

bound. They were not in the Interlake fleet long before both sisters were fitted with wooden upper pilothouses to provide shelter for the men on the bridge. The Interlake fleet continued to add new vessels as the years passed and during the 1920s built a whole series of handsome bulk carriers designed specifically for the ore trade. Accordingly, some of the older vessels in the line began to be considered as excess tonnage and candidates for disposal if buyers could be found.

In 1926, one of the up-and-coming fleets on the Canadian side of the lakes was that of Paterson Steamships Limited, of Fort William, Ontario. The Paterson fleet had grown from owning a few small, wooden-hulled steamers to be a major operator of steel-hulled ships, and in the mid-1920s the fleet had been greatly expanded with the construction in the United Kingdom of a large number of canallers. At the same time, Paterson sought to expand into the upper lake trades as well, so that it might be a major shipper of grain all the way from the Lakehead to the St. Lawrence River ports.

Accordingly, in 1926, Norman Paterson's company acquired eleven upper lake steamers from the Interlake Steamship Company. Two of these were INDUS and LUPUS, which were brought into Canadian registry and renamed (c) ALTADOC (I) and PRINDOC (I), respectively. "Alta" is the common abbreviation of the name of the Province of Alberta, while "Prin" was chosen to represent the maritime Province of Prince Edward Island. The "doc" suffix of each name was intended to honour the Dominion of Canada, which Norman M. Paterson served as a member of the Senate for many years.

ALTADOC was enrolled at Fort William under official number C.116577 and in due course of time she was painted up in the usual Paterson fleet livery. Her hull once again became black, this time with an orange boot-top. Her forecastle was white, as were her cabins. Her stack was black, with a very large white letter 'P' on it. The foremast was buff and the main was black. The 'P' also appeared high on the foremast, and in a red-edged black diamond on the bow, with the company's name appearing in small white letters on the red border of the diamond.

The upper lakers which Paterson acquired during the 1920s were to last the company for four decades or more. All of them, that is, except for two, which came to unfortunate and violent ends, one by collision and one by stranding. (One additional upper laker, which was acquired as late as 1948, also was lost by collision.) The first of the upper lakers to pass out of the Paterson fleet by accident was, unfortunately, ALTADOC, and she was lost during only her second season of Paterson operation.

The report of the Lake Carriers' Association dealing with vessel losses during 1927, recorded that "considering as complete losses the five steel bulk freighters left stranded on the shores of the upper lakes at the close of navigation, vessel losses in 1927 were the most extensive in point of both number of ships and tonnage involved of any season covering the past 14 years".

The report continued: "While the violence of the storm which broke on December 6 and continued without cessation for three more days, with resultant loss of five steel steamers, nearly approached in point of destructive force the storm of November, 1913. It is gratifying to report that losses in lives were greatly diminished. Then, ten steamers foundered with all on board. In the gale of December 6-9, 1927, only one vessel foundered with her crew, the others having been driven ashore..."

"The havoc wrought to shipping early in December (1927) was not brought about by one gale but by a series of storms of five days' duration. There was a gale of great intensity on Lake Superior during the afternoon of Monday, December 5, that brought snow and heavy seas. A fleet of eight or nine steamers, upbound, rode out the storm at Whitefish Point, but between 8 and 9 that evening, they weighed anchor and headed up Lake Superior.

"That night, southwest storm warnings were issued for Lake Superior and the northern portions of Michigan and Huron. On the 6th, this new disturbance was reported to have advanced southeastward with increased intensity, ap-