

YUKONDOC

Every once in a while, when casting about for a ship of the past to feature in these pages, we look through some of the features we did in the early years of "Scanner" to see if there are any that we can do better that we did back then. We have accumulated much more detailed information as the years have passed and already we have been able to redo some of those early efforts to produce a much more satisfactory result.

In Volume IV, Number 6, the issue of March 1972, we featured the canal-sized motorvessel YUKONDOC which served the Paterson fleet for a fairly brief time in the late 1920s, but which also ran for other operators. Our original feature almost makes us cringe when we look at it now, because it was so brief and so lacking in detail that we now have available to us. So what better can we do than to rewrite the history of this interesting ship for the enjoyment of all of our readers, and to set the record to rights?

We begin by looking at the May 1912 issue of "The Railway and Marine World" which noted the incorporation of Canadian Interlake Line Limited, Toronto, the new company being a consolidation of the various interests associated with the Merchants Mutual Line, Toronto. The directors of the new firm were rather well known shipping people, namely J. W. Norcross, M.J. Haney, T. Bradshaw and J.F.M. Stewart, all then of Toronto; Roy M. Wolvin, of Winnipeg; H. Munderloh, of Montreal, and E. H. Ambrose, of Hamilton. The article noted all of the ships which the new company proposed to operate, and noted that three new vessels had been ordered; the first two, to be named CALGARIAN (i) and HAMILTONIAN (i), were being built by the Western Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company at Port Arthur, Ontario. The third, "probably" to be named INDIAN, would come from Port Glasgow, Scotland, and would be equipped with Diesel oil combustion engines. It was hoped that all three would be delivered by about June 1st.

The same publication's July 1912 issue indicated that INDIAN had been expected to arrive on the lakes by the end of June. That would prove a rather empty hope, for it would be more than a year later that the vessel actually appeared on the lakes.

In its August 1912 issue, the first to be published under the name "Canadian Railway and Marine World", the magazine first mentioned the correct name of the Scottish-built canaller FORDONIAN, and stated that she was expected to be in service on the lakes shortly. It gave some details of the ship and noted that the builders had guaranteed her for six months of regular service, no doubt to allay fears about her rather revolutionary power plant.

The issue of November 1912 noted that she had "been fitted with oil motors of the Carels-Diesel type. The engines are of the two cycle type, and have a brake horsepower of 750, which is equal to an indicated horsepower in a steam engine of 875.

"The trial trip took place Sep. 21. We are advised that from the time of starting off the engines at 8 a.m., they were never stopped, excepting by the orders from the pilot on the bridge, until 9 p.m. Several runs on the Firth (of Clyde) show the vessel to have a speed of 10 knots, although only developing considerably under the maximum power. During the whole of the trials, the engines worked very satisfactorily and very smoothly. Vibration in the ship was practically nonexistent.

"Representatives from the British Admiralty, Imperial Japanese Navy, Australian and Canadian steamship owners, and very many of the principal shipping companies in Great Britain and Ireland were present, and to the majority of them the smooth and satisfactory working of the machinery was a revelation. During the course of the trials, the engines were tested for manoeuvring purposes, and were put through a very severe test. During 40 minutes, 61 manoeuvres were executed, this being a much more severe test than a steam engine is usually subjected to, but the whole performance was carried out with very commendable dispatch, and with great satisfaction. The time occupied in going from full speed ahead to full speed astern was eight seconds.

"After the trial trip, the vessel returned to Glasgow to load, and after further runs on the measured mile, which were satisfactory in every way, sailed Sep. 28 for Canada. On Oct. 21 it was reported that the vessel had met with an accident in the Irish Channel and had put back for Glasgow."

The October 24, 1912, issue of "The Motor Ship and Motor Boat" noted: "There have recently been reports concerning the working of the engine of the FORDONIAN, which have created an impression that should be removed, and the following facts will no doubt explain how the various rumours got abroad. It will be remembered that the FORDONIAN is equipped with a 750