

**PORT'S SHIPPING IS UP, TONNAGE IS UP, REVENUE BOOMS...BUT -**

[Picture: John Bossons]

# 560 will lose jobs, say docks bosses

Liverpool's port employers have produced plans for making 560 dockers redundant - at the same time as the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company has announced profits of £1½m.

And the redundancies have been planned less than eighteen months after the same employers were hurrying up the recruitment of 700 extra men.

The intention of the employers is to put the 'surplus' labour onto the unattached register - a glorified dole queue with a fall-back pay of £20 before deductions.

On February 2, Mr George Brimyard, managing director of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Co announced in the Echo that port revenue increased last year by 28%, tonnage by 14% and shipping 3 - 4%

At a luncheon on January 20 Brimyard said labour relations had improved and disputes had gone down two-thirds, and added:

"People are realising that the world does not owe them a living and are generally becoming more responsible."

Already the National Dock Labour Board in London have ordered the local board to stop the recruitment of the extra men. So far 300 have been taken on. The other

400 recruits will be sent packing.

And the 560 redundancies in the pipeline for Liverpool will be on top of 'natural wastage' - i.e. deaths, retirements, chronic sickness, men leaving etc.

In a report to the National Dock Labour Board the port employers have indicated that the 560 men will be "surplus to requirements" by May 31 this year.

A massive confrontation is building up across the country between dockers and employers who want to rapidly prune the labour force and push ahead with containerisation, palletisation and other 'labour-saving' short cuts that add to the dole queue.

## No redundancies

London faces 2,000 redundancies, Hull has been hit with 400. Nationally, the total is 7,000. Before the Devlin report on the docks the labour force was 58,500. Now it is 44,600. The National Ports Council want to see that reduced to 35,000 by the end of 1972.

As far as Merseyside dockers are concerned there will be no redundancies. "If there is a surplus of labour we want it assimilated into the industry. And we will take whatever action is necessary to make sure there are no redundancies - including strike action," said Jimmy Symes, chairman of the Port Shop Stewards Committee.

"We have asked the employers straight out for a statement. They say they will not make a statement at this stage. We have put forward our nine points for solving the situation, which include shortening the working week, without loss of pay, and longer holidays."

At a meeting of the Port Shop Stewards Committee in Liverpool on January 29, it was decided to wait for the results of appeals by two London dockers against being placed in the unattached pool. But the meeting did state that if the

## 'Surplus' men

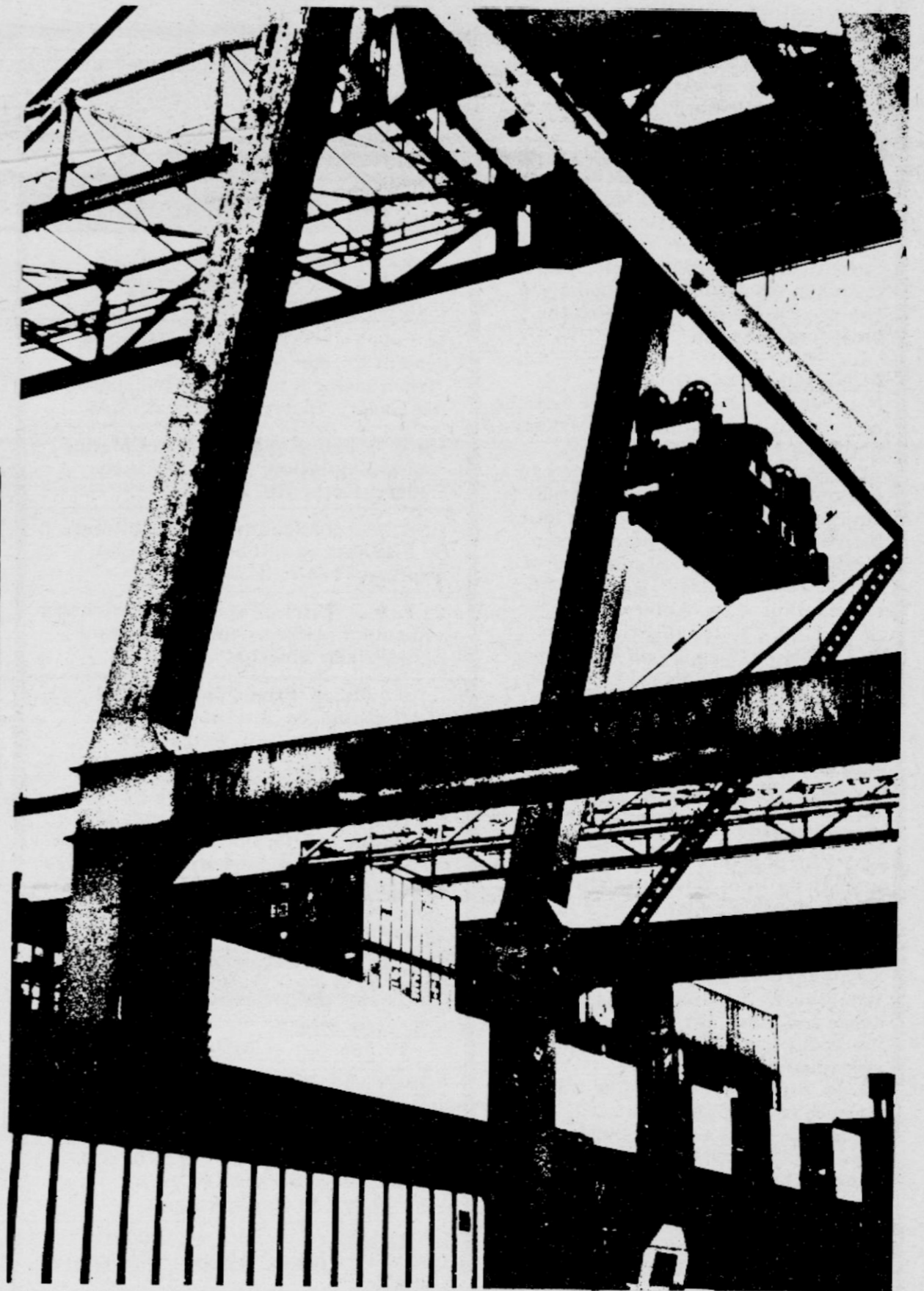
In their report to the National Dock Labour Board, the port employers gave the following figures to back up any "recommendation...from this area, before May 31, 1972, for the severance of excess labour."

