

Anchorage Daily News/Rob Stapleton

The Strider Isis, loaded with cargo containers, is ready to sail from Port of Anchorage Tuesday.

Ship makes special stop

By BRIAN A. HUNTLEY
Daily News business editor

Sea-Land Service Co.'s container ship, Strider Isis, quietly slipped out of Anchorage Tuesday after a special cargo stop.

The 410-foot-long ship docked in Anchorage Monday to pick up a load of refrigerated vans packed with frozen seafood. The Isis will sail to Cordova before continuing its voyage to Japan.

Marv Buchanan, Sea-Land sales manager, said, "We broke from our normal Kodiak to Japan routine, because we had so much cargo in Anchorage — it's unusual, but we had to move all the loaded vans here."

The containers are removed from tractor-trailer units by crane, and stacked on the ship's deck. Each unit has a self-contained refrigeration system powered by on-board generators. The Isis holds 196 refrigerated vans.

Captain Eric Judge said he didn't mind altering course to stop in Anchorage. "It's a good port," he said. Judge, a veteran of nearly 30 years at sea, quipped, "I've seen most of the world's ports — except San Francisco."

Judge has been with the Strider Isis since her

completion last year in a Japanese shipyard. "I've sailed on a lot of ships — ore carriers, freighters, and container ships, but these new ships are about the best," the captain said with a crisp British inflection.

"The ship generally takes about seven and a half days from Kodiak to Yokohama — a little longer if we have rough weather," Judge, a native of Newcastle, England, said.

"Yokohama has a fast operation. The ship can dock at 8 in the morning, be unloaded and loaded again, and away from the dock by 4 in the afternoon. That's good for everyone but the crew."

"It's money every time you dock, so the faster a port can handle the cargo and you can be outward bound, the better. Sure you have to stop for repairs, but it's better to sail," Judge said.

The Isis completes a Alaska-Japan-Alaska circuit in about 20 days. The ship, powered by German-designed diesel engines, cruises at nearly 18 knots.

Sea-Land plans to expand its Alaska-Japan service this summer. Tim Murphy, a manager of Sea-Land's Aleutian operations, said the new ships will hold 291 container vans — more than the Strider class ships. New vessels should be in sailing in August.

NEPTUNE ORIENT TO EXTEND SERVICE

SAN FRANCISCO — Neptune Orient Lines, Ltd. (NOL) has announced the extension of its trans-Pacific container service into the Pacific Northwest.

The Neptune Sapphire will introduce this extended service with its arrival at Terminal 18 in Seattle on Sept. 8, 1979.

NOL commenced its independent trans-Pacific service in February 1978 and is currently providing a sailing every seven days to Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

Furness Intercoastal Corporation, San Francisco, with offices in all principal West Coast ports, is U.S. general agent for NOL. Container-ship Agency, Inc. is East Coast/Midwest agent and Allseas Shipping Company is Gulf agent.

In Canada the agents are R.G. Redburn, Ltd. (in Montreal and Toronto) and Furness Intercoastal (Canada), Ltd. in Vancouver, B.C.

PORT OF TACOMA DEDICATES ALASKA TERMINAL (COVER STORY)



At the ribbon cutting ceremony. From left: Dr. Richard Smith, executive director, Port of Tacoma; George Sullivan, mayor of Anchorage; R.B. McMillen, TOTE; Walter Cotten, Tacoma port commissioner; Mayor Parker, Tacoma; and Jack Fabulich, Tacoma port commissioner.

by Robert P. Hammond

TACOMA — More than 300 dignitaries and guests from Alaska, the Port of Tacoma and the City of Tacoma, and Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc. turned out July 27 for the dedication of the Port of Tacoma's new Alaska Terminal.

The \$5-million facility, constructed primarily to meet the needs of

the roll-on/roll-off ships owned by Tote, covers 25 paved acres, includes an operations tower, truck scales, and 900 trailer parking stalls.

The area is fenced and brightly lighted with sodium vapor light-fixture clusters, mounted on poles, approximately 85 feet high. The site was built up with materials dredged from the adjacent Sitcum Water-

way, then topped with high-quality gravels which were covered with 121,000 square yards (20,200 tons) of asphalt pavement. Protecting the filled area is a berm shielded by rip rap from slag from the nearby Asarco Smelter.

Remarks by Cotten

Walter R. Cotten, president of the port commission, opened his remarks by saying, "It gives me great pleasure to announce that the board of commissioners has unanimously voted to name this facility the Alaska Terminal. We want to clearly say to the shipping world that we are an important gateway to the largest state and our port wants to recognize and honor the Port of Anchorage and, through it, all of Alaska."

