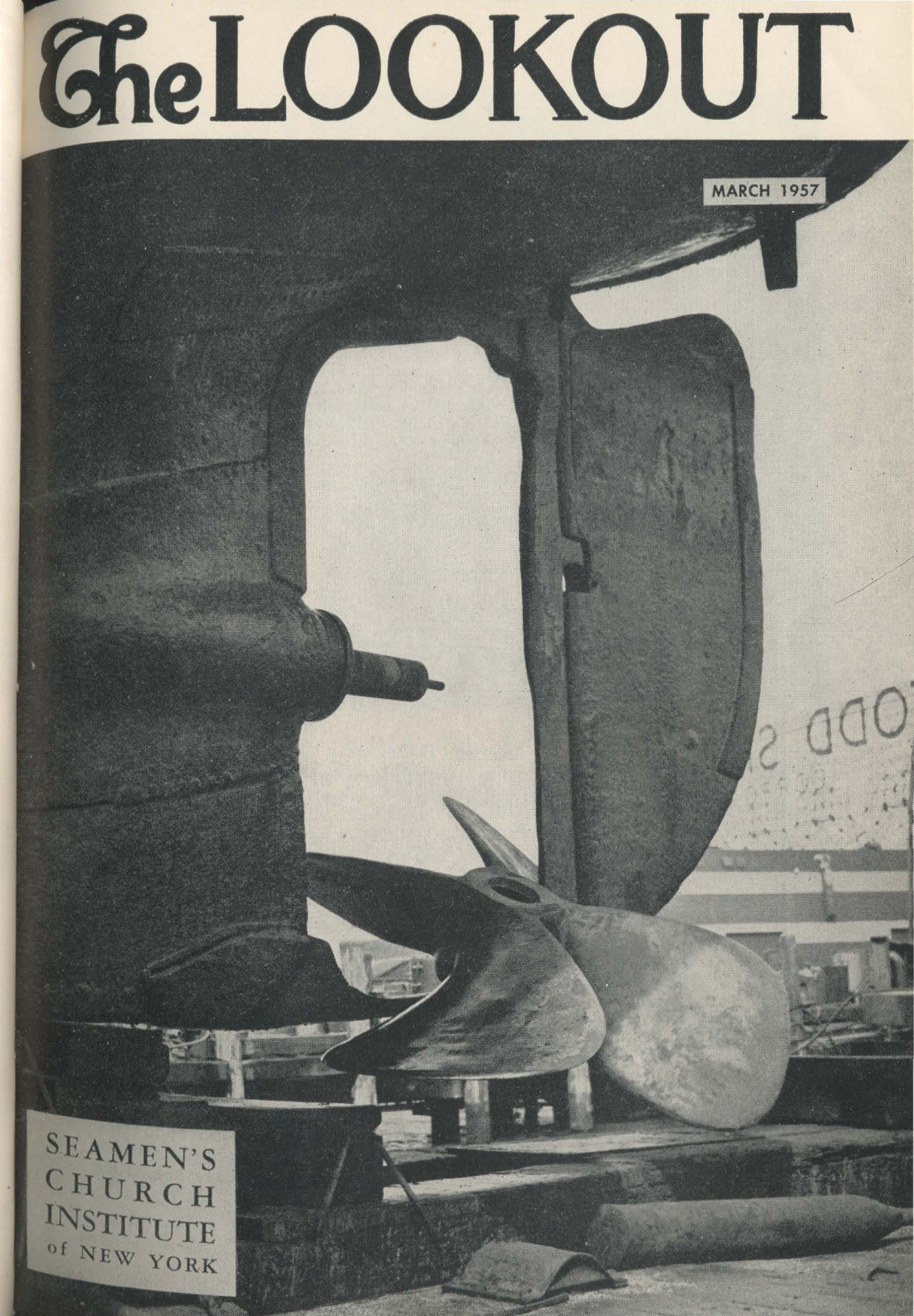


The LOOKOUT

MARCH 1957



SEAMEN'S
CHURCH
INSTITUTE
of NEW YORK



THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore center for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and give the Institute its real value for seamen of all nations and all faiths who are away from home in New York.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.



