

Despite the heavy competition, ROTHESAY CASTLE held her own in 1866, and she began the 1867 season (the year of Canadian Confederation) on the Toronto - Niagara route, but it became evident that there was insufficient business available to support both ROTHESAY CASTLE and CITY OF TORONTO. Accordingly, ROTHESAY CASTLE was withdrawn from the run and instead was placed on the route between Toronto and Hamilton, presumably with stops at way ports. On July 13, 1867, she took an excursion from Hamilton and Wellington Square (as Burlington then was known) to Oakville.

In 1868, ROTHESAY CASTLE's Toronto to Hamilton service, with a stop at Oakville going both ways, began on June 26th. She was off to an earlier start in the 1869 season, for she made her first trip that year on May 15th, leaving Hamilton's Victoria Wharf, near the Great Western Railroad station, bound for Toronto with the usual way stop at Oakville. Departing Hamilton at 7:30 a.m., she returned at 10:15 p.m., and the round-trip fare for this full day's excursion was only 75 cents!

However, ROTHESAY CASTLE was withdrawn from the Toronto - Hamilton route on July 14, 1869, and she was replaced on this service by the steamer ROCHES-TER. ROTHESAY CASTLE then returned to the east coast for service in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Northumberland Strait, her owner (presumably still Captain Leach), having received a subsidy from the Government of New Brunswick. She stayed on the coast for almost five years, but on February 10, 1874, whilst laid up for the winter at Point du Chene, near Shediac, New Brunswick, she suffered considerable damage from a fire on board.

The extensive repairs which the ship needed were completed under the direction of the vessel's insurers, and it seems entirely likely that it was at this time that ROTHESAY CASTLE received the configuration of passenger cabins for the full length of the main deck that can be seen in the two photographs on the accompanying photopage. It would appear that the usual facilities of a dining room, ladies' saloon, and other quarters were all located in this cabin, and on the upper deck there was nothing much but open observation space, a canvas awning providing shade on the after section of this deck. There also was a cabin for the master, but there was no pilot-house, only an open bridge located forward of the master's cabin. Lifeboats were carried on each side of the upper deck, both forward and aft of the paddleboxes. The steamer's tonnage became 427 Gross at this time.

After the repairs from the fire damage were completed, ROTHESAY CASTLE returned to Lake Ontario and, in June of 1874, she began regular service out of Toronto, most likely spending most of her time on the route to Hamilton, although she did make numerous excursions to Niagara, and it would seem that she was successful in her endeavours. Her second mast had been removed by this stage, and she had only the one tall, fidded mast placed forward of the navigation bridge.

Ill luck came her way on August 16, 1875, however, when she was entering Toronto Harbour via the Eastern Gap, with a party of 300 persons on board. As she negotiated the channel, she fouled the boiler of the wreck of the steamer MONARCH, which had run on the beach (of what later was to become Ward's Island) near Privat's Hotel back on November 27, 1856. ROTHESAY CASTLE, having holed her hull, quickly settled to the sandy bottom, but her deck was above water and all of her passengers were removed from the steamer safely.

ROTHESAY CASTLE soon was refloated and she was given a thorough overhaul and rebuild at Toronto during the winter of 1875-1876. The upperworks were renewed and sponsons were added. Her paddlewheels were raised 20 inches, and the engines were completely refurbished by William Hamilton & Son's St. Lawrence Foundry, which was located on Toronto's Front Street East, near Parliament Street. The engine work was supervised by the steamer's chief engineer, A. J. Cameron. The necessary hull work was carried out by Neil Currie & Company. It is our belief that it was at this time that a hexagonal, "birdcage" pilothouse, with high-domed roof and decorative finial, was constructed immediately forward of the master's cabin.