

It was on August 1st, 1983, that the C.S.L. cement-carrier METIS laid up at Kingston, having been replaced by STEPHEN B. ROMAN, (a) FORT WILLIAM (83). The latter had been purchased by the Lake Ontario Cement Company and ever since has been operated for that firm by Canada Steamship Lines, her former owner. The idle METIS lay at Kingston until all the old hulls were moved away from the elevator there, and on October 29, 1987, she arrived under tow at Toronto. Since then, she has been lying on the south side of the Lake Ontario Cement pier, corner of Villiers and Cherry Streets, her sad appearance silent testimony to her years of idleness. There have, however, been persistent rumours that the ship would be reactivated in some capacity, and we now may report that, on January 18th, METIS was sold to Lake Ontario Cement. Within a week, a towing notch had been cut into her stern, indicating that the former motorship will now be used as a barge.

Having recently commissioned its self-unloading barge JOSEPH H. THOMPSON and tug JOSEPH H. THOMPSON JR. (which was made out of the stern of the former steamer), the Upper Lakes Towing Company Inc., Escanaba, has again added to its fleet. Late in the autumn, Upper Lakes acquired from the Amersand Steamship Corporation (American Steamship Company, managers), the self-unloading steamer MCKEE SONS, (a) MARINE ANGEL (53), which has been inactive at Toledo since 21st December, 1979. The barge conversion of MCKEE SONS will be much easier than that of her former hull-sistership, the THOMPSON, because she already has unloading gear. As well, it will not be necessary to create another tug, for MCKEE SONS reportedly will be handled by OLIVE L. MOORE now that the latter's former consort, BUCKEYE, is used only for storage and transfer purposes. MCKEE SONS was hauled out of the Frog Pond at Toledo on January 3rd, and early on the morning of the 4th, she cleared Toledo in tow of TUG MALCOLM (bow) and PROTECTOR (stern), bound for Menominee, Michigan. About daybreak on January 5, MCKEE SONS was made fast at the Port Huron Marine Terminal, to wait for weather, and the unusual late-season tow did not get underway again until about 2:00 p.m. on the 7th. PROTECTOR left the tow in the lake above the Huron Cut.

It has been indicated by Ned A. Smith, the new president and C.E.O. of the American Steamship Company (replacing Ward Fuller, who is promoted to president and C.E.O. of GATC Corporation), that the company does indeed intend to refurbish the self-unloading steamer JOHN J. BOLAND (III). This ship, built at Manitowoc in 1953, actually is owned by members of the Reiss family, and has been idle at Superior, Wisconsin, since late in 1984. She will need considerable work before re-entering service, but no formal details have been made known. It will be good to see the BOLAND back in operation, as most observers had expected that she would be sold for scrapping, as was her newer near-sister DETROIT EDISON (II) back in 1986.

The relatively mild weather of late autumn allowed the St. Lawrence canals to remain open later than usual in 1990. The last salty to clear the system was the Cyprus-registered CARIBBEAN QUEEN, which was downbound on December 22 after unloading sugar at Toronto. On her way out, she had a part-load of old Toronto Transit Commission buses which were going to Cuba for use (!!) there. The last lakers of the season were in the Seaway on Christmas Day, J. N. McWATTERS upbound in ballast for Hamilton and DAVID K. GARDINER downbound with wheat for Montreal. GARDINER, the last commercial ship of the year, cleared the canal on December 26, and the actual last lockage was C.C.G.S. TRACY the same day. (She spent the night on the St. Lambert lower wall and departed on December 27th for Sorel.)

We earlier spoke of the July 20, 1990, grounding of ENERCHEM FUSION in the Saguenay River after leaving Chicoutimi downbound. The tanker, which at one stage was declared a constructive total loss, was said to be headed to Port Weller Dry Docks for repairs during the winter, but instead she remained in lay-up at Montreal. ENERCHEM FUSION left Montreal under tow on January 3rd, stopped overnight at Trois-Rivieres, and arrived at Lauzon late on the 4th.