

On April 5, 1991, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Port Weller Dry Docks celebrated the signing of the contract for the construction of the new ferry to serve Pelee Island, and on the 8th the shipyard announced that construction would begin on June 1st, with delivery scheduled for 31st May, 1992. The \$26 million ferry will be 207'4" in length and will carry 400 passengers. As well, she will be able to take 40 cars, or 25 autos and two tractor-trailers per trip. The boat will be powered by two 1,400 h.p. diesel engines. She will run from Kingsville and Leamington, Ontario, to Scudder and West Dock on Pelee Island, and from the island to Sandusky, Ohio. She will displace the previous boat on the service, PELEE ISLANDER, which in turn will take the place of the smaller UPPER CANADA on her local route to the island.

A most unfortunate and serious accident has marred the beginning of the first season of operation for Great Lakes Bulk Carriers, the consortium recently formed to operate straight-deck bulk carriers from the fleets of Canada Steamship Lines, Misener Shipping and Pioneer Shipping Ltd. On Friday, April 12th, near Varennes, below Montreal, there met the Algerian bulker SERSOU, outbound with grain, and the laker SILVER ISLE, upbound in ballast for Thunder Bay. For as-yet-unexplained reasons, the vessels were involved in a sideswipe collision which resulted in severe damage to both ships. On April 14, SERSOU moved downriver and anchored off Lauzon, where she still was lying on the 22nd, awaiting clearance from the authorities to leave Canadian waters. After the collision, SILVER ISLE went aground on Ste. Therese Island, but was refloated on April 13 and was taken to a berth at Montreal. She had sustained scrapes all the way down her port side, but also received long and deep gashes at the break of the forecastle (just below the level of the spar deck) and also amidships, caused by SERSOU's portside anchor flukes, while the overhang of the salty's flaring bow ripped open the flush side of the laker's accommodation aft. In fact, photos indicate that she looked as if she had been attacked by a giant can-opener! SILVER ISLE remained at Montreal until April 19, when she sailed for the shipyard at Port Weller. Repairs were commenced quickly at the fit-out berth at Port Weller, the cost estimated in the \$3 million range and involving some 400 feet of steel plating. It is fortunate indeed that, although it caused a great amount of damage, the collision did not result in any loss of life.

The early spring brought bad news from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Brief reports appearing in the Toronto press indicated that the McAllister Towing & Salvage Inc. tug PATRICIA B. McALLISTER, which was based at Montreal, sank in the Gulf off the Gaspé Peninsula on April 22nd during heavy weather. Searchers located one crewman who, although in dire straits from exposure after 36 hours on a liferaft, was still alive. Four bodies also were recovered, and one crew member was missing and presumed dead. No other details were available at the time of this writing. PATRICIA B. McALLISTER (C.810810) was built in 1976 and was 120.0 x 37.0 x 17.0, 439 Gross Tons. McAllister's most powerful tug at 6,100 h.p., she had been acquired by the towing company in 1988, having previously been known as (a) ESSO SANTA CRUZ (87) and (b) SANTA CRUZ when she operated in the Netherlands Antilles.

On April 30th, the Ontario Provincial Police laid criminal charges as a result of investigation into the circumstances of the March 18th collision in which the Canadian Coast Guard ship GRIFFON sank the Port Dover fishtug CAPTAIN K., causing the deaths of the tug's three crewmen. GRIFFON's master, Capt. Gordon Stogdale, and William Bennett, GRIFFON's third officer, were each charged with three counts of dangerous operation of a vessel causing death and also criminal negligence causing death. Stogdale had been on suspension from his duties with pay since shortly after the accident, but resigned his command about a week before the charges were laid. The results of the investigation have not yet been made public.