lawrence Seaway System by entering into agreements with Seaway users or any other group to operate and maintain the Seaway and overhaul the marine pilotage system.

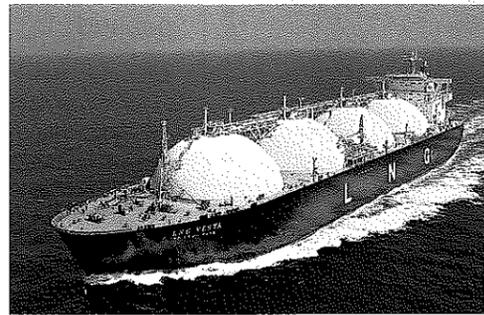
During the intervening months before the law takes effect, the 16 prospective Canadian Port Authorities will be working on their enabling charters alongside Transport Canada. The prospective CPAs include, Fraser River, Halifax, Montreal, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Prince Rupert, Quebec, Saguenay, Saint John, Sept-Îles, St John's, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Trois Rivières, Vancouver and Windsor.

More than 60% of Canada's waterborne foreign commerce and virtually all of its breakbulk cargo is shipped through these ports, all of which will be trying to meet the details mandated in the new law.

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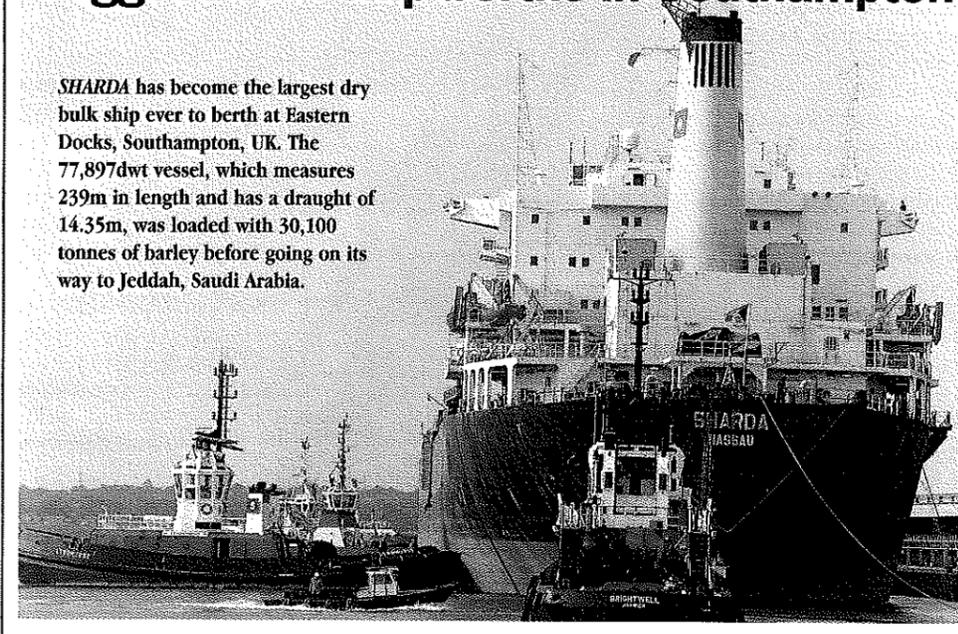


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## Biggest bulk ship berths in Southampton

SHARDA has become the largest dry bulk ship ever to berth at Eastern Docks, Southampton, UK. The 77,897dwt vessel, which measures 239m in length and has a draught of 14.35m, was loaded with 30,100 tonnes of barley before going on its way to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.



## Gdansk suffers from Polish coal slump

WITH a drop of 21.4% in cargo handling during the first quarter of 1998, the port of Gdansk is now feeling the impact of the country's coal crisis.

The port's total volume fell from 4.72mt in January-March 1997 to 3.71mt in the same period this year. Coal accounted for two-thirds of the fall, down 42.4% from 1.79mt to 1.03mt. Ore dropped from 0.12mt to 0.03mt, and grain from 0.14mt to 0.06mt.

With the port's dependence on bulk volumes hitting it hard, Gdansk is increasingly looking towards improving its general cargo activities.

Recent studies found that megaterminals, although impressive in volume, did not necessarily produce more profit for the port companies.

Gdansk is now taking a fresh look at the many existing facilities.

One plan is to set up a 56ha grain terminal to target specifically the CIS market. It would mainly unload US and Canadian grain and feedstuffs exported to the former Soviet Union.

## COMPANY NEWS

### Strong growth for Bureau Veritas

BUREAU Veritas, the Paris-based classi-

fication society has announced strong growth in 1997.

Figures for last year showed an increase of 14.5% in turnover, largely put down to a new client-orientated strategy. Predictions are optimistic for 1998 and BV is expecting to hire a further 1,200 new staff.

During 1997, Bureau Veritas' marine turnover grew by 13.5%, mainly owing to newbuildings, and its share of the world fleet reached 34m gt.

By the end of 1997, Bureau Veritas' newbuilding order book stood at 4m gt, which represent 7% of the order book worldwide.

New orders registered during 1997 were more than 300 vessels in excess of 100gt.

Now one of the world's largest inspection, certification and control groups, the international division contributed 60% of the group turnover.

### Cleveland ups its dry bulk haulage

CLEVELAND has reported an increase in its dry bulk haulage.

Due to mild weather conditions the season-to-date total for carriage stands at 16.3mt, an increase of 11.1%. Cleveland doubts whether it can maintain the increase over the entire season but remains hopeful.

The most dramatic increases have appeared in stone cargoes. Loadings of limestone and gypsum showed an increase of 22.5%, the mild spring allowing stone docks to resume operations earlier than usual. For the season US flag stone cargoes stand at 3.4mt an increase of 40.3%.

Iron ore totals have also increased, cargoes totalled 9.3mt, an increase of 13.9%.

### Rolls-Royce wins Cape Town contract

ROLLS-Royce has won a contract to refurbish two ship-to-shore container cranes at the Port of Cape Town, South Africa.

This brings the total value of crane refurbishment contracts won by Rolls-Royce in South Africa in the last 12 months to £22m.

Portnet, the South African port operator, is refurbishing its cranes to enable them to handle larger ships.

The contract will involve overhauling the two cranes, replacing the mechanics and upgrading the electrical components.

### Ryder to sell off UK operations

RYDER System is planning to sell most of its UK operations.

Ryder produced a turnover of

£239m last year and has assets estimated at around £279m. The company currently provides contract hire, truck rental and logistics services.

Ryder plans to maintain relationships with some of its existing logistics customers in the UK, in line with its strategy of strengthening its presence in this market.

It is thought that Ryder anticipates a cash sale in the third quarter of 1998 which will allow it to reinvest in company stock or fund its existing operations.

Ryder Chairman, Anthony Burns said: "This action is in complete alignment with our announced strategy to focus on becoming the global leader in integrated logistics."

### Martin belts up in Brazil

THE Brazilian arm of Martin Engineering has just won a \$16.5m contract with Brazil's leading steel maker Companhia Siderurgica de Tubarao (CST) to provide a 'total solution' to conveyor problems in CST's Victoria, Brazil, steel mill.

During the five-year contract, Martin will supply conveyor belt cleaning and sealing equipment, replacement parts and maintenance and clean-up services for 153 belt conveyors.

In the initial two-year phase of the agreement, it will install belt cleaners and transfer point sealing systems on all existing conveyors in CST's mill. The initial work includes installation of approximately 400 conveyor belt cleaners and improvement of over 100 transfer points.

In the second phase of the agreement, beginning in the third year, the company will supply spare parts, maintenance services and any necessary clean-up labour.

## EQUIPMENT

### Lintec offers new debunkering service

NETHERLANDS-based fuel testing company Lintec has developed a new rapid debunkering service.

Claimed to be eight times faster than most of its competitors, the new system uses two portable pumps, which run in tandem at up to 500tph.

The effectiveness of the dual pump system was illustrated when a

containership in Rotterdam had 4,500t of off-spec fuel pumped off it in just 16 hours. Its captain had estimated that it would take the ship's own pumps 150 hours.

### The proof of the pudding...

A MUNSTERS dehumidifier enabled a leading Christmas pudding manufacturer to break its all time production record.

Matthew Walker has sugar delivered to its factory by tanker once a week. The sugar is held in a 20t silo from which it is conveyed by a screw feed to a holding tank, then a computer-controlled weighing system.

Problems could arise when hygroscopic sugar absorbs moisture during offloading. If it clogged and blocked the feed, then the weighing machine would be starved, leading to a loss in production.

The solution was to fit a dehumidifier at the end of the pipe that already existed to couple up to the tanker to offload bulk sugar.

The configuration maintains a steady flow of dry air across the top of the sugar stored in the silo, preventing the condensation that would normally be experienced in such situations.

The equipment used is a Munsters M120 desiccant rotor dehumidifier which is capable of drying 120 cu m of air per hour, ample to ensure that conditions in the silo are maintained at a constant 45% relative humidity.

### LLP launches LSI SEAsearcher

LLP Ltd has launched a new internet database subscription service. Providing information on over 50,000 commercial ships and their movements, it is based on the weekly hard copy version of Lloyd's Shipping Index.

The electronic service, called LSI SEAsearcher, can be used to monitor shipping movements at almost 4,000 ports around the world. Benefiting from exclusive reports from Lloyd's agents, the data gathering team will process and check around 12,000 shipping movements a day.

Among other things, the LSI

SEAsearcher will include data on 50,000 vessels worldwide over 100gt, instant vessel locations, ownership information and P&I Club classification for each vessel.

Information from the LSI SEAsearcher can be used for keeping track of a ship's latest position and checking the name, flag, classification and casualty history. There are four levels of service available on LSI SEAsearcher, ranging in price from £2,500 to £70,000 a year depending on the scope of information required.