The LOOKOUT

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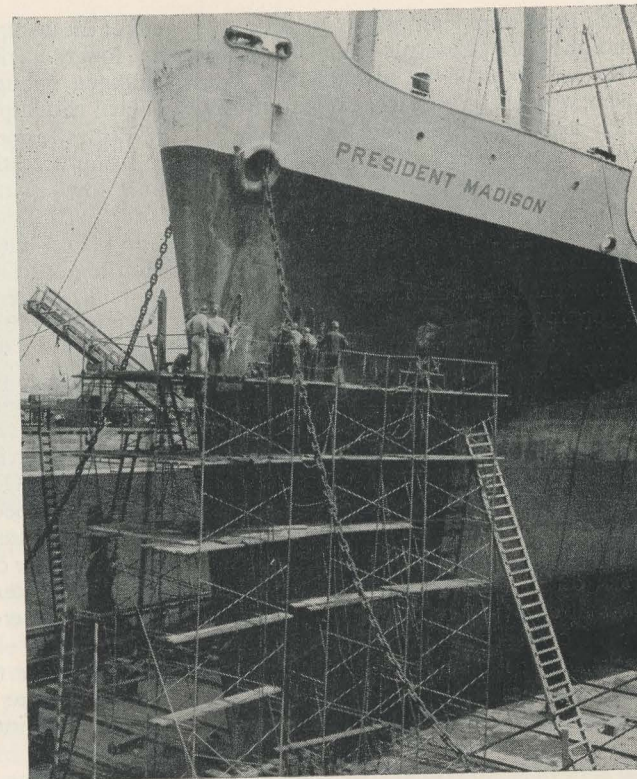
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THE COVER: A lazy propeller that didn't fall completely off but decided to rest a while brought this tugboat into Todd Shipyards for repairs. It was a short rest, but long enough for W. Donohue to make this picture. More on ship repairs on the next page.

Ship repair workers get a look at what needs to be done on the *President Madison*.



High and Dry

MERCHANT seamen have to spend a good deal of their time just keeping a ship in good running order. Besides getting a ship where she's got to go, they must also wage the endless battle of the chipping hammer and paint brush, to protect a precision machine like a ship from the constant ravages of wind and weather and salt sea. But there are some things that just can't be done to a ship while she's in the water—like scraping her hull and opening up her engines and sea valves—and these things are essential to her maintenance. So once a year most ships go into drydock for inspection and repairs. A fish out of water may be in trouble, but for a ship, a periodic breather on dry land is a must.

At any one time there are scores of ships literally high and dry in New York harbor, checked in at the port's major repair and conversion yards for either annual inspections—required every year by the

Coast Guard, the American Bureau of Shipping and Lloyd's of London—or for various forms of damage repair or conversion. The port of New York has more ship traffic than any other port in the country, and it also has the largest number of dry-docking facilities—five major yards and a dozen or so smaller ones. The combined facilities for ailing ships include more than 80 floating drydocks, two graving docks and 34 marine railways for hauling small craft out of the water. They are capable of servicing anything that floats, from a tugboat or a scow to a giant passenger liner or oil tanker.

What actually happens to a ship when she moves from sea to land for an annual inspection? First of all, she must be dry-docked, and this in itself is about as tricky an operation as minor brain surgery. At the Todd Shipyards, one of the largest in the port, the actual procedure of drydocking a vessel takes 15 men about two hours, but

