

Outbound from Fort William, with a cargo of 215,000 bushels of wheat and bound for Goderich, was the 1901-built, 356-foot Paterson Steamships Ltd. bulk carrier PRINDOC (i), (a) GILCHRIST (13), (b) LUPUS (26) (C.116578).

The two steamers met southeast of Passage Island, and the impact shook those members of BATTLEFORD's crew who were in their bunks, some of them sustaining minor injuries. But the bow of BATTLEFORD had cut deeply into the starboard side of PRINDOC just aft of amidships, and half an hour later PRINDOC went to the bottom of the lake. Fortunately, there was time for Capt. Albert Simpell, of Midland, and all of his crew of 21 to get away from PRINDOC in the boats, uninjured but without any of their personal belongings, and they soon were taken aboard BATTLEFORD. The latter proceeded carefully to Port Arthur, her bow stove in some ten feet and protected by collision matting.

After being unloaded, a process slowed by the dockside freight handlers refusing to work at night in a dispute over wage rates for work after 7:00 p.m., BATTLEFORD went to the shipyard at Port Arthur for the necessary repairs, and she soon was back in service. Not so for PRINDOC, whose remains lie to this day on the bottom of the lake. Interestingly, Lake Superior has been the graveyard of three Paterson upper lake steamers. PRINDOC's near sistership ALTADOC (i) stranded to a total loss on Keweenaw Point in a storm late in 1927, and ten years to the month following PRINDOC's loss, SCOTIADOC was rammed and sunk on Thunder Bay by C.S.L.'s steamer BURLINGTON.

BATTLEFORD stayed out of trouble for the next few years but made the news on June 7, 1946, when striking C.S.U. members, picketing ships in the Welland Canal, halted BATTLEFORD, which was under the command of Capt. A. J. Galloway, at Thorold. The pickets managed to convince BATTLEFORD's crew to leave the ship. This labour unrest, which affected a number of Canadian vessels, most particularly C.S.L. ships, eventually was resolved, but police had to escort a number of ships through the canal.

Another clipping from the Ivan Brookes scrapbooks was dated December 19, 1946, and reported that the Welland Canal had been closed for the season with the downbound passage of BATTLEFORD four hours behind her fleetmate WINNIPEG, both of which had been delayed by bad weather. BATTLEFORD was bound for Kingston with a storage cargo of grain. On April 1, 1947, the Pyke tug SALVAGE PRINCE took BATTLEFORD from her winter berth to the Kingston drydock for some work. BATTLEFORD wintered at Kingston on a number of occasions, and over the weekend of December 9-10, 1950, BATTLEFORD and CANADIAN arrived at Kingston for winter lay-up.

On August 23, 1956, "The Kingston Whig Standard" reported that the C.S.L. express package freighter CITY OF HAMILTON, aground in Lake St. Louis, had been pulled free by the tugs MATHILDA and YVON DUPRE JR. and part of her cargo had been transferred to BATTLEFORD. However, BATTLEFORD herself got into trouble on the St. Lawrence two years later when, in July 1958, she grounded off Ogden Island, near Waddington, New York. (She was the last ship grounded in the old waterway before it was flooded for the new Seaway.) The ship's hull was holed and as she was carrying 1,500 tons of soap flakes and detergent, suds on the river proved to be a problem before BATTLEFORD could be released. The Kingston paper on June 19, 1959, reported that BATTLEFORD was then on the drydock having 30 steel plates replaced as a result of the Ogden Island grounding. C.S.L. may well have delayed having the repairs done to see whether there would be any need for BATTLEFORD after the opening of the Seaway. A number of the company's canallers never operated again after 1958.

BATTLEFORD survived, however, and operated for a few more years while one by one the other C.S.L. canal-sized package freighters were retired, most of them going to the breakers, because the fleet's upper lake package freighters now were able to get all the way down to Montreal. In 1962, BATTLEFORD was chartered to Newfoundland Forwarders Ltd. for service between Montreal and Newfoundland, and she inaugurated this service on April 7, 1962. For the charter, the C.S.L. white "billboards" were painted out, although her hull remained red, and her smokestack was painted all black. As far as we can determine, the charter lasted for the 1962 season (although the ship did make some trips into the lakes that year) and BATTLEFORD returned full-time to her owner's lake service in 1963. Her stack then was given back its full C.S.L. colours, but the billboards never were returned to her sides.

The 1963 navigation season was the last during which any of the package-freight canallers purpose-built for C.S.L. was operated. The last of these was the 1926-built WINNIPEG, which was scrapped in 1964. But BATTLEFORD shouldered on - a small ship compared with the existing upper lake package freighters and the new ones being built for the fleet. BATTLEFORD