

The Paterson fleet operated very successfully and, in August of 1926, another canaller, the FORDONIAN, was acquired. In October of 1926, Paterson went back to the Interlake Steamship Company and acquired four more upper lakers, all of which originally had served the Mitchell fleet. The company was to have 18 steel canallers built to its order before the close of the decade, and the first five of these were ordered during 1926.

Norman Paterson, who later was to be appointed to the Canadian Senate, developed in 1926 a very interesting method of naming his ships and, with only a handful of exceptions, it has continued in place with the fleet to this day. The first part of each ship's name was the name (or an abbreviation or contraction) of a town, city, province or territory of Canada, to which was added the suffix "doc", referring to the Dominion of Canada, as our country then was known. Accordingly, in 1926, SIRIUS was renamed (c) ONTADOC, in honour of the Province of Ontario, in which its Fort William office was located and in whose waters most of its shipping operations then were carried out.

ONTADOC was painted up in Paterson colours in 1926 and it undoubtedly is fair to say that she looked the very best of her whole career in this livery. She had a black hull with a white forecastle and white cabins, and her stack was black with a large, white letter 'P'. Her foremast was buff while the main was black, and near the top of her foremast was placed a large letter 'P' which was equipped with lightbulbs which lit up when the ship's whistle sounded.

One other bit of ornamentation was a diamond which was painted on the bows of the ship below the white letters of her name. ONTADOC showed this in our earliest Paterson photo of her, which was taken in 1927, and at that time it was a red diamond, with a smaller black diamond inside it, and a white letter 'P' in the centre. Around the red edge of the diamond appeared the legend 'Paterson Steamships Ltd., Fort William, Ont.' in very small white letters.

It is interesting to note the many different varieties of this diamond design that the various Paterson boats carried over the years. ONTADOC's diamond lost the lettering around its rim by the early 1950s, when the name of the company was changed to N. M. Paterson & Sons Limited, and then the centre of the diamond became white rather than black, and the letter 'P' became black. In time, a small white diamond outline was added around the red, and that was the way she carried it in her final days. Some other company ships had differences in the black and white combinations inside the red rim of the diamond, while some of them did show the new corporate name on the red. A number of the ships, mainly canallers, never carried the diamond insignia at all.

ONTADOC and her various ten former Gilchrist and Mitchell fleetmates served the Paterson fleet well, and for many years, they were the backbone of the company's operations. They ran grain downbound to Buffalo and Port Colborne, and after the new Welland Ship Canal opened in the 1930s, they also traded down into Lake Ontario, frequently running coal into Toronto and Hamilton. All but two were still running when the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959, after which they could take their grain right down to the river transshipment ports. They carried a great deal of grain and coal in their day, and quite a lot of pulpwood as well, but they did not frequently carry iron ore.

Only two of Paterson's old Gilchrist boats had short careers, and interestingly, they were the two sisters in Gilchrist's second new-built "class", the 356-foot ALTADOC (I), (a) LAKE SHORE (13), (b) INDUS (26), and PRINDOC (I), (a) GILCHRIST (13), (b) LUPUS (26). The ALTADOC was lost by stranding on the Keweenaw Peninsula of Lake Superior in December of 1927, while PRINDOC foundered near Passage Island, also in Lake Superior, after a fog-