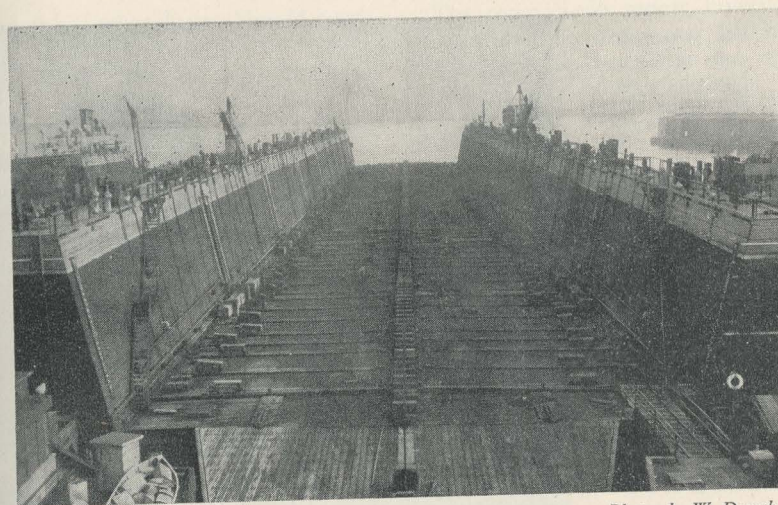
work must start long before a ship comes into the yard. Construction plans of the ship are obtained in advance, and from these, workers prepare a batch of four-foot-high mahogany keel blocks which are arranged along the exact fore-and-aft center line of the dock floor. They also prepare mahogany bilge blocks, which are shaped to fit the exact curvature of the hull, and which will be hauled into place along both sides of the hull as the last step of the docking operation.

Water is then pumped into the dock (graving docks, used for the largest ships, are flooded; floating docks are sunk) and the ship is slowly warped in with the aid of a tug. The docking master, controlling the operation from the shore, must see that the vessel is centered exactly over the submerged keel blocks. An error in judgment here and the ship could easily turn over and crash on its side. The dockmaster places the ship's bow by sighting along uprights on the centerline of the shore end of the docks. Long measuring sticks jutting out from the sides of the dock are used to center the stern. The water is then pumped

out of the dock, the bilge blocks are wedged up snugly against the hull, and the ship emerges, strongly cradled, ready for her annual checkup.

With the entire below-water regions of the ship accessible, shipyard workers can now do what merchant seamen cannot do. They go over the ship from keel to antenna. The plates of the ship are either washed with high-pressure water, or sand-blasted, or both, to remove barnacles and other marine growths which seriously impede the speed of a vessel. Perhaps most important of all, shipyard workers can go into the engine room and open up the main engines, the sea valves and the auxiliary pumps, a feat impossible while a ship is in the water. Other routine procedures in the yearly inspection include such items as renewing the stern tube packing and checking the anchor chains. The working mechanism at the stern of the vessel—propeller, shaft, rudder, etc.—also get a thorough going-over.

Once every three years a ship gets a more complete overhaul, and then such procedures as internal cleaning of the main



Photos by W. Donohue

One of the ten floating docks at Todd Shipyards waits for her next ship.

boilers and boiler valves, examination of the main turbines, throttle and guarding valves, inspection of the condensers, feed pumps, drain pumps, fire pumps, removal to the shop of various motors for cleaning and repair, etc., are carried out. For both of these inspections it is necessary that a skeleton crew of roughly half-a-dozen men, including either the master or first mate and the chief engineer, stay aboard ship to supervise the work. Inspectors from the Coast Guard, the American Bureau of Shipping and Lloyd's of London all maintain resident offices at the major shipyards, and must give their seal of approval to an inspection before the ship is returned back to the water.

The whole inspection, for a ship of 10,000 tons, takes about five days. Efficiency is necessary, since each day a ship is out of the water and out of its trade lane, it loses several thousand dollars per day for its steamship company.

In order to service ships so quickly, not only for annual inspections, but also for damage repairs, for overhauling or conversion (a great many Libertys are being taken out of the mothball fleets and fitted out for new jobs these days), a shipyard must be something of a world unto itself. The Todd yards at Hoboken, New Jersey (one of nine Todd yards in North and

South America), encompasses an area equal to eight city blocks and is a hive of machine shops (parts needed for ships are made right at the yard), travelling cranes, ten floating docks, its own electric generating plant (light and power must be furnished for vessels in drydock), its own fire department, hospital and numerous other facilities. Electricians, carpenters, riggers, pipe-fitters, machinists, sheet metal men, iron workers and steel workers are some of the 1,000-odd force who contribute their skills to ship repair work at the yard.

A shipyard has to be ready to cope with any type of situation—from getting riggers to handle the work on a three-masted training schooner to mending a broken propeller to repairing the furniture in the officer's dining room, if need be. Workers are always on hand to travel to the side of a ship at her pier to make emergency damage repairs if the ship does not have time to go into drydock.

