

9 JAN 1996

Ship

CALL BY BIG SHIPS, A RECOGNITION OF MALAYSIA

PORT KLANG, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Mammoth ships calling at Port Klang reflect the recognition given by a group of leading ocean carriers from the United States, Asia and Europe for Malaysia's world-class trade which holds excellent prospects for future growth.

American President Companies Ltd chairman George Hayashi, who made the observation, said that, typically, Malaysia's market had been served by small vessels that have carried Malaysia's exports and imports to or from other ports where they were transhipped to or from larger vessels.

He added: "However, because of the growing economic stature of Malaysia, American President Lines (APL) and its partners in Global Alliance have decided it is time to redeploy their largest and fastest container ships to call directly at Port Klang.

"That is, to inaugurate a direct, weekly container service between Malaysia and the United States."

He was speaking at a reception to mark the maiden call of "APL China," one of APL's largest ship, to Port Klang today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad inaugurated the maiden call by the 4,832 TEUs container ship by pressing a button to start the loading of a U.S.-bound container on the ship.

Hayashi said the "APL China" call at Port Klang was also a tribute to Malaysia's infrastructural development.

Port Klang could accomodate the ship and her five C 11 class sisterships as well as the large vessels of APL alliance partners.

"The C 11s are among the largest and fastest containerships in the world today and can carry the equivalent of 4,800 TEUs," he added.

He said much of the credit must go to the Ministry of Transport, Klang Port Authority and Klang Container Terminal (KCT) for creating a positive environment for the operation.

Commending the role played by the Malaysian government in attracting direct, line-haul service to Malaysia, he called for continued efforts to ensure the growth of trade through Port Klang.

Hayashi also said the occasion was significant in that it marked the start of service improvements that would be advantageous to Malaysians exporters and importers of both general and refrigerated commodities.

As a result of the direct service, transit times between Malaysia and the United States would be significantly reduced to 17 days, without the need for transshipment, he added.

Arrival of the ships at Port Klang on a Monday and departure on a Tuesday meant that Malaysian exporters could deliver a full week's worth of production in time for sailing and importers could distribute their goods in the market place at the top of each week.

"In short, the Malaysia-North American trade will benefit from faster, more reliable, more competitive transportation than has previously been available," he said. -- BERNAMA