

service until the new vessels came out in 1908, at which time his place was taken in MANITOBA by Capt. John McIntyre.

The C.P.R. had maintained Owen Sound as the eastern terminus for the lake steamships despite a history of rather stormy relations between the railway and the city. However, the C.P.R. was losing out to the competition for the all-important eastbound freight, being mostly grain and flour. Keith Fleming, in his article "Owen Sound and the C.P.R. Great Lakes Fleet", which appeared in "Ontario History", vol. LXXVI, March 1984, noted: "Owen Sound's advantages as a harbour were indisputable, but its efficiency as a trans-shipment point was seriously impeded by the railway grades of its Toronto connection and its long and indirect link with the seaboard. Although the C.P.R. had reduced many of the grades and curves of the old TG&B (Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railroad), the road's ability to handle heavy traffic volumes on a competitive basis declined yearly.

"The C.P.R.'s announcement of 19 May, 1905, ended all speculation over the eastern connection; Victoria Harbour, seven miles east of Midland, had been selected as the company's second (and new) Georgian Bay terminus.

"Ninety one miles shorter than the Owen Sound to Montreal connection, the new line would provide the C.P.R. with a grain route to the seaboard as short as the G.T.R.'s Canada Atlantic. More importantly (although requiring the construction of the lengthy wooden Hog Bay trestle -Ed.), the railway grades out of Victoria Harbour were much lighter, enabling locomotives to pull more than twice the weight that was possible out of Owen Sound.

"The fate of (Owen Sound's) C.P.R. marine service was sealed by the events of (Monday) 11 December, 1911. That evening, fire completely destroyed both (of the C.P.R.'s Owen Sound grain) elevators. In the days following the inferno, the port's atmosphere was soured by more than the sickening odour of 887,000 bushels of smoldering grain; now came the disturbing realization that there was little hope of averting the fleet's removal to its new home, since renamed Port McNicoll (in honour of C.P.R. vice-president David McNicoll -Ed.)."

Eventually the fateful day came. We quote again from Mr. Fleming's essay: "A sober faced crowd watched on (Wednesday) 1 May, 1912, as the five ships of the fleet, bearing over one hundred of the local employees, filed out of the harbour en route to their new base at Port McNicoll. Henceforth, only the MANITOBA was scheduled to call at Owen Sound on its weekly trip to Fort William." For the remaining 38 years of her active life, MANITOBA would be based at Port McNicoll, like the rest of the C.P.R. steamers, but she would call at Owen Sound on both upbound and downbound trips, and would be met by a separate boat train to and from Toronto.

In 1913, the boilers of both ALBERTA and ATHABASCA were replaced at the Port Arthur shipyard. The higher pressure provided by these new boilers would have been too much for the old engines, and so they were rebuilt with smaller diameter cylinder bores. In 1914, MANITOBA received similar treatment, but at the Collingwood shipyard. Her two new Scotch boilers, built new for her by the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company Ltd., were 14 feet long and 11 feet in diameter. With three furnaces each, they generated a working steam pressure of 150 p.s.i.

MANITOBA's engines were rebuilt to accommodate the higher pressure, and in a 1987 letter from the late T.M.H.S. member Donald Page, we have a description of the modifications that took place (and which gives the lie to oft-quoted reports that MANITOBA, along with the smaller sisters, was re-engined). "In order for the engines not to be overloaded by this higher pressure, it was deemed necessary to fit bushes (very thick liners) in both the high and low pressure cylinders to decrease their diameter and, therefore, the piston areas on which the higher steam pressures would work. As well, these bushes tended to reinforce the cylinder wall against the higher pressures exerted.