THE BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

JANUARY, 1948

The
BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Published by the Archives of British Columbia
in cooperation with the
British Columbia Historical Association.

Editorial communications should be addressed to the Editor.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Provincial Archives, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. Price, 50c. the copy, or $2 the year. Members of the British Columbia Historical Association in good standing receive the *Quarterly* without further charge.

Neither the Provincial Archives nor the British Columbia Historical Association assumes any responsibility for statements made by contributors to the magazine.

The *Quarterly* is indexed in Faxon's *Annual Magazine Subject-Index* and the *Canadian Index.*

The
BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

"Any country worthy of a future should be interested in its past."

VOL. XII VICTORIA, B.C., JANUARY, 1948. No. 1

CONTENTS.

Courtesy Associated Screen News.

The *Empress of Asia* approaching the Outer Docks at Victoria, B.C.

EMPRESS ODYSSEY: A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC SERVICE TO THE ORIENT, 1913–45.[1]

1.

The harbours of Vancouver and Victoria are once again filled with steamers in their peace-time colours, but for the ship-lover something is still lacking from the scene. No white-clad *Empress* liners yet glide into port, or lie resplendent, tied up in their accustomed berth. World War II has broken the rhythm of the famous service to the Orient that had been conducted without interruption, except for a few months in 1914–15, for a full half-century. The initial sailing of the line was made by the old *Empress of India* in April, 1891, and the *Empress of Asia* completed the last regularly scheduled voyage in January, 1941. A few months later the new *Empress of Japan* paid a secret war-time visit to Vancouver; but more than six years have passed since an *Empress* stood into Royal Roads or passed under the Lions Gate Bridge. In the interval three of the four *Empresses* that the water-front knew so well in 1939 have been destroyed. Only the *Empress of Japan,* renamed *Empress of Scotland,* now survives.

Clearly, the end of an epoch has been reached in the history of the *Empress* service, and let us hope that the line will emerge from its present difficulties as happily as it did from an earlier crisis of a very different kind that developed a few years before the First Great War. The three original *Empresses* were then still on the run, and the Canadian Pacific's troubles arose from its tardiness in recognizing the fact that its wonderful old ships could not carry on indefinitely. Small as they were (their gross tonnage was only 5,940), they had nevertheless been the largest and fastest steamers on the Pacific when they were completed in

(1) For an account of the original *Empress* liners and a history of the trans-Pacific service generally to 1913 *see* W. Kaye Lamb, "Empress to the Orient," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly,* IV (1940), pp. 29–50, 79–110.

1891. Few ships have become so well known so quickly, but when twenty years had passed without any new *Empresses* being added to the fleet, the prestige of the service began at last to decline. Thanks to their reputation, their reliability, and the shorter northern route upon which they operated, the old liners still managed to hold their own as mail and silk carriers, but as passenger-ships they had been definitely outclassed. Competition had been severe ever since the turn of the century, when the Pacific Mail Company acquired four new liners, all of them twice as big as the *Empresses*, for the run from San Francisco to the Orient. It had been still more severe since 1908, when the Pacific Mail's Japanese rival, the Toyo Kisen Kaisha, placed in service the *Chiyo Maru* and the *Tenyo Maru*. These turbine-driven sister ships were the fastest and best-equipped liners yet built for the Pacific. Their length over all was 575 feet, and their gross tonnage 13,450. On trial they attained a speed of 20.6 knots, and on one of her first voyages the *Tenyo Maru* averaged 18.25 knots from Honolulu to San Francisco.[2] This was far beyond the capabilities of the old *Empresses* in their palmy days, let alone their old age. True, it soon became apparent that the Japanese did not intend to operate their new ships at more than about 15 knots, but they could always change their minds.

When the Canadian Pacific decided at last to take the measure of these rivals, its first plans were conceived on a grand scale. About the beginning of 1910 the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company of Govan, on the Clyde, was asked to prepare preliminary designs for ships no less than 700 feet in length. An air of mystery surrounded the inquiry, for only a few high officials knew that it came from the Canadian Pacific. Within the yard it was referred to merely by the curious code word "UBAB." The proposed ships were much larger than any that the Fairfield Company had yet built, and the draughting-rooms buzzed with excitement. Unfortunately disappointment soon followed, for it became apparent that 700-foot vessels would cost much more than the Canadian Pacific cared to spend. In the course of a twelvemonth the design was completely revamped

(2) *See* S. Terano and C. Shiba, "Remarks on the design and service performance of the Transpacific liners *Tenyo Maru* and *Chiyo Maru*," in *Transactions*, Institution of Naval Architects, LIII (1911), part 2, pp. 185, 192.

twice—once for a proposed length of 650 feet, and then for the over-all length of about 600 feet that was finally accepted. This brought the hull dimensions down to figures that the yard had exceeded in some respects in the Cunarders *Campania* and *Lucania* as long before as 1892, but in gross tonnage the final design still established a record for Fairfield.[3]

The contract for the new liners was finally signed in the early summer of 1911, and the news was announced in Vancouver by W. T. Payne, then Oriental manager of the *Empress* service, as he was about to sail in the *Empress of China* for his headquarters in Yokohama.[4] It was assumed that the two new ships and two of the old *Empresses* would between them maintain fortnightly sailings across the Pacific. This gave rise to some local speculation as to what would become of the third old *Empress*, and as if to settle the matter, the *Empress of China*, with Mr. Payne on board, piled up on a reef outside Yokohama on July 27 and damaged herself so severely that she was never reconditioned. In September the press reported that one of the new steamers would be named *Empress Van Horne*,[5] and if this quaint suggestion had been adopted one can only assume that the sister ship would have been called the *Empress Mount Stephen*. Fortunately the idea, if it was ever seriously entertained, was quickly abandoned, and early in October it was stated officially that the vessels would be named *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*.[6]

No one was surprised that the order went to the Fairfield Company, for the Canadian Pacific was already an old customer of the yard. The *Assiniboia* and *Keewatin* for the Great Lakes, the *Princess Charlotte* and *Princess Adelaide* for the British Columbia coast fleet, and the *Empress of Britain* and *Empress of Ireland* for the trans-Atlantic service had all come from Fairfield since 1906. The surprise lay in the characteristics of the new ships themselves. One might have expected them to bear at least a family resemblance to the Atlantic *Empresses*, but in fact it was quite otherwise. The *Empress of Britain* and her sister were orthodox in the extreme. They had old-style elliptical sterns, reciprocating engines, and lounges and cabins that recalled

(3) Details given to the writer by Mr. W. D. McLaren, Vancouver.
(4) Victoria *Colonist*, July 16, 1911.
(5) Vancouver *World*, September 12, 1911.
(6) *Ibid.*, October 4, 1911.

late-Victorian interior decoration at its plush- and drapery-clad worst. The *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*, on the other hand, incorporated many new ideas and anticipated the general trend of passenger-ship design for many years to come. For this three men were largely responsible: Dr. Percy Hillhouse, naval architect for the Fairfield Company; W. D. McLaren, now a resident of Vancouver, who was then in charge of turbine research and design at Fairfield; and Major Maitland Kersey, who watched over the planning and construction of the ships on behalf of the Canadian Pacific.

The over-all length of the vessels was 592 feet, their width 68.2 feet, and their moulded depth 46 feet. Owing to small variations in design the *Empress of Asia* was slightly the larger of the two. Her gross tonnage was 16,909, that of the *Empress of Russia* was 16,810. Similarly, the *Asia's* displacement was 25,400 tons, while that of the *Russia* was 25,200.[7] The visitor on board had no difficulty in telling one sister from the other, as different schemes of decoration were used in their lounges and smoking-rooms. Externally, however, even an *Empress* officer could detect only one distinguishing feature: the wheel-house of the *Empress of Asia* had portholes, whereas that of the *Empress of Russia* had square windows.

The *Empresses* were not the largest ships on the Pacific, as they were at first intended to be, for the Great Northern Steamship Company's *Minnesota*, of 20,718 tons gross, was still in service when they were completed.[8] But they were the fastest, and by far the best equipped and most modern in design. Amongst other things, they were the first big liners to have cruiser sterns, a feature now virtually universal. Dr. Hillhouse was responsible

(7) When the *Empresses* were new, Canadian Pacific publicity booklets stated in their enthusiasm that their displacement was 30,625 tons, but this was far beyond any figure ever reached in actual service. One *Empress* skipper, when consulted on the point, suggested playfully that it must represent the displacement of the vessels when they were totally submerged!

(8) For a detailed account of the *Minnesota*, which was withdrawn from the trans-Pacific run in 1915, *see* W. Kaye Lamb, "The Trans-Pacific Venture of James J. Hill: A History of the Great Northern Steamship Company," *American Neptune*, III (1943), pp. 185–204. A sister ship, the *Dakota*, was wrecked near Yokohama in 1907.

both for this innovation[9] and for the attractive and distinctive appearance of the vessels. Their cruiser sterns, long unbroken deck-houses, and three funnels set the general pattern that was to be followed in later *Empresses* for twenty years. To the best of their designer's knowledge they were also the first "four-compartment" ships—that is, the first liners in which four watertight compartments could be flooded without sinking the ship.

A maximum speed of 20.5 knots and a service speed of 18 to 19 knots were specified, and Parsons turbines were chosen as the best means of developing the required power. The whole machinery layout therefore became the responsibility of W. D. McLaren. Ordinarily a ship of the size would probably have had three turbines (one high-pressure and two low-pressure) driving three propellors. Mr. McLaren decided to use four turbines driving four propellors instead. This enabled him not only to keep the individual turbines conveniently small, but also to introduce an intermediate-pressure turbine into the series. This in turn increased efficiency and cut down fuel consumption. No large liner afloat had such turbines at the time the *Empresses* were designed.

Major Kersey took a special interest in the passenger-quarters, which accommodated 284 in the first class, 100 in second class, and 808 in the Oriental steerage. Every first-class cabin was either an outside or a Bibby-style room, but it is interesting to note that to begin with only the eight special suites were fitted with running hot and cold water. A big ship's plumbing and wiring, the complexity of which adds prodigiously nowadays to the cost of a liner, were still relatively simple in 1911. The public rooms were designed at the height of the enthusiasm for " period " styles that swept the seven seas in the

(9) It is interesting to note that the first merchant steamers of any size to have cruiser sterns were built for service on the coast of British Columbia. These were the *Prince George* and *Prince Rupert*, completed at Newcastle in 1910 for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The *Prince George* was destroyed by fire in 1945, but the *Prince Rupert* is still sailing for the Canadian National Railways between Vancouver and northern ports. Dr. Hillhouse was an enthusiastic advocate of the new type of stern and stated his views in a paper entitled " The Cruiser Stern in Merchant Ships," published in the *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record*, XIV (1919), pp. 737, 738.

years immediately before and after the Great War. It is the fashion now to poke fun at such rooms, but the fact remains that they were usually a vast improvement upon those of an earlier day. Few pleasanter dining saloons have been put afloat than those in the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*, and the smoking-room of the *Asia*, which was finished in carved wood in natural colour, was a fine example of successful ship decoration.[10]

The keel of the *Empress of Russia* was laid on November 7, 1911. By that time the Canadian Pacific's need for new tonnage in the Pacific was acute, for the loss of the *Empress of China* in July had disrupted schedules badly. In 1912 the number of first-class passengers carried to and from the Orient fell to the all-time low of 649.[11]

Fortunately the Fairfield Company was able to deliver the new ships in relatively quick time. The *Empress of Russia* was ready for launching by August of 1912, and on the 28th she was sent afloat by Mrs. Wyndham Beauclerk, daughter of Sir Thomas (later Baron) Shaughnessy, then president of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The keel of the *Empress of Asia* was laid on December 4, 1911, and she was launched on November 23, 1912, by Mrs. G. M. Bosworth, wife of the manager of the Canadian Pacific's ocean steamships. The *Russia* was ready for her trials in March, 1913, and the *Asia* followed at the end of May. The former was thus completed in less than seventeen months, and the *Empress of Asia* in less than eighteen months.[12]

Between them the new sisters cost just over $5,000,000.[13] This was looked upon as a vast expenditure at the time, but their performance on trial indicated that the company was getting its money's worth. The contract requirements were a speed of 20.5 knots on the measured mile, and an average of 20 knots on a 600-

(10) The best general description of the *Empresses*, complete with profile, deck plans, and interior views, is probably that in the *Shipbuilder*, IX (1913), pp. 122–130.

(11) Details will be found in the report on subsidized steamship services included in the annual report of the Department of Trade and Commerce.

(12) Dates, etc., are quoted from the official records in the files of Canadian Pacific Steamships Limited, Montreal.

(13) To be exact, $5,005,738.84. *See* entries in the *Annual Report* of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1912, 1913, and 1914. The cost of the liners had first been estimated at £440,000 each. As the total given indicates, they actually cost about £515,000 each.

mile sea trial. The turbines were expected to develop about 22,500 shaft horse-power. Those of the *Empress of Russia* actually developed a maximum of 26,285 s.h.p., and she attained a speed of 21.178 knots on the measured mile. The *Empress of Asia* did even better. Her fastest runs were made at 21.43 knots, and her turbines developed 27,280 s.h.p. This was probably the only time in their whole careers that their turbines were forced to the limit, and the 600-mile sea trials gave a much better idea of the maximum speeds that might be expected in regular service. The *Empress of Russia* averaged 21,030 s.h.p. and a speed of 20.14 knots; the *Empress of Asia*—once more doing just a little better than her sister—averaged 21,810 s.h.p. and 20.33 knots. Equally satisfactory was the fact that the intended ordinary service speed of 18 to 19 knots was reached when the turbines were developing considerably less than the designed power.[14]

There had been talk of equipping the *Empresses* to burn oil, but they were completed as coal-burners. This is surprising, for even in 1913 oil fuel was coming to the fore on the Pacific. The *Chiyo Maru* and *Tenyo Maru* could burn oil or coal at will, and so could the new Canadian-Australasian liner *Niagara*. As in all coal-burning ships, poor-quality coal or inefficient firemen could slow the *Empresses* down, but through the years they established a fine record for consistent performance, and rarely fell far behind schedule.

The *Empress of Russia* dropped anchor at Greenock, after her trials, on March 24, 1913. That same day she was formally handed over to her owners, and her log commences with the notation: "Hoisted C.P.R. flag." Her first commander was Captain Edward Beetham, who had joined the old *Empress of Japan* when she was first commissioned, and in recent years had been in command of the *Empress of India*. A. J. Hosken was chief officer, and James Adamson, another old-timer who had been in the *Empress of India* since 1891, was chief engineer.

The *Empress's* maiden voyage commenced at Liverpool on April 1, when she sailed with a large party of round-the-world excursionists. Proceeding by way of the Mediterranean and the

(14) Details from the official records in the office of Canadian Pacific Steamships Limited, and from data in the possession of Mr. W. D. McLaren, Vancouver, who supervised the trials.

Suez Canal, she called at Gibraltar and Monaco, passed through the Straits of Messina, paused at Port Said, gave her passengers time to see some of the sights in Colombo, visited Singapore, and tied up at Hong Kong on May 9. Twelve days later she set off to make the round of the Oriental ports she was to know so well in years to come: Shanghai, Nagasaki, Kobe, and Yokohama. This first visit to Nagasaki was memorable, for between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. on May 25 the human chains of Japanese coal-handlers, for which the port was long famous, swarmed up her sides and poured no less than 3,200 tons of coal into her bunkers. This was an average of 533 tons per hour—a record that has never been equalled.[15]

On May 29 the *Empress* left Yokohama and set off across the Pacific. In spite of strong winds, rough following seas, and some dense fog, she made steady progress, and completed the passage to William Head in 9 days 5 hours and 29 minutes. This reduced by more than 28 hours the old east-bound record of 10 days 10 hours, held for many years by the *Empress of Japan.* The *Russia's* average speed—about 19 knots—was higher than any other vessel on any competing route had ever averaged, and when she tied up in Vancouver, she was indisputably Queen of the Pacific. Quite as satisfactory from the point of view of her owners was the fact that she brought no less than 1,066 passengers—198 of them in the first class—and a cargo that totalled 3,854 tons measurement.[16]

The *Empress of Asia* was delivered to her owners on May 31 and sailed from Liverpool on June 14. In order to avoid the extreme heat that prevails in the Red Sea during the summer months, she travelled to Hong Kong by way of the Cape of Good Hope. She arrived off Victoria late on the night of August 30, docked there the next morning, and tied up in Vancouver later in the day. Captain Samuel Robinson, one of the best known of all the *Empress* skippers, was in command, L. D. Douglas was chief officer, and William Auld was chief engineer. All three had been promoted to the *Asia* from the famous old *Empress of Japan.*

(15) A fine photograph of the *Empress*, taken while she was coaling at Nagasaki, hangs in the office of the General Superintendent, Canadian Pacific Steamships, in Vancouver.

(16) Details from the ship's log; also Victoria *Times*, June 7, 1913.

For the next few months the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia,* running in conjunction with the *Empress of India* and *Empress of Japan,* shuttled back and forth across the Pacific without incident. Then, in the spring of 1914, there came a spate of record-breaking. On May 3 Captain Robinson brought the *Empress of Asia* to William Head after a record run of 9 days 2 hours and 44 minutes from Yokohama. The average speed maintained was 19.19 knots.[17] If she had not encountered heavy gales that persisted for two days, the *Asia* would have done better still, for her best day's run was made at an average of 20.4 knots. But her performance was not to go unchallenged for long. On May 29 the *Empress of Russia,* now commanded by Captain A. W. Davison, regained her laurels by completing a voyage in only 8 days 18 hours and 31 minutes, at an average speed of 19.86 knots—a record that was to stand for nine years.[18]

A month later, on June 29, the *Russia* added another page to the story of the *Empresses* when she tied up in the harbour at Manila. Hitherto the Canadian Pacific liners had not gone beyond Hong Kong, but it was found that the superior speed of the new *Empresses* left them with a few days in hand at the end of their run. The service was therefore extended to the Philippines, and the initial sailing fell to the lot of the *Empress of Russia.* Four weeks later the *Empress of Asia* followed, but thereafter the schedule was completely disrupted by the outbreak of war between Great Britain and Germany.

2.

For the *Empresses* the Great War proved to be a drama consisting of three acts and an interlude. The first act opened in familiar waters, but was played for the most part in the Indian Ocean. The second act was staged in the Red Sea. The inter-

(17) *Marine Engineer and Naval Architect,* June, 1914, p. 417 (where the length of the voyage is incorrectly stated to have been eight days nineteen hours); Victoria *Colonist,* May 5, 1914. On her best day the *Asia* steamed 473 miles in twenty-three hours and ten minutes.

(18) Victoria *Colonist,* May 30, 1914. The *Russia's* log shows that she crossed at an extraordinarily steady pace. Her daily runs were as follows: 386, 460, 461, 466, 460, 464, 463, 452, 451, 224. During the last three hours of the voyage she speeded up to an estimated 21 knots.

lude consisted of a return to regular trading across the Pacific, while the closing act took place in the Atlantic.

The *Empress of Asia* was actually requisitioned on August 3, before hostilities commenced. She was lying at Hong Kong, and the naval base there had been a hive of activity for some days past. She was quickly stripped of superfluous fittings, armed with eight old 4.7-inch guns, and prepared for service as an auxiliary cruiser. Mustering a naval crew proved to be a difficult problem, and when she finally sailed, her complement consisted of a strange conglomeration that included most of her regular officers, engineers, and Chinese seamen; men of the Royal Naval Reserve; detachments from the French Yangtse River gunboats and the Royal Garrison Artillery; and some Pathan Sepoys. Her first naval captain was Commander C. C. Walcott, R.N. (Ret.), who was succeeded later by Commander P. H. Colomb, R.N. Captain Robinson stayed with his ship, serving in the capacity of navigating officer.

Her first cruise took her to the Yellow Sea, where she joined a squadron headed by the old battleship *Triumph* that was keeping a watch on the German naval base at Tsingtau. When the entry of Japan into the war made her presence there no longer necessary, the *Empress* was sent to the Philippines. A dozen or more German merchantmen had taken refuge in various harbours there, and it was highly important that they should be prevented from sailing and carrying supplies to the enemy cruisers known to be close by.

The blockading squadron off the Philippines included the *Empress of Japan*, which had also been commandeered, and she and the *Empress of Asia* were joined presently by the *Empress of Russia*. The *Russia* had sailed from Vancouver on August 6, on schedule, in spite of the outbreak of war. Two days out her wireless operator picked up signals that two German vessels—one apparently near by—were exchanging in code, and more German messages were heard the next morning. Otherwise the voyage was completed without incident, and the *Empress* arrived at Hong Kong on the 22nd. At midnight on the 23rd she was taken over by the naval authorities, who fitted her out as an auxiliary cruiser. Like the *Empress of Asia* she was armed with eight 4.7-inch guns, but this armament was less formidable

than it sounds; the guns were of an ancient pattern, and their effective range was only about 10,000 yards. Commander Archibald Cochran, R.N., took command, and Captain Davison became navigating officer. The *Empress of Russia's* first cruise was to Singapore, and from there she was ordered first to Hong Kong and then to the Philippines. The only excitement encountered came one day when the North German Lloyd steamer *Mark* was sighted on the horizon. The *Empress of Russia* gave chase, but in spite of her efforts to cut the enemy off the *Mark* managed to take refuge in American waters.

About the middle of September the first exploits of the famous commerce-raiding cruiser *Emden* became known, and to emphasize her presence in the Indian Ocean the *Emden* boldly bombarded and fired some oil-tanks at Madras on the 22nd. At this time the *Empress of Asia* and the Russian cruiser *Askold*—an ancient five-funnelled craft of questionable combat value—were escorting three transports that were carrying garrison troops home to Europe from the Far East. When they got as far as Colombo, the *Empress* was sent off in company with the British cruiser *Hampshire* to patrol trade routes and try to run down the *Emden.* Within a fortnight—although this was not known till long afterwards—the *Asia* came within an ace of doing so. She first got definite track of the raider on October 15, when she called at Diego Garcia, in the Chagos Archipelago, far to the south of Colombo. The little port had no wireless station, and its people were astonished to learn that war had broken out. The officers of the *Empress,* in their turn, were equally astonished to hear that the *Emden* had spent two days there the previous week. Captain von Müller had told the curious islanders that joint German-French-British naval manœuvres were being held in the Indian Ocean, and several pleasant social functions had marked the *Emden's* visit. The *Hampshire* and *Empress of Asia* returned at once to Colombo, to protect shipping thereabouts. Then, on the 20th, they sailed with orders to sweep the seas between Ceylon and the Maldive Islands. All night long they steamed in line ahead, but when daylight came on October 21—Trafalgar Day—they prepared to spread out, so as to scan the widest possible area. Their general course was to the south-west, and about 6.30 a.m. the *Asia* swung round to the north-

west, the intention being that she should maintain this course for an hour or so, and then swing back to the south-west and proceed on a course parallel to that of the *Hampshire*. At this same hour, as it happened, the *Emden*, which had decided to leave the now heavily patrolled Colombo region and seek victims in safer waters, was in the same vicinity, steaming to the south-east. About 8 a.m. she and the *Empress of Asia*, steaming on virtually parallel courses but in opposite directions, cannot have been more than 10 miles apart. But it was a case of so near and yet so far, for the *Empress* failed to sight her quarry.

