

comments on the influence of the Forgets and others in making the R & O a success, and Mr. Gildersleeve, the company's general manager, "spoke of the improvement in the dividend-paying power of the company since the change in management some eight years ago..." (when the Forget syndicate gained control of the R&O -Ed.).

Mr. Bertram proposed the toast of "Our Defenders", referring to the work of Canadian forces in South Africa, to which Lieut. Col. Pellatt replied. The chairman proposed a toast of "Canada and the Empire", to which the reply was given by Mr. W. Maclean, M.P. The toast of "Transportation" was proposed by Mr. E. B. Osler, M.P., and the response was given by Messrs. Mann, Matthews and Cumberland.

Those present certainly seemed to get into the celebratory mood, for the "Globe" article reported that the toasts continued. A toast to "The Shipbuilding Industry in Canada" was proposed by Mr. Gildersleeve, and replies were forthcoming from Messrs. Angstrom, Melville Bertram and Long. A toast to "The Financial, Mercantile and Manufacturing Industries of the Country" was proposed by Mr. Leighton McCarthy, M.P., to which Mr. Ames replied. A toast of "The Cities of Montreal and Toronto" was eventually given, to which Toronto's Mayor Howland replied.

The one thing that the newspaper did not report was the location of this "toasty" banquet. We suppose that it was in one of the city's best hotels, and we suspect very likely at the Queen's Hotel on Front Street (on the site where the Royal York Hotel stands today). But to make the event more ship-like, one wall of the diningroom was decorated with "a model of Mr. Challoner's beautiful decorations for the ceiling of the rear cabin of the MONTREAL".

As our photopage will show, and as drawings accompanying the "Globe" report of the launch confirm, MONTREAL was completed only up to the level of the main deck, and the deck frames were laid out over the sponsons, but none of the superstructure was built at Toronto. Although the Bertram yard had been entrusted with the building of the upperworks of both TORONTO and KINGSTON, such was not possible with the MONTREAL, because she was far too long to pass down through the St. Lawrence canals, and it would be necessary for her to run the rapids downbound on her delivery trip. Such a trip would not be possible if the hull were weighed down by all of the superstructure on such a large ship, and so it was intended that the R & O would attend to the building of the cabins of MONTREAL at its own facilities located at Sorel, Quebec.

In fact, MONTREAL was the longest hull ever constructed at Toronto. As far as we know, she was the longest hull ever built anywhere on the level of Lake Ontario and removed from the lake in one piece during the era of the old canals. Late in May of 1902, MONTREAL set out for the St. Lawrence River in tow of two tugs whose identities were not reported. Drawing 7 feet, 7 inches of water even without her cabins, MONTREAL passed safely down through the rapids at a time of high water, and she made the passage with only one touch of the bottom, that occurring in the Lachine Rapids but without any damage to the ship. She arrived at Montreal on May 30th, 1902, and later was towed down to Sorel, where her upperworks were constructed at the Richelieu & Ontario's own shipyard under the direction of Capt. Gilbert Johnston, the company's mechanical superintendent.

Unfortunately, however, MONTREAL fell victim to the scourge of fire, for first of two times in her short life, before she even had a chance to enter service. She was still undergoing completion at Sorel when, over the night of Saturday - Sunday, March 7 - 8, 1903, the steamer was completely gutted by fire, and all of Mr. Challoner's beautiful decorations were destroyed. The devastation was so complete that the R & O abandoned MONTREAL to the underwriters. The burned-out hull was towed to Levis, Quebec, where it was placed on the Davie drydock for inspection.