

It was announced on March 24th that Canada Steamship Lines had given to Canadian Shipbuilding & Engineering Ltd. a deal worth Canadian \$100 million for the reconstruction of a number of its aging self-unloaders. The work will be done at Port Weller Dry Docks and will involve three confirmed rebuilds, with two more under option. The first of the ships to be rebuilt will be the J. W. McGIFFIN, built at Collingwood in 1972, and the first of C.S.L.'s "ugly sister" stemwinders. The job will entail the construction of an entire new forebody and midbody for the McGIFFIN, in effect replacing everything forward of the aft accommodations and machinery. The rebuilt ship will have an overall length of 739.8 feet and beam of 78.1 feet, and the extreme length of the rebuilt ship indicates that she will have a different shape of bow than at present, incorporating a forward protrusion below the level of the lock fender cables. Work on the new hull section will begin at Port Weller during June, and the McGIFFIN will arrive at the yard late in the autumn for the removal of the old forward section and the placement of the new. She is to be delivered to C.S.L. in the spring of 1999.

The next two confirmed rebuildings are to be completed in the spring of 2000 and 2001. The identities of the other ships involved have not yet been announced, but it is presumed that the confirmed contract will include H. M. GRIFFITH and either JEAN PARISIEN or LOUIS R. DESMARAIS. If the two options are confirmed, we can only guess what the fifth rebuild might be - perhaps ATLANTIC SUPERIOR? The rebuilding work will not only give C.S.L. a much modernized fleet of self-unloaders, many of these ships having been used extremely hard over the years since their building, but also will provide increased employment at Port Weller and considerable benefit to the local economy.

\* \* \*

The Welland Ship Canal opened for the 1998 navigation season on Tuesday, March 24th, the mild winter meaning that no interference to shipping was caused by ice. The official first transit of the canal was the upbound passage of CANADIAN LEADER, which had come from winter lay-up at Toronto, where she had a storage cargo of sugar. The St. Mary's Falls Canal at Sault Ste. Marie opened without any ice difficulties at midnight during the night of March 24-25. Several vessels had been awaiting the opening of the canal, and the first passages were the WALTER R. McCARTHY JR. downbound, and the PHILIP R. CLARKE upbound. A large number of other vessels passed through the locks on March 25th.

In the March issue, we indicated that the tug being used to push the Interlake Steamship Company's self-unloading barge PATHFINDER, (a) J. L. MAUTHE, would be named simply JOYCE. It seems that the plans changed once again, however, and the tug will be known as JOYCE L. VAN ENKEVORT, in honour of the wife of Clyde Van Enkevort, president of Upper Lakes Towing Company Inc. In addition, the schedule for her first trips with the barge was changed, and the first trip was to be with ore from Escanaba to South Chicago.

It was announced on March 18th that Houston-based cement manufacturer Southdown Inc. had agreed to acquire the Medusa Corp. for about U.S. \$1 billion in stock, the combined organization to be the second-largest cement maker in the United States. Shareholders of Medusa, which in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, will receive 0.88 of a share of Southdown stock for each Medusa share. It was not immediately evident how this acquisition might affect the Medusa Cement Company's lake fleet, which is operated by Cement Transit Company. The fleet consists of the 1906-built steamer MEDUSA CHALLENGER, (a) WILLIAM P. SNYDER (26), (b) ELTON HOYT II (52), (c) ALEX D. CHISHOLM (66), and the 1937-built barge (and former tanker) MEDUSA CONQUEST, (a) RED CROWN (62), (b) AMOCO INDIANA (87).

Continued on Page 14

\* \* \* \* \*