

A Rumble of Discontent

Rumble, rumble, mumble, grumble!

"Oh, dear!" Mr. Excavator said to himself. "Here comes Dumpy Dump Truck again, always grumbling. I'll just stay cheery and keep scooping."

Rumble, mumble, grumble, squeeEEEEEEK, groan! Bump!

"Hello, Mr. Dump Truck! How are you today?"

"Humph," was all that grumpy Dump Truck said in response.

Dump Truck ground to a halt in front of Mr. Excavator with his back turned towards him. There was a dumpy, grumpy look on his face.

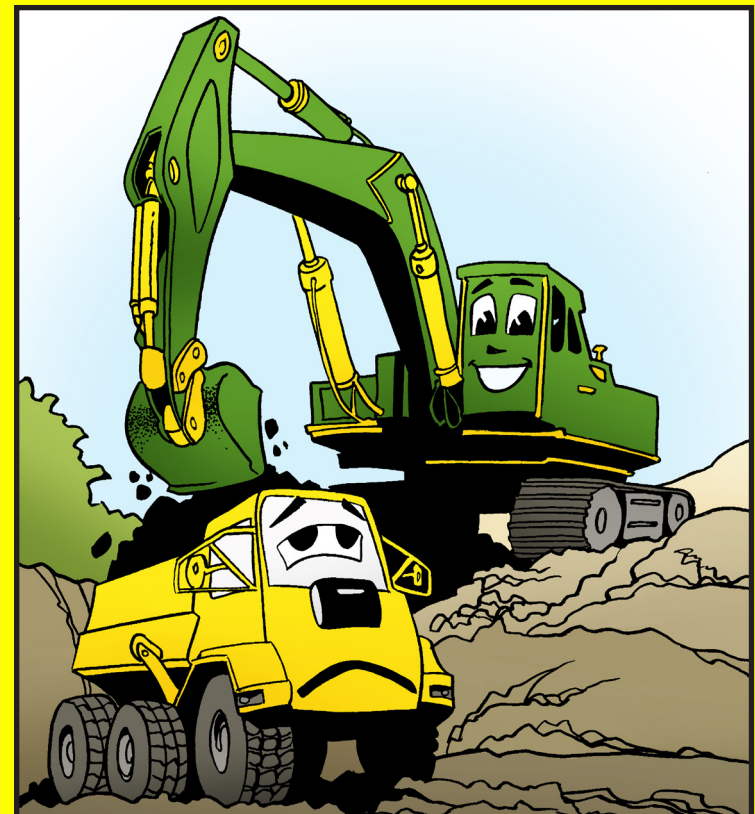
Mr. Excavator's long arm reached down and scooped up a big handful of rubble, dust, rocks, and soil. He lifted it high in the air and brought it back down, pouring it onto the open truck bed on Dumpy's back, who then grumbled and slowly rumbled off with his load.

Oh well, thought Mr. Excavator. I'm happy doing this job as best I can. What can I do? I wish Dumpy would be happy with his work, too.

After a few minutes, Dump Truck rumbled and grumbled back for another scoop of earth, which Mr. Excavator had been patiently waiting to load onto his back.

"Some people have it so easy," mumbled Dumpy.

I'll keep smiling, thought Mr. Excavator. I'll try to encourage Dump Truck. This is my job, and I have to do it, so I'll do it cheerfully.



Now Mr. Oversight, the foreman of CREW and Co. (that stands for Constructive Rewarding Edifying Work and Company) had been concerned that the project was not going as efficiently and smoothly as he would have liked. He was observing this little scenario from his office over at the side of the big construction site. He had noticed that for some time Dumpy had been dragging his wheels and was not inspired in his work. So Mr. Oversight walked over and called Mr. Dump Truck aside.

"Is something the matter, Dumpy?" he asked. "Why are you always so sad and grumpy?"

"Well," mumbled Dump Truck. "Day in and day out, I have to take Mr. Excavator's heavy loads on my back and carry them off to dump them. It's getting mighty heavy and boring. I don't get any recognition for it, and, I might add, no appreciation. But see how everybody looks up to Mr. Excavator—big, high and mighty Mr. Excavator! The little kids come by and always ooh and aah over him, but they never notice me. They never say a word about me.

"It's all right for him—he gets to do all the easy, fun stuff! He gets to stand there and show off what he can lift while I'm supposed to humbly rumble back and forth doing the dirty work ... for him!"