The database is currently available for a free 14-day trial. For further information contact Tony Lescombe at LLP, London on Tel: +44 171 553 1783, Fax: +44 171 553 1107 or E-mail: tlescombe@llplimited.com. Readers in East Asia can contact Paul Davis at LLP, Hong Kong on Tel: 852 2854 3222, Fax: 852 2854 1538 or E-mail: llpasia@llplimited.com.

### EVENTS & PUBLICATIONS

#### Two Scottish shows on handling and storage

TWO materials handling shows will take place at the SECC, Glasgow, Scotland on the September 9-10 1998.

The Scottish Handling and Storage Show is an exhibition of the latest equipment and handling technology for storage, packaging and control of all forms of unit loads.

Running alongside the handling and storage show is the Scottish Solids Handling Show. This will promote the latest in loose bulk materials handling and will include exhibits of products including conveying, processing and control and instrumentation equipment. For further information call Jackie Rood on: 01737 768 611 or e-mail: jrood@dmg.co.uk.

#### Adam Smith Institute looks east

THE Adam Smith Institute is holding two international conferences on the key issues of transporting goods in the CIS and Baltic States.

The first will highlight the opportunities in the Baltic States for the investment in shipping and port facil-



### Romanian grain crane

DUTCH survey company D Touw Expertise-en Ingenieursbureau is advising on a floating grain storage and transfer project in the port of Constanza, Romania.

The project will consist of the employment of a 16t floating lemniscate crane to transfer grain from Ukrainian feeder vessels on to four 4,400t barges, where it is stored before being loaded on to bulk carriers.

The crane is owned by Rotterdam based EQ Trade, which will transport it to Constanza ready for the operation to begin in August.

ities. During the past 12 months there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of trade and traffic in the CIS and the prediction is that this will continue.

The Adam Smith Institute hopes to promote the area and its potential and highlight the dangers of poor handling equipment, theft and fraud. The second conference will concentrate on the minefield of customs and tariffs in the area. For further information call Samantha Friend on: +44 171 490 or Fax: +44 171 490 8932.

#### Australasian natural resources conference

THE Investing in Australasian Natural Resources Conference 1998 will be held in Sydney, Australia from July

20-22 1998. It is hoped that the three-day conference will provide a forum for natural resource companies, fund managers and analysts to come together and compare notes.

The Regent Hotel, Sydney is playing host to the conference and further information is available by calling International Investment Conferences Inc, Miami, US on Tel: 305 669 1963 or e-mail: iiconf@iiconf.com

#### NMEA to hold convention in Florida

THE National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA) is to hold its annual convention in Orlando, Florida.

The convention will be held from

November 11-14 at the Orlando North Hilton hotel in Altamere Springs.

The programme will feature a status report on the new NMEA 2000 interface standard for marine electronics, a FCC/USCG forum on GMDSS implementation and other topics of interest to NMEA members. Manufacturers will also be displaying their latest products and systems.

For further details contact Cindy Ensley, executive director, National Marine Electronics Association on Tel: +1 252 638 2626, Fax: +1 252 638 4885 or e-mail: nmea@coastal-net.com.

### Cement forum sets date

THE Cement Industry Suppliers Forum is holding its second annual conference on September 9 at the BCA Conference Centre, Crowthorne, UK. Aimed at all those with an interest in supplying the cement industry with plant, materials, energy, services and testing and monitoring equipment, the CISF aims to provide a forum for dialogue between its members and the industry.

For further information call Dr Roger Sym on Tel: +44 (0)1344 762 676 or Fax: +44 (0)1344 772 137.

### PEOPLE

#### Top executive resigns from Maryland Port

TAY Yoshitani, Maryland Port Administration's sixth executive director in the last 10 years, has resigned to accept a position as deputy executive director of the Port of Oakland.

The move to Oakland will mean a return to California, where he served as deputy executive director of maritime affairs at the Port of Los Angeles. Maryland Port Administration deputy director, James White will serve as acting executive officer.

#### Leica strengthens sales organisation

LEICA GPS has announced three key

## Cementing a deal aboard *Atlantis*



CEMENT carrier *Atlantis* has been fitted out with a new pneumatic cement conveyor system.

The work was carried out by Merewido Europe BV, which claims to be the only company in the world with the capability to engineer such systems on a turn-key basis.

The loading/offloading system for dry powder material was developed by Merewido and consists of a suction/delivery system with filter tank and four aeration floors fitted with synthetic cloth as fluidisation mat in the two separate holds.

The loading/offloading system has a maximum capacity of 600tph and 200tph respectively. The sys-

tem, which is installed centrally between the two holds of the vessel, comprises of two suction/delivery (reloader) tanks with a separate filter tank, three Atlas Copco compressors and two vacuum/blower sets. Hydraulically powered screw conveyors are used for loading.

The pneumatic offloading system has a design capacity of 200tph, the cement can be conveyed for a maximum distance of 500 m through a 10in/12in line. The two reloader tanks of the suction/delivery system have a net capacity of 20 cu m. The operating pressure is three bar for the suction/delivery system and 0.8 bar for the floor aeration system.

appointments for its marine GPS sales organisation, in a move to provide better support to its international dealer network and customers.

Stuart Tolman has been named marine sales manager for the US market, Matthew Smith will handle marine GPS sales for southeast Asia from Leica's office in Singapore, along with his existing responsibility for the survey products in the same territory. Peter Devantier has been appointed marine sales manager for the European market. He will operate out of Copenhagen.

Leica GPS is a business unit of Leica Geosystems which produces global positioning systems.

#### Borland joins Strachan and Henshaw

STRACHAN and Henshaw has appointed a new director, Gavin Bor-

land, who will assume responsibility for after-sales service and support development for its material handling business located in Bristol, England.

Mr Borland joins from sister company, Weir Engineering Services, where he acted as general manager of maintenance and projects. He also led an initiative to break in to the 'total maintenance' business sector.

Strachan and Henshaw are part of the Weir group.

#### Hull Blyth appoints director in Angola

WEST African ship agency and freight forwarding specialist Hull Blyth & Co has appointed Nigel Aldridge as shipping and forwarding director of subsidiary, Hull Blyth Angola.

Mr Aldridge has previously held posts in the UK, Sudan and West Africa, his most recent appointment

being general manager at Antrak Group in Ghana.

#### Ramsey promotes three to vp

RAMSEY, the industrial weighing, monitoring and control equipment manufacturer has announced the promotion of three of its employees to vice-president status.

Kevin Machling has been promoted to vice-president from director of Ramsey Products. Mr Machling is responsible for the company's standard product line of bulk weighing, inspection, monitoring and control systems. Tony R Phillips is now vice-president of Icore Products where he was previously director.

Dwight Weber has also been promoted to vice president from production manager. Dwight will oversee general production.

# Intercargo review proposes priorities

INTERCARGO has made a statement of current initiatives and proposed future priorities in its recent annual review.

It is currently stressing the importance of quality among the dry bulk shipping industry, not only in the owners but also the ships and crews.

Recently there have been concerns about safety, especially when the public perception is of poorly maintained and operated ships employing seafarers from third-world countries whose lives may be treated as cheap, even expendable.

Intercargo is determined to dispel this image and raise a better understanding of the industry among the public. The association wants to promote a more open approach to business, provide advantages to quality owners and reduce inspections and surveys for members.

Intercargo is also in the process of trying to improve ship/shore communications and hopes it will provide valuable information to members about the safety of ports. Parts of the association have developed a questionnaire so that ship masters can share their experiences.

Pilotage is another area of concern the association has addressed. An agreement has been made on a standard format for pre-planning purposes and for ship/shore ship communications, recognising the wide difference in aspects of pilotage including weather conditions, periods of pilotage and so on. The association plans to promote wide acceptance of the new format.

Casualty statistics have continued to be



Pilotage is one area addressed by Intercargo in its annual review

monitored and the association will continue to publish results of its analysis.

Future priorities have been identified as safety in all its aspects, including the clarification of existing safety rules and making ISM compliance a condition of membership.

The commercial environment has also been looked into and, among other things, it is hoped that a dialogue can be established between cargo interests and charterers on issues of common interest. These include ethics in chartering and related aspects, as well as mutual disadvantages of charters fixing sub-

standard ships. The association aims to eliminate sub-standard shipowners and charterers by working to maintain the P&I mutual system and stressing their role in enhancing safety and working with others regarding liability issues.

Another target for the future is to establish better public relations with the media and promote the role bulk shipping plays in the world economy. The association will also drive to develop better communications with its members while providing a forum for an exchange of views and protecting their interests.

## Shippers publish bulk shipping code of practice

THE European Shippers' Council (ESC) has established a voluntary code of practice to promote quality shipping in the bulk shipping sector.

The code is designed to assist shippers and charterers in determining the suitability of vessels for the carriage of their cargo. It also brings together safety levels from a variety of agencies including the International Maritime Organization, the European Commission and member states.

In addition, the code requires shippers to seek answers from operators of vessels over a wide range of subjects including:

- Port state control status
- Hull and machinery insurance
- Manning
- P&I insurance cover for the vessel and cargo
- Compliance with class standards
- Compliance with ISM safety regulations

The ESC hopes the guide will promote both maritime safety and the protection of the commercial interests of its shipper members. The ESC has also emphasised that shipowners and operators would be wise to provide the important information required by shippers in order for them to make an informed judgment about the quality of a vessel and whether they should charter it in or not.

## Dry bulk fleet grows in first quarter

RECENTLY released figures for the world bulk carrier fleet during the first quarter of 1998 have shown a net increase of 1.4m dwt.

Compiled by Simpson Spence and Young (SSY), figures show additions to the fleet totalled 70 ships of 3.97m dwt, while 55 ships of 2.59m dwt were removed. This figure was the lowest quarterly growth in the fleet for nearly four years.

A sharp increase in bulk carrier scrapping since the middle of last year has helped partly to offset the large number of new deliveries entering a depressed market.

