

Another passenger vessel which has traded periodically into the lakes, CARIBBEAN PRINCE, of the American Canadian Caribbean Line Inc., has been sold to Glacier Bay Tours and Cruises, a Native American owned firm in Alaska. The ship, according to the "Maritime Reporter" of November, 1996, was being upgraded at the ACCL yard at Warren, Rhode Island, to meet the new safety-at-sea regulations, and would be delivered to the new owner at the Panama Canal after fulfilling her winter cruising schedule in Belize. CARIBBEAN PRINCE will be replaced in the ACCL fleet by GRANDE PRINCE, a new, 100-passenger ship currently under construction at the Blount Industries shipyard, but we do not yet know whether this new ship will appear in the lakes.

In our December issue, we mentioned that the Inland Steel Company's 1960-built, straight-deck steamer EDWARD L. RYERSON had been put on the Bay Ship-building drydock at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, for her five-year inspection and survey, despite the fact that she has been inactive since January of 1994. We since have learned that the RYERSON passed her inspection with flying colours, and will be ready to resume service for her owner if needed in 1997.

Last issue, we noted that the Imperial Oil Limited tanker A. G. FARQUHARSON, (a) TEXACO CHIEF (II)(86), had been laid up in the Halifax area since October, Imperial having taken the ship back from her previous charterer, Socanav Inc. Joining the FARQUHARSON in lay-up at Halifax on November 26th was LE BRAVE, (a) TEXACO BRAVE (II)(86), which was moved under her own power from her previous lay-up berth at Sorel, Quebec. As yet, Imperial has not, apparently, decided what it will do with the two tankers, and that decision will not be made until the spring.

The St. Lawrence Seaway closed for the 1996 season on Friday, December 27th. In terms of cargo passing through the St. Lawrence and Welland canals, this was the best year for the Seaway since 1988, and tonnage was 2.5 percent higher than in 1995. The cargo figures would have been even higher had grain shipments not been adversely affected by lack of stocks in the spring, a consequence of poor growing seasons in 1995 in both Canada and the U.S.A.

The second of the Great Lakes Towing Company's new ice-classed, multi-purpose, reverse tractor tugs, equipped with Z-drive, was side-launched by Halter Marine at Lockport, Louisiana, in October. Christened Z-TWO, the tug joins Z-ONE, which was launched in August and already has been delivered to her owner, the Great Lakes Towing affiliate, Tugz International. The tugs are 95.0 x 32.0 x 11.5, and each is powered by two Caterpillar diesels (a total of 4,400 h.p.) driving Ulstein Z-drives. They reportedly are capable of a speed of 14 knots going ahead, and 12 knots astern.

A late-season accident occurred in the St. Lawrence Seaway on Tuesday, November 26th, when the Nassau-registered salty UTVIKEN, bound from Richards Bay, South Africa, to Ashtabula, Ohio, with a cargo of titanium, experienced steering problems and grounded off Racquette Point, some 2½ miles east of the Massena-Cornwall International Bridge. The salty reportedly was well outside the marked navigation channel when she grounded. The forepeak and No. 1 port ballast tank were holed and flooded, and salvage equipment from McKeil Marine, of Hamilton, was called to the scene to lighten the UTVIKEN and pull her free. Some 2,400 tons of cargo were taken out of the ship, but it was not until 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, December 1st, that seven tugs were able to pull the UTVIKEN free. After inspection revealed that the ship would be able to continue her voyage, despite the bottom damage, the UTVIKEN was cleared to sail at 6:25 p.m. on December 2nd, and she proceeded to transit the Snell Lock, upbound. (The inspection had taken place on the wall below the lock.) There have been a number of groundings in the St. Lawrence section of the Seaway during the 1996 navigation season, but this was the most serious of them. For a time, only one-way traffic was permitted past the accident scene.