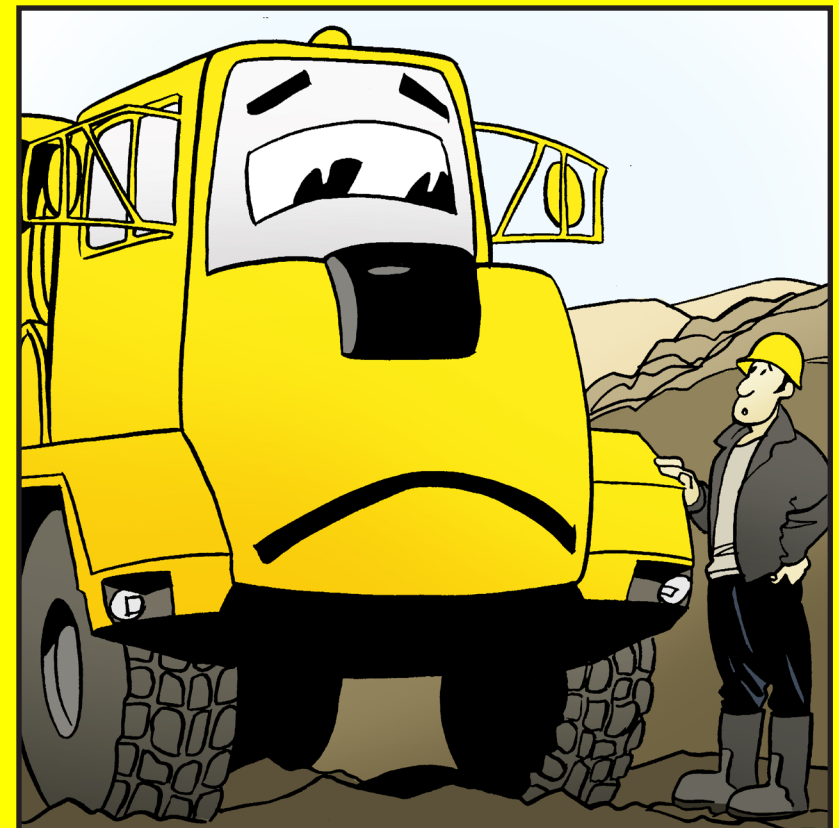
"Oh my," said Mr. Oversight. "I'm going to have to think about this."



The foreman then walked over to the other side of the enormous construction site. There was so much work going on: pushing,

lifting, crushing, filling, digging, scooping, scraping, and clearing huge amounts of earth and mud and sand and rocks and dirt and gravel and concrete, all in preparing the land for the building of Costa Del Sol, a beautiful hotel resort.

But amid all the noise and busy hubbub, Mr. Oversight couldn't help but notice a *rumble of discontent*.



Then he saw Mr. Cranky Crane working very slowly with a rather sour expression on his face. He was lifting a wall off a stack that Miss Lorry Loader had delivered and swinging it into place.

This time, it was Mr. Cranky Crane who was very sad, while Miss Lorry Loader was very happy. She was happily trundling back and forth, delivering doors and windows, which she would lift and lower carefully onto neat stacks, humming cheerfully as she went.

While Lorry was off collecting another load, Mr. Oversight took the opportunity to ask Mr. Cranky Crane what he was so sad about.

"Bah!" Cranky fumed. "It's fine for little Miss Lorry Loader! She gets to go here and there visiting all the factories, while

I just stay in this one place working my hoist off. It's like she's on a permanent vacation, humming as she goes, not noticing the work I have to do. Let me tell you, it's hard work! My work never stops. By the time I have a chance to rest my arm, she is back with another stack of windows or walls."

"Hmmm," said the foreman thoughtfully. "I'll have to think about this." And he walked off.