Among the deliveries were 25 panamax and 25 handysize vessels (the majority being over 40,000 dwt). Only four capesize vessels entered the fleet compared with 18 in the same period last year. Over half the removals in numerical terms were under 50,000 dwt, with 37 ships of 1m dwt. The remaining ships consisted of 12 panamaxes and six capesize vessels. In the first quarter a year ago, 25 ships (1.1m dwt) were removed from the fleet.

A further three vessels (0.1m dwt) have so far arrived at a demolition site in the second quarter and another 74 (2.9m dwt) have been sold for scrap. SSY estimates that dry bulk scrapping for 1998 is in the region of 9.5m dwt, although not enough to overtake the 13.1m dwt expected deliveries. As far as shipowners are concerned it is certainly a step in the right direction.

## Bulker standards improving, says AMSA

THE latest edition of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Port State Control (PSC) Report reveals that almost two-thirds of all eligible ships calling into Australia received PSC inspections last year.

The number of individual ship visits to all Australian ports during 1997 is estimated to be 22,491.

Many of these visits were made by regular traders and ships calling at more than one port. It is estimated that 4,840 'eligible' ships (ones which have not been inspected by the AMSA during the previous six months or three months for passengers) visited Australian ports during 1997.

AMSA notes that well over half the vessels (59%) inspected were bulk carriers, about the same as last year's figure.

Only around 6% of the ships inspected were detained, which is considerably less than previous years. It also confirms reports from general observation by AMSA surveyors that the standard of bulk carriers coming to Australia has improved substantially.

AMSA said the dominance of bulk carriers in the Australian statistics is again a reflection of the large numbers of this ship type visiting Australia, the rigorous conditions under which they operate and their age.

However, the continuing downward trend in the detention rate is a positive indication that the quality of ships coming to Australia is improving.

AMSA believes that this gives tangible evidence of success of its PSC activities.

## ISM certification for Gulfoast Transit

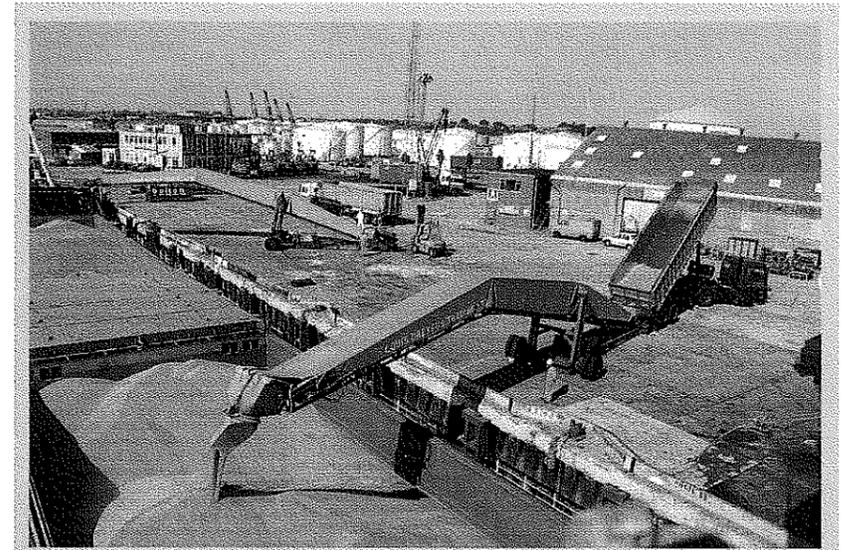
GULFOAST Transit Company, the oceangoing arm of TECO Transport, has announced that it has been certified under the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

The certification of Gulfoast Transit followed a comprehensive audit of its shoreside operations and four of its vessels by the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS). The four Gulfoast vessels were the *Judy Litrico*, *TECO Trader*, *Barbara Kessel* and *Debbie Rankin*.

The international regulations specify required dates for approval by vessel type and tonnage. The *Judy Litrico* and *TECO Trader*, Gulfoast's oceangoing dry bulk carriers, were required to be certified prior to July 1, 1998.

The *Barbara Kessel*, an integrated tug barge unit, requires certification by July 1, 2002. The *Debbie Rankin* was not required to be certified under the existing rules. Gulfoast is going beyond the minimum requirements with plans to certify its entire fleet of 14 vessels by Year 2000.

Gulfoast Transit also received Responsible



The BFI has fallen to an 11-year low

# Continued weakness in dry bulk industry

THERE seems no end to the weakness currently being experienced in the dry bulk industry. The Baltic Freight Index (BFI) has fallen to an 11-year low of 900 in June and nothing seems to be going in favour of the owners. The only mitigating factor is the continuing low cost of bunkers and modest interest rates.

Freight future volumes have also declined considerably in 1998, leading some observers to comment that the BIFFEX market, traded on the London International Financial Futures Exchange, is in crisis.

Falls in the liquidity and volatility of freight futures have undermined the value of the forward contracts. The 1998 volume traded so far is 52% down on the corresponding period in 1997. One answer put forward is that freight futures should be panamax-based only, rather than the current composition based on all the BFI routes.

Scrapping seems to have tailed off a little after a promising start to the year, but is still

running 39% ahead of 1997 levels. With new building prices falling and secondhand values in sharp decline, a good scrapping result is needed to offset the impact of continued new deliveries, particularly of the panamax vessels that are fuelling the oversupply problem: 63 panamaxes will have been delivered by the end of the year and a further 67 are scheduled to be delivered by the end of the year and a 67 more in 1999. In this context, the decline in asset values seems to continue and banks must be bracing themselves for further non-performance in their shipping loan portfolios.

The nuclear bomb tests in India and Pakistan have heightened tension in the sub-continent. The imminent Indian budget, import tax increases together with the uncertainty of the impact of trade sanctions imposed by the West, have brought scrapping to a halt, according to reports, and sellers are being made to re-negotiate at the beaches.

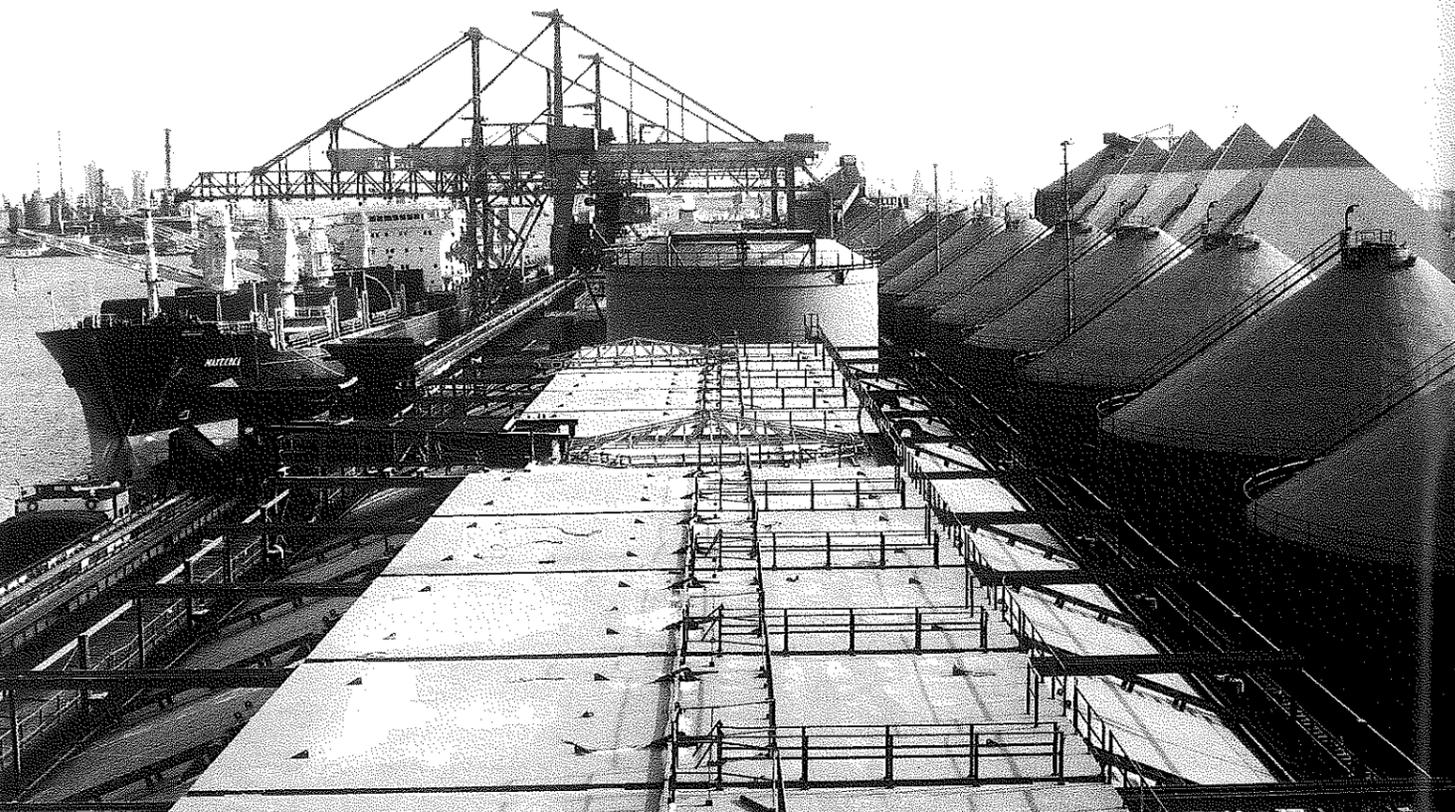
Carrier certification earlier this year awarded by the American Waterway Operators.

## Register of ships on CD-ROM

LOYD'S Register's shipping information is now available on CD-ROM, with search facilities, indexing and analysis. Three licensed packages will be

offered on CD-ROM: Shipfinder, The Register of Ships and The Ultimate Guide to Ships, allowing customers to subscribe to the electronic publications they require.

● Full details are available in the Maritime Publications Catalogue available from LR offices or from Maritime Information Publishing Group, London. You can contact them on Tel: +44 171 423 2076, Fax: +44 171 423 2182 or e-mail: mipg@lr.org.