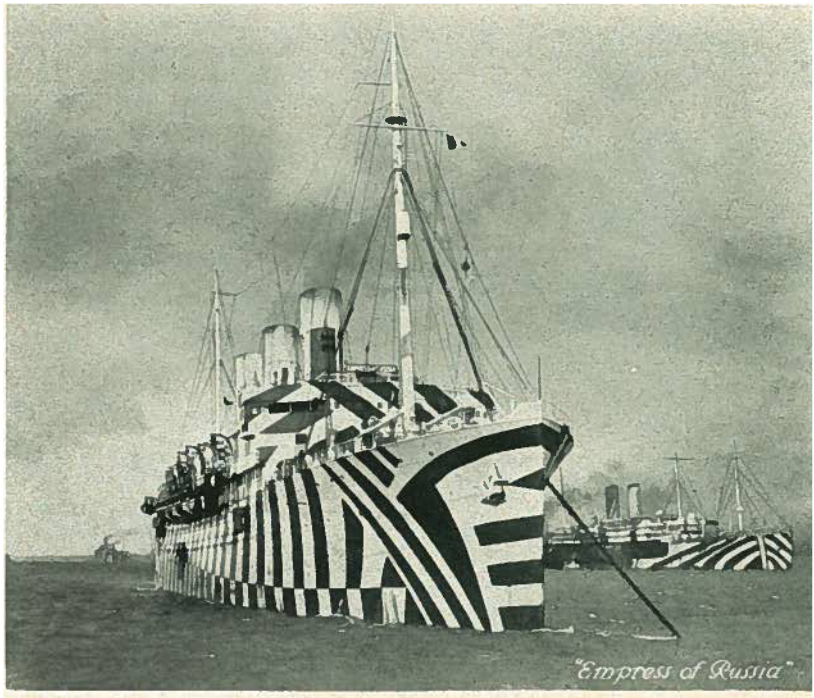
In the closing days of the search for the *Emden*, both the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* were based on Colombo. On November 9, when the welcome news came that the raider had at last been found in the Cocos Islands and engaged by the Australian cruiser *Sydney*, both the *Empresses* were ordered to proceed thither immediately. Four days later the *Empress of Russia* met the *Sydney* at sea and took on board 230 survivors of the *Emden*. Many of the men were wounded, and it was impossible to care for them properly in the cruiser. The *Empress* brought them to Colombo. Meanwhile search parties from the *Empress of Asia* had combed the Cocos Islands in an unsuccessful effort to find a landing party that the *Emden* had left behind, and the *Asia* later joined in a search for the raider's attendant collier.[19]

Before the end of 1914 both *Empresses* had shifted their base to Aden; the second act of their war drama had commenced. Turkey had allied herself with Germany on November 1, and it

(19) This account of the war-time movements of the *Empresses* in 1914 is based chiefly on the log of the *Empress of Russia*, conversations with Captain L. D. Douglas, and Sir Julian Corbett, *History of the Great War—Naval Operations*, revised edition, I, London, 1938, pp. 142–149, 302, 333–337, 379–384; also chart entitled "Operations against S.M.S. *Emden* August to November 1914." The latter is the British official history. *See also* Franz Joseph, Prince of Hohenzollern, *Emden*, New York, 1928, in which the belief is expressed that the *Emden* once actually sighted the *Empress of Russia* (p. 162). As happens so often in accounts of sea warfare, times and places do not coincide exactly, but it is entirely possible that the *Emden* did sight the *Empress of Asia* (not the *Russia*, which was many miles away). Even though the *Empress* was only a converted merchantman, the *Emden* would not seek to engage her; her great anxiety was to avoid damage, and she was probably aware that the *Empress* and a cruiser usually operated in company.

Courtesy Canadian Pacific Railway.

First class smoking-room in the *Empress of Asia*.



Courtesy Canadian Pacific Railway.

The *Empress of Russia* in the coat of camouflage which she wore while serving as a troopship on the Atlantic in 1918.

was essential that the trade and transport route from Aden to the Mediterranean be kept open and secure. The duties involved were of the most varied description. Some of the Red Sea lighthouses had to be taken over from the Turks or defended from them. At Hodeida the British and French consuls had been bundled off inland to Sana when hostilities commenced, and when their release had been arranged for, after protracted negotiations carried on through the intermediary of the Spanish authorities, the *Empress of Russia* sent in a steam pinnace under a flag of truce to bring them off. Later it was decided to take possession of Kamaran, the island port where many pilgrims bound for Mecca passed through quarantine. This the *Russia* accomplished, thanks to the combined efforts of her own guns and some Indian territorials brought along for the occasion. At one time the Turks were in a position to threaten Aden itself, and the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* defended the port until British reinforcements arrived from Suez. A little later the *Minto*, of the Royal Indian Marine, was struck and damaged at Lohaia, to the north of Kamaran. The *Empress of Russia* answered her call for assistance, bombarded the port, and set a spectacular blaze alight when she fired the Turkish oil-supplies that were stored there. Salif, Port Sudan, and Shaiksaid were the scenes of further incidents in which one or other of the *Empresses* was engaged. For the most part, however, they served as patrol ships. Five German steamers had taken refuge in Italian waters at Massaua, and one of their chief concerns was to keep an eye on them, and to prevent the dhows that dodged from one shore to the other from smuggling their cargoes across to the Turks. Some of these dhows the *Empresses* sank; others they towed to Aden. As dhow-towing in the stifling heat of the Red Sea was tedious in the extreme, the officers of the *Empress of Russia* devised slings that would hold a dhow against the ship's side, clear of the water, and so permit the liner to proceed at speed. One dhow, unable to stand the strain, collapsed amidships—an accident that called for elaborate explanations in high places!

In the course of time it became evident that the valuable *Empresses* were being wasted in the Red Sea; the routine duties they performed could be done just as well by much smaller and

slower ships. In the fall of 1915 it was therefore decided to turn them back to their owners. The *Empress of Russia* concluded her active naval duties at Bombay on October 19, and the *Empress of Asia* followed on the 22nd. The latter had travelled a total of 64,024 miles during her commission. From Bombay the *Empresses* proceeded to Hong Kong, where they were overhauled, refitted, and restored to their pre-war condition. By the early spring they were ready for service. Just before the *Empress of Russia* sailed from Hong Kong, instructions were received from Montreal that the sisters were to exchange commanders, and it was therefore Captain Robinson who brought the *Empress of Russia* into Vancouver on April 8, and Captain Davison who was on the bridge of the *Empress of Asia* when she docked four weeks later.[20]

The interlude in the war drama of the *Empresses* lasted for two whole years. In spite of mounting shipping losses, it was not until 1918 that they were again taken off their regular run to the Orient. The service they maintained was in itself important; they carried thousands of Chinese coolies, bound for France, where they worked in labour battalions behind the battle-fronts, and both the Canadian Pacific and the British Government were reluctant to abandon the whole of the trans-Pacific trade to the Japanese. It was the need for transports to move American troops to Europe that finally led to the second requisitioning of the *Empresses*. The *Empress of Asia* left Vancouver in May, 1918, travelled to New York by way of the Panama Canal, and made six voyages to Europe before the end of the year. Five of these were to Liverpool, and the sixth to Brest. The *Empress of Russia* followed in due course, and made the first of her four trans-Atlantic sailings as a troop-ship on July 6. Complete figures are not available, but we know that on five trips the *Empresses* carried a total of 14,489 officers and men. As many as 3,222 were carried by the *Empress of Russia* at one

(20) Useful accounts of the Red Sea adventures of the *Empresses* appeared in the press when they returned to the trans-Pacific run. On the *Empress of Russia*, *see* Victoria *Colonist*, April 9, 1916, and on the *Empress of Asia*, see *ibid.*, May 7, 1916. Captain Douglas possesses an interesting chart illustrating the movements of the *Asia* while she was in commission as an auxiliary cruiser.

time.[21] Most of the voyages were without incident, and Captain Davison reported later that the *Empress of Asia* never sighted a submarine nor, so far as he knew, was she ever attacked. Upon one occasion it was known that a submerged submarine was lurking under the convoy, but at the surface the fog was so dense that it could take no action, and eventually it made off. Needless to say, this was before the days of Asdic, wolf packs, or the acoustic torpedo![22]

Once the war ended, the Canadian Pacific was able to secure the release of the ships in remarkably short order. The *Empress of Asia* was able to sail from Liverpool for Vancouver on January 2, 1919, less than two months after the signing of the armistice. Travelling by way of Panama, she made the passage in 23 days, and the 1,100 veterans she carried received a great welcome at Victoria on January 24 and in Vancouver the next morning. The *Empress* was reconditioned by the Wallace yard, at North Vancouver, and the work was completed so quickly that she was able to sail for the Orient on February 27. Meanwhile the *Empress of Russia* had returned to her station by way of the Suez Canal. Leaving Liverpool on January 10, she picked up several thousand Chinese at Havre on the 14th and landed them safely at Tsingtau before proceeding to Hong Kong for refitting. In less than a month she, too, was ready for service, and on March 31 she tied up in Vancouver.

Both ships had fared far better than most of the big British liners had done during the war. They were on active war duty for only about two years in all, and at no time were they badly knocked about. When they returned to peace-time service, they were virtually as good as new. Indeed, the only visible mark the war left upon them was a new colour on their hulls. When they went to the Atlantic in 1918, they were both given coats of camouflage, and the *Empress of Russia* received one of the most elaborate dazzle-paint jobs of the war. At refit time it was decided not to restore the white hulls that had been a distinctive feature of the *Empress* liners since 1891, and they returned to the trans-Pacific run with an all-over coat of light grey.

---

(21) *See* Benedict Crowell and Robert Forrest Wilson, *The Road to France*, New Haven, 1921, II, pp. 553–559.

(22) Vancouver *Province*, January 25, 1919.

3.

The only running-mates available for the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* in 1919 were the old *Empress of Japan* and the *Monteagle*. The latter was primarily a freighter, and had neither the speed nor the passenger accommodation necessary to enable her to fit comfortably into the mail service. Such a mixture of ship-types, ages, and sizes made the fleet difficult to handle, and all that could be done was to arrange a regular schedule for the two big liners and let the others fill in with extra sailings as they were able. This was regarded as a temporary arrangement only, for a new *Empress* was ordered soon after the Armistice, and the intention was that a second new liner should follow shortly.

The first two years of peace saw an unprecedented rush of traffic across the Pacific. To cope with it, various modifications were made in the passenger accommodation of the larger *Empresses*. Hitherto they had carried only three classes: first, second, and Oriental steerage. In 1919 staterooms for ninety-two persons in a new third class were added. The next year it became necessary to extend the first-class accommodation. By appropriating all the original second-class cabins, which were roomy and comfortable, the number of berths was increased from 296 to 374. New second-class quarters were added presently, further aft. In spite of this the ships were frequently taxed to the limit—indeed, demands were so pressing that they were often booked far beyond their nominal capacity. Saloon lists totalling 450 were not unusual, and the peak seems to have been reached in May, 1920, when the *Empress of Russia* arrived with no less than 480 in the first class. To accommodate them, cots had been placed in staterooms, officers had given up their cabins, and the patience and ingenuity of the ship's staff had been tried to the utmost.

It will be recalled that in 1912 the Canadian Pacific had carried only 649 first-class passengers to and from the Orient. In the year ended June 30, 1914—the first twelvemonth in which the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* were in service—the total jumped to 2,514. But in the year ended June 30, 1921, no less than 9,761 first-class passengers sailed by the *Empress*

route[23]—a volume of traffic that must have brought at least $3,000,000 into the coffers of the company. Second class, the new third class, and Oriental steerage all added to the total, and the number of passengers carried in all classes, which had been 14,575 in 1913–14, rose to no less than 35,555 in 1920–21.[24]

Cargo holds as well as cabins were well filled, and the freight department shared in the boom. Silk was the most important single item in *Empress* inward manifests, and many immensely valuable shipments were landed at Vancouver. For example, in August, 1919, the *Empress of Asia* arrived with 10,800 bales of raw silk which, according to *Harbor and Shipping*, were valued at $8,500,000, and in addition she brought 2,053 cases of silk goods that increased the total to more than $10,000,000.[25] Tea, rice, and miscellaneous Oriental goods were for years the chief additional items in the cargoes carried from the Orient. Outward bound, the two staple items soon came to be spelter (zinc) and wheat products. When flour and wheat shipments first commenced on any scale, it was assumed that the trade would be temporary, but between the wars a shipment totalling several hundred tons, and upon occasion consisting of as much as 2,300 tons, became a fixture in *Empress* cargoes. On a smaller scale the same was true of spelter. Machinery, manufactured goods, timber products, and canned goods made up the bulk of the rest of the cargo.

In spite of their size the *Empresses* were not big cargo carriers; their dead-weight cargo capacity was only about 3,500 tons. They were primarily passenger and express ships, intended to carry shipments that were of great value, or for which rapid transit was essential. In order to share in the prosperous general freight business, the Canadian Pacific decided to bring to the Pacific two of the freight steamers that had been purchased during the war to run on the Atlantic. The first of these was the *Methven*, a 10-knot steamer of 4,852 tons gross, completed in 1906. She came to Vancouver by way of the Panama Canal, arriving early in March, 1919. More than a

(23) E. W. Beatty, "Canada and the Orient," *Harbor and Shipping*, IV, p. 209 (April, 1922).

(24) *Ibid.*

(25) *Harbor and Shipping*, I, p. 389 (September, 1919).

year passed before she was joined by the *Mattawa*, which came to the Pacific by way of Suez, and arrived in Vancouver for the first time in August, 1920. The gross tonnage of the *Mattawa* was 4,874, her speed was 9½ knots, and she had been built in 1912. On some of their trans-Pacific trips these freighters turned back at Hong Kong, but the intention was that they should continue on and maintain a service as far as Singapore. As it turned out, their careers on the Pacific proved to be brief. By the end of 1920 the freight market was collapsing, and in January, 1921, both ships were laid up in Hong Kong. Later they were employed for a time in the Asiatic coastal trade. The *Methven* carried rice from Saigon, and upon one occasion went as far afield as the Persian Gulf, but before the end of 1922 both vessels had found their way back to the Atlantic.[26]

The *Methven* was the first permanent command of Captain L. D. Douglas, a future commodore of the Pacific *Empress* fleet, and such well-known figures as Captain A. J. Holland, Captain Herbert James, Captain A. V. R. Lovegrove, and Captain George Goold served in her or in the *Mattawa*.

The spring of 1921 was an interesting time for the *Empresses*. For one thing, each of them, as they came back into service after the usual annual overhaul, appeared in a new colour scheme. The light grey of 1919 now gave way to black hulls and white upper works; their funnels were buff, as before. For another, a new passenger service was started from Seattle to the Orient, and this inevitably aroused the spirit of competition. The five new American liners placed on the run were all of the well-known "535" type—redesigned army transports with a length of 535 feet, a gross tonnage of over 14,000, and a maximum speed of about 18 knots. Outwardly they were unattractive, and the arrangement of their cargo holds made it impossible to give them the spacious public rooms that characterized the *Empresses*. To compensate for this, special attention was lavished on their cabins, which were unusually large and abounded in private bathrooms. Nor were the Americans content to let the speed laurels of the *Empresses* go unchallenged, at least on paper. Time after time the claim was advanced—usually by the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*—that silk brought to Seattle by the new steamers had

(26) For further details of the *Methven* and *Mattawa*, *see* Appendix.

been delivered in New York in less time than shipments landed in Vancouver by the *Empresses*. It was a difficult point to counter conclusively, but an opportunity came finally at the end of April, 1922. The American steamer *Bay State* (soon after renamed *President Madison*) left Yokohama for Seattle some time before the *Empress of Russia* sailed for Vancouver. Setting out in pursuit, the *Russia* overhauled the *Bay State*, passed her at sea, and arrived at William Head on May 7, after a passage of 8 days 21 hours and 43 minutes. The average speed maintained was 19.6 knots, which was only a quarter of a knot below the record established by the *Russia* in 1914. The *Bay State* took 10 days 5 hours and 22 minutes to make the crossing, and did not arrive until May 8. True, her captain contended that he was under orders not to exceed 17½ knots, but this speed was below the voyage average regularly scheduled for the *Empresses*, and it was difficult to reconcile the captain's instructions with a claim that the line offered the fastest route for the shipment of silk from the Orient to New York.[27] Actually the *President Grant* (ex-*Pine Tree State*) seems to have been the fastest of the American liners, and she has to her credit a crossing at an average of 18.63 knots.

It may be well to add that this was not the only time that the *Empress of Russia's* record was closely approached. In the summer of 1919 the *Empress of Asia* completed a passage in 8 days 21 hours and 4 minutes at an average speed of 19.6 knots,[28] and in April, 1921, she came within minutes of repeating this performance.[29] Two months later the *Empress of Russia* crossed in 8 days and 21 hours at an average speed of 19.65 knots.[30] Later still, as we shall see, the *Empress of Asia* was to average more than 20 knots, and set a mark that neither of the sisters ever improved upon.

A memorable adventure befell those on board the *Empress of Asia* in October, 1921. The *Empress* had sailed from Vancouver (as the superstitious will note) on the 13th. A week later she

(27) The whole matter is dealt with in some detail in the Victoria *Times* for May 8 and May 9, 1922.

(28) *Harbor and Shipping*, I, p. 307 (July, 1919).

(29) *See* Victoria *Colonist*, April 19, 1921; Victoria *Times*, April 18, 1921.

(30) *See* Victoria *Times*, July 11, 1921.

encountered what may well have been the worst storm to strike the Pacific in a quarter of a century. At noon on October 20 the barometer stood at 29.81. By 4 p.m. it had fallen to 29.29, and was still falling rapidly. At 10 p.m. the reading was 28.13. Even in the worst storms off the China coast the barometer rarely falls as low as 28.00, but on this occasion it fell much farther. At midnight it stood at 27.53, and at 1 a.m. reached the lowest level of all, about 27.48. By that time the needle was off the barograph, and only an estimate of its position was possible. It was the lowest point that Captain L. D. Douglas, who was in command, had ever seen the barometer reach in the course of a lifetime spent at sea. Fortunately the *Empress* was a little to the north of the centre of the storm, the velocity of which far exceeded 100 miles per hour. In spite of the pounding she received she suffered no structural damage, though at times her speed had to be reduced to as little as 8 knots. One of Captain Douglas's most vivid memories relates to a minor incident—the way in which the storm suddenly tore the canvas covers from the life-boats. In his own amusing phrase, "they went away like a flock of gulls!"[31]

4.

By the autumn of 1921 the new *Empress of Canada* was in the final stages of completion at Govan. Built by the same Fairfield yard that had constructed the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*, she resembled them closely in general appearance. Internally, however, she was a very different ship, for her larger dimensions enabled her designers to plan her accommodation upon a more lavish scale. She had an extra deck, and the whole of her promenade deck was devoted to an elaborate suite of first-class public rooms. The older *Empresses* had boasted lounges, writing-rooms, smoking-rooms, gymnasiums, and veranda cafés. In addition to these, the *Canada* offered a long gallery, drawing-room, card-room, and children's room. She was also the first Pacific *Empress* to have such luxury-liner attractions as an elevator and a swimming-pool. All her cabins had hot and cold running water, and forty of them had private baths or toilets.

(31) *Harbor and Shipping*, IV, p. 60 (December, 1921), and personal notes and recollections of Captain Douglas.

Compared with the earlier *Empresses*, over-all length had been increased from 592 feet to 653 feet, width from 68.2 to 77.5 feet, and gross tonnage from just under 17,000 to 21,517. The *Canada's* maximum displacement was 32,250 tons, and she was both the largest ship ever built for the trans-Pacific trade and the largest yet built by the Fairfield Company. Like most of the big liners built just after the Great War, the *Empress* was propelled by double-reduction geared turbines driving twin screws. She burned oil fuel, and her boilers were grouped compactly in two boiler-rooms under the two forward funnels. The third funnel was a dummy, added for the sake of appearance, and used only as a ventilating-shaft for the engine-room.

The *Empress of Canada* had been laid down as soon as possible after the Armistice—too soon, as it proved, for her own good. Skilled labour and first-quality materials were both extremely scarce at the time, and her builders frequently found the going most difficult. Fine ship as she undoubtedly was, the *Canada* was never particularly lucky, and the minor mechanical troubles that dogged her throughout her career doubtless sprang in great part from the circumstances of her construction. Those circumstances, and the rapid rise in ship-building costs, had between them the further result of robbing her of a sister ship. A fourth big liner was required to maintain a fortnightly service across the Pacific, and by the summer of 1919 the *Empress of Canada's* projected sister was being referred to in the press by name as the *Empress of Australia*,[32] but within a few months plans for her construction were definitely abandoned.

The *Empress of Canada* herself was launched on August 17, 1920, by Mrs. G. M. Bosworth, who, it will be recalled, had sponsored the *Empress of Asia* eight years before. The intention was that the *Canada* should leave Liverpool in March, 1921, and cruise to Vancouver by way of the Mediterranean, but the work of fitting her out progressed so slowly that this plan was soon abandoned. By June, 1921, the installation of her machinery had been completed, and she was able to leave the shipyard and run a series of builders' trials in the Firth of Clyde.[33] Newspaper stories credited her with having worked up to a speed of

(32) *See* for example, *ibid.*, I, p. 349 (August, 1919).

(33) *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record*, XVII (1921), p. 781.

25.6 knots,[34] but she was, in fact, quite incapable of any such performance. Moreover, the type of gearing used in the *Canada* required extremely careful handling when new, and it goes without saying that she was not forced in any way on this initial cruise.

Owing to a joiners' strike that kept work on her cabins and lounges at a standstill for many months, the *Empress* was not finally completed until April, 1922. Her official trials followed, but these were inevitably an anticlimax, thanks to the wild rumours that had circulated the year before. The maximum speed reached on the measured mile was 20.3 knots, with the engines developing 24,000 shaft horse-power. It will be noted that neither in power nor speed did she equal the showing made by the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* in 1913. It was nevertheless clear that she would have no difficulty in maintaining the service speed of 18 knots that her owners had in mind, and on a 365-mile sea trial she averaged 20 knots, as required in the contract.[35]

This sea trial ended at Falmouth, and from there the *Empress* proceeded to Hong Kong without delay, travelling by way of the Mediterranean. Captain A. J. Hailey was in command. In the Red Sea the new liner met the freighter *Methven*, which was returning to the Atlantic after her brief sojourn on the Pacific; otherwise the voyage was uneventful. On her first passage from Yokohama to William Head the *Empress of Canada* covered the distance in 9 days 2 hours—a good average run, but well below the marks set by the *Russia* and *Asia*. Victoria and Vancouver were both agog to welcome the largest ship ever to cross the Pacific, but one of those minor misfortunes that were to trouble the *Empress of Canada* so frequently marred the occasion. A case of smallpox developed on board, and this not only delayed her arrival until June 24, but made it necessary to cancel all festivities, including a reception to which thousands of invitations had been issued.

---

(34) *See* Vancouver *Province*, August 22, 1921; *Harbor and Shipping*, III, p. 901 (August, 1921).

(35) Files of Canadian Pacific Steamships, Montreal; *Engineering*, CXIV, p. 388 (September 29, 1922).

