

We earlier reported the late-season sale by Enerchem Transport Inc. of the former canaller ENERCHEM LAKER, (a) ROCKCLIFFE HALL (II)(72), (b) ISLAND TRANSPORT (86). We now learn that the motortanker was sold to Energy Recovery Systems, a U.S. firm which will operate her as a bunkering ship "in Panama". Flying the Panamanian flag and rechristened (d) RECOVERY VIII, she cleared Montreal on December 7th, and on the 16th she arrived at anchor at Halifax. Due to the lateness of the season, her new owner called for bids for an "assisted tow" to New York. On Christmas Day morning, RECOVERY VIII cleared Halifax for New York, accompanied by the tug RUSSELL JR. (the former U.S.C.G. tug YANKTON), owned by Russell Tripp, of Boston.

It would seem that the misfortunes of the "Ontonagon Barge" abated when she left the upper lakes. Under tow of the Marine Specialty Company tug TORRENT, the barge passed down at Detroit on December 10, and on the 17th (reported as UPSCO HULL 002) she was downbound in the Seaway, assisted by EVANS McKEIL and GLENSIDE. In the lower river, TORRENT suffered damage in the ice below Ile aux Coudres, and had to undergo emergency repairs. TORRENT and her barge passed Halifax on January 3rd, estimating arrival at Port Arthur, Texas, for January 18th. We have received confirmation that, when the barge enters service, she will indeed be christened LIGHTNING.

A potentially serious accident occurred in the early morning hours of December 31st at Toledo. The Algoma Central self-unloader ALGORAIL was up-bound in the Maumee River with a cargo of potash when she was caught in the strong current caused by heavy rains and a rapid snow melt. The ship swung across the channel, with her bow wedged against the dock of The Andersons elevator facilities and her stern against the pilings of the Conrail swing bridge. It took the G-tugs MONTANA, NEW HAMPSHIRE and UTAH some eight hours to pull the ship from the bridge draw, and several freight and passenger trains were delayed while the bridge was stuck in the open position. The ship was unhurt, although minor damage to the dock and bridge pilings was reported. ALGORAIL finally cleared Toledo on January 4th, bound for Goderich to load salt. Another Algoma ship had bridge troubles at Toledo, this on December 30th. ALGOWOOD was trapped when electrical problems struck the Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge. The span was out of operation for six hours and had to be cranked open manually to allow ALGOWOOD to pass.

On December 13, 1990, a judge of the U.S. District Court at Chicago ruled that professional diver Harry Zych, through his Lady Elgin Foundation, has clear claim to the wreckage of the passenger steamer LADY ELGIN which has been lying on the floor of Lake Michigan since her sinking on the night of September 8, 1860, after a collision with the schooner AUGUSTA. Zych claims that he found the wreck in 1989, but he has not revealed its location. The judge's ruling validates an agreement which Zych's foundation had made with the CIGNA Property & Casualty Company, successor to the LADY ELGIN's insurer, for rights to the wreck in return for 20% of the gross proceeds of the sale of any artifacts from the wreck. In a move which will not be popular amongst preservation groups, Zych plans to begin "salvaging" the wreck as soon as he can raise the funds. Zych also has laid claim to the wreck of the steamer SEABIRD, which burned on Lake Michigan on April 9, 1868. The LADY ELGIN and SEABIRD disasters together claimed some 400 lives.

Toronto excursion boat operator Norman Rogers (who runs EMPIRE SANDY and also "The Toronto Drydock" made out of the hull of the coaster MENIER CONSOL, and who owns the former U.S.C.G. tug SAUK and the barge S. A. QUEEN), has bought another vessel to use as a party boat on Toronto Bay. The latest acquisition is the former trawler MISS KRISTY (U.S.540420), 122 Gross and 88 Net, which was built in Louisiana about 1970. The vessel, at last report, was lying at the Fairhaven Shipyard, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, but Rogers intended to take her farther south for winter refurbishing. She supposedly will be made over into a sailing vessel to serve as a companion to the three-masted EMPIRE SANDY (the former steam tug CHRIS M.).