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EBS has the facilities to store and tranship all types of minerals. In addition, EBS offers a range of processing services, such as screening and crushing ferro alloys and petcoques. The dockside quays can handle vessels up to 70,000 tonnes, while on the buoys ships of up to around 250,000 tonnes can be unloaded using floating cranes.

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EBS is a low-cost producer, whose watchwords are efficiency and effectiveness. The client benefits from EBS's extensive and advanced handling facilities. EBS operates a competitive pricing policy which is tailored to the needs of its customers and to the relevant quality standards, but which always offers the right performance at the right price!



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## Coal fires up Dutch trade

*BSE, swine fever and pig-culling may have pushed down agri-bulk volumes, but most sectors of the Dutch bulk industry, particularly coal, are enjoying healthy volumes, writes Ray Philpott*

**C**ONSIDERING its pre-eminence among the world's seafaring nations, it should come as no surprise that the Netherlands bulk industry has experienced another great year. The country's position as the gateway to the European hinterland has again ensured that coal volumes through Rotterdam and Amsterdam remain buoyant, with competition between the great ports remaining healthy.

The grain trade, however, has shown a marked decrease since the last time *IBJ* tipped through the tulips – a fact largely due to two contributing factors: the continuing effects that the BSE crisis is having on the amounts of animal feed actually needed, and a recent outbreak of swine fever among Holland's pig population that killed in excess of 3m animals.

In fact, for Dutch pigs it has been a bad

year, with the swine fever following a government-sponsored cull aimed at dramatically slashing herd sizes. The reason? Simple. At the beginning of 1997 there were around 15m pigs in the Netherlands, about one for every man, woman and child in the country. Such a large herd was producing methane levels which were harming soil conditions and causing other environmental concerns, and so drastic action was taken – which also had the knock-on effect of lowering agri-bulk levels as well.

#### Port of Rotterdam

Total goods throughput in the port of Rotterdam rose to 310.7mt last year, representing a 6.2% growth on 1996 and a new record. Although some dry bulk cargoes such as coal experienced huge increases in throughput, many others fell quite dramatically.

*Above: EMO's Rotterdam terminal has expanded and diversified beyond its core trade in coal and iron*

In saying that, however, dry bulk continued to contribute around 29% to the port's overall volumes, with ores and scrap making up 15%, coal 7%, agri-bulk 3.8% and other cargoes 3.5%.

Distribution, rail and inland shipping were also on the up, with general manager of Rotterdam Municipal Port Management (RMPM) Willem Scholten identifying hinterland rail and shipping routes as two areas worthy of praise. In order to maximise even further the port's share of these routes, RMPM, in conjunction with the Dutch Ministry of Transport, is implementing numerous infrastructure projects, one of which is the doubling of the main railway line in the port.

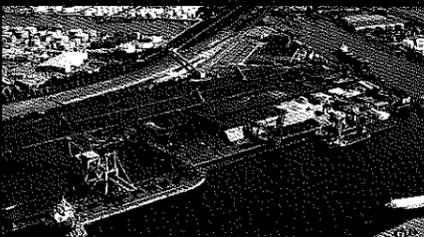
The Distripark concept is also viewed as one of the port's success stories, with the two established sites showing healthy levels of take-up. A third Maasvlakte Distripark is also under way, with details of the launch customer expected soon.

In the dry bulk sector, throughput of coal was up 18.9% to 22mt, the highest level for 10 years. The cause of this sharp increase was an upsurge in demand from German power stations and the



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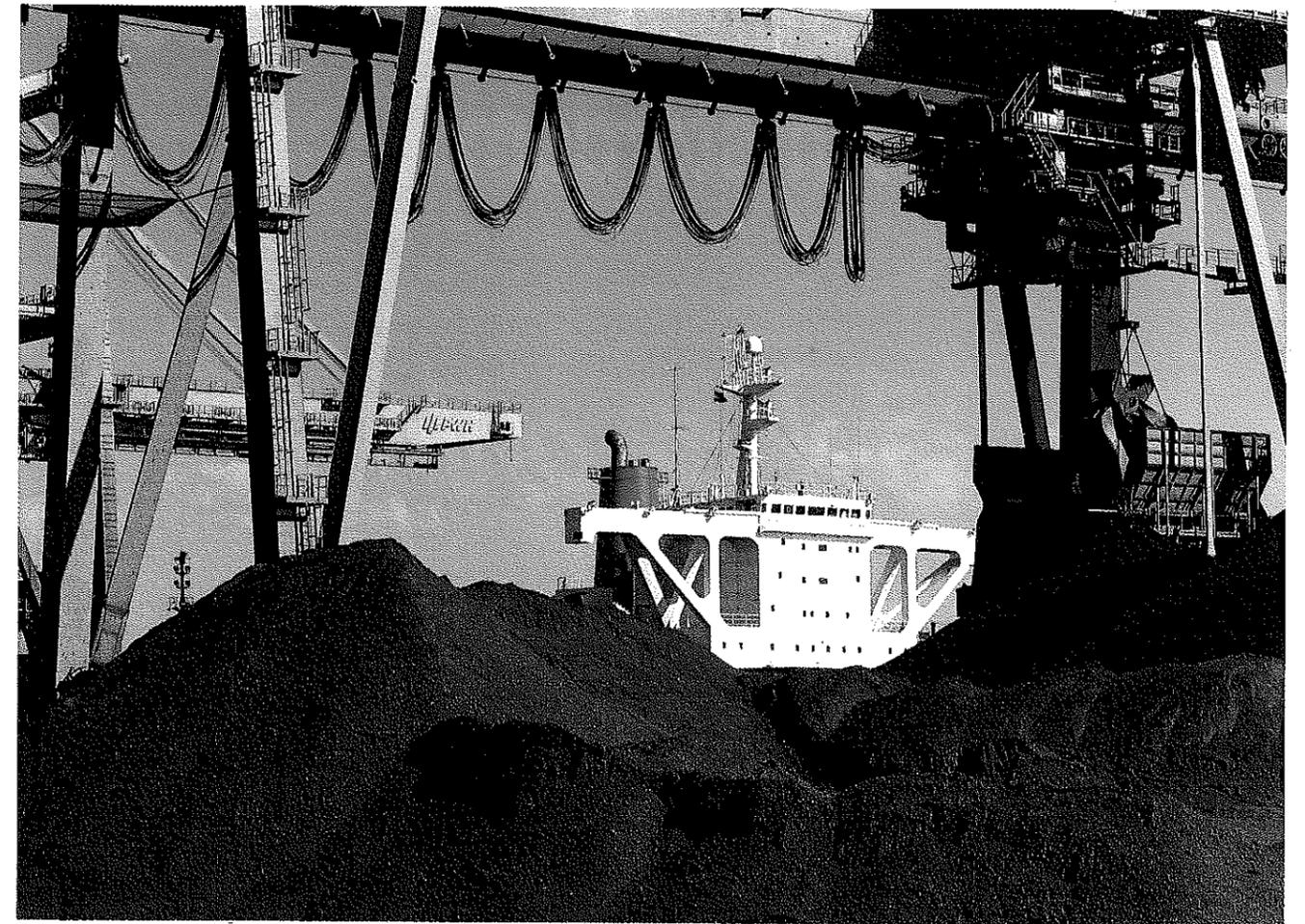
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steel industry for overseas coal. RMPM feels that this is a structural development, with the country currently in the process of running down its own coal production.

If this is indeed the case, then port managers are confidently predicting that coal exports to Germany could double in time. The improvement was not merely reliant on the German market though — shipments to the UK also increased and the indigenous market remained stable.

Throughput of ores and scrap was 16.4% higher than the previous year, with incoming trade resulting from an increase in the production of iron in Germany and the rebuilding of stocks at blast furnaces.

Other dry bulk, such as minerals, aluminium oxide and fertilisers, dropped by 11% to 11mt. Agri-bulk also showed a decrease, but this trend of falling grains and animal feeds was also evident in ports across western Europe. In a period of 10 years, the throughput of grains, crude animal feed and oil seeds has fallen by 40%, from 21.6mt to 11.9mt.

Expectations for next year are favourable, with the high level of Dutch domestic spending and the continuing recovery of Germany's economic situation

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EMO has been able to offer ocean carrier discharge rates of up to 140,000 tpd and shiploading at up to 50,000 tpd

expected to be good news for the port of Rotterdam.

## EMO

Last year was also strong for EMO, Rotterdam's deepwater coal terminal at the Maasvlakte. Since commissioning in 1973, mainly as an iron ore terminal, the EMO facility had expanded and diversified along with the port. Extensive and recent expansion has completed the range of services it offers, with commercial director Wim Rensen confident that whatever the future trends for raw material demand, EMO will be able to meet it.

Operating five shifts on a 24 hour/seven days a week basis, EMO has been able to offer ocean carrier discharge rates of up to 140,000 tpd and shiploading at up to 50,000 tpd. With annual throughput potential at more than 60mt, and the ability to accommodate as many as three large bulk carriers simultaneously, it is not surprising that Mr Rensen is confident for the future.

"Last year we handled 20mt of coal and 14mt of iron, which compared with 1996's figures of 17mt and 12mt, shows what a great year it was," he told *IBJ*. "The steel industry was extremely healthy over the

last 12 months, with full orderbooks and an upswing in stock levels both contributing to this trend."

To date, the Far East economic crisis has had little effect on the facility, even with a decrease in coal demand from the region. However, to combat this, EMO is targeting European markets to make up any shortfall, with UK power generators National Power and PowerGen both taking higher levels of coal from Rotterdam than before.

Surveying the smooth operation of the gigantic ship unloaders from his air-conditioned office, Mr Rensen brushes aside talk of local competition from Amsterdam. "Despite the claims made by Amsterdam's coal community, you cannot escape the fact that to get coal through the port vessels have to pass through locks, unlike here, where we have direct and open access to the North Sea," he says.

