

But it was only a matter of days before PELEE again was in trouble, this time another brush with the law. On Monday, May 28, 1949, PELEE was boarded by three R.C.M.P. officers when she docked at Kingsville, and after a search, several articles, not identified in the press reports, were seized. The master, Capt. John Gordon, of Alvinston, Ontario, refused to tie the ship up at Kingsville and went ashore in a rowboat. Apparently, on the return trip from Sandusky, a customs declaration should have been made when PELEE landed at the Island, but that was not done. PELEE's owner was fined and on the following day, May 29, paid the sum of \$400 for infringement of customs regulations, thus securing the release of the steamer so she could resume her service. A report of the incident, contained in the May 29 issue of the "Kingston Whig-Standard", made reference to a "sensational smuggling case" in which PELEE had been involved "a few years ago", but we have been unable to locate any reference to such an event. Perhaps the reporter actually was thinking of the gaming house and liquor incident of 1947.

The year 1950 did not get off to a good start for the PELEE. "The Toronto Star" of Monday, January 23rd, 1950, carried the following item: "(Special to The Star) - Kingsville, Jan. 23 - An attempt to scuttle the passenger vessel s.s. PELEE by smashing one of her seacocks and opening another was made here early Sunday. The ship was saved by Kingsville firemen, who pumped three feet of water from her hull and closed the valves.

"The fishing tug SANDI-PAT (sic), berthed near the PELEE in Kingsville harbour, sank under mysterious circumstances and is believed to have been scuttled by the person or persons who tried to send the s.s. PELEE to the bottom. The tug, owned by J. Earl Moody, is heeled over on its side at the Kingsville dock in about nine feet of water.

"The s.s. PELEE, tied up at her winter berth here, was found with one seacock smashed open, the other opened to permit water to enter the hull. The discovery was made by William Blatchford, who was looking after the boat for Fred Gerster, of Port Stanley, who is making repairs to the craft. (Gerster was PELEE's chief engineer -Ed.) Gerster had gone to Port Stanley for material and tools. Ernest Blake, marine engineer when the PELEE is in service, led the attempts to keep the vessel from sinking.

"The PELEE's seacocks were packed with tallow and grease and it is not considered possible they could have come open by themselves. Seacocks on a ship as large as the PELEE aren't easily found in the maze of valves about the engineroom. Whoever opened them had a fair idea where they were, it was stated. The first one was opened with a large pipe wrench which broke the valve. The second seacock had a wheel on top of it. The wheel had been pulled off and was lying in the bottom of the hull about three feet below the engineroom floor."

That sounds rather like what happened to HIAWATHA and KWASIND at Toronto in the summer of 2000, doesn't it? The fish tug referred to in the article as also having been attacked by the vandal(s) was actually W. M. SANDI-PAT (C. 172141), which was built by Harry Gamble at Port Dover in 1944. She sank in Lake Erie off Erieau on December 3, 1969, with the loss of two lives.

The PELEE suffered no lasting effects from her near-sinking, and she was back on her regular service in the spring of 1950. The decade of the 1950s was PELEE's last in operation, but it was a generally quiet and successful time for her. It was during this period that she was given new and rather bright colours for her smokestack. The broad black smokeband at the top remained, but the rest became a rich, royal blue. Over the demarcation line between the blue and black sections of the funnel was superimposed a jaunty red pennant which carried a large white letter 'P' in its field. The 'P' stood for the Pelee Shipping Company Ltd., the company under which Vincent Barrie operated PELEE.

An unsourced clipping from the Ivan Brookes scrapbook for 1957 gave indica-