Less than a month later Vancouver welcomed another new *Empress,* and we must next describe the circumstances that brought this interesting vessel to the Pacific.

When ship-building costs soared in 1920–21, one of the factors that caused the Canadian Pacific to abandon plans to build a sister ship to the *Empress of Canada* was undoubtedly the fact that a number of German passenger liners, seized by the Allies at the end of the Great War, were coming on the market at knock-down prices. The *Canada* was costing £1,700,000; German ships of comparable size were selling for a fraction of this sum. To buy instead of to build would save time as well as money, and the company ended by making several purchases. One of these was the former North German Lloyd liner *Prinz Freidrich Wilhelm,* a vessel of 17,082 tons that had been operated for half a dozen years on the New York run. She was renamed *Empress of China,* and the work of refitting her, to make her suitable for the trans-Pacific trade, actually began. Before it had proceeded far, however, it was decided to bring a larger and much newer steamer to the Pacific in her stead.[36] This was the *Tirpitz,* one of a class of three ships that the Hamburg Amerika Line was building in 1914 for a new de luxe service to South America.[37] Her length over all was 615 feet, her width 75.2 feet, and her gross tonnage 21,861. She was thus much the same size as the *Empress of Canada,* and, like her, she had three funnels. But there all similarity ended. The *Tirpitz* had the old-style elliptical stern and the ungraceful, bulky upper works that were typical of the German ships of the period. Built in the famous Vulcan yard at Stettin, she had been launched on December 20, 1913.

In several respects she was an unusual vessel. To begin with, she had achieved a certain notoriety because rumour insisted that when the war was going well for the Germans, she had been

(36) The *Prinz Freidrich Wilhelm* sailed under four different names while in the service of the Canadian Pacific: *Empress of China, Empress of India, Montlaurier,* and *Montnairn.* She was used most of the time as a reserve ship, and made a voyage as a trooper to the Near East during the crisis of 1922. She was sold finally to Italian ship-breakers in December, 1929.

(37) For further details of this project, *see* Appendix. An interesting account of the *Tirpitz* and her sisters will be found in the *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record,* V (1915), pp. 339–340.

selected to carry the Kaiser on the triumphal cruise that would have followed a German victory. It was even stated that her luxurious suites had been specially designed with this cruise in mind. The whole story is highly improbable, though work on her, which had come to a standstill, does seem to have been resumed for a time during the war, and her accommodation certainly included several palatial suites in which even an emperor should have felt at home. Her fittings throughout were elaborate, and her deck plans followed, on a reduced scale, those of the monster liners of the *Vaterland* class that the Hamburg Amerika Line was building at this same time. In particular, the uptakes to the two forward funnels were brought up through the passenger accommodation in two sections, some distance apart, and these did not come together until they reached the boat deck, at the base of the funnels proper. This made it possible to provide a broad hallway along the centre line of the ship, extending from one public room to another. On the promenade deck the effect was impressive, but on the cabin decks it gave rise to such a maze of corridors that the plan has not been repeated.

Mechanically the *Tirpitz* was frankly an experiment. Her two sisters were fitted with machinery of orthodox design, but she had been chosen for a full-scale test of the hydraulic transformers upon which Dr. Föttinger had been working for some years. Instead of using mechanical gearing (as in the *Empress of Canada*) to reduce the high speed of her Brown-Curtis turbines to the relatively low speeds at which propellors operate most efficiently, the *Tirpitz* was fitted with what would nowadays be called a variety of fluid drive. In effect, her turbines drove water-pumps, and the water from these in turn drove water-wheels which were attached to the propellor shafts. It was an ingenious idea, and tests made with a full-scale set of turbines and transformers in 1912 seemed to show that it would prove reliable and economical in operation.[38]

The *Tirpitz* was completed about May, 1919, and after a period of uncertainty she was finally allocated to Great Britain, on reparations account. On February 3, 1921, she arrived at Immingham, and there she lay at anchor until she was purchased

(38) For an account of these tests, see *Marine Engineer and Naval Architect*, March, 1912, p. 127.

by the Canadian Pacific in July.[39] She was sent first to Hamburg, where she was dry-docked, refitted, and equipped to burn oil fuel instead of coal. Captain Samuel Robinson arrived to take command of her early in 1922, and he presently took her to the Clyde for a few last-minute touches.[40] She had by this time been twice renamed. She first became the *Empress of China* (the other ship so named having by this time become the *Empress of India*), but this was soon changed to *Empress of Australia.* On June 16 she finally cleared for Vancouver, by way of Panama, and she reached her destination on July 19. Only a skeleton crew travelled out in her, but her complement was brought up to full strength as soon as she arrived in Vancouver. Many of those who joined her came from the old *Empress of Japan,* which had just completed her last voyage from the Orient. The *Australia* was given a thorough spring cleaning, took on cargo, provisions, and passengers, and sailed for Yokohama on July 28.

Her departure was a landmark in the history of the *Empress* service, for the Canadian Pacific now possessed the four big ships that were required to provide fortnightly sailings to the Orient. As all four of them were larger, and all but the *Empress of Australia* were faster than the ships of any other line, the competitive position of the *Empresses* seemed to be an exceptionally strong one. But unsuspected difficulties lay ahead, and another eight years were to pass before the state of the *Empress* fleet became really satisfactory.

5.

The most serious of these difficulties was presented by the latest addition to the fleet, the *Empress of Australia,* whose engineers quickly discovered that they had a problem on their hands. She was fitted with water-tube boilers, and these were

(39) A photograph of the ship arriving at Immingham appears in the *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record,* XVII (1921), p. 172.

(40) The late G. M. Bosworth, then general manager of the Canadian Pacific's ocean steamships, visited the *Tirpitz* while she was refitting. The story is told that he was horrified to find that the nymphs that figured in the ship's decorations were very scantily clad, and instantly gave the order, "Put clothes on them!" When he later paid the ship another visit, he was not satisfied with the changes made and issued a further order, "Put *more* clothes on them!"

found to be poorly constructed and very hard on fuel. Equally important, the ship failed to develop her designed power and speed, and on her first trip to the Orient she lagged far behind the schedule maintained by the other *Empresses*. Her second sailing was delayed a week, in order that various adjustments might be made in Vancouver, and a 24-hour test run in Georgia Strait seemed to indicate that all was well. On September 28 the *Empress* therefore put to sea, bound for Yokohama. Two days later, however, a terrific thumping and crashing suddenly arose in the engine-room. The thrust blocks on one of the turbine shafts had failed, damaging the shaft itself, and completely disabling the turbine. Turning about, the *Empress* came slowly back to port, escorted part way by a salvage ship. Repairs were made in the Puget Sound Navy Yard, at Bremerton, where dry-docks, heavy cranes, and other equipment were available. The work was carried out by the Todd Company, and the opportunity was seized to install improved oil-burners, which reduced somewhat the ship's excessive fuel consumption.

The *Empress* missed only one voyage to the Orient, and was back in service by the end of November. No further major machinery troubles developed, but it was no secret along the water-front that she was still far from being a satisfactory ship.

A year after this mishap, sudden fame came to the *Empress of Australia* and to her commander, Captain Robinson. A minute or two before noon on September 1, 1923, when the *Empress* was lying at her wharf in Yokohama, on the very point of casting off and sailing for Vancouver, the first shock of the great earthquake that levelled most of Yokohama and Tokio swept over the land. The ship shook and rocked so violently that Captain Robinson expected her masts and funnels to fall; a large slice of the wharf alongside subsided suddenly into the water, and from the vantage point of the bridge it was actually possible to see the land "rolling in waves apparently 6 to 8 feet high like a succession of fast moving ocean swells . . ."[41]

For a complete account of what followed, the reader is referred to the graphic report submitted by Captain Robinson

(41) *Official Report of Captain S. Robinson, R.N.R., . . . on the Japanese Earthquake* . . . (n.d., n.p.), p. 1.

to his owners, and subsequently printed in pamphlet form;[42] only a summary may be given here. For many hours the *Empress*, though serving as a haven of comparative safety to the refugees who crowded on board, was herself in extreme peril. Other ships in the harbour blundered into her, and her port propellor fouled a cable and held her prisoner close to the ruins of the wharf, which were soon a mass of flames. Huge masses of burning oil adrift in the harbour soon added to the dangers that beset her. But through it all her captain and crew worked calmly and ceaselessly to safeguard their ship, and to do their utmost to save life and lessen suffering. By slow degrees the *Empress* was edged away from her berth, but it was 36 hours before she was able to reach a safe anchorage. Later she moved outside the breakwater, and there her propellor was freed of obstructions by a diver secured from a Japanese man-of-war. With his ship once more functioning properly, Captain Robinson steamed back into the harbour, in order to do all he could to assist relief-work. It was not until a week after the earthquake, by which time British and American warships had arrived with emergency supplies, that the *Empress* finally withdrew and sailed for Kobe with refugees.

Both the Canadian Pacific and Captain Robinson received and deserved many expressions of appreciation for the outstanding service the *Empress* rendered, and the following March a tablet was presented to the ship by the passengers who had been aboard her when the earthquake occurred.

Months before the Yokohama disaster it had been announced that the *Empress of Canada* would make a world cruise in 1924. Officially this was to start from New York on January 30, but so far as the ship herself was concerned, it commenced on January 4, when she sailed from Vancouver for New York, via Panama. The company was not above recognizing the publicity value of the fame Captain Robinson had achieved, and he was transferred to the *Empress of Canada* before she sailed. Captain Hailey took his place on the bridge of the *Empress of Australia*.

The *Canada's* cruise lasted four months. After a call at Madeira she visited various Mediterranean ports, sailed on to

(42) *Ibid.* The pamphlet seems to have been published late in 1923.

India and Ceylon, and proceeded thence to the Straits Settlements, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, China, and Japan. Returning across the Pacific she deviated from her usual course in order to call at Honolulu and Hilo, and arrived back in Vancouver on May 24.

For the next two years the *Empress of Canada, Empress of Australia, Empress of Russia,* and *Empress of Asia* were all on the regular run to the Orient. It was known, however, that company officials were still far from happy about the *Empress of Australia.* Passengers found her luxurious lounges and well-fitted cabins pleasing, but down in the engine-room it was another story. There engineers fought a continuous battle to keep her on schedule, for she never developed anything approaching the speed of her running-mates. Thanks to great efforts below decks and a stretch of good weather, Captain Hailey was able to bring her to William Head on May 3, 1925, with a passage of 10 days 17 hours and 32 minutes to her credit, her average speed having been 16.4 knots, but this was her peak performance on the Pacific. She still burned a prodigious amount of oil, and, in addition, she was burdened with 1,500 tons of permanent ballast that the Germans had found it necessary to add, because her bulky upper works tended to make her top heavy.

About this time the Canadian Pacific reviewed the whole field of its ocean steamship operations, and several major decisions presently emerged. The first of these cleared the way for the great building program that was carried through during the next five or six years. Another concerned important units of the existing fleet. The company came to the conclusion that, from a long-term point of view, a thorough overhauling would prove to be a good investment. Early in 1926 it was announced in the annual report that a re-engining program would get under way immediately, and that the *Empress of Australia* would be one of the first ships to be dealt with. At the same time it was made known that when she returned to service she would be transferred to the Atlantic—the ocean for which she was originally intended.

The *Australia* made her last trans-Pacific sailing from Vancouver in May of 1926. It was her twenty-first voyage outward, for she had completed a score of round trips to the Orient during

her somewhat checkered career of just under four years. Captain Hailey took her on to Great Britain by way of the Mediterranean, and there delivered her to the Fairfield Company at Govan, where her new engines and boilers were to be installed.

6.

The name of John Johnson will be familiar to few outside shipping circles, but his name looms large in the later history of the *Empresses*. Johnson came on the scene about 1924, when he was appointed chief superintendent engineer of the Canadian Pacific fleet. At that time the Diesel engine seemed to be sweeping all before it, and the opinion was becoming general that it would only be a matter of time before it displaced steam even in the largest and fastest liners. Johnson, however, believed that steam propulsion still had great advantages, and that the efficiency of steam engines and boilers could be increased to such a degree that they would continue to be much the most economical machinery for the various types of ships in which the Canadian Pacific was interested.[43]

His first experiments were made in some of the older ships in the Atlantic service. The changes made were relatively small, but they were successful, and they convinced Johnson that he was on the right track. More important, they also convinced the company, and Johnson had the unparalleled good fortune to have the Canadian Pacific's large existing fleet and even larger shipbuilding program virtually placed at his disposal, so far as propelling-machinery was concerned.

Some notes on the chief technical problems in which Johnson was interested will be found in the Appendix. Here it will be sufficient to outline the developments in the Pacific *Empresses* for which he was responsible.

This outline must start with the re-engining of the *Empress of Australia*, for although the ship herself never returned to the Pacific, the changes made in her influenced policy with regard to other units of the fleet. There was nothing very new about the

(43) Mr. Johnson has contributed many papers to technical journals and the proceedings of learned societies. Perhaps the most informative and interesting of these, from the present point of view, is "The Propulsion of Ships by Modern Steam Machinery," *Transactions of the Institution of Naval Architects*, LXXI (1929), pp. 39–81.

machinery layout that Johnson proposed—indeed, one suspects that his purpose may well have been to prove his own competence by showing what he could accomplish without departing far from current practice. The new boilers he installed were of the old Scotch cylindrical type, and the pressure was no more than 220 lb. The engines were Parsons turbines, and in place of the Föttinger transformers he used single-reduction gearing. The only Johnsonian touches were the use of superheated steam (which a good many other companies were abandoning at this time) and the introduction of Diesel engines to drive the ship's generators and other auxiliaries. By the late spring of 1927 the *Empress* was ready for her trials, and it at once became apparent that the re-engining had been a spectacular success. She developed the designed horse-power of 20,000 and a speed of over 20 knots with ease, and accomplished this on a fuel consumption about one-third less than before. When placed in regular service, she soon made an entire voyage at an average speed of 19.25 knots. From being a fuel hog and a continual worry to her owners and engineers, the *Australia* suddenly blossomed forth as the most economical liner of her size and speed in commission.

With this achievement in hand Johnson next turned his attention to the *Empress of Canada,* which had never come up to expectations from the mechanical point of view. When she entered service in June, 1922, the trans-Pacific record was held by the *Empress of Russia,* which had crossed from Yokohama to William Head at an average speed of 19.86 knots. A year passed before the *Canada* improved upon this, and it was not until June 17, 1923, that Captain Hailey brought her to William Head with a new record to her credit. Her time from Yokohama was 8 days 10 hours and 53 minutes, and her average speed 20.6 knots. Her best day's run was made at 21.2 knots.[44]

It was not a very resounding victory, and this was made apparent in July of 1924, when the *Empress of Asia,* with Captain Douglas in command, completed a passage in 8 days 14 hours and 48 minutes, at an average speed of 20.2 knots.[45] This was

(44) Victoria *Times,* June 18, 1923; *Harbor and Shipping,* V, p. 343 (July, 1923), where the arrival date is wrongly given as June 20.

(45) Her best day's run was 477 miles at an average of 20.63 knots. Her day runs were 472, 463, 469, 466, 468, 468, 477, 471, and 445 miles. Victoria *Times,* July 21, 1924.

the fastest run ever made by either the *Empress of Asia* or the *Empress of Russia*, and it left the *Empress of Canada* in possession of her laurels by the very narrow margin of two-fifths of a knot. In spite of this, the *Canada* showed little sign of being able to improve on her record, and, quite as important, her fuel bills continually reminded the company that her oil consumption was very high—some 225 tons per day, as compared with only 142 tons for the re-engined *Empress of Australia*, in which comparable power was developed.

A careful study of the ship's performance led to the conclusion that the fault lay in her engines rather than in her boilers. Few of the double-reduction geared turbines installed in 1919 to 1925 proved very satisfactory, and those in the *Empress of Canada* were no exception. Johnson proposed to remove them and replace them with single-reduction geared turbines of the type that had been so successful in the *Empress of Australia*. The official announcement that the change would be made came in the spring of 1928, and on November 1 the *Empress* sailed from Vancouver on a voyage that took her first to the Orient, and thence to Great Britain and her birthplace, the Fairfield yard at Govan.

As the departure of the *Empress of Australia* had already reduced the Pacific *Empress* fleet to three ships, a substitute had to be found for the *Empress of Canada* while she was under refit. This problem was solved by temporarily transferring the *Empress of France* from the trans-Atlantic run to the Pacific. Originally the *Alsatian*, of the Allan Line, the *Empress of France* had served with distinction as an auxiliary cruiser throughout the First World War, and in recent years had become widely known as a cruise ship. She was completed in 1913, the same year as the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*, and was a most satisfactory running-mate for them. Her length over all was 600 feet, and her gross tonnage 18,481. The year before she came to the Pacific she had averaged 20.49 knots on a voyage from Southampton to Quebec. The *Empress of France* met the *Empress of Canada* in the Orient, exchanged crews and captains with her, and took her place in the trans-Pacific schedule under the command of Captain Robinson.

Work on the *Empress of Canada* proceeded apace, and the re-engining was completed within nine months. The old turbines had never developed much more than 24,000 horse-power, but Johnson was confident that the original boilers, to which he added superheaters, would be able to produce sufficient steam to drive new turbines intended to develop 26,000 horse-power throughout a trans-Pacific voyage, and as much as 29,000 horse-power for short periods. His expectations were fulfilled, and the *Empress* worked up to 22.4 knots on her trials. She then made a round voyage to Quebec which was really in the nature of an extended sea trial. The results were highly satisfactory, for on the east-bound crossing she averaged 20.53 knots and burned only 175 tons of oil per day, whereas on her record run across the Pacific, when powered by her old engines, she had burned no less than 284 tons per day to maintain an average of 20.6 knots.[46] Johnson had thus increased her normal service speed until it equalled her old maximum service speed, and at the same time had reduced her fuel consumption by more than 100 tons per day—surely a remarkable achievement.

In the re-engined *Empress of Canada*, as in the *Empress of Australia*, Johnson installed Diesel engines to run the ship's auxiliaries. Financially the change was doubtless a success, but the *Canada's* steam-minded engineers disliked the Diesels cordially. Visitors to her engine-room were sure to hear remarks about the unending clatter of the Diesels, and the tinkering sort of attention they seemed always to be requiring.

The *Empress's* refit extended to her passenger accommodation, where many minor improvements were carried out. Amongst other things her first-class lounge was made much more spacious and attractive, and many of her cabins were provided with shower-baths. She returned to the Pacific a better ship in almost every respect than she had left it, though time was to show that even re-engining had not solved all her mechanical difficulties. To the end of her days she was plagued with minor troubles, including leaks in her steam-pipes, the lay-out of which seems to have been needlessly complicated. Few of these difficulties were serious, and they very rarely delayed the

(46) *The Engineer*, CXLVIII, p. 394 (October 11, 1929).

ship, but they added an annoying touch of uncertainty and discomfort to the lives of the men who were responsible for her.

As if to prove that the jinx had not been broken, the *Empress* suffered misfortune even before she returned to her regular run. In September, 1929, she made a voyage from Southampton to New York, and then proceeded to Vancouver by way of the Panama Canal. It was foggy when she entered the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Atlantic captain in command was unfamiliar with local conditions and, it seems, none too willing to accept advice. The result was that he ran the *Empress* hard ashore near the William Head quarantine station. The date was Sunday, October 13.

The ship lay in an exposed position, and a change in the weather might have spelled disaster. Fortunately it remained calm, and the tugs and salvage craft that rushed to the *Canada's* assistance succeeded in refloating her after 52 hours of anxious effort. She was taken at once to the big graving-dock at the Esquimalt naval base, which had been completed two years before, and there repaired by Yarrows, Limited. The damage to her hull was found to extend over a length of 145 feet, and of twenty plates that had to be taken off, fifteen had to be renewed.[47]

The *Empress of France* was in Vancouver when the *Canada* ran aground, the intention being that the ships should exchange crews there, and so permit the *Empress of France* to return promptly to the Atlantic by way of Panama. When the *Canada* was disabled, the *Empress of France* sailed for the Orient in her stead. Fast work on the part of Yarrows' workmen enabled the *Canada* to get to sea on November 3, and by sailing directly to Hong Kong, she was able to catch up with the *Empress of France* there, and so keep the disruption of schedules to a minimum.

The marked improvement in the performance of the *Empress of Canada* brought about by her new engines soon became apparent. On her second homeward voyage from Yokahama she averaged 20.44 knots, or only a fraction of a knot less than she had achieved on her record run in 1923. Some machinery

(47) For details of the damage, etc., see *Harbor and Shipping*, XII, pp. 494, 512 (November, 1929). An average of 275 men were employed by Yarrows on the repair work.

adjustments became necessary in 1930, but by the following spring she was at last able to show her paces. In March, 1931, she averaged 21 knots on the voyage from Yokohama to William Head, and in May, travelling by way of Honolulu, she did better still. Between Yokohama and Honolulu she attained the highest average of her career—21.78 knots—and between Honolulu and Victoria her speed was 21.47 knots. In August, sailing from Yokohama direct to Victoria, she averaged 21.57 knots—her fastest run on the northern route. Her new engines gave her an ample reserve of power, and she could be depended upon to maintain a steady average of over 20 knots. The last two years she was on the Pacific she made a dozen voyages to the Orient and back by way of Honolulu, and the remarkable consistency of her performance is shown by the average speeds that she maintained between Honolulu and Victoria. Eight of the twelve passages were made at speeds of from 20.76 to 20.87 knots, and three others at 20.66, 20.51, and 20.25 knots respectively. Only on one of the twelve voyages did she fall below 20 knots; her average was 19.73 knots upon this occasion. These speeds were maintained with her engines developing slightly less than the 26,000 horse-power that John Johnson had intended them to maintain in normal service.[48]

When the *Empress of Canada* made her record run in May, 1931, she was no longer Queen of the Pacific. A larger and faster *Empress* had by then joined the fleet. This was the second *Empress of Japan,* which, like her three running-mates, was built in the Fairfield yard at Govan. The official announcement that a new Pacific *Empress* would be ordered soon was made in February, 1928, and the contract was duly awarded in June. Though she bore a family resemblance to the earlier ships, the design of the *Empress of Japan* represented a great step forward in almost every respect. Indeed, she had much more in common with the *Empress of Britain,* the sumptuous 42,000-ton express liner for the Atlantic service that the Canadian Pacific was building at this same time, than she had with the *Empress of Canada.* Her length over all is 666 feet, her beam 83 feet 6 inches, and her gross tonnage 26,032. Her great

(48) All average speeds, etc., here cited are taken from the voyage reports of the *Canada's* chief engineer.

width makes her interior remarkably spacious, and full advantage was taken of this both in the fine suite of public rooms on the promenade deck and in her staterooms. A great palm court and ballroom extending right across the ship at the forward end of the promenade deck, an entrance-hall of reception-room proportions, and wide expanses of deck for sports are amongst the ship's features. Her extra deck, sweeping promenades, and huge funnels seem somehow to increase her bulk disproportionately, and both to the passer-by and to the visitor on board the *Empress of Japan* seems to be very much larger, in comparison to the *Empress of Canada*, than she actually is.

