

The Ontario provincial government announced on January 30th that a second passenger and auto ferry will soon be added to the Manitoulin Island (Tobermory to South Baymouth) route which is operated by the Owen Sound Transportation Company Ltd. for the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. She is the Norwegian twin-screw motorship SKUDENES, 302.4 x 55.2 x 36.7, 3589 Gross and 1872 Net, which was completed in May 1976 by S.A. Juliana Const. Gijonesa (Hull 243) at Gijon, Spain. Launched as MONTE CRECETA, she sailed as MONTE CASTILLO (78) and MANX VIKING before becoming SKUDENES. The ferry, powered by two Pielstick diesel engines of 8,400 b.h.p., will cost the Ontario government just under \$10 million, whereas the cost of building a new ferry would have run in excess of \$30 million. SKUDENES will be sailed to Halifax under the name ONTARIO NO. 1 (reminiscent of a certain Lake Ontario rail and passenger ferry). Her Norwegian crew will leave her at Halifax, where she will be refitted for her new service. It is hoped that she will be able to join CHI-CHEEMAUN around the 1st of July. She will be slightly smaller than CHI-CHEEMAUN (130 cars compared to the 140 carried by the existing ferry), but her addition to the route will do much to relieve congestion on the service during periods of heavy traffic. SKUDENES, however, is not classed for service in ice, and her addition to the route does not in any way imply that there are any plans to extend the ferry season. Ontario Northland is presently considering several possible names in order to choose the most suitable one to give the ship when she actually is commissioned.

It is reported that a former Branch Lines tanker was sold for scrapping during the summer of 1988 in Texas. She was the Mexican-owned and Panamanian flag TLATOANI, which was built at Sorel in 1958 as (a) MAPLEBRANCH (II). She served as a cement carrier from 1962 until 1968, at which time she reverted to a tanker. She was officially renamed (b) L'ERABLE NO. 1 in 1982, but that name was never painted on her, for she was sold almost immediately for off-lakes use.

In the February issue, we reported details of the sale to foreign owners of the Paterson motorvessel LABRADO (II), which was renamed (b) FALCON CREST and departed from Montreal on January 8th. When she sailed, she was still in Paterson colours, except for the letter 'P' which had been removed from her stack. FALCON CREST proceeded to Sorel, Quebec, and there loaded a cargo at the Tracy wharf of the Quebec Iron & Titanium Company. She spent several days at Sorel before departing for overseas.

At long last, it would appear that a new ferry for the service between Drummond Island and DeTour Village, Michigan, will become a reality. In mid-January, the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority announced that a construction contract, worth \$1,288,000 was being given by the Michigan Department of Transportation to Trinity Marine, a New Orleans area shipbuilder. The contract was expected to be signed within a month, with delivery of the ferry by mid-Summer. Trinity Marine's bid was accepted over a somewhat higher bid submitted by Peterson Boulders of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. The new ferry will be capable of carrying 149 passengers and 24 full-sized automobiles, and will be a welcome addition to the busy ferry route across the mouth of the lower St. Mary's River.

Two salt-water vessels encountered difficulties on the St. Lawrence River during the month of January. On the 5th, the Yugoslavian BLOKOVO, (a) CP VOYAGEUR, went aground at Pointe aux Trembles shortly after departing her Montreal berth. It took a fleet of tugs and lighters until the 10th to refloat her. Then, on January 25, the Norwegian STAR ROVER, (a) FENGTIEN, (b) FENG SHIANG, (c) SEAROVER, suffered a fire in her crew quarters while downbound off Mont-Joli with a cargo of aluminum and paper rolls loaded in the Saguenay. The vessel had changed owners and names shortly before the accident, and we understand that her entire accommodations area was gutted in the blaze. The Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker DES GROSEILLIERS attended at the scene and rescued STAR ROVER's crew.