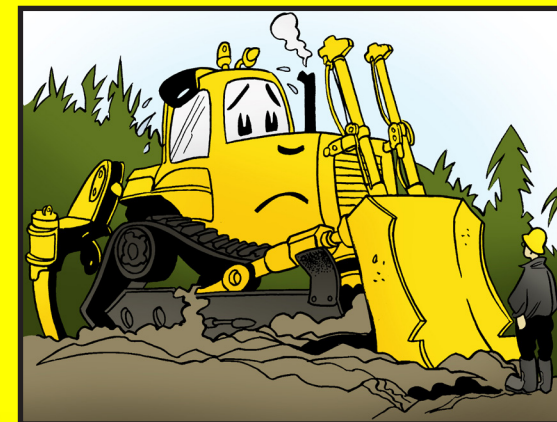
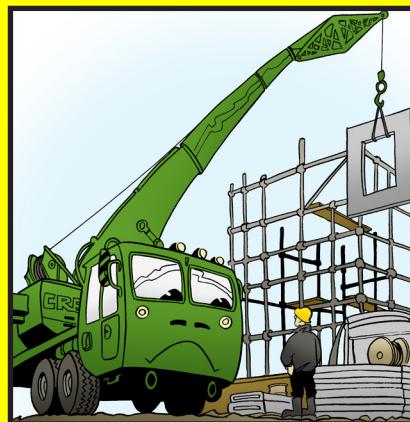
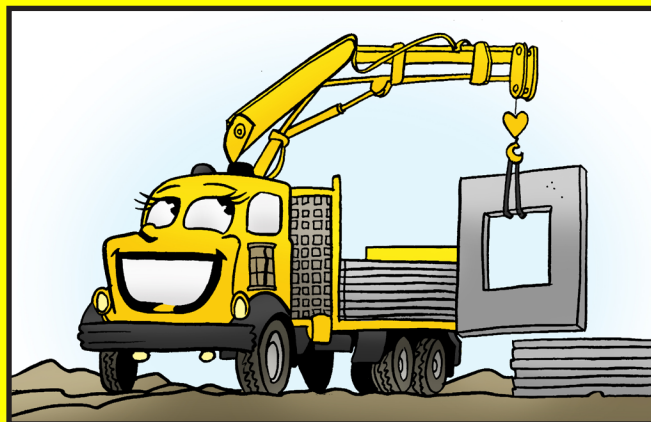


Then he noticed powerful Mr. Bulldozer. He seemed a little out of sorts too, though not as much as dumpy Mr. Dump Truck and Mr. Cranky Crane. But he did look a little weary in his job.

"Hi, old caterpillar tracks! How is it going?"

"Oh, okay. I am getting a bit tired of always pushing. I'm not even the biggest on the block, Mr. Oversight. Mr. Scraper is bigger than me, but I even have to push him! As a matter of fact, here he comes right now!"

Mr. Scraper swaggered up, and with a lot of huffing and puffing, he sliced his giant blade into the earth. Then he pushed the earth back into his giant bowl behind him, scraping and clearing a huge strip in one sweep. He turned and looked back proudly at his impressive accomplishment. Then heaving a giant aaaaaah he ground to a halt, his huge wheels unable to move.



"Dozer?" he called. "Can't you see I'm stuck? I'm just waiting on you to give me a shove!"

"Coming!" Bulldozer answered, then ambled down the slope and situated himself behind Mr. Scraper. With a "heave" and a "ho," he pushed Scraper up and over the pile of earth he was stuck in. Scraper then went on his way with an impatient snort.

"See?" whined Bulldozer, turning to Mr. Oversight. "These guys come along clearing away big loads, and I have to help push them. And you know what? Some of them like Crane and Scraper are even bigger than me, but still I have to push, push, push ... all day long! I mainly have to push Scraper, of course, and he is a tough, big wheel. He doesn't want to be pushed; it's hard on his ego! But because of the nature of this job, he does get himself into a few scrapes, and I have to be there to help him get out of them. I hardly get a break! Sometimes I wish I could just take some time off!

"But you know what? It's not that I mind the pushing job so much; I just don't get any thanks or appreciation. They grumble about me pushing them, but if I'm not there to help move them along as quickly as they would like, they grumble about that too! And all the while they are reminding me of how much they do and bragging about their accomplishments.

"But," Dozer paused. He realized he was talking badly about the others and he felt ashamed. "The other day one of them did say a little thank you ... kind of under his breath, and told me he really appreciated me. I know it wasn't easy for him, being such a big, tough, proud guy, but he said it anyway. And you know what? It really made my day!"

Mr. Oversight thanked Bulldozer for his time. "Hmmm, I guess I'll have to think about this," he said to himself. Then he continued on his way, still concerned about the ever-present rumble under his feet.