If proof of Rotterdam's and EMO's superiority in the field was needed, a quick glance at Holland's own coal needs paints the picture succinctly. The country currently has six coal-fired power stations, which have a combined demand of 9mt of coal. Of that a massive 6.5mt is imported through Rotterdam, 1.5mt through

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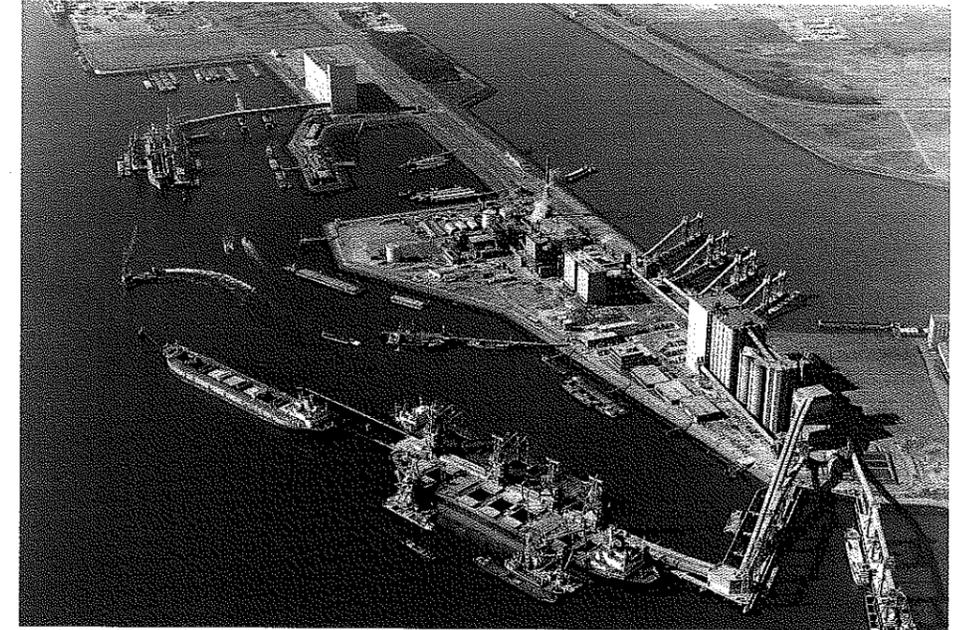
In addition to this, Siemens is currently overhauling EMO's loaders and building a third belt conveyor.

An even larger development project under way is the gradual removal of a dyke. So far over 400 m of it has been removed and when the remainder finally goes EMO will construct four new loading berths covering over 68 hectares of land.

### EBS

In the words of Ferdinand Hokkeling, marketing and sales manager for terminal operator EBS, "1997 was a very dramatic year for the company." With the terminal primarily involved in the shipments of agri-bulk, cargo volumes have, of course, been hit by EC import policy, the BSE crisis, problems with Holland's swine herds and a general downturn in meat consumption.

As a result, the 30mt of only four years ago has dropped to around 20mt, comprising in equal measure 10mt agri-bulk and 10mt mineral cargoes. This year the termi-



nal expects at least a 5% decline in agri-bulk cargoes and, far from fighting other terminals on price, EBS will attempt to attract new customers through offering new and improved services.

"Anyone involved in the agri-bulk industry is facing the same problems as we are,"

**Falling volumes:**  
the EBS terminal at Europort

continues Mr Hokkeling, "and the only way that we are going to maintain our position and possibly grow it is by approaching the problem creatively."

As a result, EBS is looking to attract new business on the back of a total logistics package that covers every single

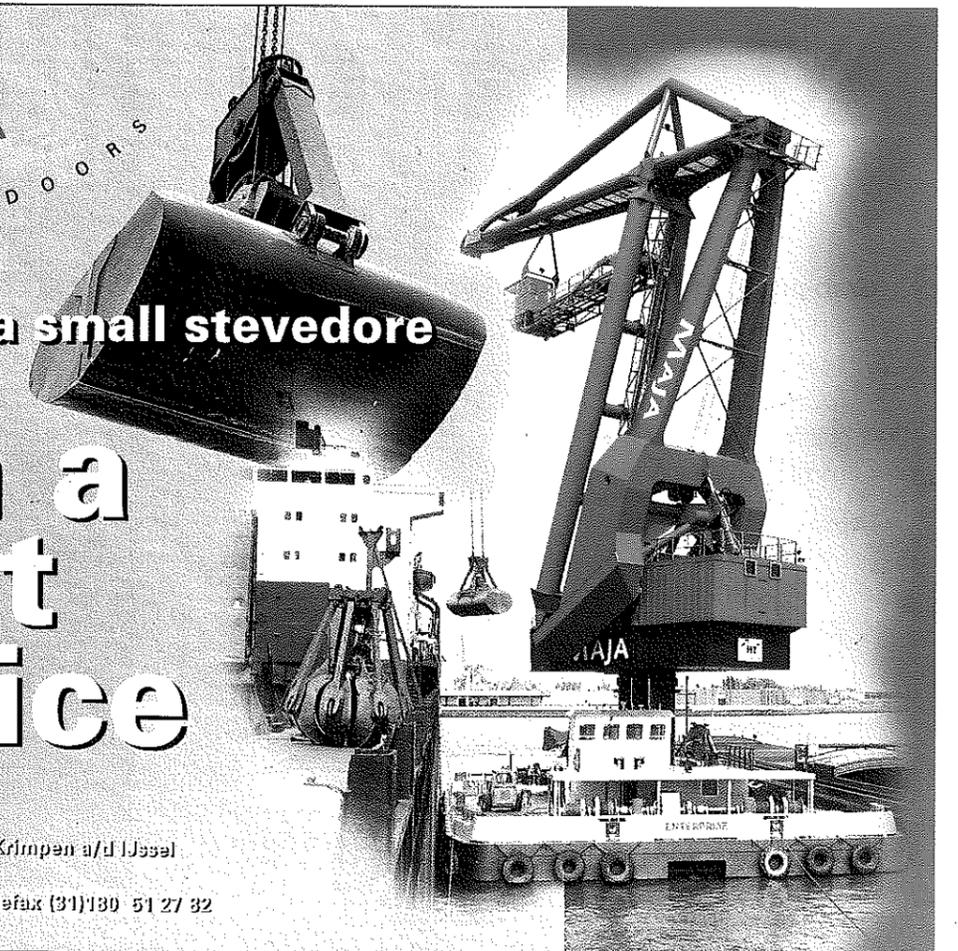
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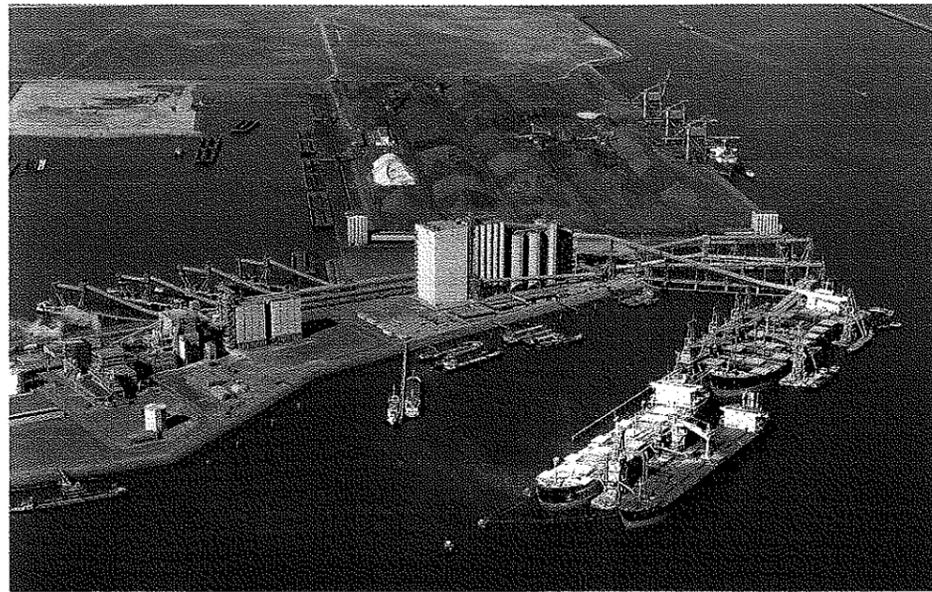
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aspect of the transportation and storage process. Also, in a move to cut costs and keep the facility working, the company will be sharing one of its terminals with clients. "Unfortunately, the economic landscape of last year meant that we had no choice but to lay off 260 members of staff," laments Mr Hokkeling. "Many of them had worked for us for decades and so we knew we owed them a debt of gratitude. With this in mind we entered into negotiations with the trade unions to try and identify a way of making this as easy as we could."

The result of these negotiations can only be described as inspired, with the establishment of a foundation which is financed by EBS and the workers who stayed with the company. Everyone, from chairman down to cleaner now pays 9% of their salary into a fund for the next five years. The Dutch social security fund also contributes to this amount with the result that those workers who lost their jobs are guaranteed 80% of their former salary for the next five years.

In addition to cushioning the economic impact of redundancy, the foundation also acts as an employment agency of sorts, seeking to place former-EBS employees in any terminal posts that come up. As a



**Total goods throughput in the port of Rotterdam rose to 310.7mt last year, representing a 6.2% growth on 1996**

result more than 100 people have already found permanent employment and the company is confident that the remainder will go the same way.

"Quite by accident we have also found out that the foundation has also helped our own flexibility," continued Mr Hokkeling. "As we can now tailor our work-

force requirements depending on how busy we are. In fact, we have had many companies from all sorts of markets contacting us concerning the foundation, and so maybe we have helped others as well."

