

Work has progressed on the conversion to a barge of the cement carrier METIS. The Lake Ontario Cement Company, which acquired METIS from Canada Steamship Lines during January, is having the work done as the ship lies along the south side of the company's pier at the mouth of the Keating Channel, Toronto. Work has been done on refurbishing METIS' cargo-handling equipment, which has not been used since the summer of 1983. Her propellers and rudders have been cut away, and a towing notch has been cut into her stern. Her boat deck has been cleared of all structures, including the stack and "doghouse". For a while, it seemed as if the pilothouse and texas might be left intact, but on March 21st, the entire bridge structure was lifted off in one piece and then placed on a barge and moved to the Toronto Harbour Commission yard on Villiers Street. A press report indicated that the Harbour Commission had acquired the pilothouse and texas for the sum of \$1.00 and would display the structure to the public somewhere along the waterfront. Much work remains to be done, but it appears that METIS will be ready for service this summer, joining STEPHEN B. ROMAN, (a) FORT WILLIAM (83), in the Lake Ontario Cement Company fleet. It is interesting to note that it was the commissioning of the ROMAN in 1983 that had caused C.S.L. to retire the 1956-built METIS from service.

As the cement carriers of the Inland Lakes Transportation Inc. fleet enter service this season, they are sporting a new stack design, eliminating the last vestiges of the old "Huron Cement" operation. The basic black stack with a wide red band between narrow silver bands remains, but the big silver 'H' as been removed from the red band. In its place appears a large white letter 'I'. As usual, the company's 1927-built steamer S. T. CRAPO was one of the first lakers fitted out for the season, and she was running by mid-March. The newly-converted ALPENA, (a) LEON FRASER, will be in service by June, and it is said that she most likely will spend most of her time running up into Lake Superior. The venerable steamer E. M. FORD will be operated in 1991, ferrying cement from the east side of Lake Michigan into the port of Milwaukee.

It appears that plans by Fraser Shipyards to convert the former Inland Steel bulk carrier L. E. BLOCK into a cement carrier will proceed, and that the BLOCK will be towed from Escanaba to Superior as soon as navigation conditions permit. The BLOCK reportedly will be shortened (just like the FRASER was) and it is said that it will be the damaged portion of her hull that will be cut out, thus avoiding the necessity of repairing major structural damage that she suffered when her hull came to rest on the bottom whilst she was being used as a cement storage hull at South Chicago some years ago.

In previous issues, we outlined details of the sale of the former lake package freighter WOODLAND, (a) FRENCH RIVER (81), (b) JENSEN STAR (86), to the International Capital Equipment Company of Canada, which renamed her (d) WOODLANDS and, it now has been confirmed, re-registered her at Kingstown, St. Vincent & Grenadines. WOODLANDS sailed from Montreal on January 22nd, and from Becancour on the 25th, bound for Saint John, New Brunswick. She reportedly had a part-load of lumber, and was to load more at Saint John, but she apparently arrived there without a cargo manifest and the Saint John longshoremen had to calculate the weight of cargo already aboard before loading any more. Then WOODLANDS was arrested for non-payment of accounts, and as of March 12th, she still was moored at Saint John, her future uncertain.

Contingent upon Michigan State approval, the Neebish Island ferry service has a new operator beginning in 1991. The Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority in March reached an agreement with Schallip's Incorporated for that firm to take over the running of NEEBISH ISLANDER, (a) LILLIFRED (56), from former operator Clifford Tyner. A reduction in the cost of the operation to E.U.P.T.A. is anticipated.