

"I think that the AMUR's lower house (in the bridge structure, and also the after cabin, unless our eyes deceive us when looking at the Roberts photograph -Ed.) was always grey. The lifeboats were painted brown.

"The fleet's Canadian-flag steamers were all equipped with towing winches, as the company owned a number of old sailing ship hulls that were used as ore and coal barges. They were named GRIFFSON, FOREST PRIDE, BARODA, LORD TEMPLETOWN and RIVERSDALE..."

The letter went on to name most of the other vessels that the company owned and operated, together with some interesting facts about them, but unfortunately we do not have room to share all of it with our readers. We do, however, extend sincere thanks to John Henderson for his additional comments concerning the AMUR, which have allowed us to round out the history of this famous former canal.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ADDITIONAL MARINE NEWS

On Page 2 of this issue, we reported the opening of the Soo Locks and the icebreaking efforts that permitted the early opening. We should elaborate on that report. In fact, the navigation channels in the lower St. Mary's River being mostly in U.S. waters, that area was broken out by U.S.C.G. MACKINAW and KATMAI BAY, which were working the area as early as Monday, March 15th. For a while, KATMAI BAY was diverted to assist her sister, BISCAYNE BAY, which was assisting the cement barge MEDUSA CONQUEST, which encountered ice problems in the Straits of Mackinac. The efforts of the various icebreakers, working in some 18 inches of ice throughout the area, were successful, and by March 29, MACKINAW and KATMAI BAY were back at the Soo awaiting any difficulties which might develop. MACKINAW is to be kept available at the Soo until April 14.

Readers will recall the big tug and barge which were built at the UPSCO shipyard at Ontonagon, Michigan, and which proved to be a sinkhole into which Michigan taxpayers poured an estimated \$44 million. Originally planned to run railroad cars across Lake Michigan, the tug and barge were later acquired by Texas owners and in a partially completed state were towed from the lakes in 1989, the tug later being christened THUNDER and the barge LIGHTNING. A report in the "Natal Mercury", of Durban, South Africa, dated November 6, 1992, indicated that the tug and barge were in Durban harbour unloading a cargo of 7,000 tons of vegetable oil consigned to Zimbabwe. The barge, now painted red, has been fitted with a hinged bow for Ro-Ro service, while the tug has had a deck removed from a redesigned bridge, with a topgallant pilothouse added atop a tower. The pair has made several runs across the Atlantic from Texas to South Africa, but it was reported during March that both tug and barge are for sale - at the right price!

A late report indicates that there has been an improvement in the prospects for the lake straight-deck bulk carriers, apparently as a result of a movement of U.S. grain. At press time, Algoma Central was either running or fitting out all of its ships, including ALGONORTH, ALGOSOUND and ALGOCAPE. Upper Lakes Shipping was reported to be going to fit out most of its bulkers, and Great Lakes Bulk Carriers reportedly had increased the number of straight-deckers it was intending to operate.

\* \* \* \* \*

In our **New Member Department**, a hearty welcome goes out to Wilf Morrison, of Hamilton, Ontario.

And to close, we remind members to reserve their tickets for the **Annual Dinner Meeting** scheduled for Saturday, May 8th. See details on our cover.

\* \* \* \* \*