

loading systems.

"Over the years, the SIMCOE has been the workhorse of the fleet. She spent most of her summers navigating the treacherous rivers and canals... then when a ship was required for the coast, summer or winter, it was the SIMCOE that was called. This rugged existence has taken its toll, and although she still sits proudly with her paintwork gleaming, she like the WELLAND, is destined for retirement..."

The writer, Capt F. C. Smith, Imperial port superintendent at Sarnia, then commented on some notes taken from the chief engineer's log abstract of the 1930 transatlantic delivery voyage: "... she sailed from South Shields at 15:30 April 16th, 1930, and arrived at Halifax 18:30 hours April 30th. Steaming time, 14 days, 5 hours and 48 minutes. You perfectionists will say that does not tally. However, there is a notation '1 hour and 12 minutes Sea and Ice Precaution'. Then there are 4 days in which she had 25 hours steaming time, which would be for time zone adjustments.

"She was out of drydock on April 15th, so they must have had a couple of busy days swinging compass, storing, etc., as she sailed two days later. Her draft leaving was 14'5½" for'd and 16'16½" aft, and 13'1" for'd and 15'3" aft arriving, which might be termed good fighting trim, which she no doubt needed crossing the Atlantic in early Spring. She used 1,236 barrels of fuel to make the voyage and arrived with 760 barrels, a good, safe margin. William Snelgar was chief engineer for the voyage across..."

We will not give all the details here, but Capt. Smith also noted extracts from the SIMCOE's log for a voyage which, from February 3rd to the 13th, 1958, took the steamer from Halifax to Sydney, Nova Scotia, to St. John's and Burin, Newfoundland, and then back to Halifax, certainly not an easy trade in the dead of winter.

The Summer, 1965, issue of "Fleet News" somewhat surprisingly carried a report from IMPERIAL SIMCOE - the last one that ever would appear there. It was an account written to cover only one trip, her final voyage from Sarnia down to Montreal, where she would be turned over to the scrappers. It was penned by Barry Leach, 3rd mate for the trip.

"After a fast fit-out (we wonder if it rivalled the four-hour [!] fit-out the SIMCOE received before her unexpectedly early activation in the spring of 1964 -Ed.), we departed from winter quarters to the lower (Sarnia) dock for a cargo of furnace fuel for Kingston. Once underway, the problems that arose were taken in stride and solved with no great difficulty. The engineers were quite jovial after working 12 or 16 hours a day to keep everything running smoothly. A bilge full of bunker seemed to keep them busy (! -Ed.) in between repairing pumps.

"The deck department didn't go unnoticed; after repeated attempts to put the Gyro (compass) back in action, we finally used the old standby, the magnetic compass. With the steering left in the steady hands of the wheelsman, we steamed straight and true for Port Colborne.

"On arriving, we were greeted by heavy snow, which started everyone complaining about the weather. (It was on Saturday, April 17, 1965, that the SIMCOE passed down the Welland Canal -Ed.) After stopping for a few minor repairs to the radio and after winch - another job which kept the engineers happy - we continued on our way, still by magnetic compass. Which goes to prove that you can still navigate without modern aids when necessary.

"We made Kingston on Easter Sunday, to be greeted by the sound of church bells. Discharged our cargo and prepared the old girl for her ultimate fate. On arrival at Montreal, we continued our preparation, including cleaning cofferdams of bunker which our engineers had removed from the bilge..."

With the SIMCOE gone from the fleet, the summer of 1965 proved interesting for IMPERIAL WINDSOR, for in late May she received orders to head out to the east coast. At Sarnia, she loaded for Montreal, Charlottetown and Halifax.