

ROYALTON

Over the years, we frequently have mentioned the fleet of the Mathews Steamship Company of Toronto. One of the major fleets on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes for many years, this fleet traced its roots back to 1856, when a shipping business was started by James Mathews, of Toronto. The business later became a partnership known as J. and J. T. Mathews and it continued to operate vessels into the following century. The fleet's patriarch, James Mathews, retired from the business in 1902, and he died in 1912.

J. T. Mathews (elder son of James Mathews) continued his interest in lake shipping and, on October 15, 1905, the Mathews Steamship Company Limited, Toronto, was incorporated with \$250,000 capital. The principal founders of the firm were J. T. Mathews, Alfred Ernest Mathews, George H. Gooderham (of the distilling family) and R. L. Dennison-Taylor. But J. T. Mathews did not long remain in command of the company. He retired from the firm and eventually passed away on May 21, 1919. Long before this, his younger brother, A. E. Mathews, had become the driving force behind the company operations.

The Mathews fleet took over the management of the steel-hulled canaller HADDINGTON (built on speculation in 1904 by the Bertram shipyard at Toronto) but the first ship specifically built for the Mathews Steamship Company was the steel canaller EDMONTON of 1906. In 1907, the Mathews interests formed a subsidiary company known as the Merchants Steamship Company Limited, Toronto, and in 1910 this firm was merged into the Merchants Mutual Steamship Company Limited.

In the years following World War One, the Mathews Steamship Company greatly expanded its operations with the acquisition or construction of many new canallers. In certain of these ventures in the early 1920s and up until 1925, A. E. Mathews worked in close collaboration with the famous Midland shipping entrepreneur James Playfair. In 1922, Mathews ventured into the upper lakes bulk cargo trades with the construction of the 530-foot steamer MATHEWSTON as Hull 47 of the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Company Limited. This handsome and thoroughly modern upper laker proved to be a great success and it was not surprising that a short time later, Mathews ordered another upper laker of very similar size and design.

The new steamer was ordered late in 1923 from the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company Limited, which built her as its Hull 73. Her keel was laid on January 2, 1924, and construction proceeded quickly. The vessel was launched on Saturday, August 9, 1924, and her sponsor, Mrs. A. E. Mathews, christened her ROYALTON. There has been much speculation, but no definite confirmation, as to why this name was chosen for the ship, but her name did include the "ton" suffix which, by this time, had become usual for Mathews ships. Perhaps the name was intended to honour Toronto, Canada's "Queen City". In any event, after the launch of ROYALTON, a celebratory luncheon was held, at which much high-blown speechification took place. For the details of the ship as built, we can do no better than to quote from the August 1924 issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World".

"The principal dimensions are, length over all 550 ft., length between perpendiculars 536½ ft., breadth moulded 58 ft., depth moulded 31 ft. She will be of the usual single deck type in accordance with usual lake practice, and is being built under the British Corporation Classification Society's special survey, and to its highest class for Great Lakes service.

"The deck and double bottom will have longitudinal framing, the sides being framed transversely. There will be 6 cargo holds served by 31 hatches (spaced on 12-foot centres) with telescopic steel covers. A double bottom, 5 ft. deep, for water ballast, is fitted throughout. The ballast tanks will be extended up the sides to main deck stringer in way of cargo holds, and will be divided at the centre line by a watertight girder. For the rapid discharge of water ballast, two centrifugal pumps with 14 in. suction and 14 in. discharge will be fitted, and in addition, two horizontal duplex pumps 8 x 12 x 14 in. Separate suction pipes 8 in. diameter will be fitted to each double bottom compartment.

"The accommodation for officers and crew will be of a very high class, and is designed to give maximum of comfort and convenience. The officers' and private dining rooms will be paneled in quarter cut oak. The owner's quarters forward, consisting of two staterooms, observation room and hallway, will be paneled in mahogany. A telephone system will be fitted throughout.

"The ship's equipment will include a complete wireless set, Sperry gyro compass, electric telegraphs, electric and hydraulic whistle controls, two 15 k.w. electric generators and a 1-ton refrigerating machine. A large cold chamber will be provided for the carriage of pro-