The new *Empress* was the first trans-Pacific liner in which John Johnson designed the whole of the propelling-machinery. She reflects the experience he gained in the five fast freighters of the *Beaver* class that the Canadian Pacific built for the Montreal–London service, and the four *Duchess*-type passenger liners for the Atlantic that followed. Johnson believed that water-tube boilers (replacing the old Scotch cylindrical type), high-pressure steam, superheaters, and single-reduction geared turbines were the best combination, and in the *Empress of Japan* the results achieved were striking. The working-pressure of her boilers is 425 lb. (as compared with 210 lb. in the old-style boilers in the *Canada*), and her turbines were designed to develop up to 30,000 horse-power in normal service, and somewhat more, if need be, for short periods. It is interesting to note that the estimated cost of the new ship was no more than £1,270,000, or less than two-thirds the cost of the *Empress of Canada* in 1921–22.[49]

The *Empress of Japan* was launched on December 17, 1929, by Mrs. Peacock, wife of Mr. E. R. (now Sir Edward) Peacock, a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway. By June, 1930, she was ready for service. On her trials she attained a speed of 23 knots, and like the re-engined *Empress of Canada* she made a voyage to Quebec to make sure that all was shipshape before she sailed for her distant station on the Pacific. She was in no way forced, but the results indicated that her designers and builders had produced a remarkably efficient vessel. Homeward

(49) The figure is given in the *Annual Report* of the Canadian Pacific Railway for 1928, p. 8.

bound she averaged 21.09 knots, and she maintained this speed with her engines developing no more than 26,100 horse-power and with a fuel consumption of only 168.8 tons of oil per day.[50]

The *Empress* went to the Pacific by way of the Mediterranean, and took her place in the regular sailing schedule at the beginning of August. Captain Robinson was in command, and James Lamb was chief engineer. She showed her capabilities immediately, for she broke the trans-Pacific record on her maiden voyage, which ended at Vancouver on August 22. Her time from Yokohama to William Head was 8 days 6 hours and 27 minutes, and her average speed 21.04 knots. Her arrival was a gala occasion, and Captain E. Aikman, general superintendent in Vancouver, seized the opportunity to recall the career of the original *Empress of Japan* that had served the company so well for more than thirty years. The figurehead of the old *Empress* has been preserved and erected in Stanley Park, inside the First Narrows, and her bell is a cherished possession of the Vancouver Merchants Exchange. The new *Empress of Japan* dipped her colours to the figurehead as she entered Vancouver Harbour for the first time, and the old liner's bell, borrowed for the purpose, was used by the toastmaster at the banquet held on board to celebrate her arrival. When she was opened for public inspection, some 13,000 persons visited the new ship, and various seamen's charities received the thousands of dollars collected in admission fees.

By the beginning of 1931 the *Empress* was ready to make an attempt to lower the record she had established the previous summer. Her engines had been carefully broken in, and it was clear that she could easily improve upon her past performance. This she did in February, on her fourth east-bound passage, when she averaged 21.47 knots.[51] But it was on her fifth voyage that she put possession of her laurels definitely beyond the reach of her friendly rival, the *Empress of Canada*. The King of Siam was to travel in her, and Captain Robinson doubtless received

(50) *Shipping World*, September 3, 1930, p. 312. A good description of the *Empress of Japan*, complete with midship section, profile, deck plans, etc., will be found in *Shipbuilding and Shipping Record*, September 25, 1930, pp. 349–354.

(51) Her time from Yokohama to Race Rocks was 8 days 3 hours and 18 minutes.

permission to make the best time he could. The *Empress* left Yokohama at 3.32 p.m. on April 9 and was off Race Rocks by 6.48 p.m. on April 16. The Pacific had thus been crossed in less than eight days, for her steaming-time was only 7 days 20 hours and 16 minutes. The average speed was 22.27 knots. Her engines were opened up fully on this voyage for the first time since her trials, and the horse-power developed was 29,000. Her speed varied only slightly throughout the passage, for the day runs were all between a low of 504 miles and a high of 520 miles.[52]

This record, which still stands unchallenged, was a fitting climax to the career of both Captain Robinson and Chief Engineer Lamb, both of whom reached retirement age soon after. Captain L. D. Douglas took command in 1932, and R. H. Shaw presently replaced Mr. Lamb as chief engineer. In their charge the *Empress* settled down to the regular round of schedule-keeping. No further attempt on the Yokohama–Race Rocks record was possible, for the ship was now calling at Honolulu on both east- and west-bound voyages. It was not long, however, before she established a new record between Yokohama and Honolulu. Late in May, 1935, she covered the distance in 6 days 8 hours and 39 minutes at an average speed of 22.16 knots, and on the second leg of the crossing, from Honolulu to Victoria, she attained the fastest average speed of her career so far—22.37 knots. Three years later, in April, 1938, she improved upon her Yokohama–Honolulu run by one of the narrowest margins by which a big ship ever took a record. Her average speed was 22.17 knots, and her steaming-time for the whole distance of 3,383 miles was only six minutes less than in 1935.[53]

7.

The completion of the *Empress of Japan* gave the Canadian Pacific the four liners, all specially designed for the trade, that the company had been endeavouring to place on the run to the

(52) All details from the official voyage report of Chief Engineer James Lamb. The day runs were 462, 518, 511, 504, 505, 516, 520, 509, and 155. On this voyage the *Empress* carried a total of 1,158 passengers, of whom 481 were in first class, 218 in second class, 135 in third class, and 324 in the Oriental steerage.

(53) All details from the voyage reports of Chief Engineer R. H. Shaw.

Orient ever since the end of the Great War. Unfortunately the depression commenced just before the fleet was brought up to full strength. Its effect on trans-Pacific shipping was relatively slight in 1930, and cargo movements were still fairly heavy in 1931. The crisis came in 1932, and freight pickings continued to be extremely slim for several years thereafter. Statistics will best show how serious the situation became. In 1929 the average cargo carried by the *Empress of Russia*, homeward bound from the Orient, was just under 4,000 tons. By 1931 the average had fallen to 2,500 tons, and in 1932 it was no more than 700 tons. In June, 1932, the *Empress of Asia* actually arrived with less than 200 tons of cargo rattling about in her echoing holds.[54]

To make matters worse, it was at this same time that the highly lucrative silk trade entered a rapid decline. For this two factors were responsible. The first was a fall in the value of silk, due both to the depression and to the development of rayon and other substitutes. In 1924 the average price of silk had been $6.50 per pound, and it was still $5.11 in 1929. Within a year, however, it had fallen to $3.70, and in 1934 it was no more than $1.27. As the value of silk shipments fell, they naturally became less expensive to insure, and this in turn made the fast transit offered by the *Empresses* less important. It was at this point that the second factor entered the scene—the desire of the Japanese to divert the trade to their own vessels. Nor were they content merely to have the silk, most of which was bound for New York and the Eastern United States, cross the Pacific in Japanese ships instead of foreign ones; they wished to avoid using Canadian and American railroads as well. With this in mind the Nippon Yusen Kaisha built a fleet of specially designed fast freighters to sail from Japan direct to New York by way of the Panama Canal. The first of the new ships entered service in 1929, and by 1939 they had captured 90 per cent. of the silk trade.[55]

---

(54) These estimates are based on the cargo returns (in tons measurement) published month by month in *Harbor and Shipping*, Vancouver.

(55) *See* Walter A. Radius, *United States Shipping in Transpacific Trade: 1922–1938*, Stanford University Press, 1944, p. 78, where further details are given.

Whether or not this new line paid its way was beside the point; it accomplished the nationalistic purpose the Japanese had in mind. The ties between Japanese industry and Japanese shipping were extremely close, and the task of securing a share of Japan's export trade became more and more difficult for the outsider. The bargaining position of the *Empresses* was strengthened by their close link with a transcontinental railway and the various industrial enterprises in which the Canadian Pacific was interested, and they retained a certain foothold within Japan, thanks to certain still-powerful export houses that had long served the company. The bulk of their cargoes, however, were carried to and from Chinese rather than Japanese ports, and the outbreak of hostilities in China in 1937 was therefore a heavy blow to their prospects. Surprisingly enough, general trade seemed actually to increase at first, but times were becoming difficult by 1939. Yet at certain seasons cargo holds were still well filled. Late in 1938, for example, the *Empress of Canada* docked with a 4,500-ton cargo, and the *Empress of Russia* carried about 4,100 tons when she arrived a fortnight later. But these were altogether exceptional figures. Taking the year as a whole, the *Empress of Russia* loaded an average of about 1,900 tons outward, and on her homeward passages arrived with an average of about 1,600 tons.[56]

With freight revenues falling, the Canadian Pacific turned to the passenger trade and sought means both of increasing it and of offering stiffer competition to rival lines. It is noteworthy that the possibility of curtailing the *Empress* service never seems to have been considered. In depression and in prosperity alike an *Empress* sailed for the Orient every fortnight. Nor was the scheduled speed of the liners lowered. They had been designed to cross the Pacific in a specified number of days, and this they continued to do, whether their cabins and holds were full or relatively empty. Indeed, it was upon the speed of its ships that the company depended in great part to see it through the difficult trading days of the thirties.

The most important change made was the extension of the service to include regular sailings to Honolulu. *Empresses* had

(56) Estimates based on cargo returns as published each month in *Harbor and Shipping*, Vancouver.

called there occasionally in the past on their way home from the Orient, but the visit lengthened the trans-Pacific voyage by more than 1,500 miles, and ships with a somewhat higher operating speed seemed necessary to maintain a regular schedule. This was kept in mind when the *Empress of Japan* was designed and the *Empress of Canada* re-engined, and the service was inaugurated as soon as the *Canada* returned to the Pacific. To begin with, the call was made west-bound only, but the two faster *Empresses* began sailing in both directions by way of Honolulu in 1931.

The new service was successful from the start, and at the peak of the season the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* made a special sailing or two by way of the Hawaiian Islands to help handle the rush of traffic. Even in the depression days of 1932 it was not uncommon for an *Empress* to clear from Victoria for Honolulu with a capacity list.

Another change made at this time was the introduction of "tourist" class, which took the place of the old second-class accommodation in the *Empresses*. The traveller of modest means, who wished to secure reasonably comfortable accommodation at moderate rates, had all at once become a person of financial importance to trans-Pacific shipping companies. In catering to his needs, the *Empresses* were at a disadvantage, for they had been designed in the spacious days when the first-class passenger was all-important, and the luxuries provided for him were permitted to absorb a vast amount of space. Except in the *Empress of Japan*, second class was, by comparison, very cramped and unattractive. But much could be and was done to improve matters. Public rooms were enlarged and refurnished, new ones were added, promenade space was reallocated as between classes, and even in the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* the tourist-class passenger presently found an open-air swimming-pool provided for him at the after end of "A" deck.

The Honolulu call had a further interesting result—it brought the *Empresses* into direct competition with the American and Japanese liners sailing between San Francisco and the Orient. By 1931 these opponents made up a formidable fleet. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha, which had absorbed the old Toyo Kisen Kaisha, had built and placed in service the three 17,000-ton

motorships of the *Asama Maru* type, and the Dollar Line had recently completed the *President Hoover* and *President Coolidge*, sister ships of 21,936 tons gross. But none of these fine vessels proved to be a match for the *Empresses* in speed. The Japanese motorships could not maintain more than 19 knots, and the top service speed of the *Presidents* was between 20 and 20½ knots. In a pinch the *Empress of Japan*, by comparison, could always work up to 22 knots, and the *Empress of Canada* to 21 knots or more. As a result, it was possible to operate the *Japan* and *Canada* on a seven-day schedule from Yokohama to Honolulu—a full day faster than their rivals could attempt. Moreover, they could travel from Honolulu to Vancouver in the same time (five days) taken by the American and Japanese ships to cover the much shorter distance from Honolulu to San Francisco. In sum, the *Empresses* could go 1,500 miles out of their way, reap their share of the lucrative passenger trade to and from the holiday isles and still reach Vancouver before their competitors docked in San Francisco. For travellers in a hurry, the *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia*, sailing on the direct northern route, offered a ten-day service from Yokohama to Vancouver—a mark none of the San Francisco lines could distantly approach.

The Honolulu call brought new fame to the "White *Empresses*," as they were usually called. As this implies, the black hulls introduced after World War I never became popular; the original colour scheme, dating back to 1891, was restored within a few years. The first of the fleet to appear in her white coat was the *Empress of Asia*, which arrived in Vancouver, fresh from overhaul, in January, 1927. Later the same year Pier B-C, a vast new terminal built specially to cater to the needs of the *Empresses*, was completed in Vancouver. The formal opening took place on July 4, but the pier had then actually been in use for some months. In 1932 the Canadian Pacific decided to make use of the 1,150-foot dry-dock at Esquimalt for the summer overhauls of the *Empresses*, and on July 8 the *Empress of Russia* was docked, and her hull cleaned and painted. The other ships of the fleet followed in turn, and all four visited Esquimalt regularly each summer thereafter.

The service was carried on, year after year, with remarkable regularity and freedom from accident. The adventures of the

Empress of Australia in the Yokohama earthquake of 1923 and the stranding of the *Empress of Canada* near William Head in 1929 were the only occasions upon which a ship of the fleet was in really serious danger. Some mishaps did, of course, occur. In January, 1926, the *Empress of Asia* struck and sank the small freighter *Tung Shing,* which blundered into her path in the crooked river channel below Shanghai, and in March, 1927, the *Empress of Canada* sank the Japanese collier *Jinsho Maru* in the same vicinity under very similar circumstances. In November, 1932, the *Canada* suffered slight damage in collision with the *Yeitai Maru* between Kobe and Shanghai; and in June, 1937, a sudden gust of wind caught her as she approached the dock at Vancouver, swung her about, and caused her to ram her bow into the reinforced-concrete side of Pier B-C. Fortunately the damage suffered was mostly to paint and tempers.

Plans for the replacement of the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* were afoot not long after the *Empress of Japan* joined the fleet. In 1931, when they had been in service for eighteen years, the *Russia* and *Asia* were subjected to a careful scrutiny by company officials. Although, generally speaking, they were found to be in good condition, the report was critical of their electrical and ventilating systems, neither of which was satisfactory by later-day standards. The maximum useful life of the ships was estimated to be another seven years, and the view was expressed that it would probably be wiser to replace them within three years. The depression made this impracticable, and the now aging sisters were reprieved, refurbished from time to time, and retained in service. By 1938, however, the Canadian Pacific was ready to embark upon another great ship-building program, and this was to include two new steamers for the run to the Orient. Orders for these were to have been placed in 1939, but by that time the whole program had been postponed, for costs had risen to such a degree that it was impossible to secure any of the ships for the prices the Company had in mind.[57]

(57) This new building program was to have included two 25,000-ton 23-knot liners for the Canadian-Australasian Line, two new Pacific *Empresses,* and a companion liner for the *Empress of Britain.* The Canadian Pacific hoped to secure the five ships for £11,000,000. Sir Edward Beatty arrived in Great Britain in July, 1938, expecting to place the order

The *Empresses* wore amazingly well in their old age. They lacked private bathrooms and burned coal instead of oil, but they were thoroughly comfortable ships, and popular with passengers. Mechanically the most serious mishaps they suffered were cracked spokes in the spiders of their turbine rotors. One crack developed in the *Empress of Russia* in 1930, and another appeared in the *Empress of Asia* three years later. For the only time in her long career the *Russia* missed a voyage, while repairs were made at Bremerton, but the *Asia* was able to carry on until overhaul time, and maintained her schedule as usual. It is interesting to note that the older *Empresses* all wore their after-bottom plating thin, owing to the fact that they ploughed and scraped through the mud and sand in the lower reaches of the Woosung River every time they called at Shanghai; indeed, the *Empress of Canada* once wore a plate completely through, and sprang a leak as a consequence. Extra plates were eventually fitted to the ships' bottoms to protect them from further damage.[58]

Entries in log-books and voyage reports show that the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* maintained as high average speeds in 1938—their last complete year of peace-time service—as they had done when brand new in 1913. On the six voyages she made in 1938 from Yokohama to Race Rocks, the average speed of the *Empress of Asia* only varied from 18.34 to 18.96 knots, and the performance of the *Empress of Russia* was on a par. Five of her crossings were made at from 18.79 to 18.92 knots, while her average on the sixth passage was 17.83 knots. More remarkable still, their fuel consumption per round voyage was substantially less than it had been in 1913. The old ships were in the hands of unusually competent chief engineers, and there seems to have been a friendliness and co-operation between them and the *Empress* captains that is far from being characteristic of all merchant fleets. Everyone worked together to accomplish the end in view, and the result was astonishing. In 1939, in spite of the fact that she was then twenty-five years old, the *Empress of Russia* actually consumed nearly 10,000 tons less coal

---

for the Canadian-Australasian liners, but prices proved to be too high, and it was decided to postpone the program.

(58) This paragraph based on voyage reports, etc.

in the course of the six round trips she made to the Orient than she had burned on six corresponding voyages in 1925. Results such as these helped to reconcile the company's accountants to the necessity of keeping the old ships in service far beyond the expected replacement date![59]

8.

The only captain of the later *Empresses* who had served in the fleet from its beginning was Captain Edward Beetham, first skipper of the *Empress of Russia*. He came to the Pacific as fourth officer in the *Empress of Japan* in 1891, and had been captain of the *Empress of India* for seven years when he was appointed to the *Russia*. As things turned out, he remained in his new command only a few months, for in January, 1914, he turned her over to Captain A. W. Davison, and came ashore to take the post of marine superintendent in Vancouver. Captain Davison was a contemporary of Captain Samuel Robinson, first commander of the *Empress of Asia;* both had joined the Company in 1895. Captain Robinson and Captain Davison exchanged ships in 1916, when the *Empresses* returned to their regular run after their first spell of war-time service, and then carried on until 1919, when Captain Davison accepted a shore appointment in Hong Kong.

Captain A. J. Hailey, who had been serving in various ships of the line since 1900, thereupon took over the *Empress of Asia*. He and Captain Robinson were the senior skippers of the fleet for many years, sailing first in the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*, then in the *Empress of Australia* and *Empress of Canada*, and finally in the *Empress of Canada* and the new *Empress of Japan*. Few *Empress* captains have been as well known, or have rivalled them in popularity. Only Captain O. P. Marshall and Captain Henry Pybus, of the old guard, and Captain L. D. Douglas and Captain A. J. Hosken, of later days, have approached them in these respects.

Empress captains seem often to emerge in pairs. Captain Hosken and Captain Douglas, for example, were opposite numbers for years. Captain Hosken joined the old *Empress of*

(59) All speeds, fuel statistics, etc., here referred to were extracted from voyage reports and other documents in the files of the general superintendent, Canadian Pacific Steamships, Vancouver.

Japan as fourth officer in 1904. By 1913 he was chief officer of the *Empress of Russia,* in which he was to spend most of the next twenty years. He left her briefly in 1914 and again in 1919 to take over his first command, the *Monteagle,* and then became captain of the *Russia* herself in 1922. He was her skipper for more than twelve years—the second longest period that any *Empress* captain has ever been in command of the same ship. At the end of 1934 he succeeded Captain Hailey in the *Empress of Canada,* but failing health compelled him to retire in 1936. Captain Douglas, a *Conway* boy who had first visited Vancouver in the sailing ship *Silverhorn,* was appointed third officer of the *Empress of India* in 1905. He became chief officer of the *Empress of Asia* in 1913, thus keeping step with Captain Hosken. In 1919, when Hosken was captain of the *Monteagle,* he was in command of the *Methven.* In 1921 he moved to the *Empress of Asia.* Some years later, when only three Pacific *Empresses* were on the run, he gave up his command to serve in the capacity of staff captain; as soon as the fleet was brought up to full strength, he again became captain of the *Asia.* In 1932 he succeeded Captain Robinson in the pride of the fleet, the new *Empress of Japan.* He reached retirement age in 1940 and handed over the *Japan* to Captain Thomas; but within a year he was recalled to active duty and appointed general superintendent in Vancouver. From this post he retired for a second time in 1946.

Captain Douglas's propensity for happening to be in command of a ship when she made a record run reminds one of the late Captain Pybus. He was in command of the *Empress of Asia* when she averaged 20.2 knots, a mark neither she nor the *Empress of Russia* ever improved upon; he was in the *Empress of Canada* when she averaged 21.57 knots between Yokohama and Victoria in 1931, and the *Empress of Japan* when she averaged 22.37 knots between Honolulu and Victoria in 1935.

Another well-known *Empress* skipper was Captain A. J. Holland. (The initials " A. J. H.," it may be noted in passing, were well represented in the *Empress* fleet. Captain A. J. Hailey, Captain A. J. Hosken, and Captain A. J. Holland were all afloat at one and the same time!) Captain Holland did not climb the ladder of seniority with the same regularity as some of his colleagues; spells of service as a relief captain and a variety of

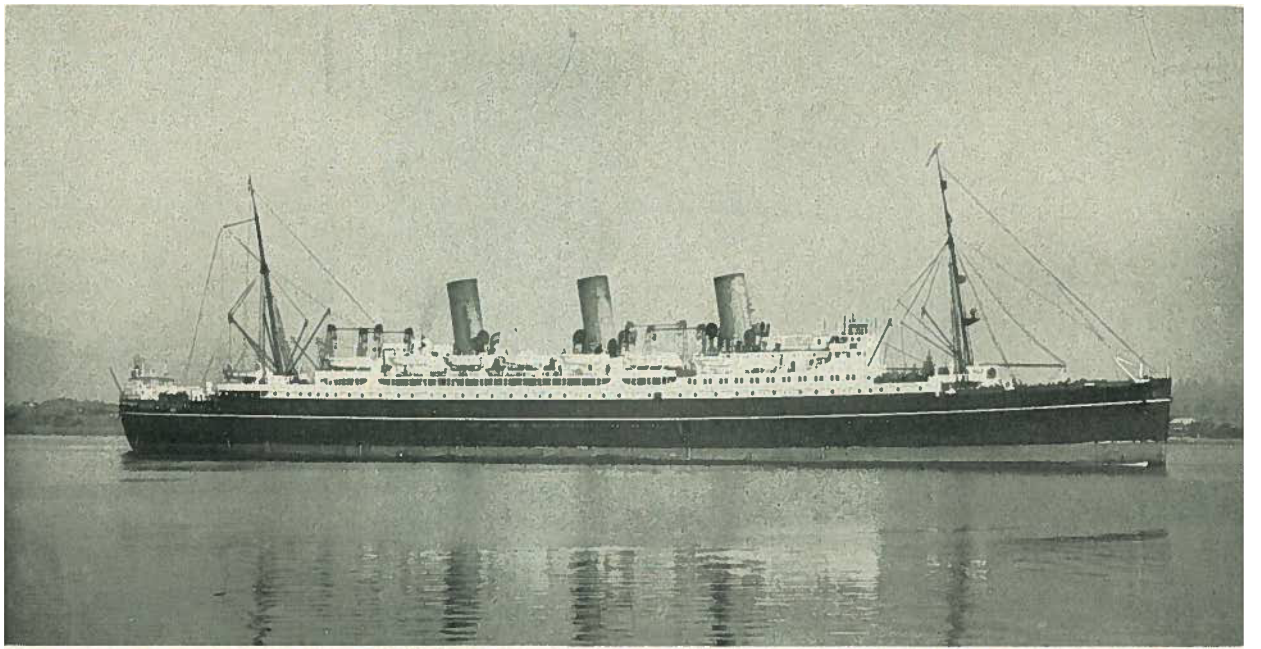
shore appointments made his career a varied one. He joined one of the original *Empresses* as fourth officer in 1906, and he took over his first command—the old *Empress of Japan*—in 1919. He came ashore for good in 1931, when he was appointed marine superintendent in Vancouver, a post he held until 1942.

