

A virtually permanent fixture on the New York State Barge Canal for a good many years has been its last self-propelled freight vessel, the Erie Navigation Company's motor canaller DAY PECKINPAUGH, (a) INTERWATERWAYS LINE INCORPORATED 101 (32), (b) I.L.I. 101 (36), (c) RICHARD J. BARNES (58), which was built in 1921 by the McDougall Duluth Shipbuilding Company at Duluth, Minnesota. She received a new hull midbody in 1946, had her engines rebuilt in 1926 and again in 1957, and was converted to a scraper-type, self-unloading bulk cement carrier in 1962. The PECKINPAUGH ventures only rarely into the lakes these days, usually only when drydocking becomes necessary. The rest of the time, she loads cement, at about 1,500 tons per trip, out of Essroc Cement's STEPHEN R. ROMAN, (a) FORT WILLIAM (83), at Oswego, New York, and carries it down the Barge Canal on the 36-hour run to Rome, New York. The PECKINPAUGH was scheduled to take her last load out of Oswego for the season on November 24th, but there was a possibility that another trip might be made if weather conditions allowed the canal to remain in operation. Continued operation of the aging PECKINPAUGH, the last of her unusual breed, remains a year-to-year matter.

Meanwhile, weather conditions on the lower lakes, although unpleasant, remained warm enough that the St. Lawrence Seaway and Welland Ship Canal could remain in operation until Christmas Eve, December 24th. There was little difficulty encountered in getting the last salt-water vessels out of the Seaway in time for its closing. No definite closing date had been announced for the the St. Mary's Falls Canal, at the Michigan Soo, although vessel owners had indicated that no lock traffic was expected after January 9th. The MacArthur Lock closed for the season at midnight on Saturday, December 19th, and thereafter only the Poe Lock remained open for vessel passages. Ships transitting the St. Mary's River encountered little difficulty during the closing weeks of 1992.

* * * * *

THE SHIPS OF PORT WELLER

In the October issue, we reviewed Skip Gillham's The Ships of Collingwood, and now the second book of this series, entitled The Ships of Port Weller, is available. The new book is 90 pages (plus introductory material) and is presented in the same softcover, upright 8½" by 11" format. There are a great many photos, those on the interior being in good quality black-and-white, while the covers are in colour. The front cover features a rather amusing photo of ARCTIC in heavy northern ice, with a dog team and sled in the foreground, while the back cover illustrates AVON FOREST and the Coast Guard icebreaker DES GROSEILLIERS.

The first three chapters of the book detail the history of Port Weller Dry Docks from its formation in April of 1946 by Charles Ansell (DALHOUSIE CITY and WINDSOLITE were the first ships to use the new facility on April 3rd), right up to the present. The largest section of the book contains a short history, with photos, of each vessel built (or rebuilt, if a new Hull Number was assigned) by Port Weller Dry Docks, including the three tugs built at the former Muir Bros. shipyard at Port Dalhousie after it was acquired by P.W.D.D. An index of ships is incorporated into the Table of Contents; it is done by Hull Number order rather than alphabetically, but it is not difficult to manage, as far fewer ships are involved than was the case with the Collingwood book, which had no index of ships at all.

An interesting addition to any lake marine library, The Ships of Port Weller may be obtained from Niagara area booksellers, or by addressing the publisher, Riverbank Traders, 57 Main Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2N 4T8 or telephone (416) 934-3634. The price is \$17.95 plus \$2.00 packing and postage.

* * * * *