

Zwarte Zee Said Highly Powerful And Fastest Tug

By JOOP MARMELESTEIN
United Press International
ROTTERDAM, The Netherlands (UPI) —The trend to bigger ships has upped the need for bigger tugs to help them in port or when they're in trouble.

From a small office in Rotterdam, the Dutch firm of L. Smit and company handles about 60 per cent of the world's major towing jobs with a fleet of tugs that includes what is claimed to be the fastest and most powerful tug there is, the "Zwarte Zee."

To the layman's eye the Zwarte Zee looks much like any other tug, though perhaps just a bit more streamlined. Yet with a 9,000 horsepower engine plant the company says it is the world's most powerful, and its owners say its speed capability of 20 knots makes it the fastest as well.

One of the Zwarte Zee's most notable jobs was performed last summer when it took in tow the disabled, 13,332-ton French tanker "Sologne" 450 miles southeast of the Azores. The Sologne was carrying 90,000 tons of crude oil but the Zwarte Zee took on the job alone, pulled the big, heavily-loaded tanker along at a neat 11 knots to port.

Surprising Feat

"If I didn't see it I wouldn't believe it," said the master of the Sologne later.

The Zwarte Zee, fourth of the company's tugs to bear the name, reflects what Smit and company's vice president E. E. P. Kleyn van Willigen said was "the trend of the times."

"The trend in shipbuilding is toward bigger ships," he said. "In spite of all technical advances there will always be breakdowns. And then tugs are needed. We are satisfied, that we are heading in the right direction, and we expect to order more of our 'super-tugs'."

Van Willigen's views apparently are not accepted by all tug people. He said some of the company's own tug captains have been doubtful about the super-tugs. The problem is not nautical, but economic. The price tag for the last Zwarte Zee was around seven million guilders or \$2,000,000, and its running costs are high.

There are not too many jobs for such a tug that produce a profit. And yet they do come along enough, in Van Willigen's opinion, to prove the need for the big tugs. He pointed to the Sologne job as a case in point.

Other Activities

Towing is not the company's only activity. It also specializes in salvage jobs and putting out ship fires. One of its better known salvages was of the American freighter "Excelsior" which was driven aground near Chittagong, Pakistan. It took a Smit and Co. crew, flown from Holland, four weeks to refloat the vessel.

Salvage jobs are a gamble. The formula, said Van Willigen, is "no cure—no pay." The company invested thousands of dollars in the Excelsior job and if it hadn't worked out the money would have been down the drain for the salvagers.

Today Dutch tugs, and many of them bear the Smit and Co. flag, are stationed around the world. There always is at least one ready to go in the Persian Gulf, a center of great tanker activity. Smit tugs also are always ready at Malta, in the North Sea, and the Caribbean.

"There will be work for our tugs as long as ships sail the seas," said Van Willigen. "And as the ships grow bigger, so will the tugs."

Federal Deduction Elimination Upheld

SALEM (UPI) — Elimination of the deduction for federal income taxes from the state's tax laws is not illegal, Atty. Gen. Robert Y. Thornton said Wednesday.

Thornton received a letter from an Elmira housewife who questioned the legality of the 1963 legislature's tax increase measure because it eliminated the federal deduction.

Thornton, who did not identify the woman by name, said he replied "because the question is of general public concern."

"When one understands that the income tax is a tax upon income, it becomes apparent that there is no such thing as a 'tax upon a tax' when talking of deductions allowed in determining taxable income," Thornton explained.

"The legislature may increase taxes either by eliminating some of the deductions, exemptions or credits previously allowed, or may increase rates," Thornton said.

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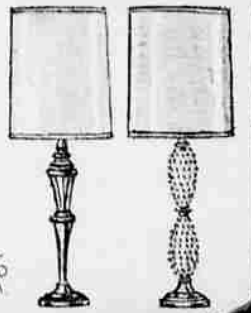
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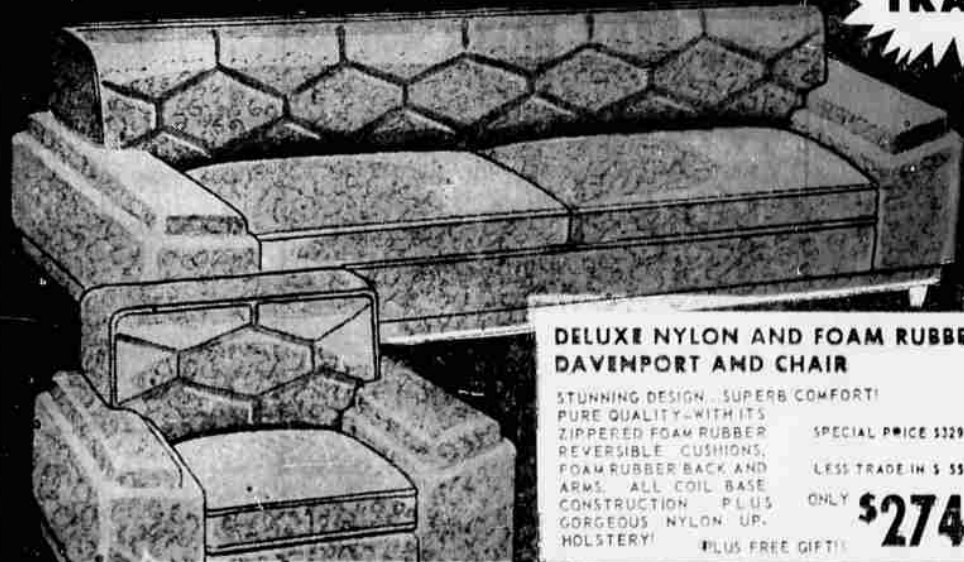
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