

The last salt-water ship downbound through the Welland Canal this season was the sad-looking standard-type CANADIAN CHALLENGER, which has caused no end of concern for Seaway officials during her stay in our waters. Reportedly owned by Toronto parties, although of "Central American" registry, the ship was first upbound in the Seaway on November 18th, en route to Toronto. Moored by the Eastern Gap for quite a few days, a cargo was clam-shelled out of her onto the dock. Her inbound cargo was officially reported as cement clinkers, but we have never seen such a cargo unloaded by clamshell onto an open pile on a dock before. At the time, we thought the cargo was silica sand, which on occasion has been unloaded that way at the same wharf.

There were a number of minor incidents involving salties in the Seaway during the season, as usual, but a serious one occurred at about 4:30 a.m. on December 12th, when the Norwegian FEDERAL BERGEN, downbound below Morrisburg, strayed out of the channel and struck and destroyed the Weaver Shoal Light (Light No. 68), a fixed light structure, and then struck Weaver Shoal itself. Damage to the steel and concrete caisson light structure was roughly estimated at \$1 million, while the ship sustained hull fractures in the forepeak tank and the No. 1 port double-bottom tank. The ship slid off the shoal and then was directed to go to the Wilson Hill anchorage, which she did. McKeil Marine was called to lighter the ship to facilitate examination of the hull damage, and LAC VANCOUVER and GLENBROOK came to the scene with D. C. EVEREST, which took off 3,800 tonnes of grain. FEDERAL BERGEN finally was cleared to proceed downbound on December 17th, with compressors working to keep her damaged compartments dry. The two tugs and lightering barge followed down to Montreal, where the EVEREST unloaded the grain she was holding. As yet, there is no word as to the cause of the accident, but an investigation was underway. Although Norwegian owned, FEDERAL BERGEN is registered at Hong Kong.

The MacArthur Lock at the Soo closed at midnight on Wednesday, December 16th, three days later than planned because of shippers' requests for more than one lock to be available. The MacArthur Lock will see major maintenance work this winter, the first since its construction in 1943. Meanwhile, the Poe Lock remained open with its closing scheduled for January 15th. However, late-season traffic was not great, as the importation of foreign steel caused U.S. operators to lay up many of their ore carriers early. The glut of foreign steel being imported was decried by U.S. lake vessel operators, but it certainly kept the Port of Toronto busy this season. In one of the best seasons Toronto Harbour has had since the early Seaway days, there was scarcely a day in late summer or autumn when at least one salty, and sometimes four of them, could be seen unloading steel at the Pier 51/52 complex beside the Eastern Gap.

The Soo Lock tour boats that many of us have observed (and sometimes - dare we admit it? - rode) have been such a familiar sight on the Soo scene for so many years that we tend to forget how long they have been running. Soo Lock Boat Tours now runs the five ships of the old Welch and Famous Soo Locks fleets, with BIDE-A-WEE of 1955, HOLIDAY of 1957, and HIAWATHA, NOKOMIS and LE VOYAGEUR, all built in 1959. All are of roughly 65 feet in length. This winter, LE VOYAGEUR is at the M.C.M. Marine yard (the former Twin City yard) for repowering, the first major update seen by any of these boats for years.

Also wintering at the M.C.M. yard are two of Arnold Transit's Mackinac Island high-speed catamaran ferries, MACKINAC EXPRESS and STRAITS EXPRESS. The Soo yard for many years has handled drydocking necessitated by Arnold ferries.

The Algoma Central self-unloader was at the Algoma Export Dock at the Soo on December 3rd for repairs to her self-unloader boom. The boom buckled when the ship was unloading stone at Serpent Harbour, reportedly as a result of the stone pile building beneath it.