

ing barge RELIANCE was brought down from the Soo and offloaded part of CASCO's cargo, permitting her to be refloated. The cargo then was reloaded and CASCO was allowed by the authorities to proceed on her way. Replacement of eleven shell plates was done after the steamer arrived at Montreal. Captain Theobald Marchand had been CASCO's first lake master, but he did not retain command after the Pipe Island accident.

CASCO's next master was Capt. Edward Staley, but he did not have command for long. At about 7:15 a.m. on Sunday, September 4, 1927, CASCO ran out of the channel and grounded as she was leaving the cut leading to the elevator at Cardinal. The extent of damage was even greater than in the earlier accident and the insurers demanded that a more competent master be obtained for the ship or else they would not write the hull insurance on CASCO. Lakes and St. Lawrence Navigation complied, and Capt. Staley was sent packing.

In his place, Capt. W. J. Mills was appointed to the position of master of CASCO. An extremely capable master, he was to remain in command of CASCO for as long as Canada Starch operated the vessel, and he stayed in her even after she was sold, and for as long as the ship operated. S. E. Moore, the steamer's first chief engineer, also remained with CASCO for many years.

Over the years, the Canada Starch Company developed a close relationship with the Paterson fleet, and Paterson steamers carried many cargoes for the company, whose needs often exceeded the capacity of CASCO, but not to the point that it would have been to the starch miller's benefit to build and own a second canaller of its own. This relationship with N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited was to last for many years. CASCO remained with Canada Starch and the Lakes and St. Lawrence Navigation Company Limited until the mid-1950s, when the company made the decision to suspend its own marine operations, liquidate Lakes and St. Lawrence, and enter into a long-term contract to have ships of the Paterson fleet deliver the corn cargoes it required.

Accordingly, in February of 1955, CASCO was sold to N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited, Fort William, and she was re-registered at Fort William as (b) THORDOC (ii), her name honouring the town of Thorold, located on the Welland Canal. There was very little change made to the ship because, although Paterson needed additional tonnage, many of its canallers having been lost during World War Two, it was recognized that the new St. Lawrence Seaway would be opened in just a few years and canallers would be obsolete. Thus, no effort was made to remove the "step" in THORDOC's deck and increase her cargo capacity by raising the forward end of the ship, as had been done with a number of canallers in the years following the war. However, the steamer's heavy old spars were removed, and in their stead were stepped two very light and short pipe masts, the fore positioned just abaft the pilothouse and the main well abaft the smokestack.

THORDOC was painted up in the usual Paterson colours. Her hull remained black, while her cabins and forecastle and poop bulwarks were all white with black trim. The stack was black with the usual large, white letter 'P' on it. The foremast was buff, while the main was black. On the foremast was placed a big, white letter 'P' which was made of wood. That 'P' now hangs on a wall in your Editor's study and is looking down on us as this feature is being written.

At first, THORDOC carried these normal Paterson colours but, by 1959, she was sporting gray trim around the pilothouse windows as well as red, white and blue "wings" on her bows, with the letter 'P' in black on a white diamond right at the stem. Paterson fleet management did not appreciate these additions, however, and Capt. Mills, who was still master of the ship after more than thirty years, was obliged to remove the fancy touches. (After THORDOC was retired, Capt. Mills was appointed to the upper laker PORTADOC [iii], and again he annoyed Paterson management by painting a rather handsome grey stripe all the way along the sides of the steamer at the spar deck gunwale.)