

The "Toronto Star" of January 22, 1997, carried an article which stated that Blue Circle America Inc., a Georgia cement manufacturer which is a subsidiary of Blue Circle Industries Plc of Britain, has signed a letter of intent to purchase the St. Marys Cement Corp. It was reported that the purchase price had not been disclosed, and that the deal probably would not be finalized for another three months. A source at Blue Circle indicated that it did not intend to make any immediate changes in St. Marys Cement operations. There is no indication of how the purchase might affect the lake shipping operations that serve St. Marys Cement.

The proposed Lake Erie carferry service to be operated by VIKING I may be dead, but another cross-lake service may be in the wings. Inland Ocean Lines was formed by a group of Michigan investors, and early in January it reached agreement with Northumberland Ferries Ltd., of Charlottetown, to acquire, for \$1 million U.S., the 231-foot ferry PRINCE NOVA, which was built in 1964 at Pictou, Nova Scotia. Reportedly to be renamed LAKE KING and operated between Cleveland and Erieau, the ferry can accommodate 300 passengers and up to 60 automobiles. Erieau council has not yet approved the ferry landing there, but Inland Ocean Lines has leased five hectares of land adjacent to the proposed dock site.

Another Lake Erie ferry service may be in some serious trouble. In its effort to reduce the provincial deficit and fulfill election promises of tax cuts, the Ontario government has been slashing and burning, and downloading all sorts of services onto local municipalities. Provincially operated or subsidized ferry services have been hit hard, and one of them is Pelee Island Transportation Services, which operates the 1992-built JIIMAAN and 1960-built PELEE ISLANDER. The Island's mayor has indicated that the very existence of the ferry link, and the survival of the Island community, is threatened because, with a peak summer population of 1,500, there is no way the Islanders can raise the \$2 million that the province now pays to cover the shortfall between operating expenses and fare receipts. Provincial funding is due to end on January 1, 1998.

The C.S.L. self-unloader LOUIS R. DESMARAIS suffered damage to her boom whilst unloading on December 14th at the St. Marys Cement facility in the Rouge River. The end of her unloading boom apparently broke off in the incident. The DESMARAIS underwent repairs at Port Colborne and was back in service by December 23.

The 1996 navigation season on the Welland Canal came to an end on Christmas Day with the upbound passage of MANITOULIN and the downbound lockage of the tanker EMERALD STAR. The latter ship also closed the St. Lawrence canals, passing down at St. Lambert on December 27th. The last upbound laker in the Seaway was CANADIAN VOYAGER on December 23, and the last downbound laker was CANADIAN RANGER on the 25th.

It has been reported that the former Socanav-operated deep sea tankers ICE-VINHA and ICEPURHA were renamed ARCTIC FLOWER and CUSIANA STAR in 1996.

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#### A PATERSON HISTORY

T.M.H.S. members Gene Onchulenko and Skip Gillham have combined efforts to produce The Ships of the Paterson Fleet, a 141-page softcover which is published by Riverbank Traders, St. Catharines. The book was launched at Thunder Bay on January 28th and should soon be available at most outlets for books of marine interest. It features individual histories, copiously illustrated, of all the ships the Paterson interests have operated over the years. It is recommended to our readers, although it is somewhat marred by avoidable "typos", which even include the mis-spelling of one of the author's names on the book's spine. The content outweighs these problems.

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