

The work on modernizing and widening the Upper Lakes Shipping self-unloader CANADIAN CENTURY has been progressing rapidly at Port Weller Dry Docks, and the ceremonies at which the ship will be rechristened JOHN D. LEITCH are now scheduled for May 15th. CANADIAN CENTURY was given that name because she was commissioned in 1967, Canada's centennial year.

For more than seven weeks, the members of the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union were on strike against the provincial government. While the strike caused only minor difficulties for most Ontarians, it did seriously affect two provincially-operated ferry services. The operation of the Glenora to Adolphustown ferry was suspended completely during the strike, whilst the Wolfe Island run, considered to be an essential service for the Island residents, was operated only intermittently, causing major problems for the Wolfe Islanders. O.P.S.E.U. members eventually agreed to a new contract and returned to work on May 6th.

In previous issues, we have commented extensively on the McKeil conversion of the barge LE VENT to carry aviation fuel, and the refitting of the tug ALICE A. to handle her. We had reported that ALICE A. was renamed WILLIAM J. MOORE for the service, and was being given an elevated pilothouse. Now comes word that the barge also has been renamed. LE VENT is now named McCLEARY'S SPIRIT for her new duties, but we have no report as to why that particular name was chosen.

It had been rumoured for quite some time that Canada Steamship Lines' ATLANTIC HURON (ii), (a) PRAIRIE HARVEST (89), (b) ATLANTIC HURON (ii)(94), (c) MELVIN H. BAKER II (ii)(97), would be the next vessel to undergo a major hull reconstruction at Port Weller Dry Docks, and the fact that this would be made so was announced formally in late April. The ship was built in 1984 and converted to a self-unloader in 1989, and a certain amount of internal refurbishing has been done in recent years. During the coming winter, the main project of side tank renewal will be done at Port Weller, with the old structure being cut away and new wider side tanks being put in place to "bustle" the hull out to an overall beam of 78 feet. This will give the ship increased displacement and greater cargo capacity at the same drafts as before. ATLANTIC HURON has sustained much hull wear during her years of service on salt water. She spent the winter of 2001-2002 at Thunder Bay.

Speaking of bustled-out vessels, CSL TADOUSSAC departed the Toledo Shipyard on April 11th after the completion of major rudder repairs. She had been towed from Port Colborne to Toledo at the start of the 2002 navigation season. The damage had been sustained late in 2001.

Algoma Central Corp's self-unloading salt carrier SAUNIÈRE departed the shipyard at Port Weller on April 10th, after the completion of major winter work that included bottom plating replacement, the rebuilding of her unloading boom and the fitting of a complete new set of hatch covers. Her place on the deep drydock was taken by another Algoma vessel, the tanker ALGOEAST, which came for bottom repairs.

N. M. Paterson & Sons Ltd. announced early in April that it would be accepting bids, to be opened on May 3rd, for the inactive vessels in its fleet that had not been included in the earlier sale (of PATERSON, CARTIERDOC and MANTADOC) to Canada Steamship Lines. The ships were being offered on an as is / where is basis, with no competitive restrictions. Up to the time of this writing, no word has been received as to the sale of any of the ships. Then, on April 19th, Donald Paterson, vice-chairman of the family firm, issued a statement criticizing the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, its insurers and counsel, for not having settled the Paterson claim for the damage sustained by its WINDOC (ii), which was rendered a constructive total loss when the Allanburg Bridge on the Welland Canal was brought down on the WINDOC's pilothouse and stack on August 11, 2001. Paterson alleges that "it was the fire and ultimate writing off of the ship that caused the company to get out of the shipping business".