

While the December announcement by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission that only CHI-CHEEMAUN will run on the Tobermory to South Baymouth ferry service in 1993 created a shock wave in many areas, Tobermory businesses seem to have reacted positively to the fact that only one boat will be running. It seems that they anticipate that tourists passing through town will spend more money there if they have to wait for a ferry rather than getting quick dispatch out of town on the boat!

However, even more troubling to Owen Sound residents than the temporary withdrawal of NINDAWAYMA, were mid-December reports to the effect that the grain elevator at the port might be closed. Much has been said in the Toronto area about the impact of plans by Metropolitan Toronto to impose market value assessment on realty taxes paid in the area, and the victory won by the City of Toronto in having the provincial government kill Metro's plans before they could be implemented. Market value assessment is a threat in other areas as well, and Herbert C. Heimbecker, C.E.O. of Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd., owner of the Owen Sound elevator, has indicated that the property would be subject to realty taxes of \$350,000 in 1993, as opposed to \$235,000 in 1991, under M.V.A. This would be based on a 1988 market value assessment of the value of the property at \$5.8 million whereas, as Heimbecker has noted, "anybody would be happy to sell it for \$2 million". The phasing in of market value assessment was approved by Owen Sound city council last October, but faced with Heimbecker's statement that the elevator will have to close if the higher tax bill becomes a reality, the city is now torn between wanting the increased revenue, and the disastrous effects on the local economy if the facility closes. An appeal has been submitted to the Assessment Review Board, and a decision is expected in the spring. The Owen Sound elevator, built in stages between 1923 and 1929, generally is serviced by Parish & Heimbecker's own boats, and WILLOWGLEN and BEECHGLEN are laid up at Owen Sound this winter.

The Inland Lakes Transportation Inc. steam-powered, self-unloading cement carrier S. T. CRAPO spent a rather unpleasant Christmas Day out on Lake Michigan. Heading down the lake, she encountered 50 m.p.h. winds and 18 to 22 foot seas. By the time the CRAPO was able to reach shelter in Milwaukee harbour, she was wearing a coat of some 400 tons of ice and she had taken on an additional nine inches of forward draft! After being de-iced, the steamer sailed on Boxing Day for her original destination, St. Joseph, Michigan. For several years now, it has been rumoured that the 1927-built CRAPO would be repowered, thus ending her "reign" as the last coal-fired bulk freighter in regular service on the lakes. I.L.T. reportedly has made arrangements with the Bay Shipbuilding Corporation for the CRAPO to go to its Sturgeon Bay shipyard on June 1st for the removal of her triple expansion steam engine and the fitting of a new diesel propulsion plant. As yet, we have no details regarding the make or horsepower of the engine that will be installed.

Another veteran cement-carrying steamer passed her five-year inspection during the autumn. The Medusa Cement Company's 1906-built MEDUSA CHALLENGER, (a) WILLIAM P. SNYDER (26), (b) ELTON HOYT II (52), (c) ALEX D. CHISHOLM (66), apparently passed with flying colours as far as her hull is concerned. However, her 1950-installed Skinner Unaflow steam engine has been causing concern. While MEDUSA CHALLENGER is wintering at Milwaukee, she will receive a major engine overhaul, involving the lifting of the engine from its bed so that the lower heads can be replaced. We understand that Medusa Cement has given consideration to the possible dieselization of the CHALLENGER in the future if the Skinner engine should be the source of any further problems.

Last issue, we commented upon the fact that the Toronto excursion boat M.V. MYSTIQUE is spending the winter at Port Dover, where she is being rebuilt to make her more suitable for her duties. We now learn that she will have a new name when she returns to Toronto Bay in the spring. She will be rechristened (c) OBSESSION III.