

We earlier reported that the Toronto Island ferry WILLIAM INGLIS had been placed on the Toronto Drydock (the hull of the former coaster MENIER CONSOL) on September 9th. The INGLIS, having undergone regular survey and inspection, as well as necessary repairs, came off the dock on 21st October, and went back to her Bay Street dock, where she was placed in winter lay-up, along with SAM McBRIDE and TRILLIUM. Normally, after the advent of the winter ferry schedule (which this year occurred on October 13), the carferry ONGIARA provides base service, with the INGLIS assisting during periods of peak movement, but this autumn the back-up boat was THOMAS RENNIE.

Meanwhile, it was said that Duratug, of Port Dover, had obtained a contract to lengthen by 40 feet the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications' 1954-built Bay of Quinte carferry THE QUINTE LOYALIST. Duratug apparently has sublet the drydocking portion of the contract to the Rogers interests, and it is said that THE QUINTE LOYALIST will go onto MENIER CONSOL during December, 1992. If, indeed, this work comes to fruition, it will be the first major reconstruction of a commercial vessel accomplished in the new drydock facility.

The United States Congress has been requested to make it an offence to abandon any type of vessel, including unregistered barges, along the country's waterways, in an effort to control the cost of containing pollutants released from such hulls. It is estimated that there may be as many as 4,000 boats abandoned along U.S. waterways, and that up to 46% of those may be inland waters barges, whose remains are plain to see all along the shores of the Mississippi River and its tributaries. At present, the U.S. Coast Guard requires official registration of commercial barges of more than five Gross Tons, but this requirement strangely excludes barges on the inland waterways. It is estimated that some 14,000 barges are not documented and thus not readily identifiable as to owner in the event of accident or abandonment.

We earlier reported on the activities (or lack of same) of the Star excursion boat fleet which was lying idle at Port Lambton in the early part of the season. STAR OF CHICAGO I went to Ecorse, where she was to be refitted and operated as STAR OF DETROIT (II), but she never began service and remains at Nicholson's yard. It is reported that STAR OF CHICAGO III is also now at Ecorse, likewise lying idle. STAR OF CHICAGO II is still in the Chenal Ecarte at Port Lambton. Incidentally, STAR OF DETROIT (I), which was refitted earlier in 1992 and, on June 6th, set out for the long voyage around the east coast and up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to Cincinnati, for service there under the ownership of Lexington, Kentucky, parties, arrived safely at Cincinnati on August 14th. Under her new name, STAR OF CINCINNATI, she was observed by Ye Ed. carrying excursionists on the Ohio River during Cincinnati's incredible "Tall Stacks" celebrations during mid-October.

Nothing further has been heard concerning the various passenger ferry routes across Lake Ontario that were supposed to be operating in 1992. The only two vessels that actually appeared on the lake, the hydrofoils SUNRISE I and SUNRISE II of Canadian Lake Express, remain idle at Toronto, the I in the water and the II up on a shipping cradle at Pier 52. Nevertheless, there still is talk about a big ferry running on Lake Erie in 1993. Gary Spence, proponent of the service between Port Stanley and Cleveland, is still being quoted as saying that the line will be operative by June 1st next, using "a leased European vessel yet to be selected". An office to receive applications for jobs aboard the ferry is reportedly to be opened at Port Stanley during December. We shall see...

A real new ferry, Pelee Island Transportation Services' JIIMAAN, which entered service in July after completion at Port Weller, has encountered mechanical problems which have kept her from operating to capacity. Pump failures, engine breakdowns, and other such problems have combined to produce delays and trip cancellations.