

When we left the unfortunate saga of the Detroit mail and pilotboat J. W. WESTCOTT II in our last issue, the vessel remained on the bottom of the Detroit River near Zug Island and its two crew members still were missing. Then, on October 29th, six days after the sinking, the WESTCOTT was raised, using a crane barge and air bags, and inside the boat was found the body of Capt. Catherine Nasiatka. The WESTCOTT was placed on drydock at Nicholson's Terminal at Ecorse, and a clean-up of the boat was commenced. Steelwork then was begun and by the end of November, repairs were well advanced. Replacement of the WESTCOTT's engine will be undertaken during the winter months. Meanwhile, the brother of missing WESTCOTT deckhand David Lewis commenced a \$10 million federal lawsuit against the Westcott Company, and Westcott took legal action against the SIDSEL KNUITSEN, the vessel which the J. W. WESTCOTT II was servicing when the accident occurred. The body of Lewis eventually was found on November 27 on the Canadian side of Fighting Island, some six miles downriver from where the WESTCOTT sank.

Another continuing saga is that of the WINDOC following her August 11th encounter with the Allanburg Bridge on the Welland Canal. In early November, N. M. Paterson and Sons Ltd. reacquired WINDOC from the underwriters (to whom she had been abandoned) for \$1,000,000 although it was not announced what would be done with the vessel. Work then was done to board in the damaged aft cabins of the ship, and it was said that she was to be towed from Hamilton to Toronto during the week of November 19th. That did not happen, however, and a late report indicated that Heddle Marine would drydock WINDOC at Hamilton for the repair of the forward hull damage that she suffered when she came to a stop after being struck by the bridge. After approximately \$800,000 in repairs, Bridge 11 was put back into service in mid-November. Although no formal decision has been rendered as to the reason why the bridge descended onto the WINDOC, investigators for the Transportation Safety Board of Canada have said that "human performance factors" are "very significant" in the investigation. Considering the circumstances of the incident, that does not in the slightest surprise us!

With things not doing at all well in the North American steel trade, with iron ore mines cutting back on production, and with Bethlehem Steel having filed for Chapter 11 protection from bankruptcy on October 15th, one might have been tempted to think that things could not get much worse. However, on November 20th, LTV Steel, which had made a voluntary Chapter 11 filing on December 29, 2000, asked a U.S. Bankruptcy Court for permission to cease all steel production and to prepare to sell its facilities. As LTV is the United States' third-largest integrated steel maker and an employer of some 17,000 workers, this move, which would close all its Cleveland and Indiana Harbor works, caused major repercussions, not the least of them being amongst the lake shippers who supplied LTV with raw materials. Its three major transporters, American Steamship Company, Interlake Steamship Company and the Oglebay Norton Company, almost immediately began to send some of their ships to early winter lay-up. Observers have wondered about the amount of money LTV might owe to these shipping firms. During the closing days of November, negotiators from the City of Cleveland, the steelworkers' union and creditors submitted a proposal to LTV in an attempt to forego the closure; it would involve the company's employees taking major cuts in wages and health care benefits in return for a 35 percent increase in their share of the ownership of the company. At the time of this writing, there had been no word of the company's response to the proposal.

The McAsphalt barge NORMAN McLEOD was floated from the drydock at Port Weller on November 24th and moved by JAMES E. McGRATH, MISEFORD and SEAHOUND to the fit-out wall, where she was paired for the first time with her tug EVERLAST. They left on the 26th for Port Colborne, where their outfitting will be completed. If conditions permit, they may move to Detroit during January for lay-up for the rest of the winter. The Upper Lakes Group Inc. will operate EVERLAST and NORMAN McLEOD for McAsphalt.