

veered from the port bank and came directly at them. This would appear to have been a case of the STOVE "sucking" the west bank of the canal and then, as other ships had done in the past and more probably will do in the narrow canal, swinging out into the path of an oncoming vessel.

"The freighter hit us just forward of the port bridge wing, tore off the port running light and made a hole just aft of the port fairlead," he (Gauthier) says. "She veered off and struck again, tearing another hole further aft."

"John Mott said he was coming out of the galley, saw the freighter (the STOVE) was heading for them and shouted, 'We're going to be hit!' Then, he ran forward. The STONEFAX was hit twice. He raced to the forward quarters to call crewmen who were sleeping. Then, he helped the men trying to stop the water coming into the ship by draping a tarpaulin over the hole.

"They tried to land Cyril Boudreau on a landing boom, but he couldn't make it. He jumped into the water and swam ashore. So did Mott, and together they pulled the ship's (mooring) wires ashore. The crewmen on the ship kept their heads, and their lives... When it became obvious (that) the ship was going down, they took to the lifeboats and made their way safely ashore, 100 or so feet away."

STONEFAX drifted down the canal, as her officers tried to find a mud bank on which to run aground. Finally, as a tunnel self-unloader could not have watertight compartments in her hold, she filled and settled on the bottom about half-way between Port Robinson and Allanburg. She came to rest with her spar deck just submerged, and with a slight list to port.

The ship herself was relatively safe in this position, with her mooring cables securing her to the east bank of the canal so that she could not slip out further into the navigation channel and block vessel traffic. As it was, some 30 ships were held up for about ten hours, while the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority verified the stability of the wreck. The Authority then granted permission for traffic to pass with caution, and at reduced speed, on the west side of the wreck.

A totally different type of danger, however, resulted when STONEFAX's potash cargo began to dissolve in the waters of the canal. Those communities which normally drew even a part of their supply of fresh water from the canal or its tributaries had to make other arrangements until the wreck could be moved, in order to safeguard the health of their residents.

It should be noted that the ship which appeared to have caused the problem, ARTHUR STOVE, did not receive any severe damage in the collision, and she had been allowed to proceed on her way after the necessary inspection. In a subsequent Supreme Court decision, ARTHUR STOVE was held 80% responsible for the collision, while 20% liability was assessed against STONEFAX.

In due course of time, a contract for the raising of STONEFAX was awarded to Ship Repairs & Supplies Ltd., Toronto, and this firm subcontracted part of the salvage work to the Canadian Dredge and Dock Company Ltd., Toronto. The hatch area of the steamer's spar deck was cofferdammed, and on November 23, 1966, the pumping out of STONEFAX began. The ship was refloated on November 25th, although at one stage in the operation, STONEFAX took on a sudden 14° list to port (or outboard, toward the navigation channel), and ship traffic past the site was stopped until the situation could be rectified.

After the damage to STONEFAX was surveyed at Port Weller Dry Docks, and temporary repairs were made there, the underwriters sold STONEFAX to Ship Repairs & Supplies Ltd. The Canadian Dredge and Dock tugs TRAVELER and G. W. ROGERS then took STONEFAX in tow, and on November 28, 1966, she arrived at Toronto and was moored along the north wall of the Turning Basin. There, permanent repairs were made during the winter of 1966-1967. A great deal of general cleaning up had to be accomplished, for the steamer had a high scum line on her hull and through her cabins and engine room, etc., as a result of contamination with the muddy and potash-laden canal waters.