

The first season of operation for the CANADIAN TRANSFER, the self-unloader made by Port Weller Dry Docks from the bow of HAMILTON TRANSFER and the stern of CANADIAN EXPLORER, has not proven to be without incident. The ship went into service during the second half of August, but on September 8th, with tugs AVENGER IV and W. I. SCOTT PURVIS assisting, and her rudder secured midships, CANADIAN TRANSFER was towed up through the Soo Locks bound for the Pascol shipyard at Thunder Bay. CANADIAN TRANSFER apparently damaged her stern when she backed into a dock at Saginaw, Michigan.

Another self-unloader which entered service this summer is Algoma Central's ALGOWEST, converted over the winter from a straight-decker at Port Weller. Rededication ceremonies for ALGOWEST were held on July 10th.

Work is well under way in the graving dock at Port Weller on the construction of the new bow and mid-body section for the Canada Steamship Lines self-unloader J. W. McGIFFIN. Over the coming winter, the stern of the McGIFFIN will be joined to the new hull, and the ship's old hull scrapped. This is the first of five major rebuildings which Port Weller will be doing for C.S.L. lakers.

The ULS straight-decker CANADIAN LEADER was involved in a serious stranding at about 11:50 p.m. on August 21, when she suffered a steering failure when downbound about a mile and a half above the lower entrance to the St. Mary's River. With her rudder frozen hard over, she swung to port and put her bow solidly aground in a boulder field less than 100 yards off the shore of Drummond Island. The steamer's forepeak and No. Two ballast tank were holed, but air pressure and a temporary patch stabilized the flooding. The tugs AVENGER IV, ANGLIAN LADY, WILFRED M. COHEN and NANCY K. finally managed to pull the LEADER free on the 23rd, and after being taken up to the Trout Island anchorage for inspection, the Coast Guard cleared her for departure at 7:00 a.m. on the 24th. The LEADER continued her trip down to Baie Comeau to unload her grain cargo, following which she was to head to drydock for the necessary repairs.

Although many of the Canadian straight-deckers were laid up during the summer months due to a shortage of grain cargoes, the situation changed towards autumn, and most if not all of the idle grain boats were to return to service. Even the ULS steamers CANADIAN MARINER and SEAWAY QUEEN, idle at Toronto since late in 1997, were back in service before the end of September.

1000 Islands Cruises, of Kingston, has an interesting new ship in its fleet. It is the 200-passenger, 95-foot, aluminum-hulled catamaran ISLAND STAR, (a) LE BATEAU MOUCHE II (98) (C.817169), built in 1994 at Montreal.

Another new passenger boat recently seen in the area is the American Canadian Caribbean Line's new GRANDE MARINER, which arrived at Ogdensburg on August 9th and was downbound in the Seaway on the 10th, en route to the coast on her maiden lakes voyage. Built by Blount Industries, the 182.5-foot ship can carry 100 passengers and features the line's typical low profile for calling, shallow draft, and a bow passenger ramp. GRANDE MARINER had been at Montreal on July 5th but did not enter that lakes system on that trip.

Last issue, we reported the departure from the lakes of TUG MALCOLM. We can now confirm that her new owner is Beyel Bros. Crane & Rigging, of Cocoa Beach, Florida. She is to operate in the Port Canaveral area.

Much interest has been aroused by the entry of C. COLUMBUS into lake cruise trade, and plans of other foreign operators to do likewise. Now American Classic Voyages Inc., parent of Great Hawaiian Cruise Line and the Delta Queen Steamboat Co., plans to build five 300-foot coastal cruise ships, modelled roughly on former U.S. east coast night boats. Delivery of the first ship is planned for 2000, and the company is eyeing many coastal markets, including the Great Lakes.