

Mexico. We do know that it was whilst ST. HELIERS was owned by the petroleum company that her boilers were converted to burn oil fuel, which was far more readily available in the southern United States than was coal.

ST. HELIERS served the Huasteca firm through 1929. As previously noted, she ceased to be classed by the British Corporation in October of that year, and that would seem to have coincided with the beginning of the next stage of her career. The March 1930 issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" carried the following item: "The United States tug ST. HELIER'S (sic), which arrived at St. John, N.B., from Norfolk, Va., recently, is being laid up there until navigation opens on the Great Lakes. She is reported to have been bought by Canadian interests for service on the upper lakes. She is a steel oilburning ship built at Port Glasgow, Scotland, under the supervision of the British Admiralty, and is similar in appearance to a number of other tugs built under the same circumstances. Her dimensions are: - length, 135.4 ft.; breadth, 29 ft.; depth, 13 ft., with engines of 1,200 i.h.p. She is of 458 tons gross and 9 tons net register."

It seems difficult to imagine that such an august publication was unaware that ST. HELIERS had not been purchased by just any Canadian interests, but rather by the Canadian government, but such was the case. ST. HELIERS was brought under the Canadian flag and was registered under the ownership of The Minister of Marine, Ottawa. She was enrolled at Sorel, Quebec, and given Canadian official number 143436. The intention was to lengthen her and convert her for use as a lighthouse and buoy tender on the upper lakes.

However, there exists today something of a controversy as to where this work was done. It has appeared in print, and some sources insist, that the conversion was done at Sorel. (Arguably, there has been some suggestion that Les Chantiers Manseau Ltee., then operator of the shipyard at Sorel, may have been involved as an intermediary in the acquisition of the ship by the government, which might also account for her Sorel port of registry.) On the other hand, the Dominion List of Shipping (showing vessels registered in Canada), beginning with the 1930 issue and continuing as long as ST. HELIERS was on the Canadian registry, showed that the work was done in 1930 at Saint John, New Brunswick, and your Editor feels that if ST. HELIERS was at Saint John for the winter anyway, the government very likely would have had the work done there before she was sent up into the lake system. We can obtain no help from "Canadian Railway and Marine World" on this issue, for despite that magazine's vigilant watch on the lake shipping scene, it printed not a word about the rebuilding of ST. HELIERS or her commissioning as a lighthouse tender.

It is, perhaps, here that we should note that ST. HELIERS was only one of seven "Saint" class Admiralty tugs that wound up operating under the Canadian flag. Three of them, namely ST. ARVANS, ST. FINBARR and ST. ANNE, came to operate on the Atlantic coast; three others, ST. FLORENCE, ST. FAITH and ST. CATHERINE, served on the Pacific coast, while ST. HELIERS came to work for almost three decades on the Great Lakes. That said, we should note that ST. ARVANS did make some trips into the lakes in the 1960s as the "steel goelette" AIGLE d'OCEAN, operated by Les Chargeurs Unis Inc., St. Joseph-de-la-Rive, Quebec; she was wrecked whilst in Arctic service in 1977.

In any event, ST. HELIERS was cut apart and a midbody, which included a small cargo hold, was added. There was a fully topgallant forecastle that was 28 feet in length, as well as a long raised poop. The hull had a graceful, sweeping sheer, with a straight stem and a counter stern. The finished vessel was recorded on the Canadian register as having a length of 190.3 feet, a beam of 29.1 feet, and a depth of 16.4 feet, her new tonnage being 930 Gross and 507 Net. She had a tall and heavy foremast, stepped at the break of the forecastle, and it was equipped with a strong cargo boom for handling buoys and lighthouse supplies and equipment. There was an open rail around most of the forecastle head, with a small section of closed bulwark right at the stem. A vertical steering pole was fitted. A closed steel bul-