Some of the workers at Todd have had experience as merchant seamen or as Navy men, and some have served apprenticeships in actual shipbuilding yards. "Our work is noisy, rough, and completely unromantic," one of them remarked, "but it takes all kinds of people to handle ships—and some of them have to stay on land."

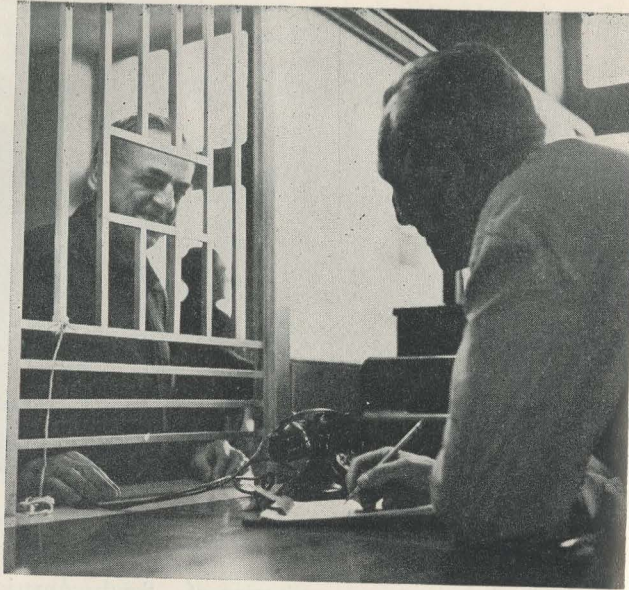
—FAYE HAMMEL

The *San Julian* leaves Todd Shipyards after an overhaul job.



Like several other clerks at the Institute's hotel desk, Bob Scott is himself a former seaman.

Fo'c's'le Ashore



HOTEL desks have never been noted for being particularly warm and friendly places, but there's at least one in New York that's very much of an exception. There, the 400 to 500 men who stop by every day to book a room, to ask for information or merely to chat with the staff, are greeted by room clerks who can speak a man's language if he's a foreigner, are especially knowledgeable about his profession, and can often greet him by his first name. They staff the hotel-registration desk at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and through that desk funnels most of the busy life of the shoreside community for merchant seamen at 25 South Street.

A sailor ashore in New York, especially for the first time, usually has a barrel-full of questions, and the room clerks get them all: How can I locate my relatives? Where is the union hall? Where's the seamen's institute in the next port I'm going to? How do you figure out the subways? And how do you get around this darn town, anyway? More general information is given out at the hotel desk than at any other place in the building, and the staff is able to direct a man not only to the many attractions and facilities of New York, but to the varied and specialized services he can draw upon at the Institute itself.

All this, of course, is auxiliary to the main business of getting a man a room. The Institute has available 765 private rooms and 176 dormitory accommodations, which a seaman can book either by the day or the week. Rooms with the harbor view are the most desirable and the first called for. When a man registers, he can also check his valuable papers at the desk, deposit his money there, and even stow his baggage if he arrives late at night when the regular baggage room is closed. To meet any emergency, the desk stays open 24 hours a day.

The smooth functioning of the hotel desk requires a behind-the-scenes operation of impressive proportions, and a staff of 14 to handle the details. Each room in the building must be accounted for each day, by a room ticket issued to its occupant. Meal and lodging tickets must be distributed to crews sent to the Institute in a group by shipping companies. An enormous "visible file," started in 1936 and now bulging with the names, ratings and birth dates of more than 116,000 seamen, must be maintained. This file is open to the public and has been extremely useful to friends and relatives trying to locate seamen. Other departments of the Institute and various outside agencies also use it frequently.

The staff has other duties. Should a seaman leave the Institute with his room-key still in the pocket of his jeans, both the lock and cylinder of the door must be changed. An average of 25 keys are lost every day.

Then, seamen must be paged, called to the telephone, messages must be taken, men must be awakened in the morning, and so on. If they have left money for deposit it must be transferred to the Institute's Seamen's Funds Bureau for safe-keeping. Around the holiday season, room clerks extend invitations for men to visit the homes of various people who have called to invite seamen to Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. But all these are fairly routine chores. A clerk at the hotel desk is always prepared for situations a bit more out-of-the-ordinary.

