

What undoubtedly is the happiest marine event of 1991 on the Great Lakes, and perhaps one of the most pleasant developments in recent memory, occurred in early June, when Inland Lakes Management Inc. placed in service its newly-rebuilt cement carrier ALPENA, the former (a) LEON FRASER (90). The shortening and conversion of the former "tinstack" ore carrier, originally built by Great Lakes Engineering Works at River Rouge, Michigan, in 1942, was completed this spring by Fraser Shipyards Inc. at Superior, Wisconsin, and the result of the work is a vessel of impressive traditional appearance. She is in usual Inland Lakes (formerly Huron Cement) livery, with the exception of the fact that, because of her slightly different ownership, the initials in the red square on her bow read 'ILM' instead of 'ILT'. These colours (and especially the cream hull) suit ALPENA admirably, and no adverse effect on her appearance was caused by the shortening of her hull to suit her new trade. It was planned that the inauguration of the steamer's new career would take place at her namesake port, and she arrived at Alpena, Michigan, late on the evening of Saturday, June 8, 1991. Dedication ceremonies took place on Monday, June 10th, and members of the public were invited to tour the ship. ALPENA then went into regular service, and has been operating successfully since. She is a tribute to the foresight of her rebuilders and owners who recognized the merits of keeping her as a traditional steamer rather than choosing a method of conversion which would have destroyed her classic lines and her steam power plant. We wish ALPENA well in her revitalized career.

In the May issue, we reported details of the bizarre incident involving the P & H Shipping steamer BEECHGLEN, whose hull buckled in the early morning hours of April 30th while the vessel was being unloaded of a cargo of corn at the elevator at Cardinal, Ontario. The 68-year-old steamer broke about thirty feet aft of her marks, and it would seem that the only things that kept the ship from breaking apart completely were the hull strapping which had been added when the steamer was operating as (a) CHARLES M. SCHWAB (75) for the Interlake Steamship Company, and the fact that her bow came to rest on the bottom of the river and thus limited the amount of bend that the hull could suffer. The lightered and then unloaded BEECHGLEN arrived at Port Weller on May 29th, in tow of the McKeil tugs EVANS McKEIL, W. N. TWOLAN, STORMONT and GLENBROOK, and subsequently went on the drydock for inspection of the damage. It is fortunate indeed that P & H Shipping had sufficient business to keep its entire three-ship fleet busy for the 1991 season, and that scrap prices currently are so low, as these undoubtedly were factors in the decision to repair BEECHGLEN. Although it originally had been proposed to cut the damaged section out of the hull and rejoin the two sections, we understand that repairs were made without any substantial shortening of the ship, despite the severe damage which the hull had sustained. Much to the amazement of observers, the repair work was completed in jigtime, and BEECHGLEN was upbound at Sarnia, on the first trip of her "new life", on Sunday, July 21st.

The cement carrier METIS, reduced to a barge by the Lake Ontario Cement Company during the past winter, did not leave Toronto on her first trip in early May in tow of EVANS McKEIL, as we reported in the May "Scanner". That appears to be what was intended to happen, but for some reason plans were changed at the last minute. In fact, METIS cleared Toronto during the night of May 18-19 in tow of the Purvis Marine tug AVENGER IV, which received the contract to tow the barge during the 1991 season. METIS loaded cement at Picton and on May 20 she was downbound in the Seaway en route to Montreal. METIS and AVENGER IV remained on that same run until mid-July, when METIS was temporarily laid up at Toronto. (STEPHEN B. ROMAN had also spent several weeks "resting" at Toronto.) Incidentally, we should mention that the Lake Ontario Cement name is no longer being used by the owners of ROMAN and METIS. The firm now calls itself Essroc Cement, the name standing, we believe, for the Stephen Roman Corporation.