The port had little worry in committing this large investment, Cotten continued, because it believes that Alaska is destined to occupy a larger role in the economy of the nation as the population grows and the resources of the contiguous states decline.

He said that he has confidence in



Dr. Smith, Port of Tacoma, accepts a plaque from the City of Anchorage from its mayor, George Sullivan.

the ability of Alaska to manage Alaska's resources wisely, for both present and future generations, and added, "we are hopeful rational minds will prevail in Congress as the Alaska lands legislation is debated. It is essential that a balanced bill be passed, which allows Alaskans to plan for the wise and orderly development of their state."

Mayor of Anchorage

Cotten's remarks made a fitting

TOTE officials look ahead cautiously

Economic doldrums past?

By BRIAN A. HUNTLEY
Daily News business editor

Alaska may have seen the worst of her economic doldrums, but business executives are still hesitant to predict a major upswing, a senior maritime shipping official said in Anchorage Tuesday.

Robert McMillen, president of Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE), noted his firm "will be viewing next year with caution."

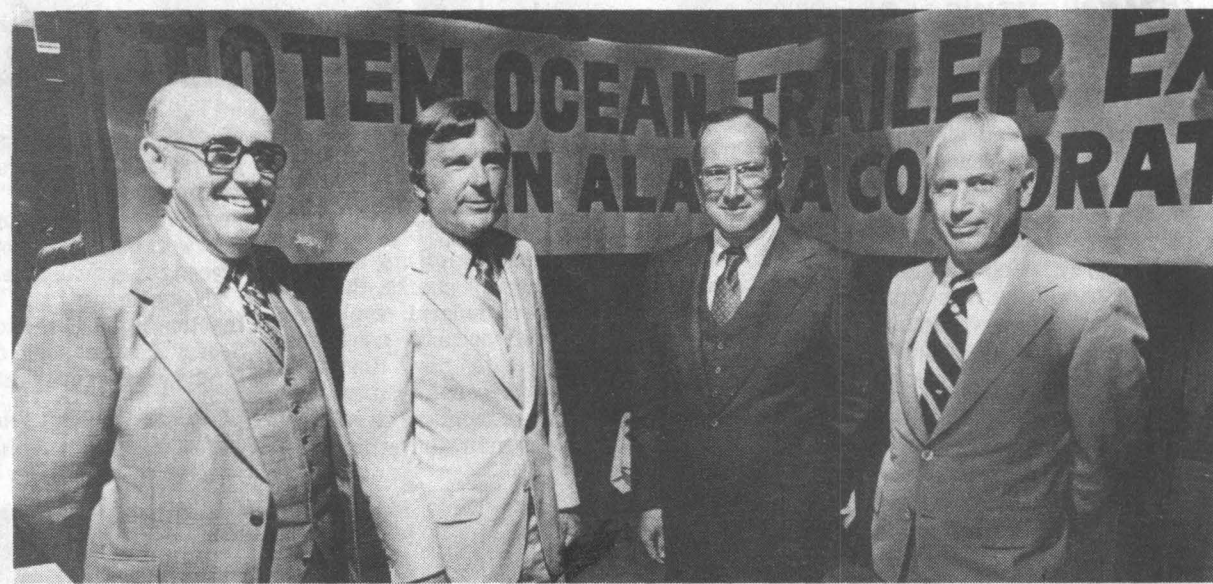
"We didn't expect the reduction in freight traffic this year, but there are indications things have bottomed out. We still don't see anything that will change the economy dramatically in the near future, and we will be extremely careful (in our business decision-making)," he added.

The TOTE president and three other corporate directors were in Alaska Tuesday for the company's annual board meeting at the Captain Cook Hotel. Tuesday's session marked TOTE's first corporate meeting in the state.

The board members included McMillen, Dudley P. Cooke, William Maling, and William S. Woods. Leighton H. Thetford, TOTE's Anchorage general manager, and Tom Barry, Alaska marketing manager, also attended the corporate meeting.

In the morning, the directors met with Anchorage mayor, George Sullivan, and Port Director, William McKinney. McMillen characterized the breakfast as "introductory and pleasant." But he said, "there weren't any specific discussions of corporate matters or port use."

During a short press conference, the TOTE executives discussed issues affecting maritime trade in Alaska.



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Totem Ocean Trailer Express, Inc. (TOTE) board members, from left, William Woods, William Maling, Robert McMillen, and Dudley Cooke pause between executive sessions at the Captain Cook Hotel. The TOTE officials were in Anchorage Tuesday for an annual board meeting.

