

July), and also the Halifax bunkering tanker IMPERIAL DARTMOUTH. The latter will remain in Halifax bunkers service, but we have no word of a new name for her. It is not clear what will be done with the FARQUHARSON, nor whether the sale includes the former Montreal bunker "barge" IMPERIAL LACHINE (II), which was towed down to Halifax in December.

Two Canadian lakers have suffered fires during winter lay-up. On the evening of Sunday, January 18, a fuel leak reportedly caused a boiler room fire on the P. & H. Shipping steamer MAPLEGLLEN, (a) CAROL LAKE (87), (b) ALGOCAPE (I)(94), which was laid up, light ship, on the east side of Owen Sound harbour. Municipal firemen attended the scene and soon extinguished the fire, but their work was hampered by heavy smoke and their unfamiliarity with the insides of a ship.

Another fire began in the hold of the Algoma self-unloader ALGOSOO (II) at 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 28, as she lay at the Welland Dock. Painters were at work in the hold and a lamp allegedly fell into wet paint. A large number of firefighters attended and it took five hours to put the fire out using canal water and foam. Preliminary estimates placed damage at some \$500,000. This fire was almost a "deja vu" episode for ALGOSOO which, on March 7, 1986, suffered a very serious after end fire while laid up at Port Colborne. Then nicknamed "Algosoot", she was taken down to the Welland Dock where she went extensive refurbishment. It is hoped that the current fire will not delay ALGOSOO's entry into service this spring.

This has been one of the most benign winters ever experienced on the lakes, and in many areas, the dreaded month of February was instead the warmest on record. As a result, ice formations have been light to non-existent. This has led several vessel owners to begin operations much earlier than usual. By the beginning of March, there was no ice in Whitefish Bay or the upper Soo harbour, and even below the locks what little ice there had been was rapidly disappearing. Consequently, present plans are for the St. Lawrence and Welland Canals to open on March 24, and the St. Mary's Falls Canal at the Soo on March 25. In advance of the Soo opening, U.S.C.G. MACKINAW will be sent to Lake Superior, but there would seem to be little work for her there.

At the Canadian Soo, work has been done this winter to repair CHIEF WAWATAM, the Purvis Marine barge (and former carferry steamer) which suffered extensive damage when caught in a storm on Lake Michigan on November 17th. Her bulwarks have been repaired, and a new crane has been placed on deck to replace the one lost overboard, along with her cargo, when the barge was thrown onto her beam ends.

Meanwhile, the Purvis motorship YANKCANUCK (II) is also receiving a new deck crane during the winter at the Canadian Soo. YANKCANUCK was built at Collingwood in 1963 as a craneship for Yankcanuck Steamships Limited (Capt. Frank Manzutti) and later ran for the Algoma Steel Corporation before being acquired by Purvis Marine.

Newspaper notices appearing in late January and early February indicated that McKeil Marine Limited had for sale two passenger boats. The ships were not named, but photos accompanying the advertisements showed them to be MACASSA BAY and GARDEN CITY, both of which returned from east coast charters in 1997. Asking price for MACASSA BAY was \$650,000 while \$450,000 was asked for GARDEN CITY. This answered our previous question of where GARDEN CITY went after her stay in Toronto's Polson Street slip on her return; she went to Hamilton. Meanwhile, the February issue of The World Ship Society's "Marine News" identifies Geomarine Ltd., Malta, as the new owner of the former BLAIN McKEIL. Sold by McKeil in 1997 after her east coast work ended, she has been renamed (c) GEOMARINER I.

The Great Lakes Towing Company has scrapped its 1927-built tug CONNECTICUT at Cleveland. Four more tugs will be broken up, and the next will be the 1930-built NEVADA.