Captain W. T. Kinley and Captain George Goold both joined the fleet in 1913, the former as a junior officer in the *Empress of Russia*, and the latter as fourth officer of the old *Empress of Japan*. Fittingly enough the *Empress of Russia*, in which he first served, happened to be Captain Kinley's first command. He took her over in 1935, but moved the following year to the *Empress of Canada*, in which he succeeded Captain Hosken. It was from the *Canada* that he himself retired at the end of 1940. Captain Goold's first command was also the *Empress of Russia;* he was appointed to her in 1936, in succession to Captain Kinley. Within a few months, however, he was transferred to the *Empress of Asia*, and he remained in her until he once again succeeded Captain Kinley, this time in the *Empress of Canada*. When the *Canada* was torpedoed and sunk in 1943, he returned, after an interval of a few months, to his first ship, the *Empress of Russia*.

Other well-remembered skippers include Captain Herbert James, always a stately figure in his immaculate uniform, who commanded the *Empress of Russia* for a few months in 1934–35; Captain E. P. Green, who, after his retirement from the *Empress of Asia*, crossed the Pacific he knew so well in the 50-foot ketch-rigged yacht *Romance;* and Captain J. F. Patrick, who commanded the *Empress of Russia* during her last years on the regular run to the Orient.

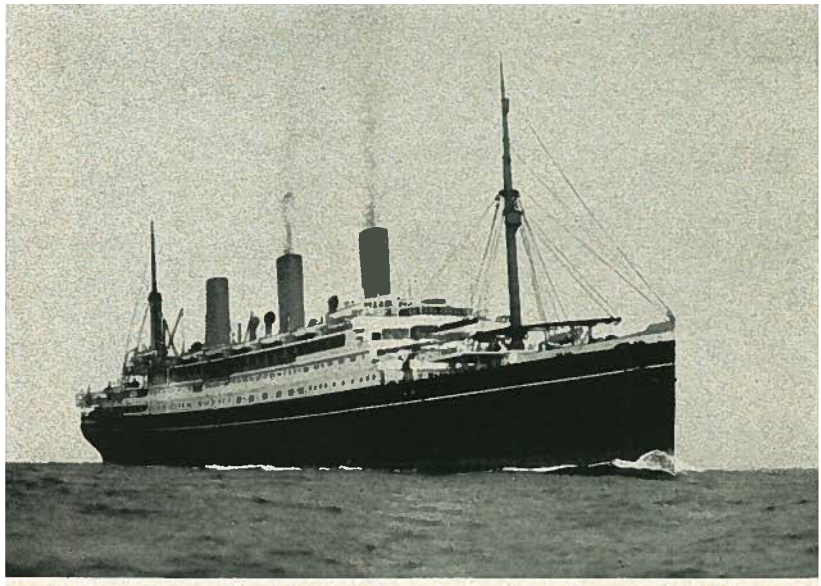
Like Captain Beetham, James Adamson, first chief engineer of the *Empress of Russia*, had served in the fleet ever since the inauguration of the service in 1891. To begin with, his opposite number in the *Empress of Asia* was William Auld, but he was soon succeeded by W. J. P. Davies. When Captain Robinson and Captain Davison exchanged ships in 1916, so did their chief engineers, and it was in the *Empress of Asia* that James Adamson concluded his long career in 1919.

Adamson is the great figure amongst the old chief engineers, and James Lamb looms correspondingly large in more recent



Chapman Collection, Provincial Archives.

The *Empress of Canada* arriving at Victoria at the end of her maiden voyage in June, 1922.



Chapman Collection, Provincial Archives.

The *Empress of Australia* photographed off Victoria on her arrival from England in 1922.

days. He joined the fleet in 1899, became the chief of the *Empress of Russia* in 1916 and of the *Empress of Canada* in 1923. In 1928–29 he stood by the *Canada* when she was re-engined at Fairfield, and, when she was ready for sea, remained behind to devote his attention to the new *Empress of Japan*, which was then approaching the launching stage. He was chief of the great new *Empress* until his retirement in 1933, and was thus in charge of her engine-room when she made her record voyages in 1931. Few men knew more about turbines and their ways, and fewer still could operate them more efficiently.

Other chief engineers of the fleet who made a name for themselves included W. H. Froude, who took over the *Empress of Canada* after she was re-engined, and continued in charge of her for a good many years, and David G. R. Smith, who had been in one ship or another of the fleet since 1903, and succeeded Froude in the *Canada*. He in turn gave place in 1940 to J. B. Deans, who served in the *Empress* until within a few months of her loss.

Two further names must be added to the list, those of David Cowper and John Bald. Mr. Cowper came to the *Empresses* from the *Princesses* of the British Columbia Coast Service in 1914, going first to the *Empress of Asia*. His longest term of service as chief in a single ship was in the *Empress of Russia*, in the later thirties. From her he went to the *Empress of Canada*, just before she sailed on her last voyage. John Bald joined the *Empress of Russia* in 1913, and he became her chief engineer in 1924. About 1929 he was transferred to the *Empress of Asia*, where he remained until his retirement over twelve years later.

Cowper and Bald deserve much credit for the remarkable fuel economy attained in the coal-burning *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* during their last years in service. It is not often that ships twenty-five years old, and still propelled by their original engines and boilers, operate on less fuel, at comparable speeds, than they did when new. But another factor in this result must not be overlooked—the watchful eye of R. R. Liddell, superintendent engineer at Vancouver from 1930 to 1941. Mr. Liddell had worked closely with John Johnson, the Canadian Pacific's chief superintendent engineer, both when the *Empress of Australia* and *Empress of Canada* were re-engined, and when

the new *Empress of Japan* was designed and built. He thus knew the larger ships of the Pacific fleet well before he arrived in Vancouver, and he soon made himself well acquainted with the older liners. Many of the small changes and adjustments that resulted in so great a saving of fuel were made at his suggestion, but the over-all improvement obtained was due to a common effort by all concerned, and, as already noted, this effort extended to captains as well as to chief engineers.

9.

The war-time adventures of the *Empresses* would fill a book if recorded in detail. They sailed all the seven seas, visited innumerable strange harbours, performed an immense variety of duties, and between them made a very substantial contribution to the Allied cause.[60]

On September 3, 1939, the *Empress of Japan* was at Shanghai, bound for Vancouver, and the safety of this most valuable unit of the fleet became the first concern of the authorities. Even at that date the British Admiralty distrusted the Japanese, and the *Empress* was therefore ordered to omit her usual calls at Kobe and Yokohama and sail for Honolulu direct. To protect her further, rumours were artfully scattered to the effect that she was returning to Hong Kong, and she duly vanished over the horizon in that direction. Once out of sight, however, she swung round to the east and headed for the open Pacific. The cruiser *Kent* joined her as escort, and her aeroplane went up to reconnoitre and make sure that all was clear ahead.

The other *Empresses* kept more or less to schedule, but efforts were made to give them a coat of grey paint as quickly as possible. The *Empress of Canada*, which had sailed for Honolulu from Vancouver on September 2, had some paint on board which was applied to her upperworks where and when possible, as the

(60) Captain R. W. McMurray, general manager of Canadian Pacific Steamships, Limited, and his staff very kindly furnished the writer with as complete a tabulation of the movements of the *Empresses* during the war years as could be compiled from the records available in Montreal, together with copies of any voyage reports, special reports, etc., that were of special interest. This account is based on these documents and on discussions with Captain L. D. Douglas, Captain L. C. Barry (who served as chief officer of the *Empress of Canada* during the first two years of the war), Captain George Goold, and Chief Officer Donald Smith of the *Empress of Asia*.

voyage proceeded. The two forward funnels could only be painted in part, as the tops were too hot, but the after funnel, being a dummy, could be painted all over. The whole effect was distinctly spotty, and gave rise to reports that the ship was camouflaged when she reached Hawaii.

Late in September the *Empress of Japan* went to Esquimalt, where a 6-inch gun and a 3-inch anti-aircraft gun were installed. The *Empress of Canada* was armed the following month, and in November both *Empresses* were requisitioned—the *Canada* on the 29th, at Hong Kong, and the *Japan* about the same time, in Vancouver. By an odd chance the *Empress of Canada* had crossed the Pacific exactly two hundred times when she was taken over.

The first war-time task of the *Empresses* was to carry Australian and New Zealand troops to the Near East. The *Japan* went first to Sydney, and the *Canada* to Wellington; but the convoy as a whole assembled off Melbourne on January 12, 1940. It consisted of eleven ships, including such well-known steamers as the P. & O. liners *Strathnaver* and *Strathaird*, the *Orion* and *Otranto* of the Orient Line, and the New Zealand Shipping Company's *Rangitata*. For a time the escort included the battleship *Ramilles* and the aircraft carrier *Eagle*.[61] From Suez and Port Said, which proved to be the destinations respectively of the *Empress of Canada* and *Empress of Japan*, the liners returned independently to the Antipodes.

The second convoy in which the *Empresses* sailed was one of the most remarkable of the whole war. It consisted of the Cunard liners *Queen Mary*, *Aquitania*, and *Mauretania*, the Canadian Pacific's *Empress of Britain*, *Empress of Japan*, and *Empress of Canada*, and the new *Andes*, the largest ship of the Royal Mail Lines. Between them these seven great vessels totalled 276,918 gross tons, or an average of almost 40,000 tons each. Escorted by the cruisers *Canberra* and *Leander*, they assembled off Melbourne on May 6 and set sail for Colombo by way of Freemantle. Presently, however, fear that Italy might enter the war at any moment caused the convoy to be diverted to Capetown, where it arrived safely on May 26. Here the

(61) Two or three naval ships were always in company; six cruisers (H.M.A.S. *Canberra*, *Australia*, and *Hobart*, H.M.S. *Sussex* and *Kent*, and the French *Suffren*) and a destroyer were present at one time or another.

Empress of Japan and *Empress of Canada* encountered unexpected difficulties. Both ships still had many Chinese in their crews, and when the *Empresses* were ordered to sail for the United Kingdom, the Chinese refused to accompany them and enter the war zone. In the end it was decided that Captain Douglas should take the Chinese from both liners to Hong Kong in the *Empress of Japan*, while Captain Kinley undertook to muster a scratch crew and, somehow or other, get the *Empress of Canada* to the Clyde, as intended. He had his troubles, and so did his chief engineer, David Smith, who rose from a sick bed to settle difficulties below decks; but on June 16 the *Canada* reached Gourock, the seaside resort on the Clyde near Greenock, which the *Empresses* were to come to know so well.

This voyage marked the conclusion of two notable careers, for ill-health forced the retirement of both Captain Kinley and Chief Engineer Smith when the *Canada* arrived. Captain Goold of the *Empress of Asia* was appointed to succeed Captain Kinley, but as he was unable to join the *Canada* immediately, Captain Moore, of the Atlantic fleet, took command for a single voyage. J. B. Deans succeeded David Smith. The following month, on the other side of the world, Captain Douglas, commodore of the Pacific fleet, reached retirement age and handed over the *Empress of Japan* to his able staff captain, Captain J. W. Thomas.

When Captain Douglas left the *Japan*, she was busy evacuating women and children from Hong Kong to the supposedly greater security of Manila, and she completed this task under Captain Thomas. She was then overhauled, and her next assignment proved to be another voyage from Australia and New Zealand to Suez. Late in September, when she was nearing her destination, a familiar silhouette appeared on the horizon, that of the *Empress of Canada*, which had just completed a voyage from Glasgow to Suez. The *Canada* had sailed early in August in a fast seven-liner convoy that included three old travelling companions, the *Empress of Britain*, *Strathaird*, and *Andes*, and three new acquaintances, the P. & O. *Stratheden*, the Polish *Batory*, and the Furness liner *Monarch of Bermuda*. On this trip the *Empress of Canada* was carrying 1,918 troops and a crew of 323, or a total of 2,241 persons in all. Later her troop-

carrying capacity was substantially increased, and she could accommodate 3,000 or more service personnel.

Homeward bound, the *Canada* and her consorts did not travel together. The shortage of escort ships was desperate, and the faster liners were instructed to sail singly from Capetown, spaced a day or two apart. From the point of view of the Canadian Pacific the decision was an unfortunate one, for the pride of its fleet, the 42,000-ton *Empress of Britain,* was bombed, burned, and sunk off Northern Ireland on October 26. The *Empress of Canada,* next in line, slipped through safely and reached the Clyde on the 29th. Early in November, however, the *Empress of Japan,* which had been ordered to the United Kingdom, narrowly escaped the *Britain's* fate. Off Northern Ireland she was heavily bombed, and although she suffered no direct hits, much havoc to her machinery was caused by near misses. Shaft bearings were damaged, a main condenser was disabled, and her lighting system knocked out. Working in total darkness, Chief Engineer Shaw and his men managed to keep the vessel moving, and on November 10 she crept into the Clyde, safe at last. There she was anchored in shallow water over a soft bottom, for it was feared that she might sink owing to the damage done to her main intakes. Repairs, which were carried out at Glasgow and Belfast, took about six weeks, at the end of which the company's superintendent was able to report that the *Empress* was once again in excellent condition.[62]

The *Empress of Canada* was lying at Gourock when the *Japan* entered the Clyde, and this was to be the last time that the two ships were actually in sight of one another. Before the *Japan* was moved to Belfast, the *Canada,* now commanded by Captain Goold, had sailed once more for Suez, this time in a ten-liner convoy that included the *Andes* and sundry old friends from the P. & O. and Orient Line fleets. From Suez the *Empress of Canada* herself went through into the Mediterranean, and she spent New Year's Day, 1941, at Alexandria. The return voyage was uneventful until the last few days, when a German raider

(62) Most of the details given are from reports received by Captain E. Aikman from Captain R. N. Stuart, European manager for Canadian Pacific Steamships, in November and December of 1940. *See also* the interview with Captain Thomas printed in the Vancouver *Province,* February 1, 1947.

found a convoy some distance ahead and sank six ships. Fortunately the *Canada's* luck held, and she arrived safely at Gourock on February 25.

She was there a month, and before it ended, both the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* arrived from the Pacific and moved on to Liverpool, where they were to be refitted as transports. We must, therefore, return to earlier days for a moment and bring the story of the old ships up to date.

Both of them had been left on their regular trans-Pacific run until late in 1940. The fact that they were coal-burners was doubtless partly responsible for this reprieve, for the transport authorities were well aware that it would make them difficult to man and probably hard to handle. The only adventures they encountered in 1940 came the way of the *Empress of Asia.* In February she made a sailing from Vancouver to Kobe direct, and it proved to be one of the roughest passages of her whole career. In the course of it a ventilator vanished bodily from the forecastle head, and the ship was so unsteady that the firemen had great difficulty in keeping up steam. In September a much more portentious event occurred. On the 14th, as the *Empress* was approaching Yokohama, a Japanese plane roared overhead and dropped a practice bomb that struck the ship, pierced two decks, penetrated to the galley, and wounded several Chinese crew members. Structural damage to the ship amounted to only $2,600, and the Japanese consul at Vancouver duly signed the repair bills; but the opinion persists that the bombing was meant to be insulting and was not in the least degree accidental.[63]

The *Empress of Russia* was requisitioned at Hong Kong on November 28, 1940. She had just completed her 310th trans-Pacific passage in the regular passenger service, and it is interesting to note that she thus failed, by a narrow margin, to equal the record of the original *Empress of Japan,* which crossed 315 times. In actual mileage, however, the *Russia* far surpassed the old *Empress.* Most of her voyages were on a longer route that included Manila, and she steamed much farther on war service

(63) *See* report, Chief Engineer J. Bald to R. R. Liddell, superintendent engineer, Vancouver, September 23, 1940; also Mr. Liddell's report to Montreal dated October 7, 1940.

in 1914–18. Moreover, nearly five years' service in World War II still lay ahead of her at this time.

Her first voyage took her around the Pacific. Leaving Hong Kong on November 30, she visited Wellington, Sydney, Auckland, Suva, and Honolulu, and arrived in Vancouver on January 23, 1941. The purpose of the trip was to bring Australian and New Zealand air recruits to Canada, en route to training stations, and the *Empress* was in effect replacing the well-known Canadian-Australasian liner *Niagara*, which had been mined and sunk the previous July.

In Vancouver the *Russia* found the *Empress of Asia*, which had just completed her final voyage from the Orient. This passage, which ended on January 11, was her 307th crossing, and, incidentally, the last scheduled sailing of a Pacific *Empress* to date. Both the sisters had been ordered to Great Britain for conversion into troop-ships, and they sailed in February, within a week of one another. The *Empress of Russia* got away on the 6th, under the command of Captain Mayall, who had succeeded Captain Patrick, and the *Empress of Asia* followed on the 13th, commanded by Captain J. Bissett Smith, who had taken over from Captain Goold. Both liners travelled by way of the Panama Canal, Jamaica, and Bermuda, and arrived in the Clyde in March, where, as already noted, they found the *Empress of Canada*. They soon shifted to Liverpool, where a couple of months was spent overhauling them, installing extra ventilating fans and cooking facilities, clearing certain areas of cabins, and otherwise adapting them for the transport service.

When the work was completed, they were placed on the United Kingdom-Capetown-Near East route that the *Empress of Canada* knew so well. The *Canada* herself had sailed for Suez late in March in a convoy that included no less than twenty-three transports. Two of the Canadian Pacific's *Duchesses*, the six finest ships in the P. & O. fleet, three Orient liners, two big Union Castle liners, the *Andes*, and the new French steamer *Pasteur* were all included. The importance attached to the convoy was shown by the escort provided, which consisted of the battleships *Nelson* and *Rodney*, two cruisers, and eight destroyers.

The *Empress of Asia* and *Empress of Russia* both got away on their first voyages in May, and early in June the *Empress of*

Canada, returning from Suez, passed the *Empress of Asia* near Durban. On this trip the *Canada* carried a ship-load of Greek refugees from Suez to Durban, and then proceeded to Halifax by way of Capetown and Trinidad. By so doing she was able to make a crossing from Halifax to the Clyde with Canadian troops in July. The last day out submarines were found in the vicinity, and one was definitely sunk by British destroyers.

This round-the-Atlantic route was adopted for other ships as well, and the *Empress of Russia* sailed from Halifax on August 25. The *Empress of Asia,* the next in line, called at New York before going to Halifax and a photograph taken of her at the time was widely published in the press. She was not used as a troop transport on this occasion; she sailed from Halifax on September 16, 1941, in a slow fifty-ship convoy. The *Asia* was the largest of this very mixed lot, while a 1,500-ton freighter was the smallest. The occasion is historic, because this happened to be the first Allied convoy escorted by ships of the United States Navy. From a point off Newfoundland to a rendezvous south of Iceland the escort consisted entirely of American warships. No submarine attacks occurred, but there was the usual trouble with stragglers, and one ship, which caught fire accidentally, had to be abandoned at sea.[64] The *Empress* reached Liverpool on the 28th and spent the next six weeks there receiving — amongst other things—a thorough cleaning, inside and out.

By the beginning of 1941 a Japanese attack seemed to be definitely in prospect, and the pressing need for troops switched for the time being from the Near East to Singapore. The *Empress of Japan* had sailed for Singapore as early as January 12, and she returned to the Clyde on May 15. The voyage, made in both directions by way of Capetown, totalled almost 32,000 miles. Homeward-bound, the *Empress* evacuated 1,400 civilians from Singapore to Colombo.[65] On June 3 she sailed on another trip to the Far East, and this time she was to circle the globe. Instead of turning back at Singapore she sailed on to Vancouver,

(64) *See* Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Battle of the Atlantic, September 1939–May 1943 (History of United States Naval Operations in World War II,* Vol. I), Boston, 1947, pp. 86–90.

(65) A summary of the war service of the *Empress of Japan* giving this and other details appeared in the Canadian Pacific *Staff Bulletin* for October, 1945, pp. 10, 11.

where she arrived on August 29. After being dry-docked and refitted at Esquimalt, she set out once more on September 30, and by the end of October she was back in Glasgow.

Meanwhile the *Empress of Canada* had had an adventure all her own. Fears had arisen that the Germans might seize Spitzbergen. As a precautionary measure it was decided that an attempt should be made to raid the island, destroy the coal mines and installations there, and so render it useless to the enemy for a long time to come. Members of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, a detachment of the Saskatoon Light Infantry, a company of the Royal Canadian Engineers, personnel of the R.A.S.C., and a Norwegian platoon participated, and the *Empress of Canada* was selected to act as transport for the expedition. She embarked her troops on August 7, and spent the next few days at Inverary, where practice landings were made. On the 19th she finally sailed from Gourock and headed for Iceland, escorted by the cruisers *Aurora* and *Nigeria*, and three destroyers. At Hvalfjordur, the base established by the Royal Navy near Reykjavik, the destroyers fueled, and the little squadron then headed for Spitzbergen, where it arrived early on the morning of August 25. No resistance was met with, and the demolition parties were soon busy. The *Empress* was concerned chiefly with the 1,969 Russians that she was taking on board, and who complicated matters considerably by insisting upon handling all their worldly goods personally. The embarkation was completed at last, and the *Empress* left for Archangel, off which she anchored on the 29th. Here she landed her Russian evacuees and picked up a British military mission that had been visiting Moscow and 192 officers and men of the Free French forces. Returning to Spitzbergen, she spent two anxious nights there, embarking Canadian troops and taking on board 767 Norwegians. Late on September 3—the second anniversary of the outbreak of war—she finally set sail, and on the 7th arrived safely at Gourock.[66]

This special mission completed, the *Empress of Canada* switched to the run to Singapore, for which she sailed on September 30. For a time the *Empress of Russia* was in the same convoy, but as she was bound for the Near East, she and the *Canada* presently parted company. The *Russia* was the only one of the four *Empresses* that did not visit Singapore. The *Empress*

(66) Details from the official voyage reports and from Captain Barry. *See* Ross Munro, *Gauntlet to Overlord*, Toronto, 1946, pp. 279–292.

of Canada had the good fortune to land her troops there and sail just three days before the Pearl Harbour attack of December 7. The original intention was that she, like the *Empress of Japan*, should travel on to Vancouver, but she was diverted to Australia and New Zealand instead. From there she passed through the Panama Canal to Newport News, where she spent six or seven weeks being overhauled and refitted. Ready once more for service she shifted to Halifax, and carried Canadian troops thence to the Clyde in March, 1942.

Just as the *Canada* and the *Russia* had sailed in company in September, so the *Empress of Japan* and *Empress of Asia* set out together in November. This time, however, both ships had the same destination—Singapore. They kept more or less in company as far as Bombay, but thereafter the *Japan*—fortunately for her—moved on with a faster group and arrived in Singapore on January 29. Two days later she cleared for Batavia and Colombo, undamaged in spite of heavy Japanese air raids. Singapore was by that time beleaguered, and the causeway linking the island with the mainland had already been blown up.

