

In previous issues, we have mentioned the decline in traffic on the Tobermory to South Baymouth ferry service operated by the Owen Sound Transportation Company Ltd. for the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, and the fact that, after operating only CHI-CHEEMAUN the last three seasons and leaving NINDAWAYMA idle at Owen Sound, the Ontario Northland has been seeking an operator who might wish to charter the 1976-built spare ferry. This was all the more necessary after plans for a service to Manitoulin Island from Alpena, which might have utilized NINDAWAYMA, were dropped. It would seem, however, that there is a good chance that NINDAWAYMA will soon be returned to service, and on the lakes as well. A group of anonymous investors has been negotiating with Ontario Northland to charter NINDAWAYMA, and these efforts seem to be closely related to plans by St. Thomas, Ontario, parties to commence an auto and passenger ferry service across Lake Erie between Port Stanley and Cleveland. On November 29, 1995, the London, Ontario, Board of Control endorsed the Port Stanley proposal, noting that it could facilitate tourist attendance at the Stratford Festival, as well as at various points of interest in Cleveland, and would also cut the cost of truck shipments around the end of the lake. The parties involved hope to begin the ferry service in 1996. Passenger service between Port Stanley and Cleveland ceased in the 1930s, and the last carferry (railferry, actually) to serve Port Stanley was the MARQUETTE & BESSEMER NO. 2 (II), but she ran to Conneaut, not to Cleveland, and she was taken out of service in February of 1932. We sincerely hope that NINDAWAYMA may find a new home and successful trade on Lake Erie.

An advertisement which appeared in "The Globe and Mail", Toronto, on December 5th, 1995, was placed by Marine Atlantic Inc., of Moncton, New Brunswick, and solicited charter or purchase offers for its coastal passenger and freight motorship TAVERNER, which currently is surplus to the firm's requirements and is lying idle at Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. The 188.3-foot TAVERNER, 1135 Gross Tons and 526 Net, was built in 1962 as Hull 175 of Collingwood Shipyards Ltd., and was launched on May 7 of that year, making her delivery transit of the Welland Canal on July 19. Ice-strengthened and equipped with a cargo-handling crane, she was built for the Canadian Department of Transport, to be operated by CN Marine Services, and later made the transition into the Marine Atlantic fleet, successor to the Canadian National's coastal services.

Another former Canadian National vessel has apparently reached an unfortunate end to her career, this being the west coast cruise steamer PRINCE GEORGE. The 335-foot, 5825 Gross Ton vessel was built in 1948 at Esquimalt, British Columbia, for the Alaska service. Out of service during the 1970s, she served at New Westminster as a floating hotel during Expo 86, but otherwise has remained idle except for a stint in 1989 when she was towed to Alaska for use as an accommodation ship for crews working on the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill clean-up. Most recently registered to Fairport Investments Ltd., HongKong, the steamer reportedly was soon to be used as a floating restaurant and hotel, and a film crew had been working aboard during the autumn of 1995. At about 3:00 p.m. on October 15, however, fire broke out aboard the vessel as she lay at Britannia Beach, B.C. Shore fire crews decided not to flood the ship with water for fear of a fuel spill if she capsized, and it took almost two weeks for the fire to burn itself out. The steamer was gutted, but at last report, no actual cause for the fire had been determined.

Any fears that the ULS Corporation's self-unloader JAMES NORRIS might not be repaired after her Remembrance Day sinking at Colborne, Ontario, have been put to rest since the 1952-built steamer arrived at Port Weller Dry Docks to have the extent of damage assessed. Not only have repairs to the ship's hull been put in hand, but her owners apparently decided that since the machinery would have to be thoroughly overhauled to return the NORRIS to ser-