On the international scene, EBS has remained extremely visible, with joint ventures in Spain, South America and



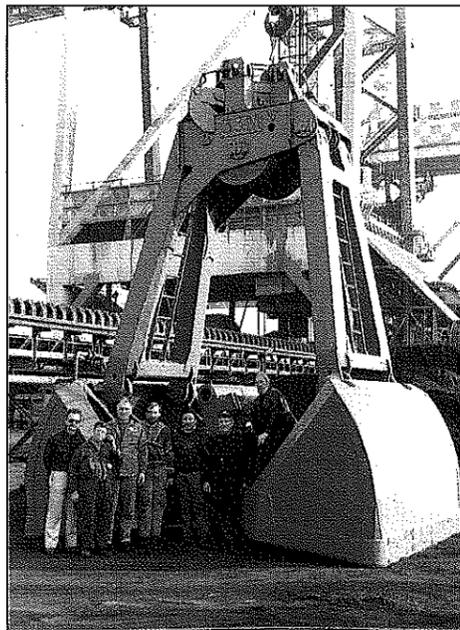
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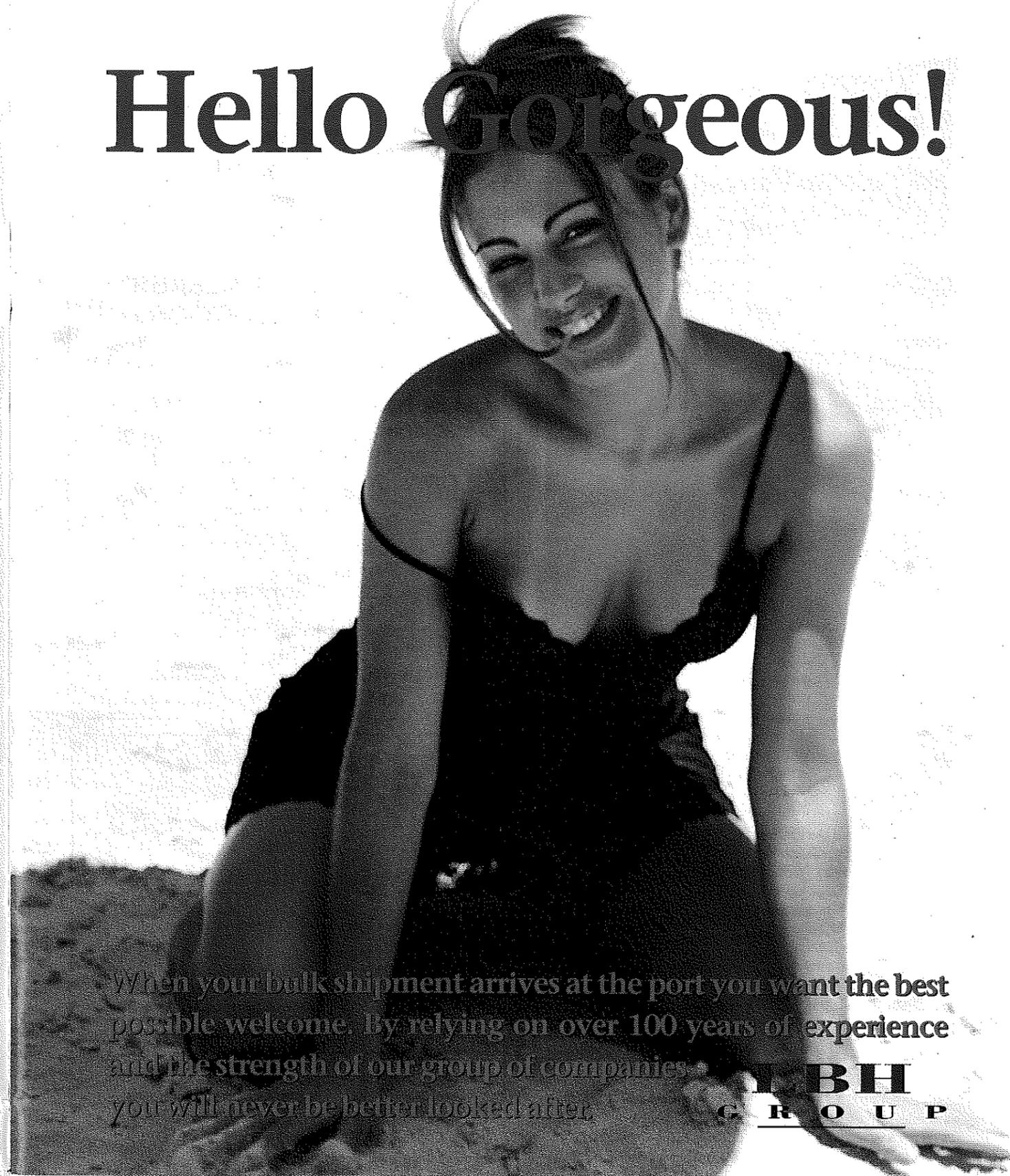
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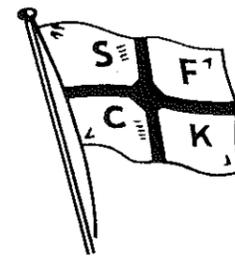
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mainland Europe being very profitable. These successes go some way to making up for the failure of a contract in Brazil, which was to have seen an EBS-supplied and managed floating terminal transported to the port of Paranagua to help ease waiting times.

The company still supports the concept, but puts the project's failure down to the fact that the port lacked the required storage space for any cargo the floating terminal unloaded.

Despite the difficulties of last year, the company remains confident that 1998 does not necessarily have to go the same way. With this in mind, it has installed a new shiploader in one of its mineral terminals, and re-designated the Europort 2 terminal from an export facility into an import

facility, which, together with Europort 1, will give EBS an additional five berths of unloading space.

### BMA

Rotterdam-based shipping agent BMA experienced its best year since it first opened its doors back in 1991, with the company handling approximately 8mt of coal.

The German coal market was one reason for this result, as was ATIC placing its account with BMA around two years ago, resulting in around 1mt of coal and iron ore cargoes a year. So far, 1998 has produced similar levels as last year, with the company's management expecting little or no variation.

BMA handles coal from all over the world, although a drop in US prices has seen it switch its attention to Australia and Indonesia to make up the shortfall. Surprisingly, considering the recent wave of civil unrest and change in political leadership, Indonesia has presented little or no problems for the company.

### Port of Amsterdam

The Amsterdam seaports of Amsterdam, Zaanstad, Beverwijk and IJmuiden have enjoyed a third consecutive successful year, with transshipment volumes totalling 56.5mt. This is a 3.2% increase on volumes of the previous year.

Chief among the reasons for this was an 8% rise in dry bulk shipment levels, which saw them contribute a staggering 38.3mt. Of this, 11.4mt was coal, 10.4mt was ore and scrap, 9.4mt was agri-bulk cargoes and 864,000 tonnes was fertilisers. Other dry bulk cargoes that experienced a rise were minerals and sand, to 6.2mt.

Commenting on the rise, Amsterdam Port Management managing director Godfried van den Heuvel says: "It is gratifying to learn that we have broken the 1996 record, more so considering increasing goods volume should translate into extra jobs in the area. An example of this is the 28 hectares of land that we have leased over the past year and the negotiations we are involved with at the moment."

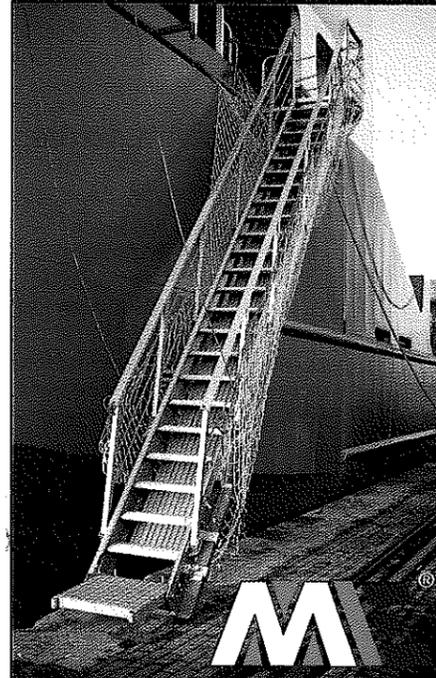
Over the last 12 months, 11.6% less general cargo was transhipped, with final volumes equalling out at 7.3mt. One of the main reasons for this was the shift in cocoa transshipment from sacks to bulk, and a general decline in container transshipment.

A new masterplan for the port is also being developed in order to improve Amsterdam's infrastructure links. Not only will this concentrate on better road and rail connections for the new Westpoint multi-modal facility, but will also include a brand new lock at the mouth of the North Sea Canal.

Westpoint is the Port of Amsterdam's three-year-old vision of the future; a facility that brings storage, handling, stevedoring and transport operations together under one roof.

The continuing development of the port will see an additional 1,500 hectares of new commercial sites along both banks and canals, including new harbour basins complete with hi-tech port equipment. With 30% of US and Japanese companies in Europe choosing the region as a central distribution point, it is no surprise that Amsterdam's port management team are convinced that they can attract an even higher percentage through the suc-

**Amsterdam has enjoyed an 8% rise in dry bulk shipment levels, to 38.3mt. Of this, 11.4mt was coal, 10.4mt was ore and scrap, 9.4mt was agri-bulk cargoes and 864,000 tonnes was fertilisers**

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Successful implementation of the plan.

The re-development is not only confined to the physical. The port authority intends to change the very structure of the port into one which has stronger ties with the private sector. Included in the plans is also a desire to change the port's management into a private corporation fully owned by the municipality of Amsterdam. It is a model set by the city's Schiphol Airport, which is now owned by both regional and national governments.

February of this year also saw Amsterdam City Council finally grant approval for the construction of the new Afrikahaven dock basin. Once completed, the new dock will be 1,900 m long, 350 m wide and 15.5 m deep, with a total of 375 hectares being made available for business sites. Initial excavation was started last year, with the first companies expected to move in by early 1999. Costing a total of Fls 85m, the new port area should be fully open to seabound traffic by the year 2001.

