

The former E. B. Magee drydock in Ramey's Bend at Humberstone on the Welland Canal had an unexpected visitor this autumn. The Ontario Hydro tug NIAGARA QUEEN II, which had sunk at her dock, was put in the Ramey's Bend drydock for the necessary repairs.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 70-foot, 1954-built tug KENOSHA is to be repowered this winter at the Michigan Soo. The tug was towed into the Corps basin at the Soo on November 4th by the Corps tug D. L. BILLMAIER, the former Navy tug NATCHITOCHEs, which the Corps brought to the lakes in 1995. KENOSHA has been (under)powered by an 8-cylinder diesel of only 600 bhp., so the repowering should make her much more useful.

The D. L. BILLMAIER was involved in an accident on the Keweenaw Waterway on August 19th, while towing the Corps derrick barge H. J. SCHWARTZ to Houghton from the Portage Entry. The barge's boom was extended and it struck a power line crossing the waterway, resulting in an eight-hour disruption of power ashore and some \$250,000 in damage to the SCHWARTZ.

When Ye Ed. was a youngster, the high point of a visit to Niagara Falls was to see the two venerable steam passenger boats which then were operated under the falls by the Maid of the Mist Steamboat Company Ltd. Those two handsome boats perished in a pre-season fire at their shipyard in 1955 and, in the years that followed, they have been succeeded by a group of diesel-powered excursion boats that have greatly expanded the fleet. In 1996, the company was operating MAID OF THE MIST III (1972), MAID OF THE MIST IV (1976), MAID OF THE MIST V (1983) and MAID OF THE MIST VI (1990), but Cartier Construction Inc. was building at its yard at Pointe Anne, Ontario, a new boat which should be ready for operation at the Falls in June of 1997. The 80-foot long, 30-foot-wide MAID OF THE MIST VII will carry 600 passengers when in service. She cannot, however, be dropped into the Niagara Gorge by crane, as were previous MAIDs, because of lack of open space on the rim, and so after she has been built, she will have to be cut into twelve small sections and then trucked down into the gorge, where she will be reassembled.

We frequently have mentioned in these pages the Inland Steel Company's 1960-built straight-deck bulk carrier EDWARD L. RYERSON, which has been lying idle at Sturgeon Bay since January 24, 1994. It often has been suggested that a self-unloader conversion might be in the works for the RYERSON, but nothing ever has transpired in this respect. As this issue of "Scanner" goes to press, however, the RYERSON is on the Bay Shipbuilding drydock at Sturgeon Bay, undergoing five-year inspection and survey. The fact that the company is willing to expend the cost of such drydocking on a 36-year-old steam-powered straight-deck ship must be taken as an optimistic sign for her future.

Elsewhere in this section, we have commented upon the construction of U.S. Coast Guard tenders by the Marinette Marine Corporation, and specifically on the October commissioning of IDA LEWIS, first of the Keeper Class. We since have learned that the second ship of the same class, KATHERINE WALKER, was launched by Marinette on September 14th. Meanwhile, early in 1997, Marinette will deliver WILLOW, the second tender in the Juniper Class.

The Imperial Oil Ltd. tanker A. G. FARQUHARSON, (a) TEXACO CHIEF (II)(86), which has spent much time operating in the lakes for Socanav Inc. in recent years, but which, along with LE BRAVE, (a) TEXACO BRAVE (II)(86), was taken back by Imperial earlier this year, has been laid up in the Halifax area since early October. Imperial apparently will not decide what to do with the 1969-built FARQUHARSON until the spring of 1997, but it seems unlikely that the company will spend any great amount of money on the well-worn tanker. There are suggestions that LE BRAVE may run as (c) IMPERIAL LABRADOR but, on the other hand, there are indications that Imperial may wish to divest itself of ownership of its entire fleet of tankers.