The *Empress of Asia* was not to be as fortunate as the *Japan*. This voyage was to be the gallant old liner's last, and a rendezvous with fate awaited her in the crooked channels near the great fortress. The story is best told in the words of Chief Officer Donald Smith's official report to the Company:—

> The convoy passed through Sunda Straits [between Sumatra and Java] early on the morning of 3rd February. We received orders to proceed to Singapore with four other transports, the escort leader being H.M.S. *Exeter*. At about 11.00 a.m. on the 4th February, while in the narrow waters of Banka Straits, off Sumatra, the convoy was attacked by a formation of 27 enemy bombers. The *Empress of Asia* being the last in line came in for a severe attack but escaped any direct hits. Pieces of exploded bombs caused damage to lifeboats and deck plating outside the Officers Deck. The parts of the bombs and the places of contact were smeared with oil indicating same to be of an incendiary nature. At approximately 11.00 a.m. 5th February, while the ship was in a mined channel approaching Sultan Shoal, 16 miles from Keppel Harbour, and slowed down to take pilot on board, the convoy was attacked by large formations of Japanese bombers. The first formation numbered 27 planes. The two ships immediately ahead of us received direct hits and then the *Empress of Asia*, being the largest vessel and the last in line, came in for the concentration of the attack. Successive waves of low dive bombers flew over at an estimated height of 600 feet. There were many near misses from bombs causing violent concussions.

Finally the ship was hit, as far as can be ascertained in three places simultaneously, the locations of hits being—forward of No. 1 Funnel, after end of Lounge dome, and through cabin No. 126 on the starboard side [amidships]. These bombs penetrated through all decks down to the Fan Flats causing casualties from the blasts and starting fires particularly in the Lounge and the main Dining Saloon. Fire parties were immediately on the scene, the hoses having previously been connected up throughout the ship, but no water was available throughout the fire service presumably due to damaged mains. The fire spread rapidly amidships and was soon out of control, isolating the forward and after parts of the ship. The removal and attention to casualty cases, and safety of life in general was very effective and well in hand, so the loss of life was comparatively small. Meanwhile attacks by low dive bombers had to be contended with and our ship's guns, together with machine guns from the units on board, kept up a steady barrage and it is reckoned that two enemy planes were brought down.

The ship was anchored close to Sultan Shoal with both anchors down. The bridge meantime was in flames and had to be abandoned. Captain Smith burned and skinned his hands badly. Mr. Crofts, 2nd Officer, fractured his ankle while jumping to the forward end of the Promenade Deck. Stretcher cases were lowered to the boats and later despatched to hospital. At 12.30 the ship was finally abandoned, the Commander, Chief Officer and Officer Commanding Troops being the last to leave and were taken on board H.M.S. *Danae* and comfortably cared for.

At 14.30 the Commander and Chief Officer again circled the ship on board H.M.S. *Sedlitz*, then returned and organized fire parties from Naval ships and two fire floats with powerful pumps. These proceeded to the ship in the hope of saving the forward and after ends where much valuable military equipment, machine guns and small ammunition was stored. In the meantime a breeze had sprung up causing the fire to burn fiercely and the ship could not be approached. . . .[67]

Considering the nature of the attack and the fact that the *Empress* had a total of 2,651 persons on board—2,235 troops and a crew of 416—the loss of life was astonishingly small. One crew member died in hospital, and the Officer Commanding troops reported that fifteen men were unaccounted for.[68] Rescue efforts were led by the Australian sloop *Yarra*, whose guns kept blazing away at the Japanese planes as long as any remained in the vicinity. Her commander placed her alongside the burning

(67) This report was released to the press on May 19, 1942—the date upon which the Canadian Pacific was permitted to announce the loss of the *Empress of Asia*.

(68) Figures from the report of Captain J. B. Smith to the company's agents in Colombo (copy in Montreal files of Canadian Pacific Steamships).

Empress, and held her there, regardless of the hazards involved, until she had taken aboard literally every man she could carry.

A graphic description of the rescue work is given by Captain J. D. Whyte, of the Singapore Pilot Association, in a letter to the writer:—

> . . . I was able to see, at a distance of some miles, the attack on the ship. As she came into sight from behind the islands she was already burning furiously, and it was evident that she would have to be abandoned. In a remarkably short space of time, all kinds of small craft began to stream out from Singapore harbour towards the *Empress*, reminding one of the fleet that rescued the British Army at Dunkirk, although this was on a very much smaller scale, naturally. These small craft did excellent service in transferring troops from the ship to corvettes and the like that were standing by. As soon as we were able to procure a launch, another pilot (Captain Gibson) and I went out to the *Empress* too. Having ascertained that there was apparently no one left on board the ship, we then commenced to transfer troops and crew-members from a small lighthouse, where they were absolutely crammed like sardines, to the corvettes. My launch was more or less commandeered to take two naval officers back to the *Empress* to put her depth charges overboard before the fire could reach them. As I was alongside the *Empress* for this last time, her mainmast came down, but fortunately went the other side of the ship. Paint was peeling off the ship's side in square yards because of the tremendous heat inside, and small arm ammunition could be heard exploding on board. The naval officers completed their task and returned to the launch as we pushed off. However, we had got only a little distance from the ship, when the launch's engine broke down, and at about the same time the fire seemed to reach some bigger ammunition, as explosions that sounded like six-inch shells were heard from the ship. It was not long before the launch engine was put right, and the engineer needed no urging, and we left the ship altogether. By this time the other craft had completed the task of rescuing troops and crew, and all were proceeding back to Singapore.[69]

On February 9 Captain Smith, Chief Officer Smith, and others went out to the *Empress*, "but due to the intense heat of the hull boarding could not be accomplished and was postponed to a later date."[70] At that time she was still lying on an even keel, and Captain Whyte tells us that from a distance "she looked as if she had practically nothing wrong with her except that she had then only one mast."[71] Later, however, she "rolled over in the

(69) Captain J. D. Whyte to W. Kaye Lamb, Singapore, July 29, 1947.

(70) Report of Chief Officer Smith.

(71) Captain Whyte to the writer, July 29, 1947. On February 7, 1942, Lloyd's surveyor in Singapore cabled to London: "Vessel remained afloat, no evidence of settling in water, and still lying on even keel. . . . All

roadstead, hissing and smoking, and lay there like the carcass of a great narwhal."[72] There she remains to this day. At low tide some of her side becomes visible, and on this a small light has now been erected to warn shipping away from the sunken wreck.[73]

Varied fortunes awaited the members of the *Asia's* crew. Her firemen, 128 strong, were so fortunate as to get away to the United Kingdom in the transports *Devonshire* and *Félix Roussel.* Her doctor and 132 members of the catering staff volunteered for duty in Singapore hospital, and after rendering great service there became prisoners of the Japanese. A few injured crewmen, patients in the hospital, suffered a like fate. On February 10 the naval authorities suggested that the ship's officers and the rest of the crew should attempt a get-away in three 200-ton coasting steamers that were lying in the harbour. In spite of a thousand difficulties the little flotilla got to sea on the 11th, " very short of food, fuel and charts," bound for Batavia, over 500 miles away. Surviving repeated bomber attacks, Captain Smith in the *Sin Kheng Seng* and Fourth Officer Oliver in the *Hong Kwong* reached Batavia safely on the 14th, but shortage of fuel compelled Chief Officer Smith to take the *Ampang* to Palembang, in Sumatra. Within a few minutes of his arrival there, a thousand enemy parachute troops landed on the river-bank near by, but, thanks to assistance given by the Dutch authorities, he and his forty companions finally got to Batavia on the 16th. From there the survivors of the *Empress* eventually reached Australia.[74]

---

structure above ' B ' deck completely gutted, and main mast collapsed on deck."

(72) George Weller, *Singapore Is Silent,* New York, 1943, p. 264. The date when the *Empress* finally sank is not given.

(73) Captain Whyte remarks that this light " gave me the impression of being in the nature of a tombstone, though the authorities, of course, had no such idea when the light was installed."

(74) Details from the reports of Captain Smith and Chief Officer Smith. The *Sin Kheng Seng,* 110 feet long and of 200 tons gross, and the *Hong Kwong,* 115 feet long and of 207 tons gross, both reached Batavia on the 15th. Captain Smith reported that only the good weather that prevailed made their survival possible. " Both ships arrived with fuel, water and food finished." The *Ampang,* 118.1 feet long and of 213 tons gross, was without a chart until she borrowed one from the *Sin Kheng Seng,* just before the two ships parted company.

With the fall of Singapore, troop movements to Durban, Suez, and Bombay once again became all-important, and the *Empress of Russia* was engaged in this service throughout 1942. In June, when she returned to the Mersey after a trip to the Near East, Captain R. N. Stuart, European general manager for Canadian Pacific Steamships, reported on her condition in a letter to the company. In spite of the difficulties of securing good firemen she had maintained a speed of 17 knots, and he found the 29-year-old veteran "as clean throughout as she was kept in her normal run between Vancouver and Hong Kong."[75] On June 20 she was off again, and on the last day of September sailed for India on a voyage that kept her away from the Mersey until March 1, 1943.

The *Empress of Canada* visited Bombay in June, 1942, and on July 13, when making the usual call at Freetown on her way back to Great Britain, she had the misfortune to strip a turbine. This necessitated a two-month lay-up for reblading and repairs at Liverpool,[76] and by the time the *Empress* was again ready for service the North African invasion was imminent. The *Canada's* allotted part in this operation was to rush in reinforcements as soon as the landing forces had secured a foothold at Oran. All preparations were completed by the middle of October, and the *Empress* and other transports spent a fortnight hidden away in Loch na Keal, in the Isle of Mull. On November 1 she finally put to sea, and on the night of the 11th led a line of reinforcing troop-ships into Mers el Kebir, the naval harbour adjacent to Oran. Resistance had only ceased the day before, and Captain Goold had to take his ship into a strange harbour in pitch darkness and without any assistance from tugs. But, as noted previously, the *Canada* handled exceptionally well, and Captain Goold laid her along the quayside with perfect precision. Dawn caused a chill to run down his spine, however, for it revealed that the chart of the harbour he had been given was badly out of date. The breakwater had been greatly extended since it was printed, and the *Empress* had missed crashing into the end of it by the narrowest of margins.[77]

(75) Captain Stuart to Captain Aikman, June 19, 1942.
(76) Details from Captain Goold.
(77) *Ibid.*

Virtually all the troops carried to Oran were American, and this was true also in December, when the *Canada* made a second trip from Liverpool to Mers el Kebir.

We now come to the last voyage of another Pacific *Empress*. So far the *Empress of Canada* had enjoyed exceptional good luck—indeed her ability to slip through war-time dangers, and in particular to survive enemy claims that she had been sunk, earned for her the nickname " the phantom ship." Because of this, an Italian communique, issued in mid-March of 1943, announcing that she had been torpedoed in the Atlantic, caused no special anxiety. Unfortunately the report was correct, and although her loss was not reported officially for almost a year, returning crew members brought the story to Vancouver within a few weeks.

The last voyage of the *Empress* was to Durban, from which she sailed on March 1, bound for the United Kingdom, carrying a great variety of military personnel. These included detachments from the French, Greek, and Norwegian Navies and the Polish Army, 500 Italian prisoners of war, and representatives of most branches of the three British services. The passenger list totalled 1,530, and including the crew of 362 there were 1,892 persons on board.

Late on the night of March 13 the *Empress,* travelling alone and bound for Takoradi, on the Gold Coast, was about 390 miles south of Cape Palmas. There was a small moon, but the sky was heavily overcast; and through the darkness the blacked-out liner steamed at a steady 18½ knots, on a zig-zag course. Suddenly, at 11.54 p.m., a torpedo struck the ship on the starboard side, abreast the bulkhead that separated the after boiler-room and the engine-room. It was a singularly unlucky hit, for it fractured a main steam-pipe, flooded the engine-room, and put the ship's electrical system out of commission, all in a few brief minutes. Soon after she was struck the *Empress* took a list of about 15 degrees, and although this did not increase appreciably, the speed with which she was settling in the water made it clear that she was doomed. As soon as way was off her, Captain Goold therefore gave the " abandon ship " order, and all hands turned to the task of getting the life-boats, rafts, and floats overboard. The moon having set, the darkness was intense,

and the lack of electric power to work the winches hampered the crew greatly. It seems probable, however, that relatively few lives were lost while the ship was being abandoned, although those in one boat suffered heavily when a second torpedo struck the liner under the bridge about 12.50 a.m. After this second blow she sank very rapidly, listing farther and farther to starboard. By about 1.05 a.m. the boat deck on the starboard side was level with the water, and Captain Goold left his ship by stepping off into the sea. When he was about a hundred feet away, her stern sank from sight, and her whole forward section, from the bridge to the stem, reared slowly up into the air. Then, causing much less suction than the survivors feared, the bow sank from view, disappearing finally about 1.10 a.m.[79]

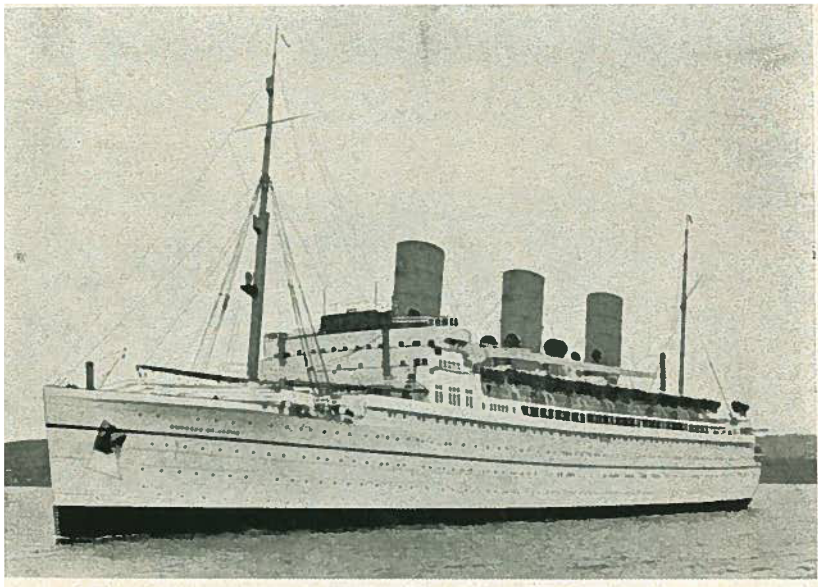
An engineer's love for machinery in his charge shows clearly in the report of Chief Engineer Cowper. The first time he attempted to reach the engine-room, he was driven back by steam from the burst steam-pipe; later, when he tried again, it was only to discover that water, which had by then engulfed the steam-line, was already covering the turbine casings. In the after stokehold he found the boilers submerged in a mixture of oil and water. No. 2 boiler-room, however, " was perfectly dry & bulkhead holding quite tight." By the time he returned on deck, practically everyone seemed to have left the ship, but he nevertheless " went down for a last look around." A very few moments later the second torpedo struck, and even Mr. Cowper then felt that the time had come to leave.[80]

Second Engineer James Thomson, who was on watch when the ship was struck, had a most remarkable escape. Badly scalded and temporarily blinded, he does not know to this day who helped him on deck and found him a place in a life-boat.

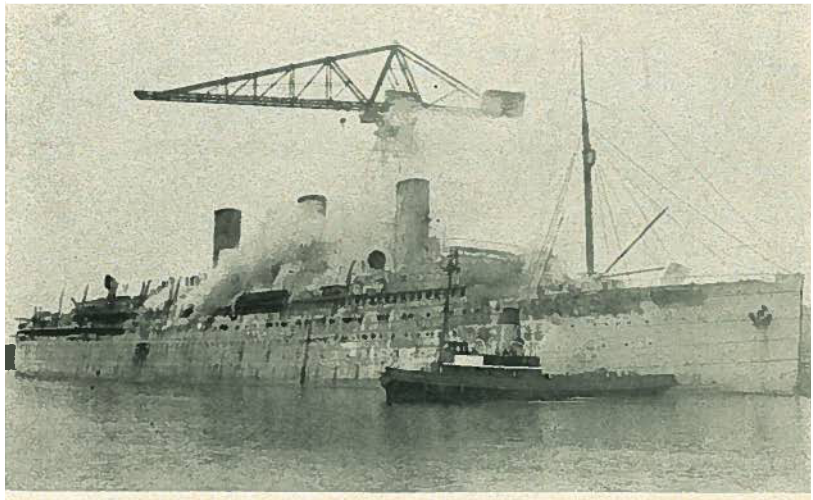
Soon after the *Empress* sank, the Italian submarine that had launched the torpedoes rose to the surface and approached the ship's boats. Her commander asked for and presently found and took on board a doctor, one of the prisoners of war the vessel was carrying. It is said that he also searched for a

(79) Details from Captain Goold's confidential report to Captain Aikman, dated May 5, 1943, and from the companion report (undated) submitted by Chief Engineer Cowper.

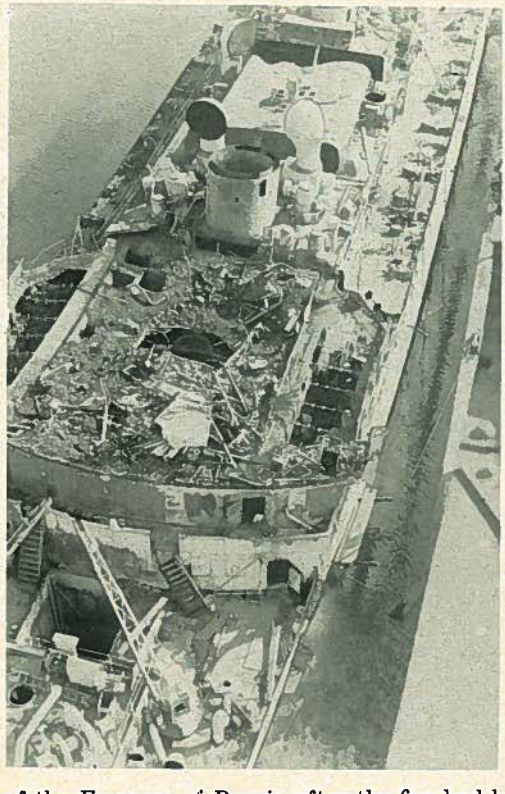
(80) All details from Mr. Cowper's report.



The new *Empress of Japan*, now the *Empress of Scotland*, photographed when running her trials in 1930.



The *Empress of Russia* on fire at Barrow-in-Furness on September 8, 1945.



A glimpse of the *Empress of Russia* after the fire had burned itself out. Her foremast and funnels were hastily removed because it was feared that she would capsize. Both photographs of the *Empress* at Barrow-in-Furness were secured through the kindness of Captain L. D. Douglas and Captain George Goold.

Greek submarine commander who had been causing havoc amongst Italian shipping, but no one betrayed his identity.[81]

The *Empress* went down scarcely more than a degree from the Equator, and the water was therefore mercifully warm. This was just as well, for many of the survivors were to spend long hours in it. Chief Engineer Cowper, for example, "was in the water hanging onto a float from the Sunday morning 1.00 a.m. until . . . Tuesday afternoon about 5 p.m. It was," as he remarks in his report, which throughout is a triumph of understatement, "a long time with nothing to drink."[82] Captain Goold was somewhat more fortunate. He found a water-logged boat, contrived with others to clear it of water, and then picked up ninety-six persons from rafts and wreckage. Two motor life-boats helped greatly in the task of rounding up survivors and keeping the boats and rafts reasonably close together. Barracuda and sharks attacked many of those in the water. Dr. Miller, the ship's own surgeon, and Surgeon Lieut. Jacklin, R.N.V.R., did all they could to assist the injured. Lieut. Jacklin was last seen going from raft to raft to assist the injured; unfortunately he did not himself survive the ordeal.[83]

The *Empress* had called for help before she sank, but rescue ships were some time in appearing. Just before sunset on the 14th a Catalina flying-boat came over and signalled that help was on the way, and the following evening (Monday) the destroyer *Boreas* and two corvettes reached the scene. A fourth ship followed, and the search for survivors continued all the next day. When the roll was finally called at Freetown, it revealed that 392 lives had been lost; forty-four of the victims were members of the crew.[84]

(81) *See* the interview with Third Officer M. D. Atkins published in the Victoria *Times*, February 19, 1944. News of the loss of the *Empress* was not released officially until February 18, 1944.

(82) Report to the company, as cited above.

(83) Report of Captain Goold, May 5, 1943; also report from Captain Stuart to Captain Aikman, April 22, 1943.

(84) A complete tabulation of those on board and those missing was appended to Captain Stuart's report to Captain Aikman, April 22, 1943. Captain Goold's report describes the work of rescue in some detail. The corvettes that arrived on the scene were the *Crocus* and the *Petunia*; H.M.S. *Corinthian* arrived later. Both Captain Goold and Chief Engineer Cowper were picked up by the *Petunia*, and both stress the kindness they received

Only two of the Pacific *Empresses* were now left sailing the seas. One of them, the pride of the fleet, was fast and modern and had proven herself to be an ideal transport. The other, aging rapidly now, was finding the going more and more difficult.

Few liners equalled the record for continuous and reliable service established by the *Empress of Japan*, which, after the Pearl Harbour attack, was renamed *Empress of Scotland*. The mileage she covered, year after year, was truly extraordinary. She arrived back in the United Kingdom from Singapore in the middle of March, 1942, and between the middle of April and the end of December she travelled from Glasgow to Durban, traversed once again the vast 11,000-mile circle represented by a return voyage via Capetown and Halifax, made a voyage to Suez and back by way of the Cape, and ended by making still another voyage to Durban, and proceeding thence to New York. The whole of 1943 was spent in the trans-Atlantic service. On seven of her twelve voyages she carried American troops to Casablanca; the other five were from Halifax or New York to the United Kingdom. The year 1944 commenced with a voyage to Bombay, after which she returned to the Atlantic and made another six voyages from Halifax. The last months of the war found the *Empress of Scotland* once more ranging far and wide over the world's seaways. In the fall of 1944 she made a voyage to Capetown and return. Then followed two voyages that took her completely round the world. The route in each instance was from Liverpool to Australia by way of Panama, and thence back to Liverpool by way of Suez and the Mediterranean. Between them the two voyages totalled no less than 58,448 miles. But this was only a small fraction of the distance covered by the fast-moving *Empress*. In the course of her war service—which concluded with a voyage to Bombay and back in the summer of 1945—she sailed no less than 484,914 miles, and transported a total of 210,068 service personnel.

