

The lake shipping industry was able to dodge the bullet earlier in the autumn when St. Lawrence Seaway workers settled their wage dispute at the eleventh hour. Such was not the case, however, in respect of engineers, members of the Canadian Maritime Officers Union. Without a contract since May 31st, the engineers, with a dispute over crew numbers and wages, went on strike as of midnight, Friday, November 30th. The strike affects Algoma Central, CSL and Paterson vessels, and at least Algoma was intending to operate with non-union engineers. At the time of this writing, the only report of problems we had received related to MANTADOC being picketed whilst unloading a cargo of bauxite at Thorold on December 1st.

The newest member of the fleet of Transport Desgagnes Inc., although trading into the lakes, has not yet been described in these pages. She is VEGA DESGAGNES (C.822171) which was enrolled at Quebec on July 26, 2001. A tanker built in 1982 by Valmet OY Helsingin Telakka at Helsinki, Finland, she was (a) SHELLTRANS (94), (b) ACILA and (c) BACALAN (01). She is 461.8 x 69.7, 8806 Gross and 3279 Net Tons. She served the Shell Oil interests until 1999, and from then until 2001 she was owned by Petromarine SA, of St. Vincent & The Grenadines.

While on the subject of Transport Desgagnes, we should note that on July 3, ANNA DESGAGNES (C.752433) was re-enrolled at Quebec, having previously been registered as Bridgetown, Barbados. She is a 569-foot Ro/Ro vessel built in 1986, known previously as (a) TRUSKAVETS (96), (b) ANNA DESGAGNES (98), (c) PCC PANAMA (99).

Work is well advanced on the lock reconstruction necessary to return the old Lachine Canal to active operation, a project costing some \$93 million. The canal was part of the old St. Lawrence canal system replaced by the Seaway in 1959. With locks capable only of handling "canallers", it ran from Montreal Harbour up to Lake St. Louis. Although too small for modern commercial vessels and with limited overhead clearance, the reactivated Lachine Canal should prove a major convenience for pleasure boaters. The canal is scheduled to open to traffic in the summer of 2002. If only it were possible to have saved more of the old canal system...

The fast ferry service proposed for a route across Lake Ontario between Toronto and Rochester has been in a "holding pattern" ever since the events of September 11th. The project was at a critical stage in the financing process and now New York State, a major partner in the funding, has been focussed on recovery in the New York City area. The Empire State Development Corp. had been requested to provide a loan guarantee so that ferry backers could secure financing for start-up costs. Rochester city officials are continuing to lobby the state for the necessary assistance.

More fallout from the closing of LTV Steel operations hit the Marquette, Michigan, area on November 24 when Cleveland-Cliffs shut down the Empire Mine. The closure will also affect the L.S.&I. Railroad, which hauled pellets from the mine to the Marquette ore dock. Another possible repercussion may be the halting of ore shipments by water out of Marquette and pellets being shipped entirely by rail in the future.

It was reported in early November that the U.S. Congress has agreed to spend the first \$3 million toward the construction of a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie. Congress had approved the new lock back in 1986 but had not appropriated any money for the construction. States bordering the lakes will also have to cough up funds for the project and Michigan gave consent in October to contribute \$14 million for the lock.

Speaking of the Soo Locks, we should note that the St. Mary's Falls Canal is scheduled to close for the season at midnight, January 15th, 2002. With so many ore boats going into early lay-up, we wonder whether there will be enough traffic to warrant keeping the canal open that late.