

ISLANDER III, which is the mainstay of the ferry crossing between DeTour Village and Drummond Island, Michigan. Problems with the ferry's machinery began three days after her arrival on the river in 1989, and further repair work on the Cummins diesels has been deemed inappropriate. Late in December, EUPTA decided to scrap the Cummins equipment and to repower DRUMMOND ISLANDER III with a set of Caterpillar 3412 diesels, and it was anticipated that the new engines would have been delivered on February 10th. The same Caterpillar 3412 equipment has been recommended for the new Sugar Island ferry as well.

Port Weller Dry Docks has been the recipient of major governmental funding in order to ensure the future of the St. Catharines shipyard and to help to preserve the jobs of shipyard workers. Port Weller reportedly is to receive a \$9.1 million grant from the federal government, together with a \$2.4 million loan from the Province of Ontario. The majority of the funding will be spent on the yard's present project to separate the current drydock and graving dock by means of a permanent wall built between the two docks. Until the completion of this project, the shipyard has been unable to move ships on or off the graving dock "shelf" when other vessels were in the regular dry dock, as the two were fully connected. Meanwhile, Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd. appears to be going ahead with its plans to close the PortShip shipyard at Thunder Bay by the end of June, 1993. While a machine shop and steel fabrication plant would remain at Thunder Bay, the company plans to move all marine work to Port Weller. If those plans proceed, it will mean that Port Weller will be the only major shipyard facility operating on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes above Quebec.

In previous issues, we have been following the ongoing saga of the former Bob-Lo Island steam ferries COLUMBIA and STE. CLAIRE, which were retired at the end of the 1991 season and spent the summer of 1992 in idleness at Ecorse. An article appearing in the "Windsor Star" on February 6th quoted Steve Williamson, vice president of business operations for Capital Gaines Inc., of Fowlerville, Michigan, as saying that it was hoped that the purchase of the two steamers from the Detroit Economic Growth Society would shortly be concluded. (We have no idea how the latter organization came to have any ownership interest in the vessels.) Capital Gaines spent considerable funds on repairs to the plating of COLUMBIA's hull while she was on the Nicholson drydock at Ecorse in late fall and during the winter, and also was refurbishing the steamer's upperworks and installing a new fire sprinkler system. Many former Bob-Lo crew members have been hired for the new operation, and Capital Gaines still hopes to have COLUMBIA back in the excursion trade in the Detroit area by May 1st. She would dock alongside the former carferry LANSLOWNE, home of the Baja Beach Club restaurant and nightclub which also is now operated by Capital Gaines. Company sources were quoted as saying that plans for STE. CLAIRE were yet to be confirmed, but that she probably would be moved to the Chicago area for further operation.

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LAY-UP LISTINGS - WINTER 1992-1993

We find it gratifying, but at the same time difficult to believe, that not a single one of our members has written or called with any corrections or additions to the lay-up listings which appeared in our February issue. Does this mean that our listings were perfect? Or have all of our members left the area for winter vacations in warmer climes?

The only correction which we have for you is one which, as noted in the Marine News section, we stumbled onto all by ourselves. It is as follows.

Hamilton: From previous listing, delete SILLERY (now operating off-lakes).

If any other corrections are received, they will appear in the April issue.

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