

MARINE NEWS

In the May issue, we noted the preparations being made in April for the transformation of HAMILTON TRANSFER into CANADIAN TRANSFER. At that time, the planned date for her tow to Port Weller was April 29th but, not surprisingly, the move was delayed and it was not until May 4th that the TRANSFER arrived at Port Weller in tow of FLORENCE McKEIL and ARGUE MARTIN. She was soon placed on the drydock and, over the early summer, the remaining parts of her old stern section were cut away and she was joined to the stern of CANADIAN EXPLORER. The EXPLORER's old pilothouse and the dead space below it were removed, and the remaining upper portions of the EXPLORER's old aft superstructure were converted to house various electrical and other assorted gear. CANADIAN TRANSFER, resplendent in her new form and colours, was floated off the drydock on Sunday, August 2nd, and her rechristening or rededicating ceremony was held as she lay alongside the fit-out berth on Tuesday, August 4th. She then was scheduled to run trials and it was hoped that she would be in service by mid-August, her first cargo reportedly to be an unusual movement of grain from Hamilton to Buffalo. However, her trials were delayed due to problems with a main engine bearing, and at the time of this writing (August 15th), trials still had not been held.

CANADIAN TRANSFER, which surely must have the most curious and convoluted background of any vessel ever to sail the lakes, looks quite handsome, with her old bow section and bridge structure retained intact. Understandably, she looks rather better when viewed from forward than from astern. A much better job was done on fairing the joint between the two sections than was done when CANADIAN EXPLORER was created from the bow of NORTHERN VENTURE and the stern of CABOT in 1983, and the spar deck in level at the joint. We understand, however, that her bottom looks most unusual when she is on drydock!

A spectre from the past appeared in the Welland Canal on July 26th when the workboat LOIS T. (originally the 1943-built fishtug KOLBE) passed upbound with the sad-looking tug BERT VERGE in tow. LOIS T. is owned by Nadro Marine Services Ltd., of Port Dover, Ontario, and this same firm has acquired BERT VERGE and apparently intends to refurbish her. BERT VERGE (C.193760) was built in 1959 by Port Weller Dry Docks at its Port Dalhousie shipyard, and she is 44 feet in length, 22 Tons Gross and 15 Net. She handled towing duties on Muir's Pond for a while when the Port Dalhousie shipyard remained in operation, but did venture as far afield as Hamilton. She gained some notoriety when she was pulled over and sunk in Hamilton Bay in 1961 whilst towing the former Reoch steamer FORESTDALE to the Stelco yard for scrapping. BERT VERGE was raised and saw some further service, but she lay idle in the Strathearne slip at Hamilton for many years (more than twenty, we believe), registered for most of that time to Arthur A. Gray, of Stony Creek. We hope that Nadro's acquisition of this little tug will, indeed, result in her reactivation.

A familiar U.S.-flag tug has left the Great Lakes this summer after being acquired by deep-sea operators. The 1944-built Malcolm Marine TUG MALCOLM passed down the Welland Canal on July 5th, bound for Cape Canaveral, Florida, where she will operate for as-yet-unidentified owners. TUG MALCOLM (U.S. 518191) was originally a U.S. Navy tug, (a) ATA-179 (48), (b) [U.S.S.] ALLEGHENY (78). She was acquired in 1972 by Northwestern Michigan University and Malcolm Marine acquired her in 1978 for service based in the Port Huron area.

Observed at Port Maitland during May, and sporting the new name (c) LOUIS J. COULET, was the Pembina Exploration Ltd. drilling ship TELESIS, (a) CONISCLIFFE HALL (II)(73). Still of canal dimensions as she was built in 1957 by Davie at Lauzon for the Hall Corporation Shipping Ltd., she has been a gas drill-rig on Lake Erie since her conversion from a bulk carrier in 1973. It is not clear whether an ownership change has accompanied the ship's renaming.