

In the April and May issues, we commented upon the fact that the Oglebay Norton Company had received U.S. Maritime Administration approval to sell its Maritime Class self-unloading steamer J. BURTON AYERS, (a) MESABI (I)(43), to an Ontario firm identified as the Black Creek Shipping Company. The vessel was built by the American Ship Building Company at Lorain in 1943 and was converted to a self-unloader in 1974. Although it appeared by May that Black Creek had not taken up its option on the AYERS, the sale eventually was completed on July 27th. She was not yet in service when this report was written, but we understand that the AYERS will be renamed (c) CUYA-HOGA, and that she will operate primarily in the stone trade out of Lake Huron. We hope that this operation will prove successful, for without such a sale, J. BURTON AYERS would most likely have followed Oglebay Norton's ROBERT C. NORTON (II) to an overseas scrapyards. For the record, the NORTON, which was downbound in the Seaway under tow on July 12, 1994, departed Sorel on August 5, 1994, in tow of the Russian tug NEFTEGAZ 56, and she arrived at Alang, India, on December 16th.

Another idle Oglebay Norton self-unloading steamer has eluded the breakers, this being the Maritime Class CRISPIN OGLEBAY (II), (a) J. H. HILLMAN JR. (74), built by the Great Lakes Engineering Works at Ashtabula, Ohio, in 1943 and converted to a self-unloader in 1974. Earlier this year, Algoma Central Marine took an option to purchase the OGLEBAY, but later decided not to exercise the option. During June, however, the ULS Corporation purchased the OGLEBAY in order to convert her into a temporary "ore bridge" for unloading straight-deck bulk carriers at the Dofasco plant at Hamilton, replacing the big ore bridge and unloader that collapsed on the Dofasco dock on March 28th. The G-tug OHIO towed the OGLEBAY out of Toledo on July 5th, en route to Port Weller Dry Docks, where she arrived on the 7th. The ship was dry-docked to prepare her for her new service, and she was fitted with a truck-type crane on her deck, as well as a movable conveyor rig to be used in transferring cargo out of other ships. Renamed (c) HAMILTON TRANSFER, the steamer departed Port Weller on August 8th, bound for Hamilton in tow of the McKeil tug OFFSHORE SUPPLIER. Some few days later, however, part of her rig was returned to Port Weller for modifications. It has been suggested that HAMILTON TRANSFER will serve at Dofasco for the remainder of this season and through 1996, but after that will go into regular lake service for Upper Lakes Shipping. This would suggest that Dofasco has plans to have a new permanent ore bridge at work on its busy wharf by 1997.

A very senior lake vessel has made the one-way voyage to the breaker's yard during the 1995 season, but she has remained in the lakes instead of heading overseas. The self-unloading sandsucker LAKEWOOD, (a) CHARLES M. WARNER (28), (b) MICHIGAN (56), was no longer needed by the Gaelic Tugboat Company, of Detroit, which had purchased the ship several years ago with the intention of using her as a barge. On June 15th, she was towed away from Nicholson's Dock at Ecorse, Michigan, by the Gaelic tug SHANNON, bound for the scrapyards at Port Maitland, Ontario, where she will be dismantled. In latter years, LAKEWOOD has been one of the last few ships on the Great Lakes still sporting an old-fashioned "turret" pilothouse, and when Gaelic acquired LAKEWOOD from her longtime former operator, the Erie Sand Steamship Company, her upper pilothouse was removed, leaving only the old lower house. In consequence, at least as far as her pilothouse was concerned, she looked rather similar to the way she did when built by the Chicago Shipbuilding Company way back in 1903.

A report in our May issue concerned the spring departure for an Indian scrapyards of the Socanav Inc. tanker LE FRENE NO. 1, (a) JOS. SIMARD (82). We since have learned that the 1964-built tanker sailed from Sorel, Quebec, under her own power on April 12th, and that she was registered in Honduras for the long eastward passage to the breakers. We do not as yet have an arrival date for her.