

Much to the surprise of almost everybody in lake shipping circles, the former Litton drydock at Erie, Pennsylvania, is being reactivated and this winter will be performing shipyard work on the Interlake Steamship Company's 1,000-footers JAMES R. BARKER and MESABI MINER. The drydock is to be operated by a firm known as the Jonathan Corp., the principals of which are individuals formerly associated with Bay Shipbuilding (Sturgeon Bay), Merce Industries (Toledo) and the Manitowoc Corp. The reactivation of the Erie shipyard will hit BayShip hardest, for in recent years the Sturgeon Bay yard was the only operating one on the Great Lakes capable of drydocking 1,000-foot ships.

Last issue, we reported that the Michigan - Wisconsin Transportation Company, which owns the former C & O carferries BADGER, CITY OF MIDLAND 41 and SPARTAN, and operates the last carferry service across Lake Michigan, would be moving its Wisconsin terminus from Kewaunee to Manitowoc. It was hoped that the move would generate more passenger and auto traffic for the ferry route, with Manitowoc being a much more accessible place for a ferry dock than the rather remote Kewaunee. In addition, the harbour at Kewaunee had become so shallow that BADGER was scraping bottom there and the line's insurers had declined liability for any damages caused by her further operation there. Difficulties were encountered in preparing the ferry slip at Manitowoc, however, with the dock not having seen ferry traffic for many years. Apparently, parts of the dock would have to be brought down from Kewaunee (notably the upper-deck auto-loading ramp which had been moved from Manitowoc to Kewaunee years ago by the now-defunct Ann Arbor ferry line), and with no possibility of the dock being ready for several months, the company reluctantly closed down the service when BADGER arrived back at Ludington on November 16th. Glen Bowden, president of the Michigan - Wisconsin Transportation Company, has stated that the company hopes to resume operation in the spring, using the Manitowoc route. In addition, we understand that the company still would like eventually to open a second route between Ludington and Milwaukee.

The Canada Steamship Lines self-unloading steamer TARANTAU participated in a rescue on Whitefish Bay during the early evening of November 30th. The downbound ship spotted near Isle Parisienne a small motorboat in difficulty. Two tribal fishermen from the Bay Mills, Michigan, area had been fishing near Tahquamenon Island when their motor gave out, and they were some three hours overdue when TARANTAU sighted them in the eight-foot seas. The first effort to get the two men aboard TARANTAU failed, but a second attempt was successful, aided by the 1,000-foot EDWIN H. GOTT, which drew near to provide a lee. Also on the scene was the U.S.C.G. SUNDEW. The TARANTAU put the two men ashore at the Soo after they were treated for hypothermia.

We earlier reported the sale, during July, of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation's self-unloaders LEWIS WILSON FOY and SPARROWS POINT to the Columbia Transportation Division, Oglebay Norton Company. It was suggested that the vessels eventually would be renamed ROBERT C. NORTON (III) and SYLVANIA (II), respectively, but would not appear in new colours until the spring of 1991. A recent report, however, indicated that the rechristening of the two ships was scheduled to take place at Toledo on December 20th. Columbia will also be taking over the management of STEWART J. CORT and BURNS HARBOR, but they will remain under Bethlehem ownership.

In the November issue, we commented that the tanker ENERCHER FUSION would winter at Port Weller for the repair of grounding damage suffered during the summer in the Saguenay River. We now learn that the stranding occurred on July 19, when the ship was bound up the Saguenay en route to Chicoutimi. She was taken first to Quebec, and then to Lauzon, and she finally arrived at Montreal under tow on October 17th.