

MARINE NEWS -CONTINUED

The Imperial Oil tanker A. G. FARQUHARSON, (a) TEAXCO CHIEF (II)(86), ended her charter to the Desgagnes affiliate, Petronav, late in the season and on December 29th went into lay-up at Halifax. It is unclear what is to become of her, because she was not included in the sale of Imperial Oil tankers to Algoma Central Corporation. Some observers had speculated that Desgagnes might purchase her, but we understand that Desgagnes has purchased a tanker (so far not identified) in Sweden and will bring her to Canada.

Another Imperial tanker now at Halifax and not included in the Algoma sale is the 1963-built IMPERIAL LACHINE (II), the small bunkering ship that had spent her entire life at Montreal, originally operating with her sistership IMPERIAL VERDUN (79), (b) SILLERY, which left the lakes in 1992. IMPERIAL LACHINE is no longer needed at Montreal, with HORIZON MONTREAL attending to bunkering there. The little LACHINE arrived at Halifax on December 14th in tow of the tug ATLANTIC OAK.

For those who watch ships at the Soo, they will find that the "tower" at the Locks now has a new radio call sign. After operating as WUD 31 for many years, the lockmaster in the tower since November has been using the call sign WUE 21. The new sign is no easier to say than the old one; it's still a tongue-twister!

Speaking of the Soo, we should note a change in colours for the museum ship VALLEY CAMP. For the last few years, the 1917-built steamer, (a) LEWIS W. HILL (55), has sported a white forecastle. This may have looked rather "cutesy-nice" for the visitors, but was totally inappropriate for a Republic Steel vessel. With considerable pleasure, we now learn that her forecastle has once again been painted black (the way it should be), and plans are being entertained to bring back the white "Republic Steel Corporation" billboards on the ships's sides. VALLEY CAMP has always kept her Republic stack markings whilst serving as a museum.

The tug that will be handling the barge PERE MARQUETTE 41, the former ferry steamer CITY OF MIDLAND 41, for the Pere Marquette Shipping Company, has an interesting history. Latterly, she has operated as KRYSTAL K. for Basic Marine, of Escanaba, Michigan. Before that, however, from 1965 to 1992, she was known as the KINGS POINTER, a training vessel at the Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy. Diesel-electrically driven, the 144-foot tug was built in 1943 at Port Arthur, Texas, as an auxiliary ocean tug for the U.S. Navy, known as ATA-199. From 1945 until 1965, she was the government tug UNDAUNTED. For her new duties, she is being sponsored out to increase her beam by five feet, hydraulic coupling pins are being installed, and an aluminum tower pilothouse is being constructed.

In response to our previous news item, we can now confirm that the new Beaver Island (Lake Michigan) ferry EMERALD ISLE was upbound in the Seaway on November 16th, and in the Welland Canal on the 18th.

The World Ship Society, in the November issue of its "Marine News", reported that ALGOSTREAM, (a) SIMCOE (94), had been renamed (c) SIMCOE in 1996, presumably in preparation for her overseas scrap tow. This would appear to account for the inaccuracies in the Lloyd's reports on the tow's difficulties. It will be recalled that throughout the tow, Lloyd's continually mistook this 1966-built, Seaway-size laker for the still-active Canadian Coast Guard buoytender SIMCOE.

Last issue, we questioned why the tug TECHNO ST-LAURENT was wintering at Toronto. It seems she was towing the barge DUPUIS NO. 10 across Lake Erie from Buffalo to Port Colborne when, early on December 24th, the barge sank. There is an ongoing government investigation into the incident, and the tug was too late to make it out of the canals before closure. Contrary to our earlier report, the tug was not built at Walkerville. The Dominion Bridge Company, Walkerville, subcontracted her construction to Chantier Maritime du St. Laurent, of St. Laurent on the Ile d'Orleans, St. Lawrence River.