Presently, he came across little Digger, who was all alone, digging and digging away with a bucket on the end of his arm, making another ditch for the rainwater to drain into. He was whistling happily to himself, but he seemed a little lonely among the mounds of sand and soil. There were no trucks, scrapers, or bulldozers around to help him or keep him company.

"Hello there, Digger. You seem happy today!"

"Oh yes, I'm happy!"

"Don't you feel a little lonely sometimes, though, working all by yourself?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Oversight, sometimes I do get a little lonely because I don't get to work with the big trucks. But right now," said Digger with a big smile on his face, as he thrust his bucket into the earth, "I am happy just digging these moats and building sandcastles."

"Sandcastles? I don't see ... oh yes ..." Mr. Oversight looked at the mounds of discarded sand and realized that Digger was pretending. "They're nice sandcastles!"

"I'm just learning. Someday I'll get to help build a real castle like the others."

"But did you know, Digger, you *are* helping to build a real castle. Without these ditches for the rain to run into, the buildings would flood."

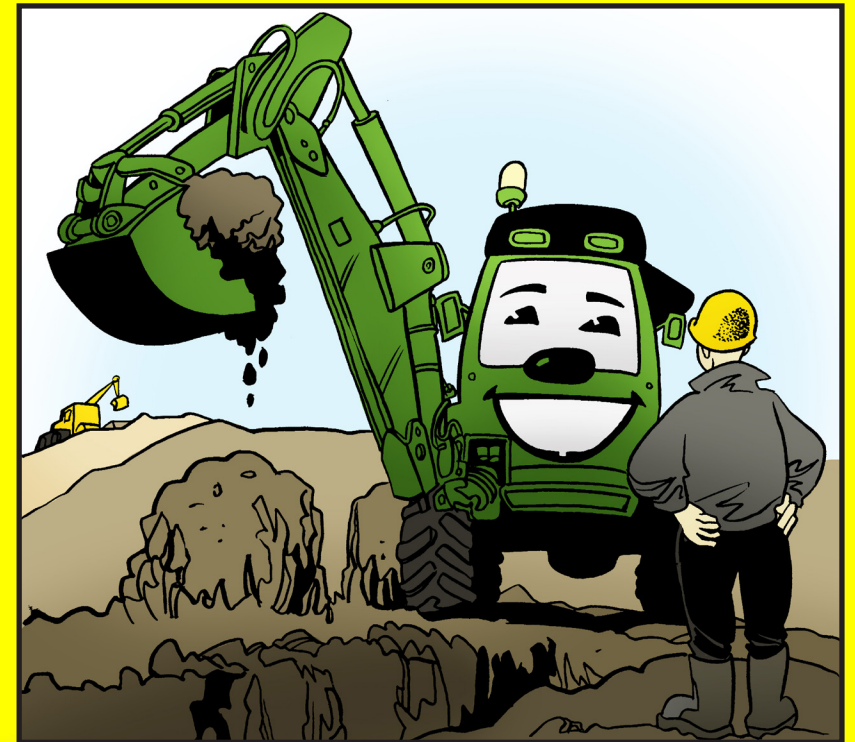
Mr. Oversight said goodbye to Digger and continued thoughtfully on his way. "I'm going to have to think about ... that's it!" he exclaimed. "What a good idea!"



"Attention all construction equipment," Loudspeaker called from his lofty position on the roof of the foreman's office. His voice echoed all over the site. It was so loud and crackly that whenever he made an announcement, all the machines were sure to stop what they were doing and take notice. "There will be a meeting at the foundation at seven o'clock this evening after work. Mr. Oversight has requested your presence."

"Uh-oh!" said Mr. Excavator. "Sounds serious."

"I wonder what it's going to be about," grumbled Dump Truck. "I had made other plans."



"I'll bet Mr. Oversight's angry with us," said Cranky Crane. "He's probably going to talk for hours."

"I'd better get myself spruced up," said Miss Lorry Loader.

"Me too," said the Scraper, flexing his big steel frame. "You never know who might be there."

"Hmmm," Mr. Bulldozer muttered. "I'd better get ready to push some of these guys if we're all going to make it on time."

Fun, thought Digger. I'll get to be with all the others.

"Please be on time. And don't worry," added Loudspeaker, "you're not in trouble."



Although some were a little worried about what the meeting was going to be about, there was an air of anticipation and excitement as all the construction machines rumbled onto the foundation.

