OCEAN TRANSPORT: THE DECADE PAST AND THE DECADE AHEAD

by

Harry Benford

Professor Emeritus
of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering

The University of Michigan

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A little over ten years ago I was rash enough to present before a British audience a paper dealing with the future of merchant ships. The paper, entitled "Ocean Transport, an Extrapolation to 1985," should, I believe, make a good starting point for a new extrapolation: to A.D. 1995. I shall therefore replicate the old paper here and append commentary and new projections on a page-by-page basis.

You will find the old paper (identified by the date 1974 at the top of each sheet) on the even numbered pages. The commentary and new projections (identified by the dates 1985-1995) will be found right across on the odd numbered pages.
Abstract
My purpose remains the same, and so does the central conjecture. I still maintain that there is more room for improvement in management than in design.

1. Introduction
Technology continues to develop at an accelerating pace. Looking ahead to the middle of the next decade is even more important than it was ten years ago.
to start thinking about what technological improvements may be incorporated in the newbuildings of that date. If nothing else, we may conclude that, between radically changed conditions and radically improved technologies, today's best-of-all-possible ships may be so technologically inferior as to be a real money loser by 1985. If so, we had better plan now for appropriate rates of capital recovery, tax depreciation schedules, and so forth. My purpose in writing this paper is to call attention to the rapidity of change we are undergoing in ships and shipping, and to make a few estimates of some specific changes we may expect within the next ten years. The main order of business is not in the details of this contemplation, but in conveying some sense of the inevitability of change so that shipowners and suppliers may prepare themselves for survival and a fair share of the returns from an expanding commerce.

As we look at world shipping today, we see enormous changes, both in problems and in potential solutions. The volume and variety of commodities carried are increasing exponentially; new ship types and cargo handling systems are coming on stage; suddenly elevated fuel prices are demanding a reevaluation of propulsion systems; measures for protecting the environment are steadily forcing changes in ship design and operating methods; and shipowners almost daily run into new problems in finding and retaining competent seagoing crews. In the next decade we can expect an ever-increasing number of new problems to arise before the old ones are solved. Fortunately, we can also expect appropriate solutions in the form of better managerial methods and better technologies, if we are willing to go after them. We cannot say for sure what these problems and solutions will be, but we must expect them in large numbers and we must learn to live with change.

Prominent writers like Peter Drucker, Herman Kahn, and Alvin Toffler have called attention to the personal and organizational stresses that we must undergo as unfortunate by-products of our changing times. Two lessons seem clear. One is that we must prepare ourselves for change through broader and continuing education. The other is that we must be selective in the potential changes we choose to adopt. What I mean to say is that we have more technological improvements on the shelf than we can properly manage or learn to live with. We must embrace the really valuable changes that
In the past decade commerce did not continue its rapid expansion. As we are only too well aware, shipping has gone into a severe depression. The worst is apparently over, and I trust we shall find better days ahead. The slump, by slowing down shipyard orders, also slowed the rate of technological progress. As a result, many of my 1974 predictions are now seen to be too advanced. They may, however, serve—only slightly warmed over—as valid predictions for 1995.

Most of what is said in this second paragraph is still true. The exceptions are (1) the failure of world trade to continue its exponential growth (as mentioned just above), and (2) the resulting easing of the problem of finding and retaining competent seagoing crews.

The advice here still seems worthy of attention.