

Container giants get under way

After three years of planning and preparation March saw the inauguration of the Overseas Container Line's container service to Australia. The first ship, the *Encounter Bay*, left Rotterdam on March 6 for Fremantle with a full load of 1300 containers. Together with the Associated Container Transportation (Australia) Ltd., this nine-company consortium will have in due course, a nine-ship container service. The British & Commonwealth Shipping Group will have played no small part toward forming the £80 million shipping giant.

Now O.C.L.'s second container ship, *Flinders Bay*, has sailed from Rotterdam.

Luxury on the Rhine

It is amazing what they manage to cram into relatively small hulls these days. The latest and biggest of the Koln-Dusseldorfer company's Rhine cruisers (*Britannia*, named in May by Mrs. George Brown) even has a sauna bath. Every cabin has private shower and WC. This is in addition to the luxuries of her other K-D sisters: observation lounge, grill, restaurant, bar, shop, hairdressing salon and top-deck swimming pool big enough to dive into.

About 10 to 12 per cent of those who float up and down the Rhine between Rotterdam and Basle on their four-night cruises are British, according to K-D's UK general agents, E. H. Mundy & Co.

Biggest tanker

The tanker situation is always of deep interest to London. Last October the 200,000-ton Shell tanker *Megara* came to the port with a draught of 45 feet—the largest vessel at that time to berth in the London River. Soon afterwards, due to a tug strike in Rotterdam, her sister ship the *Marisa* was diverted to this port with an even greater draught, 46 feet, and came in without any fuss. On January 15 yet another giant tanker the *Macoma* berthed at Thameshaven to discharge some 130,500 tons of crude oil from the Middle East—and so the oil saga continues.

Estuary development

A multi-million pound project to re-shape the Thames Estuary and incorporate a third airport for the South East is planned by a new consortium including the P.L.A.

It is intended to reclaim some 30,000 acres—46 square miles—of land between Shoeburyness and Foulness, known as Maplin Sands. The aim is to provide a deepwater open dock for bulk carriers without locks, also a deepwater oil terminal capable of receiving tankers of up to 500,000 tons deadweight. A deepwater channel of 90 ft. of water would be required.

In addition the new airport would require four 12,500 ft. runways. The approach and take-off paths would be over the sea. Of course this would also mean the construction of new railways and nearly ten miles of new road. The whole project of Foulness would be regarded as an air/sea port and its operational potential judged on that basis.

Fast repair job

The 25,000-ton-gross passenger liner *Northern Star* completed extensive repairs at Swan Hunter (Dry Docks) Ltd., Wallsend, recently 24 hours ahead of schedule. Over 600 men were employed round the clock on the job—which consisted of bottom repairs, damage incurred when the vessel grounded at Tahiti in 1967, boiler and engine-room work as well as alterations to the accommodation. The whole operation was completed in 11 days. The extra day proved invaluable to Shaw Savill in preparing *Northern Star* for her next round-the-world voyage.



Britannia, 1,174 tons displacement, uses her bow-thrust device to manoeuvre out of a quay in tricky Rhine currents. She is 110 metres long for a breadth of only 11.6 metres overall, and 9.5 metres above the waterline for a draught of 1.41 metres. Her main machinery, aft, is four 425-hp marine diesels, coupled in pairs to two Voith-Schneider propellers.