Miss Lorry Loader arrived promptly on time, followed by little Digger, who was beaming with happiness at being accompanied by Mr. Excavator. Mr. Cranky Crane and Dumpy Dump Truck

grumbled and rumbled up behind, reluctantly dragging their wheels. Lastly, in rolled a gleaming Mr. Scraper, who was being pushed along by the tired and distraught Mr. Bulldozer.

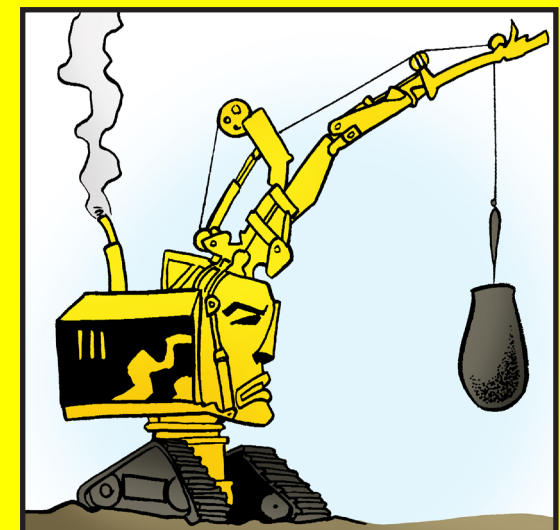
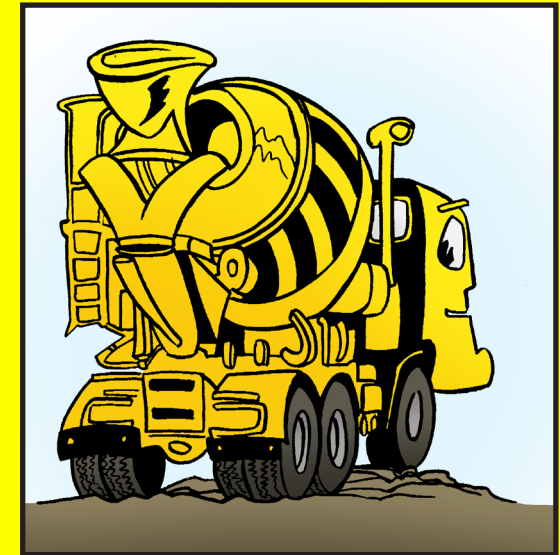
Many other machines had turned up too. There was Con Crete Pump and his chunky brother, Mixer; lanky Mr. Piling Rig; Motor Grader; Roadroller and his artistic girlfriend, Miss Roadmarker; Mr. Paver; and (to everyone's dismay) Mr. Demolition Ball, with his sons Crusher and Breaker. Everyone tried to get the best places as close to the front as possible, with the exception of Crusher and Breaker, who hung around in the back, snickering and disinterested.

"Ahem." Mr. Oversight cleared his throat as he began to address the gathering. "I am so glad you all could come. I promise that this will be brief, as I know you've all had a very long and tiring day."

"You can say that again," muttered Cranky and Dumpy.

"With the help of my dear friend, Mr. Loudspeaker, I'd like to talk about something I feel needs to be worked on in order for CREW to work together more efficiently and happily.

"I want to stress that I am very, very pleased with the work you all do. This project could not be completed without your help. However, as I walked around the site today, I couldn't help but notice a rumble of discontent!"



A gasp came from the listeners.

"I can hear it!" said one.

"I can feel it under my treads!" said another.

"And," Mr. Oversite lowered his voice to almost a whisper, "you all know what serious consequences could result if it should continue."

"Of course," Mr. Scraper said knowingly. "The vibrations in the ground could result in huge amounts of earth being dislodged, ruining a lot of my efforts."

"That would severely increase my workload too, having to move it," said Dumpy Dump Truck. "If I think I have it hard now, that would be really tough. The project would take forever to get done."

"Not to mention all the walls and windows I have so carefully put in place," said Mr. Cranky Crane. "They'd all come tumbling down."

"Imagine the danger that would be to all of us!" said Miss Lorry Loader.

"Give us a break!" mumbled Breaker and Crusher. "That's nothing. We can take it."

"That could result in big cracks in the roads I've worked so hard to level," said Roadroller.

"Oh dear, that would spoil the nice white lines I've painted!" said Miss Roadmarker.

