

KAMLOOPS - LOST AND FOUND

by Ronald F. Beaupre

With Additions by the Editor

Amongst the most handsome of the steel-hulled canallers built during the 1920s were the package freighters constructed for Canada Steamship Lines Ltd., of Montreal. Most of this large group of teak-pilothoused steamers were built at Canadian yards, but the first two of them came from a shipyard in the United Kingdom, and one of these, KAMLOOPS, was destined to last only a few years and to perish under tragic circumstances. It is as a consequence of having met two persons who lost close relatives in the disappearance of KAMLOOPS during the late autumn of 1927, and having been asked by one of them to provide details of the disaster, that the writer has been drawn to studying the mystery surrounding the loss of this ship.

During the third decade of the Twentieth Century, the package freight trade on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes was increasing in volume as the economy entered a period often called "The Roaring Twenties". In November of 1923, Canada Steamship Lines Ltd. formed a subsidiary company which was incorporated as Steamships Limited, of Montreal, and the new company had the same officers as did its parent. The manager of this new firm was Mr. H. Black, and the subsidiary's purpose was to own new vessels to be constructed for C.S.L.'s package freight business, as well as for other trades. In fact, Steamships Limited would own three steel-hulled canallers; two of them were package freighters, and the third was C.S.L.'s first self-unloader, the unique COLLIER NO. 1 (28), (b) COLLIER. All three were constructed overseas during 1924.

The two package freighters were ordered from the Furness Shipbuilding Company Ltd., of Haverton Hill-on-Tees, England. These were the shipyard's Hulls 68 and 69. It was reported that the first of the steamers was to be named WINNIPEG, but this name proved to be unavailable as it was already in use on another Canadian vessel. (The name WINNIPEG finally was used on another new C.S.L. canaller built in 1926.) Accordingly, as the first of the new package freighters was launched into the Tees on Tuesday, May 20, 1924, Agnes Black, daughter of the fleet's manager, christened the ship KAMLOOPS, in honour of a city located between the Coastal and Rocky Mountain Ranges in southern British Columbia. Her sistership, christened LETHBRIDGE, slid down the ways on Saturday, June 14th, 1924.

The following description is drawn from Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1925 - 1926 issue, and also from "Canadian Railway and Marine World" of July, 1924. The KAMLOOPS was 250.0 feet in length, 42.9 feet in the beam, and had a depth of 24.3 feet; her tonnage was 2402 Gross and 1748 Net. Her moulded depth was 26 feet, 6 inches, with 12 feet, 8 inches of freeboard amidships when loaded to a depth of 14 feet, 1.25 inches.

The steel-hulled sisterships had two decks with web frames, and hulls that were constructed with longitudinal framing. They were equipped with a cellular double bottom "all fore and aft", with the forepeak tank capable of carrying 112 tons of water ballast, and the after peak 12 tons. There were four watertight bulkheads.

Each ship was fitted with a triple expansion steam engine with cylinders of 18, 30 and 50 inches diameter and a stroke of 36 inches. Steam, at a working pressure of 185 p.s.i., was provided by two coal-fired, scotch boilers with six furnaces. The boilers were 13 feet, 3 inches in diameter by 10 feet, 10 inches in length. The engines and boilers were built by Richardsons, Westgarth and Company, of Hartlepool, England, and the machinery produced 185 indicated horsepower.

These two very handsome steamers had a full topgallant (raised) forecastle lit by several ports along each side. The forward section of the hull had so much sheer that the "straight stem actually was canted back even when the