

a report from IMPERIAL CORNWALL, which was penned by John Skinner, watchman.

"On March 25, IMPERIAL CORNWALL literally broke the ice of the sailing season by being the first vessel to leave winter quarters and proceed downriver to the Imperial Oil upper dock and take on her first load. We warmed up our engines with trips to Polymer and Dow (plants at Sarnia) before starting out on a port-opening spree. After opening the ports of Sarnia, Windsor, Bay City, Owen Sound and Britt, we had been photographed and televised so much the actors' union was beginning to complain and seems as though some agent had billed us a half hour nightly show called 'Unsinkables', and nominated us for an Emmy.

"Now for a run-down on the cast (Oops! excuse me) crew. Captain William J. Thomas heads the list, coming on board after Captain (A. G.) Bert Knight switched to the SIMCOE..."

The same issue carried a picture of Capt. Knight aboard the CORNWALL, being presented with the silk topper by Gregory Hogan of the Sarnia Chamber of Commerce. It also carried a report from IMPERIAL SIMCOE, submitted by J. R. Sprung, who described himself as the "little feller" of the SIMCOE's steward department. It indicated that "IMPERIAL SIMCOE pulled out of winter quarters on April 11 to begin another year of hard labour for her crew..."

Just so that we do not ignore the third sistership, we should include the report from IMPERIAL WINDSOR, contributed by steward Pat McCrorey. It said in part: "After leaving drydock at Port Dalhousie, the WINDSOR arrived in Toronto to load its first cargo for Cobourg (six more trips were made there in quick succession). On arrival at Cobourg, Captain (James) Burns was greeted by members of the Peterborough press to welcome the first ship of the season.

"Repairs to the engine had to be made in Toronto and this gave us all of Easter Weekend docked at Commissioners Street. Needless to say, this was appreciated by the men aboard who make Hogtown their hometown..."

IMPERIAL WINDSOR apparently ran into some trouble (unspecified, but seemingly a grounding) later in the 1963 season, for a report in the Fall issue of "Fleet News" stated: "As you all know, we were in drydock at Port Dalhousie for ten days... After our misfortune, we went to Sarnia winter quarters to find out the extent of damage we had suffered. Watchman Martin Smid was asked to don his skin diving equipment and go down to give some estimate of the damages. Diver Dan was only too happy to oblige and he went merrily about preparing his equipment for the main event of the day, and so, with a large cheering section, he bravely dove into the chilly depths of the St. Clair River..."

This same 1963 season was a busy one for IMPERIAL SIMCOE, in that she strayed from her usual Montreal to Toronto and Sarnia service. In our earlier feature, we remarked that she had seen more salt-water service than her two sisters, and that this was the main reason for her earlier retirement from service. She made two trips to salt water in 1963. On the first, she loaded two tanks of Varsol (solvent) for Montreal, and the balance for Halifax, where she arrived on May 14. She was back at Sarnia by May 27th. On her second trip "down east", she cleared Sarnia on September 6, with two tanks of finished lube oil for Sept-Iles, while the balance of the cargo was Varsol for Halifax. She arrived at Halifax on the 15th, and after discharging the Varsol, she loaded furnace fuel for Saguenayville. She arrived there on the 21st, unloaded her cargo, and then sailed in ballast for Montreal. There, on September 23, the SIMCOE loaded lube distillate, and then she headed back into the lakes, with Sarnia as her destination.

If navigation had begun early in 1963 for IMPERIAL CORNWALL, it also was a long season. As usual, she spent most of her season on Lake Huron, where she had become known affectionately as the "Bay City Special". She frequently visited Britt, Parry Sound, Owen Sound, Windsor and Michipicoten with gasoline, and occasionally had a mixed load for Toronto, all interspersed with