

It was announced in early April that thirteen bids had been received by a U.S. Marshal who, acting on behalf of the U.S. District Court in Southern Illinois, has been handling the sale of the big tug which was built at the bankrupt U.P.S.Co. shipyard at Ontonagon, Michigan, and which was brought to the Michigan Soo late last year. The highest bid apparently came from the Marine Specialty Co., of Friendswood, Texas, which also has expressed interest in obtaining the companion barge which still sits on the ways at Ontonagon. At last report, the Marshal was awaiting the approval of Marine Specialty's bid, which must come from the court as a result of the fact that the sale was forced by criminal proceedings against the former owners of the tug in connection with drug-related activities.

Construction began on April 17th on the new ferry destined for the Drummond Island to DeTour Village route across the entrance to the lower St. Mary's River. The boat is being built by the Moss Point Marine shipyard at Pascagoula, Mississippi, and under the terms of the contract, the ferry must be delivered at DeTour within 180 days from the start of construction. Certain dock reconstruction will be undertaken at the crossing before the commissioning of the new ferry. When the new boat is in service, the 42-year-old DRUMMOND ISLANDER will act as spare boat for the route, while the 1961-built DRUMMOND ISLANDER II will be reassigned to other duties or put up for sale.

By the time this appears in print, the ferry ONTARIO NO. 1, destined for the route between Tobermory and South Baymouth, should be in the lakes. Her voyage across the Atlantic, during which she encountered some rather nasty weather conditions, brought her to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, where she was drydocked. It was the intention of her new owners to move her to Owen Sound for the completion of the necessary improvements to her passenger accommodations, and it was anticipated that she would be as far as Lake Ontario during the second week of May. As yet, there has been no announcement as to the name which will be given to the ferry before she is commissioned.

Last issue, we reported the March 27th grounding of the Interlake Steamship Company's 1,000-footer MESABI MINER in the Middle Neebish Channel of the lower St. Mary's River, but only partial information was then available to us. In fact, the MINER was downbound, loaded, and moved slightly out of the channel on the St. Joseph's Island side of the Johnson's Point turn. At the time, as is usual in early and late season navigation, the Middle Neebish Channel (which is particularly narrow at its lower end) was being used for two-way traffic, as the West Neebish (Rock Cut) Channel had not yet been opened. The grounding was partially a result of pressure of ice in the channel. The MINER found the bottom with her port bow, punching a hole a bit more than a foot square in her plating. The tug CHIPPEWA took a compressor to the scene and the MINER's flooded forepeak was pressurized to expel water. With the help of three tugs, MESABI MINER was refloated during the evening of March 29th, and river traffic resumed after the three-day blockade. The MINER was taken to the Lime Island Anchorage where divers did a further hull inspection and, when no additional damage was found, she was allowed to resume her voyage to Lorain to unload her tonite cargo. We should note that, in late March, only U.S.C.G. MACKINAW, KATMAI BAY and buoy tender SUNDEW were available to break ice in the St. Mary's River. Three of KATMAI BAY's sister tugs, BRISTOL BAY, BISCAYNE BAY and NEAH BAY, were all out of commission for at least part of the time as a result of various woes.

U.S.C.G. MACKINAW made a rare visit to Toronto harbour during the last week of April during the course of a training tour for her new crew. The ship was moored near the foot of York Street and was open for public inspection. We recall MACKINAW having been on Lake Ontario on at least one previous occasion but (although we may be mistaken) we do not recall her ever before entering Toronto harbour.