

Back in the autumn of 1990, when the Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, plant of the Algoma Steel Corporation was shut down as a result of labour problems, it was suggested that the firm's marine division might well be closed and its single vessel, the craneship YANKCANUCK (II) sold. When the strike was settled during November, YANKCANUCK, which had been placed in lay-up, was reactivated and made several trips down to Windsor with steel products before the close of navigation. Over the winter months, much has been said about the financial predicament of Algoma Steel and the efforts of the company, its workers, and various levels of government to work out a solution which would save the company and the economy of the Soo area. Obviously, one of Algoma's most pressing needs is to divest itself of uneconomic operations, and it would seem that this has spelled the end for the marine division.

We understand that, as we go to press with this issue, steps are being taken to finalize the sale of YANKCANUCK to J. W. Purvis Marine Ltd., of the Canadian Soo, which will operate the "Yank" in much the same trade as before, carrying Algoma's products. (Last year, even with YANKCANUCK running, there was enough steel to be carried that Purvis used the barge CHIEF WAWATAM on the run from the Soo to Windsor.)

YANKCANUCK, 306.4 x 49.1 x 23.5, 3280 Gross and 1898 Net, was built in 1963 as Hull 178 of Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. Powered by an 8-cylinder Cooper-Bessemer diesel engine, the ship was built for Yankcanuck Steamships Ltd., of Sault Ste. Marie, of which Capt. Frank Manzutti was managing owner. The motorship was designed to carry Algoma Steel's products, and it was about 1972 that the Algoma Steel Corporation took over the vessel's ownership and replaced the crossed flags on her funnel with the "flaming 'A'". We are pleased that the sale to Purvis will keep YANKCANUCK active on the lakes.

Last issue, we mentioned reports to the effect that the package freighter WOODLAND, (a) FRENCH RIVER (81), (b) JENSEN STAR (86), had been sold for off-lakes use after lying idle during 1990 at Montreal. The vessel departed Montreal on January 22nd, bound for Becancour, and on the 25th sailed for Saint John, New Brunswick. The new owner has been identified as the International Capital Equipment Company of Canada, and a report from Lloyd's indicated that the ship would be renamed (d) WOODLANDS (note the 'S') under the Bahamian flag at the end of January. Another report, unconfirmed as yet, suggests that the ship is now under the registry of St. Vincent & Grenadines.

With work preceeding well at Fraser Shipyards on the conversion of LEON FRASER to the cement-carrier ALPENA for New Management Enterprise Inc., a subsidiary of Inland Lakes Management Inc., there comes word that Fraser has purchased another idle lake steamer for a similar conversion. This time, the vessel involved is reported to be the 9376-ton, 1927-built L. E. BLOCK which, after her retirement by the Inland Steel Company, has been owned by a developer hoping to make use of her as part of a harbour redevelopment scheme at Escanaba, Michigan. The ship was reported to have sustained structural damage whilst serving as a cement storage hull at South Chicago some years ago. There is no word yet on whether the BLOCK will remain a steamer or whether she may be reduced to a barge for the cement trade.

Speaking of the Fraser shipyard, we should mention that it will be that facility which, later this year, refurbishes the long-idle self-unloading steamer JOHN J. BOLAND (III) for a reactivation later in 1991 by the American Steamship Company, of Buffalo.

We have received a report that the Enerchem Transport Inc. tanker ENERCHEM AVANCE, (a) ARSENE SIMARD (78), (b) GASPE TRANSPORT (86), recently has been "flagged-out" to Bahamas registry. The AVANCE was in winter lay-up at Montreal from December 28th to January 26th, but then went back into active service.