

In our December issue, we touched briefly upon the November 24, 1990, grounding on Isle Royale, in Lake Superior, of the Kinsman Lines Inc. steamer KINSMAN INDEPENDENT (III), (a) CHARLES L. HUTCHINSON (III)(62), (b) ERNEST R. BREECH (88). We now know more of what was a most serious incident indeed. At the time, the INDEPENDENT was upbound light en route for Thunder Bay to load a partial cargo of grain, from whence she was to proceed to Duluth to top off, and then sail with a full cargo for Buffalo. Storm warnings had been posted for Saturday, November 24, but there is no reason to suggest that weather conditions were such that the vessel would have been forced to seek shelter. Instead of following the usual vessel track to the north of Isle Royale, the steamer grounded at about 11:00 a.m. with her bow in only six feet of water, some two miles off the entrance to Siskiwit Bay on the southeasterly side of the big island. This is a most dangerous place for a large ship (see our February, 1990, feature on the loss by stranding there of the steamer GLENLYON in the autumn of 1924). In any event, the Purvis Marine tugs ANGLIAN LADY, W. J. IVAN PURVIS and W. I. SCOTT PURVIS came to the rescue and were able to free the stranded steamer late on Sunday, November 25th, while the U.S.C.G. SUNDEW and C.C.G.S. SAMUEL RISLEY assisted. With two long gashes in her hull and seven of her ballast tanks open to the water, KINSMAN INDEPENDENT was helped by the tugs to Thunder Bay, and she arrived at the "Portship" shipyard on November 26th. With damage estimated in the area of \$1,500,000 the decision had to be made whether to scrap the ship or repair her. Probably because of the fact that a suitably-sized replacement could no longer be obtained to run the grain trade into Buffalo and Cleveland, it was decided that the ship was to be repaired, with the work being done at Thunder Bay during the winter months. Meanwhile, U.S. Coast Guard officials investigated the wreck in an effort to determine why the ship was so far (24 miles) off her normal course at the time of the stranding, and the conclusion apparently was that human error caused the mishap. Press reports emanating from Duluth indicate that three of KINSMAN INDEPENDENT's officers have been charged with negligence, and formal hearings into the charges will be heard in late February or early March. It had been hoped that the hearings could be held in January, but a "temporary shortage of administrative law judges" has forced the delay.

The newly-elected New Democratic Party government of the province of Ontario announced on Friday, December 14, 1990, that the contract for the construction of the new Pelee Island ferry would be awarded to the Port Weller yard of Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd. The contract, to be finalized in late January, will be worth in the area of \$26 million, and will produce a vessel ready for commissioning in 1992. The new ferry, considerably larger than the existing PELEE ISLANDER, will be capable of handling some 400 passengers per trip, plus either 40 automobiles or 25 passenger cars and two highway transports. The new ship will serve the usual route from Kingsville and Leamington to Pelee Island and on to Sandusky, Ohio, while the 1960-built PELEE ISLANDER will be reassigned to replace the 1949-built UPPER CANADA on the shorter route from Kingsville and Leamington to the island. At the island and the two Canadian mainland ports, some \$16.5 million in dock improvements will be made, with \$11.5 million of that coming from the federal authorities. At Sandusky, new dock facilities are planned for the south end of the west side of the Jackson Street pier to accommodate the new end-loading ferry. Southwestern Ontario boatbuilders are crying the blues because the ferry contract was awarded to Port Weller, but in St. Catharines the mood is one of elation as the work force at Port Weller Dry Docks will be expanded to handle the first major new-building contract awarded to any Canadian lake shipyard in more than five years. It has been suggested that a name for the new ferry might be chosen by means of a contest amongst school children in the municipalities to be served by the boat.