

After many years of purging inactive and marginal vessels from their fleets, the U.S. lake shipping companies had little excess tonnage left on their rosters in recent years. The last two seasons have seen the reactivation of several ships which just barely had managed to avoid the breakers, their operation required because of increased cargo commitments. The prospects are now good that several other ships may return to service in the next year or two. 1990 was the first year in recent memory when no U.S.-flag lakers were sold for scrapping (except for the fire-damaged JUPITER). By contrast, however, the end of the line appears to have come for one veteran lake steamer.

This spring, observers were heartened by the fact that the USS Great Lakes Fleet Inc. had decided to fit out its venerable self-unloader IRVIN L. CLYMER and to paint her up in the fleet's new colours. (It has been argued that she looked better in the new livery than any other ship of the "tinstack" fleet.) On November 5th, however, CLYMER was unbound at the Soo with a cargo of stone for Duluth, and as she passed the Soo, all of her excess stores were removed. She arrived at the lakehead on November 7th, unloaded at the Hallett Dock, and then next day moved over to the Baxter Slip at Fraser Shipyards in Superior. There she was laid up, and it has been said that she will be stripped out over the winter in anticipation of a sale to breakers next year.

IRVIN L. CLYMER (U.S.215018), (a) CARL D. BRADLEY (I)(27), (b) JOHN G. MUNSON (I)(51), was built in 1917 as Hull 718 of the Lorain yard of the American Ship Building Company, 537.9 x 60.0 x 32.0, 7203 Gross and 5557 Net. She was repowered in 1954 with two General Electric steam turbines, generating 4,000 shaft horsepower, although she remained a coal-burner. The CLYMER was a handsome and distinctive ship, and was the last of the "original" upper-lake self-unloaders built as such during the developmental years of that type of carrier rather than converted from straight-deck design. We suppose that her retirement is not surprising after seventy-three years of service without a major reconstruction, but we are sad to see her go and wish that she could be preserved as an example of a significant development in lake shipping technology.

In the past two issues, we commented upon reports to the effect that Canada Steamship Lines would, during the coming winter, have its straight-deck bulk carrier WINNIPEG (III), (a) RUHR ORE (76), (b) CARTIERCLIFFE HALL (88), converted to a self-unloader at Port Weller, supposedly using the boom recently removed from the idle steamer HOCHELAGA. Nevertheless, HOCHELAGA's boom will not go on WINNIPEG this winter. We have it on the best authority that the conversion will not be taking place, and we must assume that current economic conditions have caused the scrubbing of any immediate implementation of such a conversion project.

While on the subject of Canada Steamship Lines, we should advise that reports concerning the possible reflagging to the Far East of ATLANTIC SUPERIOR and ATLANTIC HURON (II), (a) PRAIRIE HARVEST (89), were at best premature. The two self-unloaders have not been re-registered, nor have they been rechristened as earlier reports reaching us had suggested.

The schooner CAROLINE ROSE, which had been at Owen Sound for eight years and latterly was lying sunk there, was refloated on August 26, 1990, and leaks in her hull were sealed with concrete. On August 27, at about 8:30 a.m., CAROLINE ROSE was towed out of the harbour by the fishtug W. A. SPEARS and, at about 7:45 p.m., she arrived at Driftwood Cove, outside Tobermory underwater park, where she was allowed to settle to the bottom. (The move to a spot outside the park would seem to indicate that no "new" wrecks will be permitted to join the "old" ships already lying in the park area.) Unfortunately, the schooner was placed in such an exposed position that, before long, wave action had moved the hull some 200 feet, and CAROLINE ROSE had lost her deck, her foremast, and part of her cabin.