

red, while the pilothouse was white with a red sunvisor. The foremast was buff, while the mainmast and the stack were all black.

OAKBRANCH was a rather handsome tanker, but she was only to operate on the lakes and the St. Lawrence River for a few short years. She had been in service for only a year when Canada, at the beginning of September, 1939, became embroiled in World War Two. Many of the canallers were to be taken over for service on salt water to aid in the Allies' war effort, and tankers, in particular, were much in demand to aid in supplying fuel to a beleaguered Britain.

OAKBRANCH remained on the lakes for a while, but in 1942 she was requisitioned for service on salt water, and she left the lakes for good. Transferred to the ownership of the British Ministry of War Transport, she was placed in operation in British waters under the management of the Bulk Oil Steamship Company Ltd. For her new duties, she was renamed (c) EMPIRE LIZARD.

The tanker managed to operate successfully and to survive the war years, and was still in service when the hostilities were concluded during 1945. In 1946, EMPIRE LIZARD was sold by the Ministry to Basinghall Shipping Ltd., of London, England, for further service around the British Isles. She was rechristened (d) BASINGBROOK by her new owners.

Many lake operators, needing more tonnage to satisfy cargo demands in the busy years following the end of the war, and hurting as a result of the loss by weather or by enemy action of so many of their ships which had been requisitioned for wartime salt water service, searched abroad for wandering canallers and brought them home to the lakes. Unfortunately, BASINGBROOK was not included in the group of ships which made their return to their former home waters in this manner, and we might speculate that the steamer was not in the best of condition after hard use during the war.

BASINGBROOK never returned to the lakes, and in 1949 Basinghall Shpping Ltd. disposed of the vessel for scrapping. That same year, she was dismantled at Sunderland, England, far from the waters which she had called home for so many years.

In the post-war years, Branch Lines Ltd. added a number of canal-sized tankers to its growing fleet. Some of these were newly-constructed for the company, while others were rebuilt from wartime-built "Park" class tankers. Interestingly, the fleet did acquire a tanker which operated under the name OAKBRANCH (II), reviving the name of the former MAPLEHILL, but this was not a modern vessel. In fact, she was a small stemwinder steamer which had been built in 1913 at Levis, Quebec, as a dredge to be operated by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. She later passed to the Ministry of Transport and, in 1940, Marine Industries converted her to a tanker for east coast bunkering service. Registered as C.134364, she was (a) M & F HOPPER BARGE NO. 1, (b) D. M. HOPPER BARGE NO. 1, and was 180.0 x 32.1 x 13.5, 676 Gross and 253 Net Tons. In the war, she operated as the naval auxliary (c) R.C.N.A. MOONBEAM (Z43).

Branch Lines Ltd. acquired her from the War Assets Corp. in 1949 and she saw several years of service as (d) OAKBRANCH (II) before being laid up in the Marine Industries boneyard at Sorel. She eventually was scrapped but had been renamed (e) B.L.L. 24 to free up her old name for re-use.

There was to be an OAKBRANCH (III). A tanker (C.312958) built for Branch Lines at Sorel in 1961 was laid down as OAKBRANCH, but before launching she was given the name J. EDOUARD SIMARD. Her name was shortened to (b) EDOUARD SIMARD in 1967, and in 1982 she became (c) LE CHENE NO. 1, under which name she still operates today for Socanav Inc.