George Anderson, who heads the registration desk and has worked there for 27 years, recalls, for example, the hectic days of World War II when the view from the room clerk's cage often showed a group of survivors from torpedoed ships, just fished out of the sea, men covered from head to toe with slimy oil. Sometimes cots had to be set up for them in public rooms when there was no other space available. Children evacuated from Europe were also unusual wartime guests at 25 South Street.

Anderson also recalls happier days, when seamen were just crazy about pets of all sorts — parrots, cats, monkeys — and had to be politely but firmly dissuaded from bringing them direct from the ship to their rooms at the Institute.

The cat craze brought dozens of them to the lobby of the Institute, Anderson recalls, and few ships would start a voyage without a cat for a good-luck mascot. One man frantically tore into the building one day looking for a cat. It was sailing time, but his ship didn't cast off until he came back from 25 South Street, victorious, with one in his arms.

Then there was the seaman who was married in the Institute's Chapel of Our Saviour and walked up to the registration desk after the ceremony to reserve the bridal suite for his honeymoon. He walked away disappointed when he learned that the Institute had no facilities for women.

The room clerks report, however, that most seamen like it that way, finding some pleasure in the knowledge that they are staying in one of the very few all-male sanctuaries in New York. When the Lamb's Club opened its hallowed doors to women a few months ago, a reporter for a New York newspaper made a survey and found out that the Institute was one of the last places in the city where a man could still retreat from the gentler sex. But even that may be changing. Business Manager Leslie Westerman told the reporter, "It's not that we have anything against women. It's just that we've scarcely had any requests for rooms for them. However, if the number of married seamen continues to grow, we may install rooms for couples in the future."

Room clerks at the hotel desk still remember the crew of Indians who came to the Institute and liked their rooms all right, but insisted on cooking their own food. The problem was solved by turning over a portion of the Cafeteria's kitchen to them, and the Indians happily prepared their fish and rice to their own liking, and mumbled incantations over it as they ate.

Requests like this are all part of the routine at this most un-routine hotel desk. As one of the clerks remarked, "When the next man in line may just as easily be a turbaned Indian, a brightly-scarved Javanese or a ten-gallon-hatted Texan, you get to expect the unusual."

For every room, a ticket.



The World of Ships

SECRET HEART

A whale's heart may skip a beat every now and then, but he's got no inclination to let everyone know about it. Four frustrated attempts to record the heartbeat of the giant grey whale have led medical researchers in California to believe that the whale may cherish a private life of his own.

Hoping to get an electrocardiogram of the gray whale's heart, which may shed light on the nature of heart disease in man, medical researchers off Catalina Island last month attempted to tranquilize a 50-foot whale with a drugged harpoon. The whale plunged into the ocean as soon as it was hit and made its getaway.

Three such previous attempts made at Baja, California, have also failed.

COOKING WITH ATOMS

Housewives looking for an answer to their cooking problems from the wonders of the atomic age had better forget all about it. A Navy man stationed on the atomic submarine *Seawolf*, who's been cooking on nuclear energy for three months, says it's the same old thing, just like cooking with gas or electricity. In fact it is electricity, supplied indirectly by an atomic reactor.

The fact that the submarine is nuclear-powered only makes cooking that much more difficult, said William J. Crow, a Navy chef in New York recently for a three-week course in gourmet cooking at the Hotel Biltmore. Men on a submarine, suffering from lack of exercise and fresh air, usually find all food monotonous; the long-range abilities of the A-sub simply make the problem that much worse.

To combat this, the Navy is teaching its A-sub chefs gourmet cooking, in the hopes that tasty sauces, savory salads and delicately-tinted after-dinner mints may do something to restore jaded appetites.

JAPAN LEADS

Japanese merchant ship construction led the world in 1956, according to figures released last month by Lloyd's of London, and the United States trailed behind in a sorry ninth place.

Japan launched 325 commercial ships last year, with a total tonnage of 1,746,429 gross tons. The only other countries to top the million mark were Britain with 1,383,387 gross tons, and Germany with 1,000,498 tons. Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, France and Norway all placed ahead of the United States in new ship construction. Only 50 new ships, with a total of more than 100 gross tons was launched here; 40 were harbor or coastal craft.