So far peace has brought no respite to the *Scotland*, for she is still under the control of the transport authorities; the " ideal

on board. Sharks seem to have been responsible for many of the casualties. Mr. Cowper writes: " The sea was pretty well infested with sharks and barracuda. A large number lost their lives from shark bites, and it was so bad that they had to use rifles to shoot at them as we were being taken on board H.M. ships."

transport" lives up to her name so well that they are loath to return her to her owners. She has been employed mostly on the Liverpool–India–Far East route, but has twice touched Canadian shores. In September, 1945, she brought 4,100 Canadians to Quebec, and in November she made a crossing to Halifax.[85]

We must turn, in conclusion, to the story of the last years of the *Empress of Russia*.[86] When she returned from India in 1943 she was taken out of service for several months and overhauled. She was by this time the only large coal-burning transport left in service, and was beset with the dual problem of securing good coal and firemen who could keep steam up in her boilers. When she was commissioned once more in July, she made a voyage to Oran and then crossed the Atlantic to New York. On the outward voyage things went moderately well, and the distance was covered in eight days. But on September 5, when she sailed for the Clyde, she found it quite impossible to maintain convoy speed, and had to put back to port. On the 9th she put to sea once more—ignominiously, as an incongruous member of an 8- to 9-knot freighter convoy. The blow to her pride was eased somewhat by the fact that she was accompanied by a well-known trans-Atlantic liner which had fallen into similar disgrace. An interested spectator of all this was Captain Goold, who crossed as a passenger in the *Empress*, and took command when she got to Gourock. This was a decided step for the better, for someone who knew the ship well was back on the bridge, but not a single engineer who had served in her on the Pacific was left in the crew.

The rest of the *Empress of Russia's* career was devoted to special assignments. The first of these was a voyage to Gothenburg, in connection with an exchange of prisoners that had been arranged between Great Britain and Germany. In preparation for this trip the ship was stripped of her armament, large Union Jacks were painted on her sides, and floodlights were arranged to illuminate them at night. Captain Stuart was so sure that the Germans would not respect the *Empress's* mission that he

(85) Based on the tabulation of the movements of the *Empress* and the account of her in the *Staff Bulletin*, October, 1945, pp. 10, 11.

(86) This account is based largely on the record of the ship's movements furnished by the company and discussions with Captain Goold.

protested the assignment. Captain Goold, on the other hand, accepted the voyage as just another war-time job. The *Russia*, loaded with German prisoners, sailed from Gourock at dusk on October 14, and was joined presently by the hospital ship *Atlantis*. Together the two vessels sailed around Scotland and across the North Sea to the approaches to the Skager Rak, where, on the morning of the 18th, a German minesweeper met them and guided them through the first minefields. At noon another sweeper took over and the ships continued on until evening, when they were asked to anchor for the night. At daylight they proceeded once more, and presently entered Swedish waters, where a Swedish naval officer boarded the *Empress* to help navigate her into Gothenburg, where she arrived in the afternoon.

There she was host to many visitors, including the Crown Prince of Sweden and the British Minister, but what those on board will never forget is the welcome she received from the British prisoners of war she was to carry back to Great Britain. The Swedish liner *Drottningholm* was to assist in transporting the British prisoners, and on the morning of October 21 the *Drottningholm*, *Atlantis*, and *Empress of Russia* set sail. Having been escorted through the minefields as before, the *Empress* and the *Drottningholm* anchored off Leith on October 25, where their passengers were ferried ashore. The *Atlantis*, with her bedridden patients, sailed on to Liverpool.[87]

The *Empress of Russia* was assigned next to the Iceland service, and between November, 1943, and April, 1944, she made six voyages to Hvalfjordur, and a seventh to the Faroe Islands. She was in effect a Royal Air Force ship, and her passengers were mostly R.A.F. details. By this time Captain Goold had come to consider a speed of 15 knots a good performance, which meant that the engines were developing only about half their nor-

(87) Sources indicated in note 86, *supra;* also report, Captain Stuart to Captain Aikman, November 25, 1943. An account of the trip by John Watson, a crew member, was printed in the Vancouver *Province*, November 26, 1943; and a feature story entitled "Unarmed, in Enemy Waters—October, 1943," by H. R. Kendrick, was published in the magazine supplement of the *Province*, October 11, 1947. Some of the dates given in the latter are incorrect, although the author was evidently in the *Empress* when she made the voyage to Gothenburg.

mal service power. This made things awkward, for the *Empress* frequently travelled light, and when heavy weather was encountered she was most difficult to handle. Once Captain Goold found himself virtually helpless, drifting in a savage gale off a lee shore, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he worked the ship clear. Yet, in spite of everything, the old liner continued to be a comfortable sea-boat. Service people always liked her, once they got to sea in her.

After her last trip to Iceland the *Empress* was sent to an anchorage in the Gareloch, which joins the Clyde estuary opposite Greenock. She was kept coaled and ready for duty at short notice, and a call was not long in coming. The battleship *Royal Sovereign* and a number of other warships were being transferred to Russia, and in May the *Empress* was sent around to Rosyth naval base, in the Firth of Forth, to act as an accommodation ship for the Russian sailors who were arriving to man them. This required one small structural alteration—the wooden tops of her steel masts had to be removed to enable her to pass under the Forth Bridge.

The *Russia* lay at Rosyth from early May until the first of June. Then, after another short period of inactivity in the Clyde, she was brought to Lee-on-Solent, a few miles from Portsmouth, early in July. There she took the place of her old friend the Canadian-Australasian liner *Aorangi*, which had been acting as a depot ship. The *Empress* served first as a tug control ship for the great Normandy invasion, which was then in progress, and thereafter as a depot ship and advanced repair base for the destroyer flotillas. Her interior was, of course, much altered to fit her for these new duties, upon which she was employed until the first week of October.

Out of a job once more, the *Empress* was first dry-docked at Southampton and then taken back to the familiar anchorage in the Gareloch. There she lay in idleness for seven months, and it seemed as if her career might have come to a close. But one more adventure awaited her. When the war in Europe ended, thousands of dependents of Canadian servicemen clamoured for transportation to Canada, and early in June, 1945, the *Empress of Russia* was sent to the vast Vickers-Armstrong ship-building

yard at Barrow-in-Furness, there to be overhauled and refitted to carry soldiers' wives and children across the Atlantic.

By September the work was nearing completion. The old liner's turbines, in service thirty-two years, were found to be in passably good condition. Her boilers were her weak spot, but these were under repair. The rebuilt passenger accommodation required only the finishing touches. In another three weeks the *Empress* would have been ready for sea. But a refit is always a particularly hazardous time in the life of a big steamer, and this was no exception. About 2.30 on the morning of September 8, fire broke out on board. Quickly out of control, it swept through the centre part of the ship, consuming it completely, and before it was extinguished it was creeping down the staircases to deck " B," where the old first-class dining saloon had been cut up into a series of family rooms. By the end of the day the liner, in Captain Stuart's phrase, presented " a scene of complete destruction," and to make matters worse two lives had been lost—those of an electrician and an engineer. Nor did anxiety end when the flames were brought under control. So much water had been pumped into the *Empress* at upper deck levels that she was in danger of capsizing. As she was lying under the big crane at the Vickers-Armstrong fitting-out berth, this would have been a very inconvenient mishap indeed, and to reduce her top hamper, her funnels and foremast were hastily removed, reducing her to the sorry plight illustrated in one of the accompanying photographs.[88]

As repairs would have cost over £500,000, or much more than the veteran *Empress* was worth, she was declared a structural total loss and sold to the ship-breakers.[89] Her last brief journey was from the Ramsden Dock, where the fire occurred, to the Channel Wall, where she was to be demolished.

So ends, for the moment, the odyssey of the *Empress* Line to the Orient. In due course the *Empress of Scotland* will be reconditioned and take her proud place once more on the sailing

(88) Captain Stuart to Captain Aikman, September 10, 1945.

(89) In December, 1945, she was handed over to the British Iron & Steel Corporation (Salvage), Limited, for scrapping. The Liverpool *Journal of Commerce*, June 19, 1946, announced that she would be broken up by Messrs. T. W. Ward & Sons, Ltd.

list. But new companions for her must come from the shipyards before the service can be fully re-established. When thinking of them, one recalls Captain Douglas's comment when he received the news of the burning of the *Empress of Russia:* " She was a good servant of the company and will be remembered in this port (Vancouver) as a frequent and welcome visitor. It is our sincere wish that her successor on the Pacific service, whoever it is, may establish as good a record as this fine ship did."[90]

W. KAYE LAMB.

VANCOUVER, B.C.

(90) Captain L. D. Douglas to Captain R. W. McMurray, October 24, 1945.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Many persons assisted me in the work of gathering material for a history of the later *Empresses*. A special word of thanks is due Captain R. W. McMurray, general manager, Canadian Pacific Steamships, Limited, for his kindness in authorizing various members of his staff to make available some of the records in their keeping. In Montreal Mr. S. V. King and his assistant, Mr. H. B. Cummins, took infinite trouble to trace the wartime movements of the *Empresses*, and to furnish certain details of their construction, trials, etc. In Vancouver Captain L. D. Douglas, general superintendent until 1946, and his successor, Captain L. C. Barry, placed old log-books, voyage reports, etc., as well as their own well-stored memories, freely at my disposal. Captain George Goold, Chief Officer Donald Smith, Captain R. J. Hickey, marine superintendent, Vancouver, all contributed reminiscences and checked various points for me. Mr. H. G. Donald, superintendent engineer in Vancouver, discussed technical points with me in the course of several fascinating conversations, and his predecessor, Mr. R. R. Liddell, helped solve a number of small mysteries. From Singapore Captain J. D. Whyte, of the Pilot Association, kindly contributed a graphic account of the loss of the *Empress of Asia*, while in Vancouver Mr. W. D. McLaren discussed the negotiations that brought the *Empress of Asia* and

Empress of Russia into being, and accounted for the various features of their design. Finally, I must once more acknowledge the kindness of Captain Samuel Robinson, Captain A. J. Hailey, and Captain A. W. Davison, who some years ago talked with me about *Empresses*, old and new, and I remember especially the friendliness with which the late Captain Edmund F. Aikman, then general superintendent in Vancouver, received my inquiries when I first seriously set about gathering data for the earlier chapter of *Empress* history published in 1940.

I hasten to add that no one but myself should be held in the least degree responsible for the contents of this article, and in particular for the errors of fact and opinion that may well have crept in, despite my best efforts to keep them out. The history of ships and shipping hereabouts has long been a hobby of mine, and it seemed to me that the story of the *Empresses* was particularly worth telling. I am grateful to the many people whose help has made the narrative more accurate and complete, and to the editor of this *Quarterly* for his kindness in printing an article of this length.

W. K. L.

APPENDIX.

1. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE LATER "EMPRESSES."

The principal dimensions of the *Empresses* are given in the accompanying table. For purposes of comparison it may be interesting to recall that the over-all length of the three original *Empress* liners, which entered service in 1891, was 485 feet, their length between perpendiculars 455.6 feet, gross tonnage 5,940, and displacement 11,750 tons. Their triple-expansion reciprocating engines were rated at 10,000 horse-power, but in actual service, with the vessels operating at 14 to 15 knots, they developed about half this total.

	Empress of Russia.	Empress of Asia.	Empress of Canada.	Empress of Japan.	Empress of Australia.
Launched	Aug. 28, 1912	Nov. 23, 1912	Aug. 17, 1920	Dec. 17, 1929	Dec. 20, 1913
Completed	Mar., 1913	May, 1913	Apr., 1922	June, 1930	June, 1922[1]
Gross tonnage	16,810	16,909	21,547	26,032	21,861
Under-deck tonnage	12,557	12,545	15,170	17,787	14,149
Net tonnage	8,789	8,883	12,811	15,725	12,292
Length over-all	592.0′	592.0′	653.0′	666.0′	615.0′
Length b.p.	570.2′	570.1′	627.0′	644.0′	589.9′
Width	68.2′	68.2′	77.9′	83.8′	75.2′
Depth	42.0′	42.0′	42.2′	44.5′	41.5′
Depth moulded	46′ 0″	46′ 0″	45′ 2″	48′ 6″	46′ 2″
Normal service draught	29′ 0″	29′ 0″	28′ 9¾″	30′ 0″	29′ 0″
Normal service displacement	21,635	.....[2]	26,644	30,754	25,100
Maximum service displacement	25,200	25,400	32,250	39,000	32,800
Dead-weight carrying capacity	9,135	9,135	10,194	10,300	7,706
Engines	Parsons turbines, direct-coupled.	Parsons turbines, direct-coupled.	*1922.* Brown-Curtis turbines, double-reduction gearing. / *1929.* Parsons turbines, single-reduction gearing.	Parsons turbines, single-reduction gearing.	*1922.* Brown-Curtis turbines, Föttinger hydraulic transformers. / *1927.* Parsons turbines, single-reduction gearing.
Propellors	Quadruple	Quadruple	Twin / Twin	Twin	Twin / Twin
Designed S.H.P.	18,500	18,500	20,000 / 26,000	29,000[5]	15,600 / 20,000
Designed service speed	18	18	18 / 20.8	21	17 / 18
Maximum trial speed	21.178	21.43	20.3 / 22.4	22.38	17.2 / 20.345
Highest average speed in service	19.86	20.2	20.6 / 21.78	22.37	16.4 / .....
Boilers, type	Scotch cylindrical.	Scotch cylindrical.	Scotch cylindrical.	Yarrow water-tube (2 Scotch-type aux.).	Vulcan water-tube. / Scotch cylindrical.
Number	6 D.E., 4 S.E.	6 D.E., 4 S.E.	8 D.E., 4 S.E.	6 (and 2 aux.)	14 / 6 D.E., 1 S.E.
Furnaces	64	64	60	.....	40 / 40
Pressure, lb.	190	190	210	425 (200 in aux.)	241 / 220
Heating surface	54,251	54,251	49,320	52,950[6]	46,280 / 38,075
Fuel	Coal	Coal	Oil	Oil	Oil[1] / Oil
Passengers:	*1917.* / *1921.*	*1925.* / *1939.*[3]	*1925.* / *1939.*	*1930.* / *1939.*	*1925.*
First class	296 / 374	347 / 207	444 / 348	399 / 293	410
Second class	84 / 66	73 / 137[4]	162 / 79[4]	164 / 164[4]	165
Third class	..... / 92	92 / 79	164 / 192	100 / 100	194
Orientals	800 / 670	728 / 470	924 / 596	510 / 558	674
Totals	1,180 / 1,202	1,240 / 893	1,694 / 1,215	1,173 / 1,115	1,443
Crew in 1936:					
Deck department	88	88	95	103	90
Pursers	7	7	7	7	7
Engineers' department	209	209	110	123	72
Catering department	208	216	303	353	326
Total crew	512	520	515	586	495

[1] The *Empress of Australia* (then the *Tirpitz*) seems to have been completed about May, 1919. She was purchased by the Canadian Pacific in the summer of 1921, and alterations made by the company, which included conversion of her boilers to burn oil instead of coal, were completed in June, 1922.

[2] The exact figure is not available; it would be a few tons in excess of the corresponding displacement of the *Empress of Russia*. Early advertising folders gave the displacement of the two ships as 30,625 tons, but this was never approached in actual service.

[3] *Empress of Russia*. Totals for the *Empress of Asia* were: First class, 217; tourist, 137; third class, 91; Oriental steerage, 470; total, 915.

[4] Tourist class, which had replaced the old second class.

[5] The contract called for a year-round average service speed of 21 knots, "unusually heavy weather only excepted." At the 29,000 S.H.P. the speed would exceed 21 knots, but this power and extra speed would be required to make good delays due to fog and other causes.

[6] Plus 17,730 square feet in superheaters and 7,270 square feet in auxiliary boilers; grand total, 77,950 square feet.

2. SERVICE PERFORMANCE OF THE "EMPRESSES."

Few liners have served their owners as well as the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia*. They met with remarkably few serious mishaps, and, so far as the writer is aware, the only occasion upon which either of the sisters failed to make a peace-time sailing was in 1930, when a fractured turbine spider compelled the *Empress of Russia* to skip a voyage. It is true that, on paper, their schedule appeared to be a leisurely one compared with that of many Atlantic liners. A round trip to the Orient usually lasted fifty-six days, which would include a week or ten days spent in Vancouver. Actual steaming time was usually about thirty-two days out of the fifty-six. But these figures are deceptive. A Pacific *Empress* made as many as fifteen calls on a voyage, and once she left Vancouver she had only fits and snatches of time in port until she was back again. The voyage from Vancouver to Manila totalled 6,946 miles (or 8,458 if the route was via Honolulu), whereas an Atlantic *Empress* only covered 2,759 miles in a voyage from Quebec to Southampton. The *Russia* and *Asia* travelled about 83,500 miles in an average year; during their last years in service this was increased to about 86,500 miles by the two calls they usually made each season at Honolulu. The larger *Empresses*, sailing regularly via the Hawaiian Islands, would pass the 100,000-mile mark in a year.

Like most ships, the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* developed tricks that became well known to the men who ran them. For one thing, they could splash water onto the officers on the bridge with an artfulness reminiscent of the famous old *Mauretania*. This was probably because they were, if anything, a little too fine-lined forward; their sharp bows would cut deeply into a big wave, then the water would rise suddenly with a mighty surge under the flare of the forecastle and throw the bow into the air—with uncomfortable consequences for all on board. Most of the men who sailed in them also feel that they were a few feet too narrow. At the time they were built, the Fairfield designers seem to have favoured a relatively narrow ship, for the Fairfield-built *Calgarian* was 2 feet narrower than her sister ship, the *Alsatian* (later the *Empress of France*), which hailed from the Beardmore yard, and the feeling seems to be that the *Alsatian* was the better ship of the two. This is not to imply that the *Empress of Russia* and *Empress of Asia* were not successful and popular ships, for they were unusually comfortable from the passenger's point of view. The point is that later experience has shown that an increase in beam that would at one time have been considered quite disproportionate can be all to the good, and if the *Empresses* had been 3 or 4 feet wider, they would probably have been more comfortable still. It is a pity, too, that they were never converted to burn oil fuel. The change was considered seriously on a number of occasions, but the estimated cost was deemed to be excessive. The disruption of sailing schedules the refit would have occasioned was doubtless another factor that weighed heavily in the decision.

As the turbines in the *Russia* and *Asia* were coupled directly to the propellor shafts, the propellors revolved at relatively high speed. The propellors themselves were therefore small in diameter—no more than 9

feet—and, as there had to be four of them, the wing propellors were well out to the line of the ship's side. The result was that when the *Empresses* rolled heavily, a wing propellor would come to the surface, and, as a consequence, lose its propulsive efficiency for a moment or two. This gave rise to another "trick"—a tendency to swing off course suddenly in a heavy sea, when the wing propellor ceased to function properly.

Some further data regarding the trials of the *Russia* and *Asia* may be of interest. On the measured mile the results of the progressive trials of the *Empress of Russia* were as follows:—

Runs.	Knots.	S.H.P.	R.P.M.
First	12.415	4,225	.....
Second	15.211	8,030	.....
Third	17.143	11,620	.....
Fourth	19.278	17,310	.....
Fifth	20.112	20,740	304.5
Sixth	21.178	26,285	327.8

As the design called for a speed of 18 knots at 18,500 S.H.P., it will be seen that the contract requirements were comfortably exceeded. On her twelve-hour sea trial the *Russia* averaged 305 R.P.M., and it was calculated that this was equivalent to a speed of 20.14 knots. Her mean draught on her progressive trials was 26 feet 8 inches, which corresponded with a displacement of 19,500 tons. The *Empress of Asia* proved to be a little faster on trial, possibly because she was drawing only 25 feet 8 inches and displacing 18,650 tons. Her fastest measured-mile runs were:—

Knots.	S.H.P.	R.P.M.	Slip.
21.33	27,010	330	20.7%
21.43	27,280	332	20.6%

A slip of over 20 per cent. would horrify an engineer nowadays, but the high-speed propellors necessitated by direct-coupled turbines made this result unavoidable.

It is interesting to compare these figures with the results secured in actual service. It so happens that complete statistics are available covering the *Russia's* last passages from Yokohama to Race Rocks, and these will enable us to place the final service performance of the 26-year-old veteran alongside her trial runs.

Sailing Date, 1940.	Average Speed.	Mean Displacement.	Average S.H.P.	R.P.M.	Coal per Day.	Coal per H.P. per Hour.
					Tons.	Lb.
March 7	18.46	19,510	17,860	.....	253.9	1.32
April 26	17.45	20,382	14,854	256.8	233.1	1.46
June 21	17.50	20,120	14,130	253.3	213.2	1.40
August 16	17.47	20,325	15,860	260.4	223.6	1.23
October 12	18.01	19,530	17,300	268.7	260.9	1.40

In his report the chief engineer explained that poor coal was responsible for the high fuel consumption on the final voyage, but the fact of the matter was that the *Empress* was burning much less fuel than when she was brand new. In 1917, for example, the *Empress of Asia* burned an average of 311.2 tons of coal per day to average 18.46 knots, or precisely the same speed that the *Russia* maintained in 1940 on a consumption of only 253.9 tons. For years the *Empresses* burned well over 10,000 tons of coal per round voyage as a matter of course, but in the thirties this was lowered substantially. Consumption on six voyages of the *Empress of Russia* in 1939 totalled only 53,194 tons (an average of 8,866 tons), as compared with 62,807 tons (an average of 10,468 tons) for six voyages in 1925.

It will be noted that the two older *Empresses* were operated at a mean displacement of about 20,000 tons on an average voyage. Their regular coaling ports were Vancouver and Nagasaki. The *Empress of Canada* usually displaced about 25,500 tons in ordinary service. The oil-burning ships took on fuel in Vancouver, Honolulu, and Yokohama.

So many rumours got afloat about the builders' trials of the *Empress of Canada* in 1921 that the following notes on her official trials on the measured mile, which took place on April 30 and May 1, 1922, will be of interest. All figures are from the Canadian Pacific's own records:—

Knots.	S.H.P.	R.P.M.
18.26	16,320	99.40
19.06	18,900	104.50
19.51	20,770	107.50
19.82	21,840	109.00
20.10	21,670	110.35

These trials were run at a draught of 27 feet, and a displacement of 24,650 tons. According to *Engineering* the *Canada* made another run at 20.3 knots and developed 24,000 S.H.P. at 111 R.P.M.

