

Our Ship of the Month No. 220, which appeared in our issue of April, 1995, was the Paterson upper lake steamer ONTADOC (I), (a) R. L. IRELAND (13), (b) SIRIUS (26), and members have indicated that they enjoyed that feature. Always on the lookout for additional information concerning a ship featured in "Scanner", we found the following strange item in the May, 1930, issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World".

"An investigation of rather an unusual character has been concluded by the reading in open court at Ottawa, by Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, of the judgment upon charges made by R. Duguid, formerly an engineer on the Paterson Steamships Ltd. steamer ONTADOC, that the company's ships engaged in the upper lake trade had, since early in the summer of 1926, been using steam pressure on their boilers in excess of that allowed by their respective certificates and contrary to the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act, 1927, secs. 642 and 643. The Commission authorizing the holding of the investigation by Capt. Demers, with J. J. Conlin and James Boak as engineering assessors, was read at the opening session at Montreal, and R. Duguid, who was not represented by counsel, stated that he was perfectly satisfied with its constitution. Paterson Steamships Ltd. was represented by Errol M. McDougall, K.C., and A. Chase-Casgrain, K. C. Percy, F. Ryan, K.C., acting for R. H. Tanner, K.C., watched the case for the Marine Department.

"R. Duguid was the first witness examined. In the course of his evidence it was brought out that the boiler pressure of the ONTADOC, upon inspection in Canada in the spring of 1926 (when Paterson bought the ship from the Interlake Steamship Co. -Ed.), was reduced from 170 lbs. allowed by the United States inspection to 130 lbs. He received orders from time to time to 'give more steam' or 'open her up', and in order to do so he altered the safety valve without help or witnesses, to give a pressure of 160 lbs., reducing it again to 130 lbs. This was done on several occasions during the season of 1926; during 1927 and 1928, he altered the safety valve to 160 lbs. and kept it so throughout these seasons. Correspondence and telegrams passing between Duguid and the company were read and filed as exhibits, as also were the trip sheets of the ONTADOC for the years 1926, 1927, 1928 and 1929.

"The court's comment upon the correspondence and trip sheets is: 'Following a series of letters written to the General Manager, which were of a most abusive nature, the company resolved to dispense with Duguid's services. I am of the opinion that the company showed extreme leniency, and almost paternal affection, in retaining his services after receiving such insinuating letters, which are couched in similar verbiage as those received by the Department. It is apparent that the ill-founded denunciations were not made in the interests of the public with a view and intent to cause or suggest amendments to the present laws, but obviously for the purpose of venting imaginary grievances.'

"Evidence was also given by N. M. Paterson, President, and W. W. Hall, General Manager of the company, as well as by Capts. H. B. Hunt and R. J. Wilson, formerly of the ONTADOC, and engineer F. A. Collier. E. M. McDougall and P. F. Ryan, counsel, and R. Duguid having made their arguments, the court adjourned on March 3, and reassembled at Ottawa at the end of the month for judgment.

"The finding is as follows: 'The court having carefully reviewed and weighed the evidence adduced, finds that the charges, implications, accusations and inferences made against the President and General Manager of Paterson Steamships Ltd., have not been proved and are ill-founded, viz: - to have ordered directly or indirectly that masters and engineers of their various boats, 10 in number, especially the s.s. ONTADOC, which appear in the charges made by R. Duguid, formerly engineer of the ONTADOC, to increase the steam pressure beyond that allowed by the boiler inspectors.