"Take a few moments, if you please," said Mr. Oversite, "to think of what each of you can do personally to stop this rumble that is slowing down the work and is about to cause even greater damage."

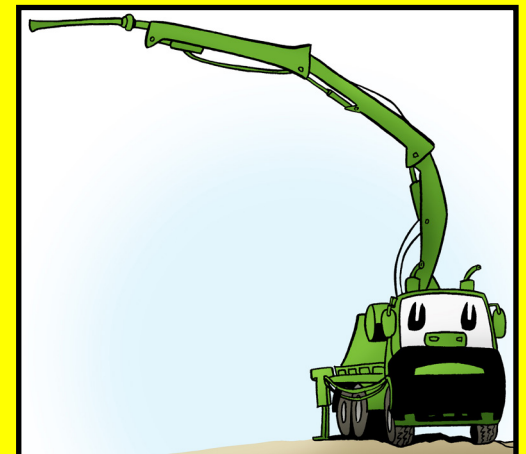
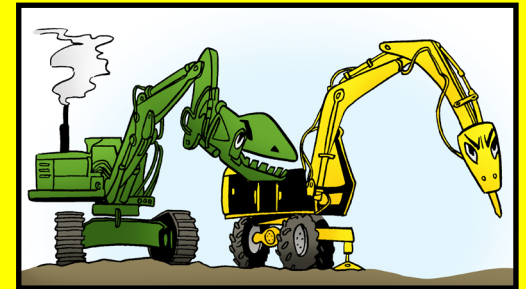
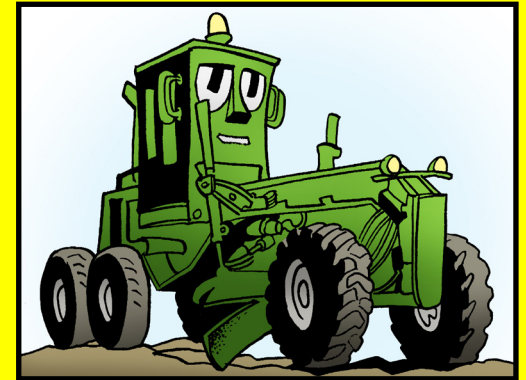
Except for the noise of Crusher and Breaker's nervous shuffling, there was a hushed silence over all the construction machines. Each of them stopped to think about their attitude of late, and imagined how difficult their work would be if the disasters that Mr. Oversite had warned them about should come to pass.

"I'm sorry if I've made you feel sad with my grumbling," whispered Dumpy to Mr. Excavator. "Will you forgive me?"

"Of course, Dumpy. I don't think I'd have the strength to go back and forth carrying those heavy loads like you do all day. I really appreciate you."

Mr. Cranky Crane put his long arm around Miss Lorry Loader. "Sorry about being such a bummer to work with. I just didn't realize how good I have it."

"That's okay, Crank. I just want you to know I really admire you and how you stick to your job. I think I'd go crazy standing in one spot like you do all day."



"Thanks, Dozer, for being such a pusher," said Scraper. "We all couldn't do our jobs without you. Sorry for my griping!"

"Don't mention it, Scraper," said Dozer.



The sun had set and floodlights lit up the happy scene at the construction site as everyone apologized and laughed and chatted with each other. Suddenly one of them shouted out:

"It's gone!"

"It's gone? What's gone?"

"The rumble! Listen! ... The rumble of discontent is gone!"

"Yes," said another. "I don't feel it anymore either. The ground is still!"

Mr. Oversight heaved a sigh of relief as a cheer arose from the crowd. Then he called for a celebration that lasted into the early morning hours, which included all the machines getting tanked up with an extra special ration of fuel.

"And you can all have the morning off," announced Mr. Oversight. Mr. Bulldozer was especially grateful for the time off.



That brings us to the end of our little story, but the atmosphere at the CREW construction site from that night on was a different one. Everyone was happy in their work, with the exception of Mr. Demolition Ball and his sons Crusher and Breaker, who left because their services were no longer required. The project was completed ahead of schedule, much to the delight of Mr. Oversight.

On the day of the grand opening of the Costa del Sol hotel complex, all the construction machines had to file out before the visitors arrived. Little Digger trundled along at the end of their long line. He was just out of the gate when he heard one of the first visitors exclaim: "I hear the drainage system here is one of the best in the world!"