Board member William Maling responding to a question on Sea-Land's competition, "I hope the company remains active in the Alaska trade. It's healthy for Alaska to have two competitive carriers. And although they have different ships, their cost structure is similar to ours."

McMillen then noted both TOTE and SeaLand were hit with inflationary price hikes leading to the need for an 8 percent rate increase request. "Our costs have gone up in all areas — trucking, drayage, stevedoring. We have been particularly hard hit by labor costs," he said.

But McMillen dismissed charges the company's rate request was improper. "We are just keeping our

freight rates in line with rising costs. And historically, we have always asked for increases at mid-year."

Dudley P. Cooke, general manager of corporate systems for the Sun Co. and a TOTE director, refused to comment on the recent anti-trust case pending against the firm's competitor, Sea-Land. "We cannot discuss a matter under litigation, it just wouldn't be proper," he said.

Board member Maling discounted rumors TOTE might expand service to include Dutch Harbor-Orient trade. "We have no plans for any such expansion."

"It's a problem of taking a primarily domestic trailer service to international ports — it just isn't

practical with only two ships," he noted.

Maling added, "Going international would be such a drastic step for us — we're a short haul operation — we just don't have the capabilities."

The directors were forced to cancel a scheduled visit to TOTE facilities in Fairbanks and Kenai due to bad weather. "We just couldn't fly in the storm," McMillen said. Asked if TOTE planned to enlarge operations in those areas, he noted, "there just isn't any need for expansion at this time. We've had substantial growth, we're now ahead in tonnage moving through Anchorage. But new facilities are not necessary to handle the growth."

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introduction to the words of George M. Sullivan, Mayor of the Municipality of Anchorage and chief executive officer of the Port of Anchorage, who decreed federal intervention in Alaska's affairs.

"The Federal Government apparently thinks that the citizens of Alaska can't manage their own affairs," Sullivan said, pointing out that 56 million acres had been put aside into national parks and monuments. "This massive set aside will have an adverse effect on the growth of Alaska and also a negative impact on its trading partners in the Pacific Northwest."

"Alaska imports most of its goods, and 45 percent of those imports come through Anchorage. Half of the imports into Anchorage come via Tote, which means that Tacoma has an important stake in the well-being of the 50th State."

He urged Alaska's neighbors—Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and particularly the Port of Tacoma—to get behind Alaska and help it cast off its federal shackles.

The growth of the Tacoma-Alas-

ka traffic was highlighted by Robert D. McMillen, president of Tote, whose ship, the SS Western Venture, formed a backdrop to the ceremonies. Emphasizing that Tote provides the fastest transportation from Puget Sound to Alaska, other than by air, McMillen stressed also that the trailership concept offers greater flexibility than most other traffic-handling methods. These advantages are reflected in Tote's growth in its short four-year history, he said.

"In 1976, our trailerships carried 334,932 short tons of freight to Alaska. For the year 1979 we are projecting a total of 565,690 short tons, for an increase of 67 percent over 1976, or an annualized average growth of 19 percent each year since we have been in business," he said.

"Our revenue has grown from \$30 million in 1976 to a projected \$54 million in 1979."

McMillen pointed out that in terms of 40-foot equivalents in 1976, Tote moved a total of 22,810 40-foot equivalents. "In 1979 we are projecting a total of 36,746 40-foot equivalents," he said. "This represents a 61 percent increase over 1976, or an average increase of 18 percent for each year we have been in operation."

McMillen said he wanted to set at rest any rumors that Tote was in this business on a short-term basis. "We are here to stay," McMillen said. "Our acceptance of this new terminal is proof of our commitment to the Port of Tacoma and to the people of Alaska."

Program Highlights

Music for the program was provided by the U.S. Naval Northwest Band, stationed at Sand Point, Seattle. The ceremonies were presided over by Richard Dale Smith, executive director of the Port of Tacoma. George M. Vanek, presi-

dent of the Propeller Club of Tacoma, gave the invocation to open the program.

Prominent also in the activities were representatives of International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union, Local 23; officials of Sea Star Stevedore Company, which handles most of the Tote cargo, and several members of the Washington State Legislature.

Tacoma's Mayor Mike Parker took the rostrum to welcome the guests to the city and also to present a key to the city to Mayor Sullivan, who was accompanied at the ceremonies by his wife. Commissioner Cotten for the Port of Tacoma also presented a plaque commemorating the terminal to Mayor Sullivan, who in turn presented to Smith a plaque from the Municipality of Anchorage and the Port of Anchorage.

(All photos courtesy of the Port of Tacoma)