

of four steamers, namely CHARLES DICK, MEAFORD, HASTINGS and NORTHTON, all suitably "dressed" for the occasion. And, on April 25, 1931, BARRIE made a record canal transit, going from Port Weller to Port Colborne in 5 hours, 19 minutes, beating the previous record by about 40 minutes. No doubt the reduction in the number of ships using the canal during those bad years enabled the ship to make such a speedy passage without having to wait for lockages.

However, the 1931 season also brought an accident for BARRIE, as reported in the October issue of CR&MW. "Investigation held at Montreal, Aug. 25, by the Dominion Wreck Commissioner, Capt. L. A. Demers, assisted by Captains Charles Lapierre and Joseph Lefebvre, as nautical assessors, into the stranding of Canada Steamship Lines s.s. BARRIE, 953 net tons, near Les Ecureuils shoal in the St. Lawrence River, July 27, while bound for Quebec. Judgment was given at Ottawa, Sept. 1. The court exonerated the master, Capt. J. B. Gamache, who had gone to his cabin before the stranding, and the first officer, Ovila Pregent, who was the officer on watch, from any blame for the stranding, but found the pilot, Damien Paquet, in default for having been momentarily asleep while on duty and for having submitted a misleading report of the casualty to the Marine Department.

"His license was suspended for three months from the date of the investigation, viz., from Aug. 25 to Nov. 24. The court, in commenting on the case, said the pilot's acknowledgement of his momentary drowsiness would have been considered with a degree of lenience had he but made the statement in his report to the Department, that the ship 'took a sheer' during his drowsiness. The Wreck Commissioner in referring to the report said: 'It is an all important document which cannot be written haphazardly and submitted with a view or intention of misguidance. I consider any attempt at evasion should be dealt with with the severity it deserves, in order to deter any repetition.'"

To show how bad things were at the height of the Great Depression, during the 1932 season BARRIE made only three transits of the Welland Canal. Cargoes were taken on whenever and wherever they could be obtained, and that sometimes took the ships to strange ports. MEAFORD spent the winter of 1934-1935 at Muskegon, Michigan, after unloading a cargo of pulpwood there.

Things returned to relative normalcy for C.S.L. as the effects of the Depression wore off in the second half of the 1930s, although a number of ships that no longer were considered viable were sold off (most for scrapping) in 1937. By the end of the decade, things were looking much better but then, on September 10, 1939, exactly one week after Great Britain declared war on Germany, Canada did likewise and thus entered World War Two. A large number of the C.S.L. canallers were taken into coastal service or the South American bauxite trade, or were sent across the Atlantic for operation overseas. The company sustained heavy losses during the war, as five of its canallers were lost to enemy hostilities, while ten others never returned to company service. Fortunately, BARRIE, MEAFORD and PENETANG, being amongst the best of the bulk canallers, were not sent deep-sea and remained out of harm's way. Thus they survived to be a major part of the C.S.L. canal bulk fleet in the busy post-war years.

In 1944, BARRIE had a rather strange cargo to haul; she carried imported Swedish iron ore on a trip from Montreal to Buffalo for Bethlehem Steel. And on May 11, 1948, BARRIE lightered ore from the saltwater ship HANTS COUNTY which had gone aground in the St. Lawrence River below Montreal.

During the 1950s, the canallers of the various Canadian fleets were running full-tilt, with cargo demands continually increasing. The need for bottoms was so great that several fleets, among them being Hall, Paterson and Q&O, built new diesel-powered canallers even though they knew that such vessels would become obsolete (at least in their original form) in just a very few years, as soon as the new Seaway, then under construction, was completed. Canada Steamship Lines also had two new bulk canal motorships built, these being IROQUOIS and METIS, the former constructed at Collingwood and the latter at Lauzon.

During this period, canallers including our three sisterships brought a lot of Labrador and Quebec iron ore from the lower St. Lawrence River up into the lakes, this being a new and developing trade which would expand considerably once the new canals were open to permit larger ships to participate in the upbound ore movement. In fact, the very first such upbound ore cargo, consisting of 2,324 tons and bound for Huron, Ohio, was brought through the old canals by MEAFORD on October 11, 1956.