DAY AND NIGHT

Twenty-four-hour quarantine service came one step closer to reality last month as the Senate passed a supplementary appropriation of \$67,500 to provide funds for nighttime inspection service in United States ports.

This marks a milestone in the shipping industry's long battle for full-time quarantine service. At present, ships arriving in port after 6 p.m. must wait until the next morning for quarantine inspection. Steamship companies estimate their annual loss from this enforced idleness to be in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000 per year.

Although the industry has repeatedly offered to foot the bill for night inspections, the Government cannot pass such legislation. Provisions of the World Health Organization do not permit payment for medical inspection, day or night.

LUNDEBERG DIES

Harry Lundeberg, who led the Sailor's Union of the Pacific for over two decades, died in San Francisco late in January of a heart attack. His age was 56. His death was mourned by thousands of merchant seamen who knew the West Coast labor leader as one of the spearheads of their cause.

One of the most colorful (he always wore a cap, never a tie, and his language shocked even the waterfront) and controversial figures in the American labor scene, Lundeberg went to sea when he was ten and sailed under nine different flags in the years that followed. At the age of 33, he decided to follow in the footsteps of the great West Coast maritime union organizer, Andrew Furuseth. As secretary-treasurer of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, a post to which he was elected in 1935, Lundeberg won victory after victory for the seamen. In 1936, his break with his former associate, Harry Bridges, leader of the West Coast longshoremen, made maritime labor history.

In 1938, Lundeberg became president of the Seafarer's International Union, a union he persuaded the A.F.L. to set up once the West Coast sailors had been organized.

Morris Weisberger, who had been New York port agent of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific for the past 18 years, and a close associate of Lundeberg's, has been elected to take over the post of secretary-treasurer.

ON THE MOVE

The offices of the Coast Guard in New York City have moved back to Steamship Row after an eight-year stay in another neighborhood. As of March 4, the offices of the Commander of the Third Coast Guard District, the Commander of the Eastern Area and Merchant Marine Inspection, New York, will be located in the U.S. Customs House in the heart of the shipping district.

During the three-day move, the Eastern Area Rescue Coordination Center was able to continue its operations without interruption as Coast Guardsmen stood duplicate watches at both the old and new quarters.

Coast Guard activities at Pier Nine, East River, will continue unchanged.

BOATS AWAY

There won't be any ships in distress, but there will be a good number of stout-hearted seamen taking to the lifeboats next May 30. That's the date set for the 18th annual Lifeboat Races, to be held at the Narrows, Brooklyn, New York, under the auspices of the International Council on Seamen's Recreation.

The annual competition, open to crews of ships of all nations, should draw special interest this year from American crews; last year, for the first time since the races resumed at the end of World War II, Americans were able to wrest top honors away from the Norwegians and place both first and second in the race.

Crews will compete this year for a new trophy, the "Millard G. Gamble Trophy," which will go to the first steamship company whose ships win it three times. Individual crew members in the prize-winning teams will also receive valuable awards.



Looking Back on the Future

THE U.S. MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR PLAYS PROPHET

MERCHANT navies roaming under the seas, hurtling to their destinations at jet-propelled speeds, and operated by remote control from radio towers ashore may all be in the offing within the next 50 years, according to Maritime Administrator Clarence G. Morse. Playing prophet at a recent meeting of the Steamship Historical Society in New York City, Mr. Morse put himself in the shoes of the Maritime Administrator of the United States in the year 2,000 and looked backwards over a half-century of fantastic changes in the maritime world.

In the late 1950's said Mr. Morse, "New ship forms and configurations had begun to evolve, some of which are still familiar to us of the 21st century. Old-fashioned 'smoke stacks', tall masts supporting wire radio antennas, profiles reminiscent of ancient sailing vessels — many of these visible

symbols of the past were on their way out in the late 1950's. The new freighters which were being delivered from the shipyards in 1959 and 1960 were among the last to display a few such vestigial remains.

