

Regardless of Cleveland bridges, the regular lake navigation season will soon be off and running. The winter work on the various canals seems to have progressed in an uneventful manner, allowing the Poe Lock at the Michigan Soo to open as scheduled on March 25th. The St. Lawrence and Welland canals will open on the morning of March 26th. At the time of this writing, no word had been received as to which vessel would participate in the annual ceremonies opening the Welland Canal.

Sold recently, apparently to Haitian interests, was the coaster ARCTIC VIKING, (a) BALTIC VIKING (81), a 244-foot, 1967-built vessel owned by C. A. Crosbie Shipping Ltd., of St. John's, Newfoundland. Laid up at Montreal since the autumn of 2000, the ship previously had made a number of passages through the Seaway, but never had ventured further into the lakes system than Ogdensburg, New York. Whilst in lay-up recently, she raised the Panamanian flag and was renamed (c) LE COMPAGNON. This leaves in the Crosbie fleet the 1970-built LADY FRANKLIN, (a) BALTIC VALIANT (81), which has been wintering at the shipyard at Levis, Quebec, following a casualty in the Arctic during the summer of 2001 that necessitated repairs.

The repowering of the Hamilton bunkering tanker HAMILTON ENERGY was completed at Port Weller Dry Docks during February and the vessel will be returning to Hamilton as soon as she can be taken down through Lock 1 of the canal. As yet, we have seen no details concerning the type of engine that has been installed in the 1965-built tanker. As well as the re-engining, other work was necessary to repair damage caused when HAMILTON ENERGY was hit by a salt-water ship at Hamilton last spring.

In addition to the refit of SAUNIERE, Port Weller Dry Docks has also been proceeding with the reconstruction of the midbody of CANADIAN CENTURY. This work was somewhat delayed due to very windy conditions that were prevalent earlier in the winter, but the work is now back on track for a late spring completion. As rebuilt, the CENTURY will have a larger cargo hold, flat tanktop and single-belt unloading system. Her sides will also be "blistered" like those of CSL TADOUSSAC, which underwent a similar rebuild last winter. This may improve the ship's efficiency and cargo capacity but will do nothing good for her appearance. It has been rumoured that the ship may be renamed before she re-enters service, but we hope that this will not be the case. CANADIAN CENTURY was completed in Canada's centennial year (1967) and her current name is entirely fitting and proper.

It is reported that a firm known as Acheson Ventures has acquired from Secunda Marine Services, Halifax, the 154-foot, gaff topsail schooner HIGHLANDER SEA (C.820666), formerly known as CALEDONIA. Built in 1924 by James and Tarr Shipyard at Essex, Massachusetts, she now is 140 Gross Tons and 65 Net, and is fitted with auxiliary power and twin screws. She has a wooden hull. HIGHLANDER SEA has visited the lakes the past two years for "tall ship" events. Her new owners plan to bring her to Port Huron, Michigan, where she is to be docked "as an attraction vessel" (does that mean static display?) at the Seaway Terminal dock. It is said that future plans "may include youth sail training programs". The vessel apparently served as a pilot boat at Boston for many years. Secunda Marine brought her into Canadian registry in 1998.

Many observers have been wondering what is happening with the 1884-built carferry LANSLOWNE, which is now at Erie, Pennsylvania, after spending time at various ports after her restaurant use at Detroit ended. The city council at Erie is presently considering plans by the ship's owner, Specialty Restaurants Corp., of Anaheim, California, to renovate the ship and have her open in 2003 at the Sassafras Street dock. Some councillors have expressed concern because of the lack of progress by Specialty Restaurants with a project at Buffalo. We'll not hold our breath!