Ocean Port Services Ltd	158 men
Port of L'pool Stevedoring Co	85
Mersey Docks & Harbour Co	90
A.E. Smith Coggins Ltd	78
Ireman Stevedoring Services	43
West Coast Stevedoring	59
Brit. Transport Docks Garston	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>563</b>

situation in Hull worsened, action would be taken in support of the Hull dockers.

At Hull 300 dockers have been pushed into the unattached pool and weekly one-day stoppages will be staged unless they are re-allocated to employers by February 14.

- BOB DANIELS



The silhouette of one of the giant container cranes that dominate Gladstone Dock and threaten the livelihood of the men who work below.

## The charter

The Merseyside dockers have drawn up this 9-point charter:

- 1 No redundancies
- 2 Nationalisation of the docks under full workers' control.
- 3 Introduction of a shorter working week, without loss of pay, and longer holidays.
- 4 Recall of the unions' docks delegates conference.
- 5 Retention of the National Dock Labour Board.
- 6 Retirement at 60 with average pay, reviewed each year.
- 7 Sacked dockers to go into unattached pool until assimilated into other firms.
- 8 Average port earnings for sacked men in pool.
- 9 All 'stuffing' and 'stripping' to be done by registered dock labour.

## Something nasty in the woodshed

Southport, usually thought of as a cosy haven for the respectable classes, is now the centre for a particularly nasty type of money-making scheme. It takes the form of "international employment agencies" - and there are no less than seventeen of them in the town.

The methods of one such firm, "Markham Research" are typical. "Markham" advertises in foreign newspapers with tempting descriptions of a well-paid job overseas.

The unsuspecting Greek, South African or Indian replies to the advert and Mr Kane of Markham's "Employment Department" writes back in glowing terms.

### Registration fee

The letter encloses a list of jobs, from upholstery to accountancy, complete with two reminders for the £2 registration fee. But once the unfortunate foreigner

sends his two quid that's the last he hears from Southport, England.

It's really no wonder that "Markham Research" isn't able to help international job-hunters, with all the complications of immigration controls, work permits, etc, for the "agency" is owned by a Mrs Barbara Sumner and the "company" address is 19 Devonshire Road, Southport. Number nineteen is the garden shed attached to a semi owned by a Mr Joseph Jones who makes £100 each year from the foreign stamps on the letters which arrive. Mrs Sumner runs six such "companies" and does all her work at home - 31 Watchyard Lane, in cosy Formby.

## A festival of life

Somewhere in Liverpool plans are being prepared for a cultural revolution. Prisoners from Walton gaol will be involved and the South Docks will be taken over.

You won't see any Red Guards around, though. Just artists, musicians, poets, dancers, actors and anybody who feels like joining in.

These are some of the plans for the "City of Life Festival" to take place throughout Liverpool from May 27 to June 3.

Organisers of the festival include the Merseyside Worker Artists Association and Arthur Dooley, the sculptor.

One of the aims is to give the people of Liverpool the opportunity to voice their opinions on City Council policy - "The most incompetent in the country and

possibly Europe," according to Mr Dooley.

An alternative planning conference is to be arranged, with members of the public on the platform, planners and councillors in the audience, in opposition to the international planning conference taking place in the Adelphi at only £30 a head.

Both cathedrals will be used, and the utilisation of the South Docks for housing, cultural and community activity will be planned. Prisoners of Walton gaol will have work on display.

The Lord Mayor will also be on display, although not in the festival. He's doin' his own thing in the Lord Mayor's Parade on June 3.



"All present and corrupt, Sir!"

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