

It would appear that what lake shipping observers have feared for a number of years has now come to pass. It recently was reported that the U.S. Maritime Administration had given approval for the Great Lakes Associates Inc. 1927-built steamer KINSMAN ENTERPRISE (ii), (a) HARRY COULBY (ii)(89), to be sold to International Marine Salvage Limited, Port Colborne, for scrapping. Ship fans had been very pleased when the Kinsman organization acquired her from the Interlake Steamship Company for the grain trade, thus prolonging her life, but the 631-foot steamer did not run in Kinsman colours for very long. With the U.S. lake grain trade much reduced, she was laid up at Buffalo in December of 1995 and has not operated since.

At the International Marine Salvage scrapyard on the east side of the outer harbour at Port Colborne, scrapping of the former C.S.L. self-unloader TARANTAU has progressed substantially. Still at the yard is the forebody of LOUIS R. DESMARAIS. Presumably, KINSMAN ENTERPRISE will put in an appearance at the scrapyard in the spring.

WENONAH II, the newest vessel of the Muskoka Lakes Navigation & Hotel Company, is having the finishing touches put to her over the winter at Gravenhurst, Ontario. Moved late in the season to the company's regular dock she dwarfs the venerable SEGWUN and WANDA III. The new ship was built in sections and assembled at a site across the bay at Gravenhurst. She was "launched" on May 30th when, at 9:50 a.m., a large crane lifted her into the water, the entire process taking only some fifteen minutes. WENONAH II, although designed to look something like Muskoka steamers of yesteryear, will, unfortunately, be diesel powered.

A major accident occurred at Charlotte (Rochester) on the afternoon of December 23rd when a CSX train became a "runaway". The engineer jumped off the train when he knew it would not make a curve and the train's 24 cars, most loaded with coal but two containing flammable chemicals, derailed and caught fire. The ensuing conflagration destroyed a number of buildings including two private homes, as well as a number of yachts in winter storage. The fire finally was controlled by local firefighters assisted by a U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat. The Genesee river was closed for a time but was reopened once the danger was past.

The strike by lake engineers who are members of the Canadian Maritime Officers' Union continues. It began on November 30th, and negotiations in Montreal broke off on December 19th over the issue of hiring practices. Wages and the length of a new contract also have been in dispute. The strike has affected ships of the Canada Steamship Lines, Algoma Central and Paterson fleets, but has caused little by way of problems for those fleets, with other engineers replacing the strikers to keep the ships moving.

Laid up light ship at Montreal this winter is the steam straight-decker CANADIAN VOYAGER, (a) BLACK BAY (94), of the ULS fleet. She arrived at Montreal on December 23rd, having unloaded a cargo of soya beans at Port Cartier. There are very strong indications that the 1963-built VOYAGER has run her last and will be put up for disposal. Increasingly, the older straight-backs are becoming less viable in today's economic conditions, and most have seen only seasonal service (when grain is moving) in recent years. Meanwhile, CANADIAN TRADER, which was towed from her Toronto lay-up berth on September 14th, continues to lie at Trois-Rivieres, used for storage pending a tow to Chinese breakers. SEAWAY QUEEN, of course, has been permanently retired by ULS and continues to lie along the north face of Pier 35, Toronto, pending possible preservation efforts.

Departing the Welland Canal downbound on December 16th was the Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company's big new dredge LIBERTY ISLAND, which recently was completed by Bay Shipbuilding at Sturgeon Bay, where your Editor saw her in June. Accompanying the dredge on her way out of the lakes was GLD&D's tug WILLIAM L. COLNOR, to provide assistance if necessary. The two vessels were bound for Florida.