

HERE COMES THE TROLLEY

- by Capt. Gerry Ouderkirk and The Editor -

One of the most well-known ships to transit the Welland Canal in the late 1970s and early 1980s was ROBERT KOCH. With a regular run between Clarkson, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York, the KOCH was in the canal so often (she could make a complete round trip every 2½ days) that Seaway workers seeing her coming would say "Here comes the trolley". Her loading port, Clarkson, was nicknamed "Koch Harbour" by her crew and even appeared frequently as such in the entries in her bridge log books.

In early June of 1977, this small cement-carrying motorship arrived on the Great Lakes from New Zealand. The ship then known as GUARDIAN CARRIER had been purchased earlier in the year by the St. Lawrence Cement Company Ltd., of Montreal, and after an extensive refit, the vessel was put into service under the new name, which was bestowed in honour of Swiss-born citizen, Robert Koch. He was on the Board of St. Lawrence Cement from March 16, 1951, to May 19, 1977. He acted as President and CEO of St. Lawrence Cement from 1953 to 1963, and he was Chairman of the Board from 1963 until his retirement in 1977. Mr. Koch retired in Switzerland and died there in 1997 or 1998, long after the vessel bearing his name had met its demise on Lake Ontario.

In May of 1957, the Grangemouth Dockyard Company Ltd. completed at its shipyard at Grangemouth, Scotland, on the River Forth, its Hull 512, a small coaster ordered by the venerable firm of F. T. Everard & Sons Ltd., of London, England. Over the many years of this company's existence, most of its vessels were given names ending with the suffix "ity", but a few of them were named for Everard family members. Hull 512 was given the name ALFRED EVERARD and she would serve the firm for many years.

Having completed ALFRED EVERARD, the Grangemouth yard started work on a sistership, Hull 513, which was completed in December of 1957. This vessel was christened ETHEL EVERARD, and she was one in a series of Everard vessels to carry that name. The previous holder of the name was a 1944-built steamer which previously had been (a) EMPIRE NEWFOUNDLAND (49) The new ETHEL EVERARD was given British registry (Br.187688) and was enrolled at London.

The ship's dimensions varied slightly depending upon which source was reporting them, but according to Lloyd's Register, she was 240.9 feet in overall length (225.0 between perpendiculars), 37.86 feet in the beam and 16.01 feet in moulded depth. Her tonnage was 1542 Gross and 674 Net. Her forecastle was 20.99 feet in length, while her poop was 58.07 feet long. Her hull had five bulkheads and there were two cargo holds. Interestingly, the hull was partially rivetted and partially welded. Power was supplied by two 6-cylinder diesel engines, 340 mm. x 570 mm., which provided 1,235 braking horsepower. The engines were built for the ship in 1957 by Nydqvist & Holm A/B, Sweden. The ship was fitted with three electric generators, two of 50 kW D.C. and one of 25 kW D.C.

ETHEL EVERARD was a ship which we can only describe as "cute"! She had a raked bow with considerable flare, a pretty sheer to her decks, and a cruiser stern. Aft the fully-topgallant forecastle was a well deck which ended just at the forward end of the bridge structure set on the spar deck. Aft, there was a raised poop on which the after cabins were placed. There were closed steel bulwarks along all decks except for the forecastle head, which had an open pipe rail except right at the stem.

The bridge structure was three decks high. The lowest level had open passageways down either side on the spar deck, while the second level was built out almost to the sides of the ship, with a little tumblehome on the sides and no open walkways on the sides or the front. On the bridge deck was placed the pilothouse which had five large windows in its face and, latter-