"... Despite their inadequacy and inefficiency by our standards of 2,000 A.D.," continued the Maritime Administrator, "these freighters, built by American shipyards in a steady stream during the 1960's, were perhaps America's most important merchant ships. Despite the fact that they were, in the main, powered by steam turbines, and were even oil-fired rather than atomic-powered, they were advanced for their day. . . . They were faster, with speeds ranging around 18 knots, which the Federal Maritime Board was then insisting upon as a minimum—and in all respects were better carriers than the ships they

supplanted."

But all in all, the 50's and 60's were still relatively the dark ages, continued Morse. "In those days, people were still thinking in terms of surface ships, and even their stabilizers were being installed only on a few new passenger vessels—none on cargo ships, as became a common practice a few years later. The stabilizers of those surface ships were merely prelude to the adoption, world-wide, of submarine ships, not only as tankers, but for dry cargo."

When the ships went under water, manning them apparently became unnecessary. Morse continued: "In those days they had not even begun to have any familiarity with remote control—to us today, who operate entire fleets of ships at sea by a single operator in a radio control tower ashore, it seems strange that in those days ships were manned by 45 to 50 men per unit. Speeds of 50 to 60 knots underwater today are commonplace, but in those days not even the fastest warships attained such speeds. What a pedestrian age that must have been!"

But the pedestrian age did have its important features: "... the period around 1957... was a turning point in merchant ship designing and planning. Not only had new power plants become available, but new concepts of engineering were appearing to increase the efficiency and productivity of ships. Automation... began to be applied to ship construction and operation. Operating simplicity was inaugurated by bridge control of gas turbine engines. New loading gear installed on the Maritime Administration's experimental ships came to be accepted, modified and improved for commercial use. In the important field of domestic shipping — new integrated concepts of ships and shoreside facilities were explored and developed into the situation we now enjoy."

Roll-on, roll-off ships never got too far in that period, said Morse, because "many companies who had advanced almost to the point of ordering such ships, were taking longer looks at their balance sheets, and their projected productivity curves, and the minutia of new design features. But soon, as we know, various decisions were made, the bottlenecks broken, and a new fleet of

what they would call 'modern' ships emerged to handle cargoes in a truly scientific manner. This was a far cry from the ancient days of derricks and slings when goods and produce were literally man-handled from shoreside to ship and out again.

The year 1957 also laid the groundwork for some other maritime developments which are accepted in 2,000, continued the Maritime Administrator. "... a closed-cycle gas turbine was started that year which was designed to operate at first from an old-fashioned fossil fuel heat source, but which would be suitable for use with a reactor. Thus began the long series of new ships which by now are familiar to us, whose names were preceded by the letters G.T.S., meaning 'gas turbine ship' as a departure from the then almost universally used S.S., meaning 'steamship.'" And in 1957, people were beginning to get used to the strange idea of giant supertankers, of 100,000 tons and more — predecessor to "our giant, swift

Push-button sailing may be a reality by the year 2,000. "Captains" seated in radio control towers ashore might operate an entire fleet of ships by remote control in the wonder-world of ships predicted by Clarence B. Morse.



underwater tankers we know so well in this year 2,000."

In the late 50's and early 60's, concluded Morse, the groundwork was laid for the navies of the 21st century. "New areas were being tapped for the metallic ores so essential to America's expanding technology; new markets were being developed for our products. This in turn called for more ships and a greater degree of specialization among their types—for example, combination ore-oil carriers; vehicle transports of all sorts; and ships especially strengthened and designed for arctic waters. A new generation of passenger ships was

springing up, the last using fossil fuel, but nevertheless representing great advances in comfort and speed. Anti-roll devices were being installed, after many previous tries with apparatus of this sort. Our ships were fully air conditioned, and they continued to be the safest on the seas. Of course they were slower than those we know today which enjoy our greater familiarity with hydrofoil and underwater jet design and other recent developments. But the propeller-driven ships of the 60's and 70's were good, they were popular and they served their twin purposes of trade and defense of the nation."

A LONESOME DEBUT: Shunned by the striking tugs and whistled at by only a few harbor craft, Holland-America's new liner *Statendam* played a lone hand on her maiden entrance into New York harbor early one misty morning last month. Captain Cornelis Haagmans, master of the new \$16,000,000 vessel, was able to swing her neatly into her Hoboken pier in less than an hour, with only the aid of a motor lifeboat to carry the first hawser ashore.

