

BRUCE HUDSON

It is difficult in the extreme for us to believe that it was eighteen years ago that we ran in "Scanner" a rather primitive corporate history and fleet list of Lloyd Tankers Limited, the lake transportation subsidiary of Lloyd Refineries Limited, of Toronto and Port Credit. The time seems to have flown by in the interim and, although we have featured many well-known canallers, we never have presented the individual history of what probably was the most famous, and also the most ill-starred vessel in the Lloyd Tankers fleet, the barge BRUCE HUDSON. We now will rectify that oversight.

It was in the early 1930s that L. B. Lloyd, a Toronto gasoline and oil dealer, ventured into the business of refining his own petroleum products. He built a refinery at Port Credit, Ontario, on the shore of Lake Ontario just west of Toronto, and he used lake tankers to transport crude oil to the plant. Lloyd himself had no experience in lake shipping, and so he entered into an association with John E. Russell, of Toronto, who was renowned as a marine salvage expert and who had many years of background in the operation of tugs, barges and freight steamers on the Great Lakes.

Russell set about putting together for Lloyd a fleet of tugs and tank barges to supply the Port Credit refinery, and in so doing he created an eclectic collection of peculiar, elderly and mismatched hulls. One of them was the iron-hulled barge EN-AR-CO, (a) BERKS (06), (b) W. S. CALVERT (21), which had been built as a collier at Chester, Pennsylvania, back in 1874. The 189-foot vessel had been cut down to a barge in 1906 and was fitted out as a tanker about 1909. John E. Russell bought her in 1934 and brought her to the Turning Basin at Toronto to refit her for service for Lloyd Tankers. Just before noon on Monday, July 23rd, 1934, a welder's torch ignited some oily waste in the hold of the barge.

The ensuing fire seemed of small proportions, and shore firefighters soon believed that they had it under control. District Fire Chief James Dixon and two of his men then went into EN-AR-CO's hold to fit equipment for drenching the compartment, and shortly thereafter a tremendous explosion occurred. The three firemen were killed, as also was John E. Russell, who was on board at the time. The fire which followed the explosion eventually was extinguished by shore crews with the aid of the Toronto Harbour Commission's big firefighting tug ROUILLE, and although severely damaged, EN-AR-CO survived to become a salvage barge. She lasted until 1969, thirty-five years after the tragic death of her owner.

The main tanker used by the Lloyd Tankers fleet in its early years was the venerable barge ROY K. RUSSELL, (a) JAPAN (10), (b) CITY OF HAMILTON (I)(27), (c) CITY OF WALKERVILLE (28), (d) ROY K. RUSSELL (28), (e) JAPAN (32), which usually was towed by the big, wooden-hulled tug MUSCALLONGE, (a) VIGILANT (13). This tug, built back in 1896, was owned by Sin-Mac Lines Ltd., of Montreal, and was chartered to Russell for Lloyd Tankers service.

Early in 1935, Lloyd Tankers Ltd. let to the Horton Steel Works Ltd., of Fort Erie, Ontario, a contract for the construction of the only newly-built vessel the Lloyd fleet ever would possess. Never assigned a hull number by the builder, the tank barge was completed in June of 1935, and was enrolled at Toronto as C.158658. Named for the son of L. B. Lloyd, BRUCE HUDSON was 164.2 feet in length, 30.0 feet in the beam, and 10.2 feet in depth. Her tonnage was recorded as 452 Gross and 440 Net.

As originally built, the BRUCE HUDSON was a peculiar little thing. She was flush-decked and had virtually no sheer at all. She had a counter stern, and her sharp bow was severely undercut. Her anchors were carried on deck forward, housed in "pockets" created by recesses in the closed bow rail. A little pilothouse, with five windows across its front, and a small cabin to house the crew were located on deck aft, protected only by a small taffrail. The latter really provided almost no shelter at all, because when