

This fall has seen three interruptions of grain shipments from Thunder Bay as a result of labour disputes. Two disruptions in September resulted from Public Service Alliance of Canada job action against the federal government, and involved grain inspectors and weighers. From October 3rd until the 12th, grainhandlers were on strike against the association of elevator owners, but that dispute was ended by back-to-work legislation. Despite good grain sales, much of the shipping has been done via west coast ports rather than through the Lakehead and down the Seaway.

Grain movements this autumn were sufficient to cause the reactivation of two Canadian lakers that many observers felt had run for the last time. The N.M. Paterson & Sons Ltd. diesel straight-decker VANDOC (II), (a) SIR DENYS LOWSON (79), which had been idle at Montreal since the end of the 1989 navigation season, was put back in service and she was upbound in the Seaway on October 30, en route to Thunder Bay. Also reactivated was the Great Lakes Bulk Carriers steam-powered straight-decker WHITEFISH BAY, which likewise had been idle since 1989 and was lying at Sorel; she re-entered service during November.

Expected to be completed in early December is the \$2.7 million enlargement of the main drydock of the Merce Industries shipyard at Toledo, Ohio. The work, which was begun last May, involves lengthening the drydock from 650 feet to 800 feet, thus greatly increasing the number of ships that can use the facility.

While the cost of arranging Canadian Customs inspection services would appear to have scuppered plans for a passenger and auto ferry across the St. Clair River between Port Huron and Sarnia, the Von Bergen Ltd. firm, of Pensacola, Florida, is proceeding with its plans to establish a ferry link across Lake Erie, between Port Stanley and Cleveland. The service would use a Danish-built ferry capable of handling 40 tractor-trailers, 150 cars and 400 passengers, a capacity which would seem rather large for a new operation...

Meanwhile, the TNR Corp., of Toronto, states that it has "ordered two 280-passenger ferries and expects to begin carrying weekday commuters between Toronto and St. Catharines in June". When that route has been established, the company hopes to add a weekend service between Rochester and Toronto. The service would dock at Harbourfront, in downtown Toronto, and would use city-owned facilities at the mouth of the Genesee River at Rochester. If traffic warrants and a third boat can be obtained, daily service would be run between Toronto and Rochester.

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LAY-UP LISTINGS

Before long, most lake ships will be in winter lay-up, safe from the excesses of wind, weather and ice. Then it will be time for us to prepare our annual listing of the vessels wintering at the various lake ports. We believe that "Scanner" carries the most comprehensive listing of winter lay-ups appearing in any publication, but we can only do this with your help.

Once all of the lay-ups are present at your local port, please go and look at them. Please prepare an accurate and complete listing (do not guess as to the identity of any ship but make sure that you know it for certain). Then you should send your report to us and we will prepare the listing to appear in the February issue of "Scanner".

Please do not assume that somebody else will send us a list from your local port, because you may be the only one who will. And remember that two lists from the same port will seldom agree (a Great Lakes corollary to Murphy's Law), so the more reports we get, the better! Please let us hear from you during January.

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