

On September 11th, the Algoma Central Corp. announced that, over the coming winter, its 730-foot (overall) straight-deck bulk carrier CAPT. HENRY JACKMAN, (a) LAKE WABUSH (87), will be converted to a self-unloader. The announcement, as reported in the press, indicated that the work would begin during October and would cost some \$20 million, but did not identify the shipyard at which the work would be done, although it seems that Port Weller Dry Docks is the only logical choice. The JACKMAN, 19699 Gross Tons and 14393 Net, was built in 1981 by Collingwood Shipyards Ltd., and is one year older and just slightly smaller in cargo capacity than her near-sistership ALGOWEST, which was built at the same yard for the Algoma fleet. When the JACKMAN returns to service next spring, she will, of course, be a far more versatile vessel and, when carrying iron ore, will be able to unload 5,443 tonnes per hour. The conversion of existing lake straight-deckers to self-unloaders seems to be an inescapable fact of the lake shipping scene bearing in mind the cost of new ship construction and the paucity of shipyards still equipped to handle new-buildings.

On Thursday, September 28th, the Seaway Bulk Carriers straight-decker CANADIAN MARINER ~~(a) MARBLEHEAD HALL (88), (b) LEMINE (II) (94)~~, which is owned by the ULS Corporation, was downbound in the Welland Ship Canal with a cargo of grain for the St. Lawrence. The ~~1966 built~~ motorvessel failed to make the starboard turn to enable her to pass safely under Bridge 10 at Thorold South, and she struck the bridge abutment, opening a large gash in her port bow. After inspection and temporary repairs, the ~~ship~~ was allowed to proceed on her way, but she was scheduled to return upbound to Port Weller Dry Docks for permanent repairs.

Another Seaway Bulk Carriers / ULS Corporation straight-decker was involved in a scrape recently in the Seaway. On September 18th, GORDON C. LEITCH (II), (a) RALPH MISENER (94), was upbound with a cargo of iron ore for Hamilton. At 6:25 a.m., the LEITCH struck a wall at the Eisenhower Lock in the U.S. section of the Seaway and, although there was no damage to the lock, the vessel sustained a six-foot rip in her hull plating. The LEITCH was permitted to continue on her way, as her safety was not endangered.

In the Mid-Summer issue, we reported the towing of the long-idle passenger steamer AQUARAMA, (a) MARINE STAR (55), from Windsor to Buffalo early in August, in preparation for her being given a \$50 million conversion to a floating casino. We indicated that no report we had seen identified the shipyard at which the work would be done, but we now know that the "Buffalo News" of August 4th reported that the work was to be done in the summer of 1996 at St. Catharines - i.e. at Port Weller Dry Docks. The owners were not revealing where they intend to operate the ship, although there were strong indications that Buffalo was the projected site despite the fact that a New York State Legislature bill to approve casino gambling could not become law until at least 1998.

Last issue, we reported the purchase by the Black Creek Shipping Company of the Oglebay Norton Company's idle Maritime Class self-unloading steamer J. BURTON AYERS, (a) MESABI (I)(43). The steamer, renamed (c) CUYAHOGA, and re-registered at Nanticoke, Ontario, was towed from Toledo by the Gaelic tugs SHANNON and PATRICIA HOEY, and arrived at Sarnia on August 24th, to be refitted for her new service. Unfortunately, on September 28th, CUYAHOGA got into a spot of trouble at Sarnia. Her unloading boom was being swung when it broke free and struck several hydro poles and then the freight shed alongside the government wharf. Control of the boom eventually was recovered, and it was swung back aboard, although considerable damage was caused in the incident, both to the boom and to shore fixtures. It will be most interesting to see CUYAHOGA in service under the Canadian flag, considering the bleak future which she was facing under her former ownership. As yet, we have received no word as to the colours to be worn by the 52-year-old ship.