

Work has been proceeding through the winter months on the reconstruction of the C.S.L. self-unloader J. W. McGIFFIN at Port Weller Dry Docks. This is the first in a series of renewals of aging ships, with the entire hull forward of the after cabins being replaced with a completely new hull. It will be interesting to see what the McGIFFIN looks like when she is ready to be commissioned in the spring.

Meanwhile, Port Weller Dry Docks also has been working on a major mid-life refit of the Algoma Central self-unloader AGAWA CANYON. Work has also been ongoing on the replacement of the steering equipment on CANADIAN TRANSFER. It will be recalled that this hybrid ship has sustained two bouts of rudder trouble since her commissioning last summer. At last report, her rudder had been removed completely, and the ship herself was lying alongside the tie-up wall below Lock Two. During November, the Port Weller yard unveiled an investment worth \$6 million in new, high-technology equipment for the yard to make it more competitive. Port Weller is the first Canadian shipyard to employ robotic construction equipment.

The veteran Lower Lakes Towing Company self-unloader CUYAHOGA, (a) J. BURTON AYERS (95), is undergoing considerable work this winter whilst in lay-up at Port Stanley. The holds have been sandblasted and refinished, while the cargo elevating gear has been removed and refurbished. As well, the steam steering gear has been removed and replaced with a hydraulic system. The replacement of the steering gear was done in anticipation of the repowering of the steamer, which is planned for next winter. The 1943-built ship's original Lentz tandem compound engine will be removed, and replaced with the EMD diesel engine which was removed from the American Steamship Company's self-unloader NICOLET when the latter vessel was scrapped at Port Maitland a few years ago. The repowering will not only give CUYAHOGA more power, but will ensure more reliability of the machinery. CUYAHOGA is the last of the AmShip-built Maritime Class steamers equipped with the Lentz engines, which generally were considered far less successful than the traditional triple-expansion engines fitted into the Maritime Class boats built by the Great Lakes Engineering Works.

Sold by McKeil Marine Ltd. to Bahamas buyers during 1998 were the tug GLENSIDE and barge GENERAL CHEMICAL 37. We understand that the GLENSIDE, built in 1944 by Russel Brothers Ltd. at Owen Sound, is now named (b) TYCOON and is pushing sand barges in the Nassau area. We do not know what has become of the barge.

Wintering at Oswego, we understand, are three former Great Lakes Towing Company tugs which have been sold for use in the Florida area, but which were unable to clear the system before the closure of the New York State Barge Canal for the winter. The tugs had passed down the Welland Canal on November 20th. They are the 1912-built ALASKA, (a) GARY (I)(34), (b) GREEN BAY (81), (c) ONEIDA (87), (d) IROQUOIS (II)(90), the 1951-built NEW HAMPSHIRE (II), (a) MESSENGER (84), (b) PATRICIA HOEY (90), and the 1930-built RHODE ISLAND.

Despite the failure of Shaker Cruise Lines, one of three operators running boats between Toronto and Niagara during the 1998 season, it would seem that Lake Ontario Fast Ferry Corp. still is aiming for a summer 2000 start to its service between Toronto and Rochester. The company, created by Toronto businessmen William Wilkinson and Leo Smith, still intends to have two 300-foot catamarans built for the service by Austal Ships Pty. Ltd., of Australia, and the \$200 million project will be a partnership of the Ferry Corp., the shipbuilder, and the engine builders. Officials from the new company were in Rochester in early February, discussing the project with local officials. A major part of the project will be preparing suitable facilities in Rochester for terminal and other support development, as well as major road access improvements.