

OSLER AGAIN

Our Ship of the Month in the April issue was the well-known steamer E. B. OSLER (26), (b) OSLER (54), (c) R. O. PETMAN. We appreciate the response of many members who brought forward details concerning incidents in the steamer's career in order to round out our history of her.

On October 4, 1908, in the year that she was commissioned, E. B. OSLER, then owned by the St. Lawrence and Chicago Steam Navigation Company Ltd., brought the very first cargo to the Government House grain elevator at Port Colborne. Incidentally, it would appear that the steamer's original boilers were built for her by the Canadian Shipbuilding Company, Toronto, and that they were retubed in 1929.

In our feature, we mentioned two groundings which E. B. OSLER suffered during 1908. We now have further detail on one incident, including an amended date, together with information about a third stranding. According to the January 28, 1909, issue of "The Marine Review", E. B. OSLER grounded at Bar Point in the Detroit River on September 13, 1908, as a result of thick smoke. The ship was released without damage. Then, on October 17, 1908 (note the date), she ran ashore in thick smoke on Gravel Island in northern Lake Huron (this being the Gravel Island which lies off the south shore of Drummond Island). The ship was released after lightering 700 tons of coal; her bottom forward was badly damaged and her forward compartments were flooded. It should be noted that the summer and autumn of 1908 were poor seasons for lake navigation as a result of a pall of heavy smoke created by forest fires, particularly in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

On May 8, 1916, E. B. OSLER grounded in the lower St. Mary's River during a heavy gale. This report comes from the August 1916 issue of "The Marine Review", but there are no further details.

On August 30, 1931, OSLER made her first passage downbound through the new Welland Ship Canal. This was, of course, the first of a great many trips into Lake Ontario for the steamer.

In our article, we mentioned that it was during the self-unloader conversion (the winter of 1939-1940) that OSLER got her new deck with twenty hatches on twelve-foot centres. Such, however, was not the case, and she retained her old hatches on 24-foot centres. During the winter of 1940-1941 at Toronto, OSLER had new small hatches cut out between the existing hatches, and these were raised as well so that all of them had  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -foot coamings. This enabled her to carry 1,000 tons more coal, but the change was not admired by OSLER's deckhands, as the coal frequently spilled out when it was loaded high and had to be shovelled up later. As well, the old deck beams were left in, and the deckhands had to scramble out on these narrow beams, now exposed, to clean the coal off them. She also had wooden hatch covers at this time. The deck was subsequently rebuilt to more modern configuration with steel telescoping hatch covers, and we believe that this work was done jointly by Collingwood Shipyards and by H. E. Heighton & Sons, of Port Colborne.

On August 23, 1944, whilst outbound from Buffalo with a cargo of coal, OSLER stranded at the North Entrance. About 7,000 tons of coal were lightered from her, and after the ship was refloated, she was taken to Buffalo Dry Dock for repairs.

In 1953, her last full year of service under the name OSLER, she entered service when she cleared Windsor on March 23rd, having laid up there on November 30, 1952. During the 1953 season, she carried 86 cargoes, all of them coal. Of those, 28 were loaded at Toledo, 27 at Ashtabula, 12 at Erie, 10 at Fairport, 8 at Sandusky, and one at Buffalo. 56 of those loads of coal were discharged at Toronto, 11 at Hamilton, 10 at Windsor, 5 at Port Maitland, two at Thorold, and one each at Port Colborne and Oshawa. Consignees of the coal were the Consumers Gas Company, the Canada Coal Company, the Empire Hanna Coal Company, Ontario Hydro, and the Steel Company of Canada.