

white band and a broad black smoke band at the top.

Having placed itself in such an enviable position, with connections for the Grand Trunk Railway, and with the Canadian Pacific Railway steamers as its only major opposition in the Canadian upper lake passenger and freight service, Northern Navigation set about having built for it a large, new steel-hulled vessel. This was a major development as not only were the other Northern Navigation passenger ships all built of wood (except for the iron-hulled BRITANNIC), but so had been all of the other vessels ever operated by its three predecessors. The new steamer was ordered (actually by the Northwest Transportation Company Limited) in 1901 from the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company Limited, and she was the first steel ship ever built at Collingwood. Given the yard's Hull Number 1, she was launched on September 12, 1901, and commissioned in the spring of 1902. Christened HURONIC, she proved to be a very popular and successful vessel.

Also during 1902, John J. Long, formerly vice-president of Northern Navigation, became president of the company, succeeding the late James Scott. Long also was president of Northwest Transportation, and in 1902 he acted as general manager of both firms. W. D. Matthews succeeded Scott as a director. A. B. Pratt was assistant manager of the N.N.Co. at Collingwood, while William Askin, long an agent for the N.W.T.Co., was assistant manager of that company at Sarnia. But by 1904, John J. Long had become embroiled in major difficulties over certain of his stockholdings, and H. C. Hammond, of Toronto, had acquired control of the Northern Navigation Company of Ontario Limited, and thus also of the Northwest Transportation Company Limited. Hammond became president and, in February of 1904, Henry Herchmer Gildersleeve (of Lake Ontario steamboat fame) became the general manager. It probably was around this time that the Northwest Transportation name was dropped.

Things were going well for Northern Navigation, but the years of wooden-hulled vessels in the fleet were drawing to a close. CITY OF PARRY SOUND had burned in 1900, ATLANTIC in 1903, and CITY OF COLLINGWOOD in 1905, while MONARCH was lost by stranding on Isle Royale on December 7th, 1906. CITY OF TORONTO and the iron BRITANNIC were sold during the autumn of 1908. The time was ripe to add another modern, steel-hulled, passenger and freight carrier to the through service out of Sarnia, and the company announced early in 1908 (actually in its annual report for the 1907 season) that such a vessel would be built.

The timing of the announcement was very interesting. As previously mentioned Northern Navigation's only opposition in the Canadian upper lakes passenger and freight service was the C.P.R., which ran from Owen Sound to the Canadian Lakehead via Sault Ste. Marie. In 1907, the C.P.R. had two new ships, the KEEWATIN and ASSINIBOIA, built in Scotland for its route and, taken through the canals in sections, they would be commissioned in 1908. Not only did the Northern Navigation's announcement of a new ship follow closely on the building of the new C.P.R. boats, but the N.N.Co. steamer would turn out to be very close to a "hull sister" to KEEWATIN and ASSINIBOIA. She had the same general hull lines, and was only 13 feet longer and six feet wider than they were, while their depths were almost identical.

By March of 1908, the contract for the construction of the new ship had been let to the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company Limited, and the keel for the yard's Hull 22 was laid on May 26th, 1908. Various descriptions of the steamer were given in the press even before construction was begun, and it was evident that she was to be even more grand and beautiful than was the HURONIC. It is interesting to note that, at the time of the construction of the new ship, the famous builder of whalebacks, Alexander McDougall, was president of the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company, and Thomas Long was vice-president. The plans for the ship were prepared by H. Calderwood, of Toronto, who did much of Collingwood's design work, while the famous Frank E. Kirby, of Detroit, acted as consulting naval architect. It is little wonder that their product was so beautiful!