Finally, this year has also marked the opening of the port's new all-weather terminal in Westhaven, with the first cargo being unloaded in January. Giving shippers of moisture-sensitive cargoes such as steel and timber the ability to load and unload vessels in all weathers, the Fls 14m

complex is managed by stevedore Waterland Terminal BV. As well as the quay-side facilities, the terminal also offers warehousing, office space and open-air storage.

### IGMA

Strategically located in the Vlothaven and Amerikahaven areas of Amsterdam, IGMA is one of the port's largest bulk handling terminals.

Like most of the country's bulk trading community, IGMA posted higher volumes last year than it did in 1996, reaching a total volume of 6.9mt. According to Sten Beuker, the terminal's managing director, one of the reasons for this was IGMA's flexibility and ability to diversify into other areas.

Looking out over a berthed bulk carrier, he told *IBJ*: "Our primary business is as a grain terminal. And, despite EU subsidies, BSE and the Netherlands swine fever epidemic, all significantly affecting agri-bulk levels, we are one of the few grain facilities in the country not to have experienced a drop in volumes.

"Why? Because unlike our competitors we offer a full service. We are not only a stevedore, but can store, ship and originate cargoes as well," he added.

**Parcel service:  
IGMA floating  
cranes  
discharging coal**

One way by which IGMA is attempting to stem the tide is by the introduction of a new coal parcel service that, according to Mr Beuker, has upset some of the country's established coal terminals.

"Our parcel service offers those who just require small amounts of coal the ability to get it," he said. "Once a month we have a capesize pick up coal from South Africa then ship it here to Amsterdam. We then tranship it via coasters and barges to the customer, which not only means that we cover all the risks, but, by sharing the costs with others, our clients experience really competitive transportation costs.

"Not only that, but our breadth of experience and facilities mean that we can store and screen any coal we ship over," he continued.

It is a claim that is quickly countered by many of the Netherlands' established coal terminals, as EMO's Mr Rensen readily testified. "We are really not that worried by IGMA's new service as it is not taking any business directly from us." According to Mr Beuker, though, it is EMO's Mr Rensen that has his wires crossed. "Our US parcel service concerns agri-bulk cargoes and occasional coal volumes from Mississippi, a service that is still successfully run."

As far as 1998's grain business is

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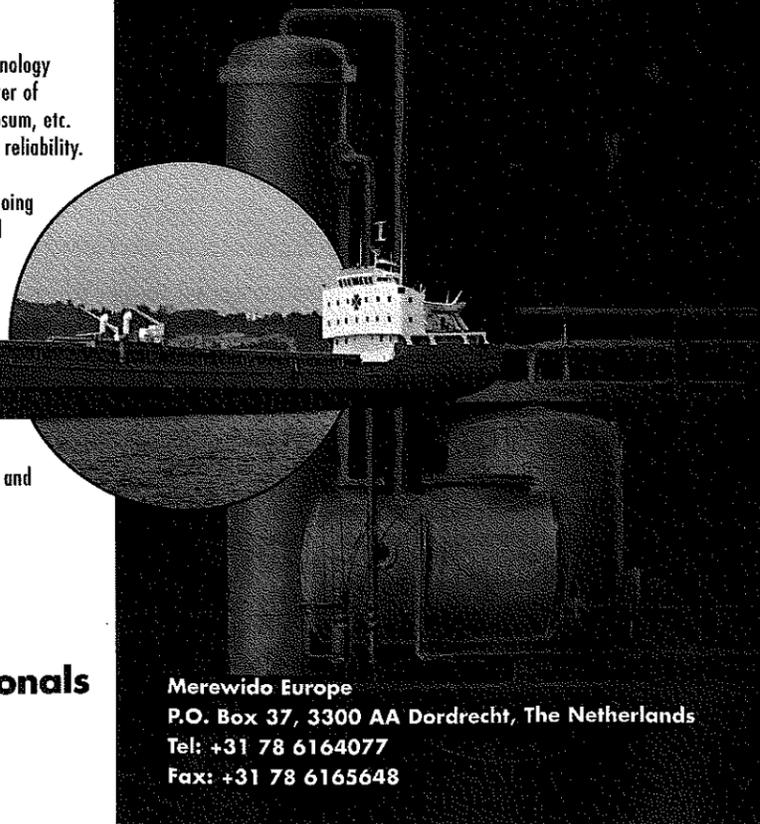
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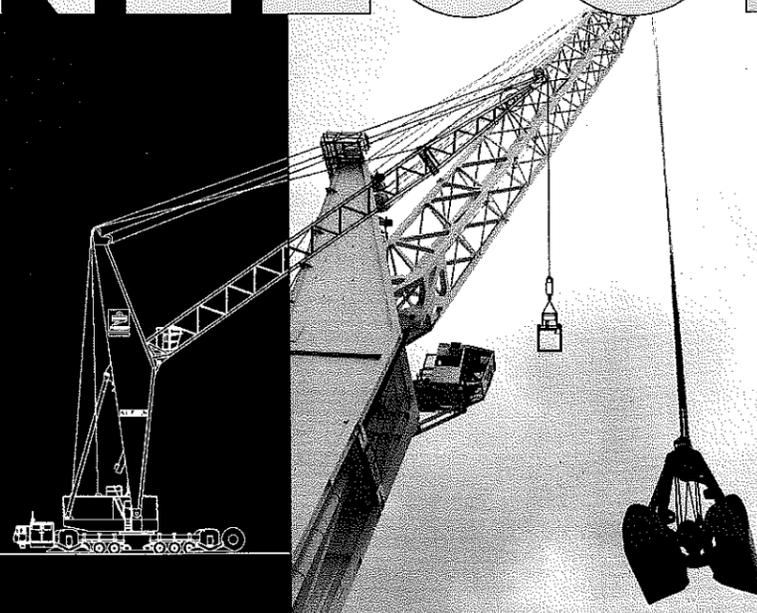
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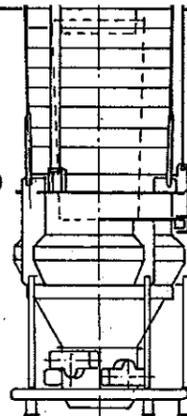
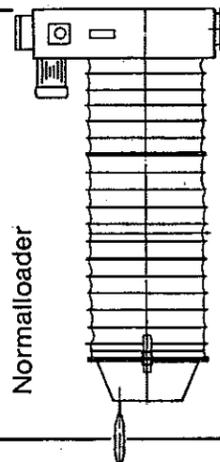


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- testing, commissioning
- project management

concerned IGMA's main intention will be to maintain current volumes. This, however, will throw up its own problems, especially with the Far East crisis affecting protein product demand. "I don't think that there will be any demand whatsoever from the Far East this year for protein agri-bulks," continued Mr Beuker, "in fact, many grain markets in the region will continue to stagnate."

### Rietlanden Stevedores

For Amsterdam-based Rietlanden Stevedores, total cargoes handled last year were up 0.5mt on 1996's figure of 3mt. This figure comprises 3mt of coal and 0.5mt of scrap, with the increase, according to the company, testament to its success of keeping its global customer base up-to-date with all the latest developments.

Managing director Louis Kanters is extremely bullish about current achievements, telling *IBJ* that they are proof of great things to come. "Our terminal already covers 12 acres, and we're planning to increase this by at least 40,000 sq m. Considering that we started with just 7.4 acres and two old fashioned cranes, we have come a long way since 1993," he said.

This year has another Figeo floating crane added to the first one the company bought in 1996, with additional investments in the company's rail car weigh facilities also being top of the agenda. Currently around 400,000 tonnes of coal are delivered by rail, far more than by road, and Rietlanden is looking to aggressively expand this amount further.

As ever, competition between Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the coal handling market is fierce, with Mr Kanters say-

*IGMA's grain terminal: claimed to be one of the few grain facilities in the country not to have experienced a drop in volumes*

ing that his port also has to battle against misinformation. "Our competitors are always saying that Amsterdam is hampered by the fact that the draught is only 45 ft," he stated. "But that's just not true. We are 54 ft deep and can easily get a 150,000 dwt vessel through our system. To speed even further our ability to process our customers' coal, we're currently investigating ways of taking less coal out of vessels and still getting them through."

### Amsterdam Coal Processing

Operating from a portable cabin alongside a disused Ford factory, Amsterdam Coal Processing is impressively understated. However, the mountains of coal that hide general manager Ron Capiou from the

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outside world tell their own story; a tale that has seen the company experience what was described as a 'good' 1997.

"Last year was far better than 1996," said Mr Capiou, "with approximately 200,000 tonnes passing through our gates. The first eight months of the year were quite slow, but that had a great deal to do with BHIBRO Coal Trades cancelling a 700,000 tonne order when we moved from OBA's site."

Amsterdam Coal Processing is now sited next door to OBA and handles all the terminal's processing, leaving it to look after stevedoring. The company's washing plant is sited inside the former Ford Transit Van factory, where it soon hopes to add a cyclone washer.

"This year is looking fairly slow as well," admitted Mr Capiou, "which is mainly due to the mild winter leaving us with lots of coal stocks and nowhere to move them."

## Eggerding & Co

Mineral stevedoring, warehousing and forwarding company Eggerding & Co experienced a stable 1997, matching the previous

year's figures of 0.5mt throughput exactly. Over the next 12 months the company expects to handle a similar amount.

"Competition in minerals handling is fairly healthy, and so we are looking at ways to add value to our clients as a way of increasing business," said commercial operations manager Ton Pollé. "As a result, we're offering a full package that includes unloading, storage, grinding and screening."

"The minerals market is constantly changing and this makes predicting future tonnages extremely difficult," he adds.

Diversification has long been a watchword at the company, with its initial capacity of handling two products now enlarged to handle around 10.

Considering the future, Mr Pollé continued: "We are always keen to upgrade, but will only do so when the tonnage and the market calls for it."

