

A double christening occurred at Port Weller Dry Docks on March 3rd. Hull 79 which is the new forebody matched with the old stern of LOUIS R. DESMARAIS, was christened CSL LAURENTIEN by Kimberley Pauley, wife of a CSL captain. TADOUSSAC, with her hull widened and painted grey for the cement clinker trade, and with a new single-belt unloading system, was christened (b) CSL TADOUSSAC by Barbara Gowthorpe, wife of a CSL chief engineer. The double christening ceremony was most unusual and we do not believe such an event has taken place at Port Weller since the 1970 christening of the Prince Edward Island carferries VACATIONLAND and HOLIDAY ISLAND.

The prospects for the grain trade in the early part of the 2001 lake season do not look good. Seaway Marine Transport only intended to fit out seven straight-deck bulkers, four from Upper Lakes Shipping and three from the Algoma Central fleet. This has meant that only one of the seven bulkers laid up at Toronto for the winter, namely CANADIAN PROSPECTOR, was fitting out as the new season dawned. Of the rest, SEAWAY QUEEN and CANADIAN TRADER are in permanent lay-up, while CANADIAN MARINER, CANADIAN VENTURE, CANADIAN VOYAGER and ALGOISLE were not fitting out. In fact, on April 2nd, ALGOISLE was towed away from Pier 52, to make way for salt-water visitors, and was put to the wall down the Ship Channel. CANADIAN VOYAGER and CANADIAN VENTURE were also expected to be moved down the Channel to free up other docking spaces.

Rumoured recently to be for sale has been Algoma Tankers' 1966-built ALGO-SCOTIA, (a) IMPERIAL ACADIA (98). A report indicates that she has been acquired by McKeil Marine Ltd., which took possession of the ship at Halifax on April 2nd. It apparently is intended that she will run in the calcium chloride trade, mostly out of General Chemicals at Amherstburg, Ontario. The tanker reportedly will be renamed (c) RALPH TUCKER to honour the retired McKeil tug captain.

To tow the barge PML 9000, Purvis Marine Ltd., of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, has acquired from Atlantic Towing Ltd. the 148-foot, 1974-built tug ATLANTIC CEDAR, (a) SINNI (81), (b) IRVING CEDAR (96). The tug departed Sandy Beach, on the Gaspé Peninsula, on March 26th, bound for the Soo. ATLANTIC CEDAR is five feet shorter and one year newer than ATLANTIC HICKORY, which towed the barge SARAH SPENCER from 1996 until 2000.

The USS Great Lakes fleet self-unloader ARTHUR M. ANDERSON departed the Bay Shipbuilding Company yard at Sturgeon Bay on March 23rd to start her new season, but soon was beset by mechanical problems, which forced her to anchor near Lansing Shoal, at the top of Lake Michigan and west of the Straits of Mackinac. Sent to her aid was the fleet's 1000-foot self-unloader EDGAR B. SPEER, which commenced the tow of the ANDERSON back to Sturgeon Bay. The tow was completed by tugs of the Selvick Marine Towing Corp.

The first laker to depart lay-up at Montreal in 2001 was CARTIERDOC, which sailed on March 15th, bound for the Verreault shipyard at Les Mechains. It is unusual for a Paterson vessel to visit that shipyard.

To the casual observer, it might have appeared recently that Transport Desgagnes Inc.'s 1971-built CECILIA DESGAGNES had been sold to foreign buyers, for she could be seen at Montreal bearing the name LADY PANAMA. She has not, however, been sold and only was being used for movie filming.

Toronto reportedly will have one more excursion boat this year. She is the former THAMES RIVER BELLE which we learn spent the winter at Port Dover. We know little about her.

Disappearing gradually in recent years have been the 180-foot, WLB-class buoy-tenders of the United States Coast Guard. The last of 38 built in the early 1940s was WOODRUSH, assigned for many years to the Duluth station, but modernized and sent to Sitka, Alaska in the late 1970s. We now learn that she was retired during March, and has been sold to Ghana for naval service.