

The "Voice of the TITANIC" whimpered at Toronto on October 28th. As part of a charity drive, the operators of the Titanic Exhibition currently on display at Exhibition Place said, according to the press, that they would take the TITANIC's triple-chime steam whistle, salvaged from the wreck, to Nathan Phillips (City Hall) Square, where steam would be blown through it for the first time since the sinking. In fact, the TITANIC's chime was there, but only on display. What was "blown" was a reproduction. It may have looked good, but the "blowers" should have studied up on the maintaining of adequate steam pressures and the tuning of whistles (which, in reality, are fine musical instruments and should be treated as such). A few short tugs on the rope produced a lot of steam and only a whimper of sound, and no prolonged musical note could be sustained. The whole event was disappointing. As disappointing as those who salvage artifacts and profit from human tragedy...

Horne's Ferry, which operates the 1952-built WILLIAM DARRELL on the run between Cape Vincent, New York, and Wolfe Island, Ontario, would normally have closed its operation for the year on October 31st, but the ferry was taken out of service on October 17th, so she could make the trip up to Hamilton for five-year survey and inspection. The DARRELL reportedly enjoyed a very good season in 1999.

Meanwhile, the steering committee charged with studying alternatives for improving the ferry service from Kingston to Wolfe Island, has "indefinitely" postponed public meetings on the issue. The ferry service, currently operated by the 1975-built WOLFE ISLANDER III, is run at no cost to users by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. Despite the fact that studies show the service consistently operates over capacity and that the present situation cannot continue, the M.O.T. says there is no funding available for any major changes in the service, and it opts to do nothing about the problem. Other more helpful suggestions include lengthening the ferry, or relocating the ferry to a route between the Canadian Forces Base on the east side of Kingston and Dawson Point on Wolfe Island, which would cut the operating time in half. A "fixed link" (bridge or tunnel) would appear to be impossibly expensive.

Another ferry that is going to cost more money than expected is the new Drummond Island ferry being built by Basic Marine Inc., of Escanaba, for the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority. Basic's low-bid price for the project was \$2.6 million (U.S.), but rising steel prices may force upward the eventual cost by as much as \$100,000. The name assigned to the new ferry is DRUMMOND ISLANDER IV.

Indications are that the venerable cement carrier J. B. FORD, (a) EDWIN F. HOLMES (16), (b) E. C. COLLINS (59), may be moved to a new location next spring. The 1904-built FORD, owned by Inland Lakes Transportation Inc., last operated in 1985 (for Huron Cement), and has been used as a storage hull at South Chicago since the spring of 1989. The cement plant there now has a newly-constructed cement silo, and the FORD is no longer needed. She reportedly will be taken to some other plant that does need floating storage facilities.

Last issue, we mentioned some of the interesting vessels that visited the lakes this year. Another one was visiting as we penned that item, namely the Canadian frigate H.M.C.S. KINGSTON. She called at several lake ports, including Toronto.

It is reported that Groupe Ocean Inc. has renamed its big tug CAPT. IOANNIS S. (C.391569), (a) SISTELLA (79), (b) SANDY CAPE (80). Built in 1973 in Norway, the tug has been rechristened (d) OCEAN DELTA. This tug, which has participated in a number of scrap tows, has operated mainly on the lower St. Lawrence River.