## Zeeland Ports

Last year saw the two Zeeland ports of Terneuzen and Vlissingen merge into one organisational structure called Zeeland Seaports. It is the logical conclusion to a

**Acres of space:**  
Rietlanden  
Stevedores  
terminal covers  
16 acres, and the  
company plans to  
increase this by  
at least 40,000  
sq m

close relationship that has seen both ports join forces over the years to improve the combined infrastructure that services the area. This includes investment in railway services, a study concerning a possible second sea-lock and a decision to develop Mosselbanken.

Alongside these improvements, the brand new Axel Plain industrial area is under way, with an eventual 100 hectares of land and 900 m of quay able to service vessels with depths of up to 11 m. Among the first companies to launch operations from the first 30 hectare and 225 m phase are Geerlings International Forwarders and Romijn Swagemakers Transhippers.

Last May a barge service between Axel Plain and Rotterdam was initiated, with P&O Nedlloyd, ARA Shipping and stevedore Van Seumeren providing a 24-hour seven-day a week line service between both ports.

Both ports have experienced continuous growth over the last couple of years, and although managing director Jan Philippen admits that Zeeland will never become a main port, he does expect it to become successful by operating a spe-

ific range of services.

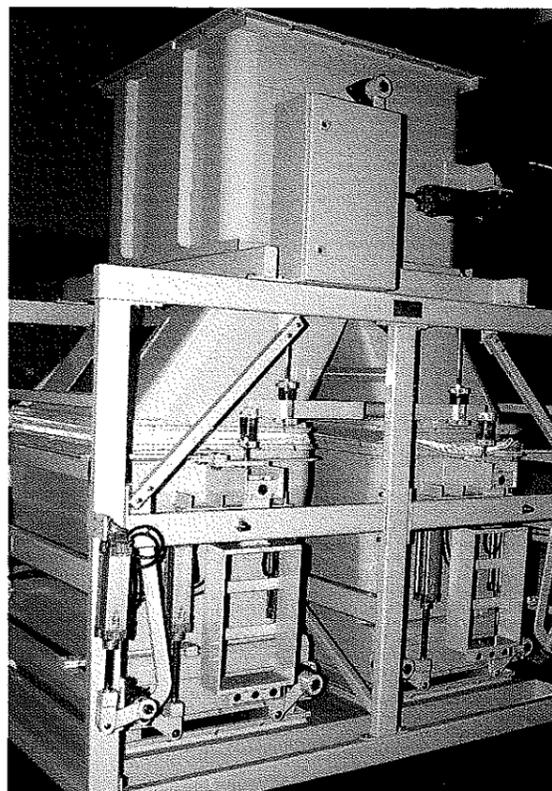
Both ports experienced increases in their bulk tonnages last year, with Terneuzen registering 8.24mt of cargo and Vlissingen 5.24mt. For Terneuzen this was an increase of around 1.52mt over the 1996 of 6.72mt and, like its Zeeland partner, was made up of scrap, ore, coal and other bulks. Vlissingen, on the other hand, only experienced a mild increase of 0.61mt over the previous year's total of 4.63mt.

### OVET

Terminal operator OVET had a record year in 1997, with more than 7mt handled; a 25% increase on tonnage levels of the previous year.

As well as operating bulk terminals at the Zeeland ports, OVET also lightens vessels, with its River Scheldt operations increasing to around 1.6mt, a further 25% increase. One of the main reasons for this was the positive state of the steel industry, and this is despite a decline in scrap tonnages, which the company fully expects to fall further over the next 12 months.

Thanks to a change in market circumstances, OVET expects coke import levels to fall during 1998 as well, with the knock-



Servo Balans' twin bulk weigher

on effect that total volumes will be down 1mt on 1997's record amount, coming in at about 6mt.

As far as future developments are concerned, the company is looking to offer part of its Vlissingen facility to new scrap clients thanks to a recent extension. As the old millennium closes and the new one dawns, the company will continue to focus on providing a quality service as a way of attracting new customers and, with four floating cranes now at its disposal, its ability to handle 70,000 tonnes a day is proving an attractive alternative to some of its larger neighbours.

### Polaris Shipping

Despite tough competition, shipping agency Polaris had a very successful 1997, so successful in fact that manager Jacques Wisse is confidently predicting that this year his company will more than double its business.

When pressed further on this startling statistic though, he was not specific as to how his company intended to drum up this new business. "We doubled our income last year and we expect to do the same this year," he said. "Our high stan-

dards mean we are better than in-house agencies, and this attention to quality is the way we will increase our business."

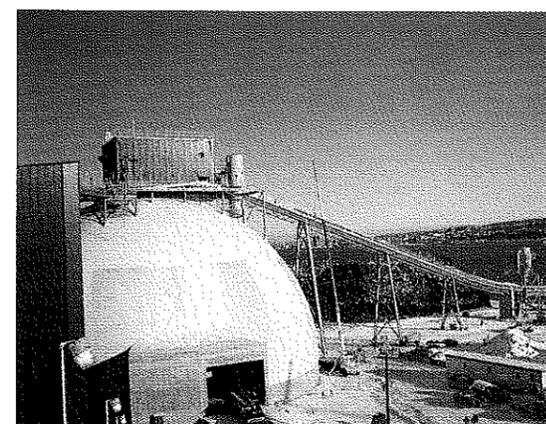
Last year Polaris handled 220 vessels, and if Mr Wisse's predictions come true, this year should see the Terneuzen-based company pass the 500 mark. The company is owned by Hydo-Agri, and has the exclusive contract to handle all of its cargoes. It is planning to expand further into the chemicals market and is currently working on a number of ways of achieving this.

### Servo Balans

Weighing machine manufacturer Servo Balans had another good year financially, although sales to the bulk industry were lower last year than in 1996.

This year is expected to be even worse in many respects, thanks in a large part to the continuing economic crisis in the Far East. Many markets have naturally disappeared and, as a result, the company is concentrating on marketing its new mobile weighing machine to home markets.

So far it looks as though this approach has indeed been successful, with a number of the new units going to ports throughout the Netherlands, the rest of



Sluis' aerobelt dome loading installation

Europe and the US.

As well as the mobile weighing machines, Servo Balans has also developed a twin-weigher that allows continuous loading without the need for stopping the flow in order to weigh cargoes.

### Sluis

Conveyor manufacturer Sluis Machinefabrieken experienced a 70% sales increase last year, with expectations for 1998 hoping to reach another 10 or 20% or more. The company's Klaus Oosterhof

feels that good customer relations are at the heart of this excellent result, with many clients and engineering consultants coming back to the company again and again.

Behind Sluis' success is the Aerobelt, an air-driven conveyor system, used in a number of industries.

"The exchange rate of the guilder has also contributed to our success," continued Mr Oosterhof, "plus our constant development of the Aerobelt, which is, after all, 25 years old."

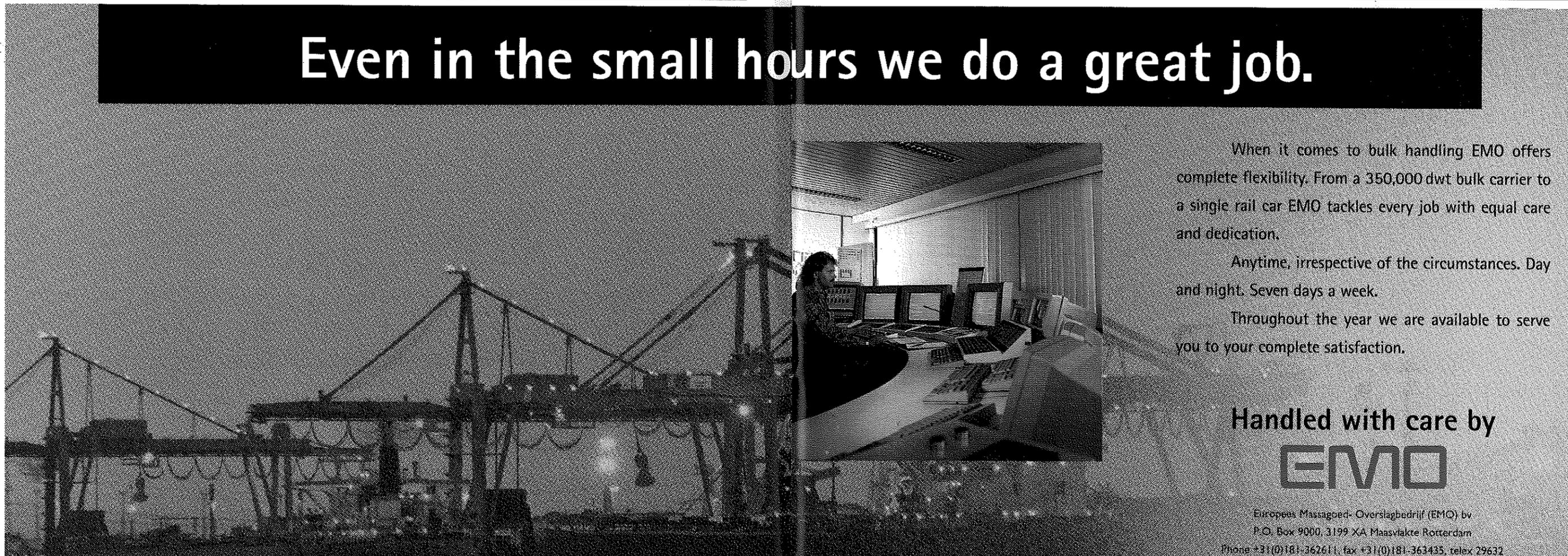
These developments have led to the system's latest incarnation, the Aerobelt Compact, which now combines its steel structure and belt as one complete unit. Already, many industries have expressed interest in this new product since it was launched in Utrecht last May.

Among the many overseas projects that the company is involved in, be they turnkey or not, Mr Oosterhof is extremely proud of a transshipment terminal in north Germany.

"We've supplied six Aerobelts to this site with the first one expected to be up and running by September, with the remainder operating by the beginning of next year."

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