Holland-American Line photo

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Boat skiing looks like more fun than water skiing in these photos taken in Florida's Cypress Gardens. Photos courtesy of *Columbian Rope Company*.

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Boating in the Sky

Images and/or text cannot be displayed due to copyright restrictions

Boats have long been associated only with water, but now there's a new element in the picture—air. A flying craft called the Gyro-boat can ride both air-waves and water waves, according to a recent issue of the *Columbian Crew*, company publication of the *Columbian Rope Company*.

The gymnastic craft, which is towed with $\frac{3}{8}$ " *Columbian* manila rope, works this way. It can be towed by either an inboard or outboard motorboat. When the towboat reaches a speed of 20 to 25 miles per hour, the Gyro-boat's two 10-foot long spinning plywood blades lift it out of the air like a helicopter.

The boat can fly either up or down, left or right in a 60 degree arc behind the tow, controlled by a handle bar device which alters the cyclical pitch of the blade. Aeronautical engineer Igor Bensen, who designed the boat, says its ceiling is limited only by the length of the tow rope. The Gyro-boat itself weighs 60 pounds, measures 14 feet long, and requires only 12 h.p. pull to stay aloft.

Yachting enthusiasts may consider the new boat great fun, but a sailor at the Seamen's Church Institute looked upon the idea with disdain. "A boat ought to stay just where she was put—in the water."

Book Watch



PRISCILLA OF FALL RIVER

Roger Williams McAdam

Stephen Daye Press, New York, \$4.75

Kings and commoners alike loved the Fall River Line, and no more "aristocratic-democratic institution" ever existed in America, writes the author of this book. *Priscilla of Fall River* is a touching and affectionate tribute to the stately steamers that connected New York and New England for some 90 years and became beloved by generations of travelers. This new edition of the book, first printed ten years ago, should find a ready response among those who remember, and those who've only heard of, these famous ships.

THE WORLD'S TANKERS

Laurence Dunn

John De Graff, New York, \$6.95

Just a little less than a century ago, the first well to be drilled specifically for oil was sunk, but hardly anybody cared. Most of its oil went drifting down into nearby rivers and streams, and what was sold brought in about two cents a barrel. That year, 1859, the world's total oil production was 1,000 tons. Today an oil-hungry world gobbles up five hundred million tons or more every year; and the production and transportation of that oil has become a colossal and crucial industry. The development of the oil tanker, which paralleled the growth of the petroleum industry, is the subject of this book.

In this presentation, the growth of the oil tanker becomes a fascinating chapter in the over-all history of the romance of shipping. By word and picture, the author, a marine artist, traces the origin of the tanker from its historical beginnings in 670 A.D. when Greek fireships carried petroleum in bulk as part of their offensive equipment, to its earliest days in America when oil was transported in barrels and an oil ship was so dangerous that a crew had to be shanghaied aboard, through the decades of the sailing ships and two world wars, into the present age of the modern tanker turning supertanker. Some unusual types — whaling ships, tankers for wine and molasses and liquefied gas — are also discussed. Superbly illustrated with over 200 photographs and drawings, this book should be a must for anyone building a serious library of books on the sea.

TWILIGHT FOR THE GODS

Ernest Gann

William Sloane Associates, New York, \$3.95

Twilight For The Gods is Ernest Gann's attempt to do for sailing and the men who go to sea what he has already done so successfully in *The High And The Mighty* for planes and the men who fly them. His new work should meet with equal acclaim. It is an exciting and absorbing tale of the last, and tragic voyage of the barquentine *Cannibal*, of her captain's desperate efforts to make that voyage a success, and of the strange group of people fate brings together for the memorable journey.

COMMUNICATION

Beyond the round world's end
beyond an abandoned pier,
a tug-boat at night
floats ghost-like on top of the sea.
The wave of the wake,
like a presence, careens
silent to shore, cross-current to me.
I feel the piles, old totems, sway
and under my bone-jointed feet
I hear an imperceptible creak
and am joined to what familiar past,
far and dark, primeval, marine?

A. Kirby Congdon

