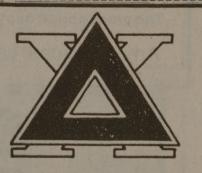


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THOROLD, Ontario - With hundreds of shiphands laid off and their barges parked at ports throughout the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway officials said they hoped to begin repairs today on a collapsed lock wall that has blocked the waterway.

A 125-foot section of the concrete wall of Lock 7 of the Welland Canal collapsed Monday, halting traffic in both directions through the canal and idling more than 50 ships at a cost estimated between \$10,000 and

Lake Ontario, circumventing Niagara Falls.

"We asked for proposals to get the lock in operation as quickly as possi-ble, so we could limp through until the end of the season," said seaway spokesman Robert Balcomb.

Steel beams will be used to reinforce the damaged wall so water could be drained from the lock and. chunks of fallen concrete removed, he said. Then new concrete will be poured into the wall.

Canada Steamship Lines, said Wednesday 100 shiphands had been laid off and another 200 workers would join them by next week He said the company will probably dot half of its 22-ship fleet until repin are completed.

The Montreal-based company s the largest shipper using the seawa transporting 30 million tons of argo a year

"We have mixed feelings," LeMay said. "For over 27 years we've had no