shuttle loads between Imperial's own Sarnia plant and the Polymer and Dow Chemical facilities. But "every second load or so, we wash the old girl until she shines, and head for Bay City with benzene... The crew are just like natives in Bay City..."

IMPERIAL CORNWALL's late 1963 duties were the subject of a "Fleet News" lament: "It's almost Christmas Eve and the IMPERIAL CORNWALL is still 'hitting', carrying gas to Windsor and 'Bentz' (benzene) to Polymer and Dow. All the 'regular type ships' are long since tucked away for the Winter in dry dock or Winter Quarters, and their crews at home ashore. We think fondly of them as we continue to battle Lake St. Clair ice, zero temperatures and frozen 'Bentz', but I guess someone has to carry on..."

Her upcoming winter rest would be short, for IMPERIAL CORNWALL, along with IMPERIAL SIMCOE and IMPERIAL WINDSOR, fitted out very early in 1964, and the CORNWALL was running by March 11th. She officially opened Sarnia, Windsor, Owen Sound and Collingwood harbours, while the WINDSOR was first arrival of the year at Bay City. All three of the sisters got into ice problems in the St. Mary's River whilst bound for the Soo with furnace fuel, and IMPERIAL LONDON was in that ice battle as well. All of the ships required the assistance of various Canadian and U.S. icebreakers.

IMPERIAL SIMCOE did not make it as far as the Soo, as ship's correspondent to "Fleet News", wheelsman Robert Thorpe, noted. "Our first trip was scheduled for Sault Ste. Marie, but upon arriving at DeTour, we had to anchor and wait for IMPERIAL CORNWALL to clear the ice. After waiting a day, we finally got under way, but didn't make it too far till we were stuck fast in the ice. The U.S.C.G. NAUGATUCK could not assist us, so we waited another night.

"Next day, the (C.C.G.S.) ALEXANDER HENRY came to our assistance and got us moving again, but after damaging one of our propeller blades, we spent another night in the ice. At daybreak, the ALEXANDER HENRY got us turned around and (was) doing all she could to help us, but had to leave us to meet their schedule. We waited out the day until the cutter MACKINAW came to our rescue and cleared us to open water where we went to anchor and awaited further orders. The following day, we received orders to proceed to Owen Sound, where we discharged our cargo and had repairs made to the propeller."

1964 was the last year of operation for IMPERIAL SIMCOE and, as we noted previously, she was scrapped in 1965 in Spain, crossing the Atlantic in a tandem tow with the much older IMPERIAL WELLAND. The two steamers had spent the winter of 1964-1965 laid up side-by-side at Sarnia, and in the spring, they sailed down the lakes under their own power before commencing their transatlantic tow.

As might be imagined, "Imperial Oil Fleet News" carried a retrospect on the careers of these two ships at the time of their retirement, and it gave some interesting details concerning the SIMCOE. For instance, it noted that SIMCOLITE crossed the Atlantic on her delivery voyage in April of 1930, and arrived at Halifax late that month. There she was joined by her lake crew, with Capt. O. D. Williamson as master and John Bulmer as chief engineer. She then steamed up to Quebec, then to Montreal, and eventually on to Toronto.

The article noted: "Canalling these ships was an art in itself and developed a race of shiphandlers without equal anywhere in the world. The SIMCOE was an ideal canaller, as well as being an efficient ship on the Coast and the Upper Lakes. This type was probably the most efficient all 'round ship the company ever built, and our competitors used the same design for seven of their ships.

"The SIMCOE has been a remarkably trouble-free ship over the years... She was fitted at one time to carry casinghead, with sealed tanks and pressure gauges registering in the wheelhouse, and had the first closed vent system. However, it was never used to any great extent and was modified at a later date when the other ships of the fleet were fitted with vents and closed