The *Empress of Canada* handled particularly well, and in spite of her greater length the *Empress* captains found her easier to dock and manœuvre than the smaller *Asia* and *Russia*. She was a good sea boat, though the opinion seems to be general that she was not quite as comfortable from the passenger's point of view as the older liners. Her one bad habit was taking water forward, and bulwarks and deck fittings were apt to take a beating unless she was watched carefully in bad weather. The *Canada's* troubles were mostly mechanical, and in later years she was plagued with small boiler cracks, leaking pipes, and so on. Few of these were of much consequence in themselves, but they were a worry and nuisance to her engineers. Her new turbines proved very satisfactory, although the first pinions in the single-reduction gearing gave trouble and had to be replaced in 1930. Her performance in actual service may be judged from the records of her last four passages from Victoria to Honolulu in 1939. The figures follow:—

Average Speed.	Dis-placement.	S.H.P.	Lb. Oil per S.H.P. per Hour.	Slip.
20.38 knots	25,650	25,875	0.705	10.30%
20.36 knots	25,475	25,902	0.7147	10.19%
20.49 knots	25,560	25,942	0.7037	9.41%
20.06 knots	25,630	25,894	0.728	11.14%

With her original engines the fuel consumption of the *Canada* had been about 1.13 pounds of oil per horse-power per hour, and the great saving in fuel the re-engining brought about will be apparent, especially when it is remembered that the fuel bill of an *Empress* in a year is measured in hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The engines and boilers of the *Empress of Japan* (now the *Empress of Scotland*) were designed by John Johnson, and represent standards of performance towards which he had been working for some years. The first task Johnson undertook after he became chief superintendent engineer of the Canadian Pacific fleet was the development of better condenser tubes. He experimented with various alloys, and eventually found one that virtually eliminated the likelihood of tube failure, unless caused by manufacturing defects. With this preliminary problem solved, he turned his attention to superheated steam and the use of water-tube boilers, for he was convinced that the way to greater economy lay in the direction of higher steam-pressures and steam-temperatures. The first passenger liners in which his ideas were applied fully were the *Duchess* class steamers, completed in 1928 and later years for the trans-Atlantic service. In succeeding vessels Johnson increased both the steam-pressure and the size of individual boilers, and he also raised the temperature to which steam was superheated. In the *Empress of Japan* only six boilers were installed to generate steam for turbines of 30,000 horse-power, and steam was superheated to 750 degrees. The small number of boilers made possible a very simple and efficient steam-pipe layout. In the *Empress of Canada* the twelve old-style boilers were linked up by an intricate maze of piping that weighed 9 tons, whereas the six larger water-tube boilers in the *Japan* were linked up by a simple, straightforward system that weighed only 6 tons. The over-all economy that Johnson achieved was remarkable. On her trial voyage from Quebec to Southampton in 1930 the *Empress of Japan* averaged 21.09 knots on a fuel consumption of only 0.603 pound of oil per horse-power per hour, or less than half the fuel consumed by the smaller *Empress of Canada* when propelled by her original engines. The following figures relating to the *Japan's* record runs between Yokohama and Honolulu are interesting:—

Date.	Speed.	Dis-placement.	S.H.P.	R.P.M.	Slip.	Tons of Oil per Day.
May, 1935.....	22.16	26,817	28,785	121.05	7.23%	192.20
April, 1938.....	22.17	26,965	28,908	121.40	7.43%	195.32

It may be added that Mr. Johnson has carried his principles still farther in recent ships, and the new *Beaver*-class freighters, completed in 1946–47, have a single boiler which generates sufficient steam at 850 pounds pressure, superheated to 850 degrees, to drive turbines developing 9,000 horse-power.

3. DESIGN OF THE "EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA."

The *Empress of Australia*, originally the *Tirpitz*, was one of three liners built by the Hamburg-Amerika Line for a new de luxe service to South America that was to have been maintained jointly with the Hamburg-South American Line. Her maiden voyage was originally scheduled for October 29, 1914. Her sister ships received the unattractive names of *William O'Swald* and *Johan Heinrich Burchard*. Of the three, only the *Tirpitz* was fitted with the new-fangled Föttinger transformers. After the Great War the *O'Swald* and *Burchard* ran to South America briefly for the Royal Holland Lloyd under the names *Brabantia* and *Limburgia*, but they were soon transferred to the American flag and the trans-Atlantic service as the *Resolute* and *Reliance*. After another year or two they were purchased by their original owners, the Hamburg-Amerika Line, which employed them for a dozen years on the Atlantic and as cruising steamers. In 1937 the *Resolute* was sold to the Italians and became the *Lombardia*. Both ships met a fiery end—the *Reliance* at Hamburg in September, 1939, just as the Second World War was starting, and the *Lombardia* at Naples in September, 1943. The *Empress of Australia* served as a transport throughout the war, and is still operating under the control of the British Ministry of Transport. Like the *Empress of Canada*, she was reported sunk several times by the enemy, but happily the claims were unfounded. The Canadian Pacific announced in 1947 that they did not propose to recondition the *Empress*, and presumably she will be disposed of as soon as she completes her work as a transport.

The accompanying photograph of the *Australia* is one of the most flattering ever taken, for she is anything but graceful in appearance. Her upperworks are high and bulky, deck being piled on deck in true German style. The tops of her funnels are no less than 140 feet 1 inch above her keel, whereas the corresponding height of the *Empress of Canada* was only 119 feet and that of the *Empress of Russia* 114 feet 6 inches.

4. DIMENSIONS OF THE "MATTAWA" AND "METHVEN."

The *Mattawa* was built by A. M'Millan & Sons, Ltd., at Dumbarton, for MacVicar Marshall & Company. Her original name was *Saint Hugo*. She

was launched on June 15, 1912, and completed the following month. Her dimensions were 401 by 52.1 by 27.3 feet, and her gross tonnage 4,874 tons. Her dead-weight carrying capacity was 8,120 tons, and her loaded displacement 11,165 tons. Her maximum speed was 10.3 knots, and her average speed 9.5 knots. Her name had been changed to *Franktor* before the Canadian Pacific purchased her in 1916, and they in turn renamed her *Mattawa*. When the company decided to give all its freighters names commencing with the letter "B," she became the *Berwyn*. She was sold to the Kintyre Steamship Company on January 17, 1928.

The *Methven* had had a varied and interesting career before she was acquired by the Canadian Pacific in 1917. Built in 1905 as the *Heliopolis*, her first owners were Harris & Dixon. Her dimensions were 390 by 52.7 by 27.1 feet, and her gross tonnage 4,852 tons. Her dead-weight carrying capacity was 7,895 tons, and her loaded displacement 12,050 tons. Her maximum speed was 10.9 knots, and her average speed 10 knots. Her builders were D. & W. Henderson & Co., Ltd., of Glasgow. Shortly before the first Great War she was purchased by the British Admiralty and fitted out as the auxiliary hospital ship *Mediator*. Not long after this the famous old hospital ship *Maine* was wrecked, and the Admiralty thereupon changed the name of the *Mediator* to *Maine*, and used her as a replacement. She seems to have continued in service as a hospital ship until sold to the Canadian Pacific in 1917. *Methven* was her next name, and she sailed under it until renamed *Borden* in 1923. She was sold on October 26, 1926, and was broken up soon after by Dutch scrappers.

5. TRANS-PACIFIC RECORD PASSAGES, 1913 TO 1938.

For purposes of comparison it may be noted that the fastest passage made by any of the old *Empresses* was the voyage of the *Empress of Japan* from Victoria to Yokohama that commenced on June 26, 1897. Her average speed was 17.144 knots, and her steaming time 10 days 3 hours and 39 minutes. It will be noted that this was a west-bound passage, whereas the fastest trans-Pacific voyages have almost invariably been made east-bound, from Yokohama to Race Rocks. The old *Empress of Japan's* best time east-bound was 10 days 10 hours. More recent records are as follows:—

June, 1913—*Empress of Russia* (maiden voyage), Yokohama to Race Rocks, 9 days 5 hours 29 minutes; average speed slightly under 19 knots; Captain Edward Beetham and Chief Engineer James Adamson.

May, 1914—*Empress of Asia*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 9 days 2 hours 44 minutes; average speed 19.19 knots; fastest day 20.4 knots; Captain Samuel Robinson and Chief Engineer W. J. P. Davies.

May, 1914—*Empress of Russia*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 18 hours 31 minutes; average speed 19.86 knots; Captain A. W. Davison and Chief Engineer James Adamson.

June, 1923—*Empress of Canada*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 10 hours 53 minutes; average speed 20.6 knots; fastest day 21.2 knots; Captain A. J. Hailey and Chief Engineer James Lamb.

July, 1924—*Empress of Asia*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 14 hours 48 minutes; average speed 20.2 knots; fastest day 20.63 knots; Captain L. D. Douglas and Chief Engineer R. H. Shaw. (This was not a record run, but it was the fastest voyage ever made by either the *Empress of Asia* or the *Empress of Russia*.)

August, 1930—*Empress of Japan* (maiden voyage), Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 6 hours 27 minutes; average speed 21.04 knots; Captain Samuel Robinson and Chief Engineer James Lamb.

February, 1931—*Empress of Japan*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 3 hours 18 minutes; average speed 21.47 knots; Captain Samuel Robinson and Chief Engineer James Lamb.

April, 1931—*Empress of Japan*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 7 days 20 hours 16 minutes; average speed 22.27 knots; Captain Samuel Robinson and Chief Engineer James Lamb. (The fastest passage yet made on this route.)

May, 1931—*Empress of Canada*, Yokohama to Honolulu, 6 days 11 hours 31 minutes; average speed 21.78 knots (a record run between these ports, and the highest average speed ever maintained by the *Canada*); Honolulu to Race Rocks, 4 days 12 hours 21 minutes; average speed 21.47 knots; Captain A. J. Hailey and Chief Engineer W. H. Froude.

August, 1931—*Empress of Canada*, Yokohama to Race Rocks, 8 days 2 hours 34 minutes; average speed 21.57 knots; Captain L. D. Douglas and Chief Engineer J. B. Deans. (Fastest passage made by the *Canada* on this route.)

May, 1935—*Empress of Japan*, Yokohama to Honolulu, 6 days 8 hours 39 minutes, average speed 22.16 knots; Honolulu to Race Rocks, average speed 22.37 knots (the latter being the highest average the *Japan* has yet attained); Captain L. D. Douglas and Chief Engineer R. H. Shaw.

April, 1938—*Empress of Japan*, Yokohama to Honolulu, 6 days 8 hours 33 minutes; average speed 22.17 knots; Captain L. D. Douglas and Chief Engineer R. H. Shaw.

The date given in each case is the arrival date at Vancouver.

JOHN FOSTER McCREIGHT.*

Fifty years ago John Foster McCreight retired from the Supreme Court Bench, ending a long career of service in the Province of British Columbia. Since that time his memory has slipped into obscurity and his actions have found little recognition. Even his name is unfamiliar to many students of British Columbia history.

Yet this man held two of the most important positions in the Province—that of Premier and Supreme Court Judge. He came to Vancouver Island and practised as one of the first lawyers; he left thirty-seven years later when the legal systems were well established and members of the Bar were numerous. He acted as Premier during the doubtful days following the entry of British Columbia into Confederation. He finished his work in the Province when responsible government had been firmly established and already eight Premiers had headed the Government. His work covered a period of great importance—the formative, growing years, when the Province was emerging from the status of two disunited colonies to that of a well-established unit linked to Canada by law and by rail.

Not only did McCreight work in British Columbia during an important era, but he also associated himself with a great many different aspects of the life of the time. His political career, as Attorney-General, as Premier, and as a private member of the Legislative Assembly, meant that for a time he had a great influence in the Government.[1] His legal activities as a barrister-at-law and later Queen's Counsel brought him into touch with many incidents and personalities in the life of the growing Province. His judicial tasks performed in the County and Supreme Courts

* This is the first in a series of four articles dealing with aspects of the career of John Foster McCreight.

(1) No attempt is made in this series of articles to deal with the political career of McCreight, as this subject has been adequately dealt with in W. N. Sage, "John Foster McCreight, the First Premier of British Columbia," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, XXXIV (1940), Section II, pp. 173–185.

gave him an authoritative position in the affairs of men. His church connections, first with the Anglican and then with the Roman Catholic faith, brought him into touch with yet another group of people. His Masonic activities took him far afield in that particular sphere of activity. Above all, his learning, his legal erudition, his supreme regard for the law and its interpretation gave him an unchallenged position as an exponent of jurisprudence and as an acknowledged master of its practice and procedure.

During his thirty-seven years in Western Canada McCreight was not only a part of many different activities, but he was also an inhabitant of a variety of places. He came first to the little city of Victoria, the English outpost of the "Honourable Company," designed to be the capital of the new, somewhat turbulent colony. He probably fitted fairly well into its activities, and from his residence at James Bay could view with interest and approval the attempts to create an ordered society based on law, the Anglican Church, and the observance of tradition. Yet, as the times changed, even Victoria began to take on a veneer of Canadianism, and McCreight moved to the Cariboo. Here, amid the remains of the gold-rush, in the little town of Richfield, he must have felt the strong sense of adventure, of recklessness, and of individual struggle that had brought people to that area. He was close to a life different from that of Victoria. He was more truly near to the heart of his adopted country, no longer in an English colony, but absorbed into the real life of the West. From Cariboo to New Westminster came the next move. Here again was a different situation. A city more truly Canadian had grown up. It boasted the name of "Royal City" from its British association, but it was first and foremost "the mainland," and then an integral part of Canada. The people of the Fraser Valley quickly evolved a way of life of their own, and New Westminster, with its eyes on the sea and its finger on the pulse of the "upper country," provided yet another phase of British Columbia's life. Of this again McCreight must have been a part, and his influence must have been felt in the city which in turn claimed him. The Court-house at New Westminster, housing his library, his picture, and a hundred associations of him, is still a monument and a reminder of Judge McCreight.

Thus John Foster McCreight associated himself with many phases of public life in varied parts of the Province during a critical period of British Columbia's development. Yet his name is not well remembered, except by those closely associated with him in the law. An obvious explanation is the scarcity of records. Beyond official speeches and papers there is little to be found relating to his life and character. The Provincial Archives of British Columbia contain his case-books concerning judicial affairs, but they are strictly legal. There is also his official correspondence as Attorney-General, but these letters give no glimpse of the author's personality. There are also the annotations in the law books of his former law library, but again these bear mainly on the legal principles involved. Six of his letters to Mr. Justice (later Sir Henry P. P.) Crease have recently come to light, and to date they are the only personal letters that are available.

The reserve of McCreight's nature is possibly the clue to his unfamiliarity. Even his contemporaries seem to have felt that they never really got to know him. Some regarded him as almost unfriendly, secluded, unapproachable. Others, recognizing his great absorption in his legal studies and his preoccupation with such things, spoke of his "quiet but cheerful manner among friends."[2] It seems evident that he was possessed of a retiring disposition and that this could develop into and be interpreted as an austere aloofness. Such a nature does not endear a man to his fellows; he is respected but not loved. McCreight lacked popular appeal in an age of outstanding personalities. Neither his nature nor his actions had anything of the attractive splendour of an Amor de Cosmos or a Matthew Baillie Begbie. As a law-maker he was steadier and much more learned than the unruly De Cosmos, but he lacked the other's push and initiative. He was too reticent to forge ahead and so was overshadowed by the memory of the man who succeeded him as Premier. As a Judge, he gained little of the prominence of Begbie. He had not that superb actor's scope nor his tremendous driving power, nor had he the capacity for adapting himself to the situations of the time and place as Begbie had. McCreight might be far more "learned in the law" than Begbie was, but that is not a way of winning public acclaim or lasting praise.

(2) Mr. A. D. Crease, Victoria, B.C., in a letter to the author.

Only on one occasion did McCreight become something of a public hero, and that was upon the one occasion in which he was involved in somewhat extreme and drastic action. This was in the famous case of *Cranford versus Wright,* when the solicitors for the plaintiff, D. Babbington Ring and John Foster McCreight, protested against Judge Begbie's summary dismissal of the jury.[3] By way of protest they had their names removed from the roll of lawyers practising on the Mainland and the famous words, "Dash your pen across my name," became a sort of symbol of resistance to the arbitrary methods of Begbie.[4] The complimentary address tendered to the lawyers by the citizens of New Westminster on this occasion is a most heart-warming document. But this was not the usual behaviour of McCreight. His protest had been made on legal grounds. He felt that Begbie was tampering with the law, and to him the law was something more important than his own popularity. It was predictable; it was reliable; it was, in spite of its flexibilities and adaptabilities, rational and absolute.

A man of this temperament could not hope to be a popular figure. He stood for integrity in a place and age where success was often judged more important. He stood for discipline in an era of self-expression, and for principle rather than personality. He could never be a "man of his times" as other well-known leaders were. Yet his times needed him most desperately. His own age may not have understood him, the succeeding years may have forgotten him, but he had a very great gift to contribute. His legal knowledge was needed, his sense of values was necessary. Above all, his great integrity and his overwhelming exactness was something which must come to balance the easy expediency of the newly formed Province. McCreight himself must have thought that he had a place in the society of his time. Though not a vain man, he knew his worth. He laboured to bring a full knowledge and appreciation of the principles of government, of the law and of justice to the Province in which he had made his home. He was not a "great

(3) For details of this famous case *see* Sydney Pettit, "The Tyrant Judge: Judge Begbie in Court," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly,* XI (1947), pp. 273–294.

(4) New Westminster *British Columbian,* December 20, 1862.

man " in the accepted sense of the word, but he was undoubtedly a " necessary man." The Statute books and the Law Courts testify to that. The tribute of other lawyers and Judges bears it out. British Columbia cannot afford to forget John Foster McCreight. Part of her structure depends on the foundation that he laid.

One cannot leave McCreight as a public figure only, even as a man who did a great work for his Province. Behind the curtain of misunderstanding, of obscure record and of apparent contradiction, one finds a man of most interesting character and undoubted charm. The record of his life is an absorbing one from a personal point of view. In some respects his character is a difficult one to analyse. There are some unexplained gaps in his life, some motivations which can only be guessed at. There are frequent breaks with the past: the physical breaks occurring when he left Ireland to go to Australia, when he left Australia to come to Vancouver Island, and when he left British Columbia to retire to England; and spiritual breaks, best typified by his secession from the Anglican Church and his strong adherence to the Roman Catholic faith. There are many contradictions, shown in his apparent lack of appeal to the people of his time, yet the rapid growth of a series of legends associated with his name. There is his impatience with the ignorance of some of his legal associates, and yet his painstaking, friendly help for those who really sought the truth. He was marked as a sober, unemotional man, yet he must have had a certain spirit of recklessness to make him leave his home in Ireland to journey first to the goldfields of Australia and then to the little known colony of Vancouver Island in 1860.

Underlying all his actions is something almost undefinable but strangely fascinating. Was it loneliness, was it conviction, was it some inner philosophy that dictated his actions? Something must have moved him deeply to make him follow the course of action that he did. It has been suggested that McCreight was a man who had broken with his past—his past in Ireland, his past in Australia—and that something from that past stirred and haunted him. There is no real evidence for this. It seems nearer to the truth to suggest that McCreight was a man seeking for the absolute in truth, in religion, in life

itself. He came as close to finding it as he could in his legal studies and his religious convictions. As one follows the life of McCreight, that motive seems to stand out clearly as the key to his personality, his set of standards, to the man that made a real contribution to his times.

In the New Westminster Court-house hangs a picture of John Foster McCreight in his judicial robes. It shows a quiet-faced aristocratic man, shrewd, but never harsh, reserved but very kindly. The white wig of a Judge cannot obscure the broad, scholarly forehead, and the white beard and moustache do not hide a firm, but calm, mouth. Bushy white eyebrows only accentuate a pair of most discerning, honest eyes. The portrait is that of a man of great character, of a man with "a good face." Only the deeply etched lines around the mouth seem to indicate someone given to much thought, to painful mental struggles, and to stern inner resolution.[5]

He was apparently a tall man, "Fine looking and athletic and of a high, determined character," as the *Colonist* described him at the time of his retirement in November, 1897. Those who had known him recognized his outstanding qualities, and he was further described as "a learned, bold, conscientious successful lawyer and a thoroughly honest man."[6]

His great learning has always been the subject of comment. He was the "acknowledged local authority on matters of law,"[7] and his phenomenal memory, as well as his great industry, placed him head and shoulders above the other lawyers of his day. Magistrate H. L. Edmonds, of New Westminster, remembered that McCreight could quote whole cases in Court, as he had a remarkable photographic memory. Mr. W. C. Moresby, who worked for Judge McCreight between 1892 and 1897, stated: "there was no question that Mr. Justice McCreight had a profound knowledge of the law and was recognized as one of the ablest jurists that we had in Canada."[8] His great industry

(5) A photograph of this portrait was reproduced in this *Quarterly*, VIII (1944), facing p. 189.

(6) Victoria *Colonist*, November 19, 1897.

(7) *Ibid.*

(8) W. C. Moresby, K.C., in a letter to the author dated October 22, 1946.

is well illustrated by an anecdote contributed by Mr. A. D. Crease:—

As an illustration of his industry I may refer to an occasion of a trial before Sir Matthew Begbie I believe, when he was counsel for the defendant, and George Hunter Cary, credited with some brilliance but less industry, had to reply to an argument by McCreight fortified by every case available. Cary said, "My learned friend has adduced to your Lordship every known authority bearing on this case, whether in favour of his case or mine, so I will now devote myself to the facts."[9]

His great industry was not confined to his own efforts, for he believed that all those connected with the law must work for what they got. The late Mr. Justice Denis Murphy told an interesting story of McCreight's rules for the successful preparation of a brief:—

Judge McCreight once instructed a young lawyer how preparation for a chamber application should be made. I had the story from the victim himself, who at the time of his telling was probably the most widely known and most popular person in British Columbia. He had made an application in Probate to Judge McCreight. The matter was somewhat involved and my friend admitted he had floundered rather badly. The judge, an old-time friend of the applicant's family, finally adjourned the hearing and requested him to come to his room after Chambers. On his doing so, the learned judge addressed him thus: "Tom" (I call him so because that was not his name) "I have known you since you were a lad. You want to be a lawyer. Well, here's how you do it. Take this book home with you this evening," and he handed him a copy of the then standard work on probate practice. The judge went on: "About an hour after your dinner ask your mother to make you a large pot of strong coffee and to leave it on the kitchen stove over a good fire. Then go to your room taking this book with you. Dampen a towel in cold water and wrap it around your head. Then sit down and read the book through carefully, starting at the opening page. To do so will take you most of the night. When you get sleepy go to the kitchen and drink one or more cups of coffee. Keep a good fire on so that the coffee will always be hot. If your head gets warm remove the towel, dampen it again in cold water—the colder the better—then replace it around your head. Repeat these performances as often as necessary to keep you wide awake and your head perfectly cool. Then come back tomorrow morning and renew your application."[10]

---

(9) A. D. Crease, K.C., in a letter to the author dated September, 1946.

(10) Mr. Justice Denis Murphy, "Judges of Ye Olden Time," Vancouver Bar Association, *The Advocate*, IV (1946), p. 87. The suggestion has been made that the young lawyer mentioned in this anecdote was Richard McBride.

This passage reveals the kindness of a great lawyer wanting another to succeed in the work that he loved so well. It shows, too, an exact clear brain in the detail of the instruction. Its tone is rather patronising, but that was McCreight's nature. It gives an almost fussy, homely touch to a somewhat aloof figure—the man who knew how to keep the coffee hot and yet keep his head cool.

There is the feeling that McCreight himself had spent many nights in such study. But to him the study was a joy as well as a task. As he grew older and withdrew more and more from his associates, he spent long hours poring over his law volumes. His collection of books was extensive and they all showed marks of constant use. As Judge Murphy explained:—

> Whosoever now owns Judge McCreight's library has little need to resort to these modern aids to research, so far as cases decided up to the time of his retirement are concerned. The lucky owner will find noted in the judge's handwriting in the report of each case every comment or reference made to it subsequent to its decision.[11]

A study of these books is most illuminating. Each one contains the name " J. F. McCreight " and the date received on the first page. Each one contains numerous annotations, in ink or pencil, sometimes limited to a case reference, sometimes giving a brief comment, sometimes a lengthy comparison or explanation. A stressed paragraph is marked with a special sign. Most of the books had obviously been sent out direct from their London publishers, while a few had belonged to D. Babbington Ring, and one is marked as " Given by A. E. B. Davie." Sometimes newspaper clippings bearing on famous cases are glued into the front of the books. The comments are not easy to read, for, as Mr. Moresby has put it:—

> His handwriting was generally abbreviated, and it was difficult to decipher same. In fact at times he had difficulty in doing so himself.[12]

A few of the books are somewhat ink-stained, possibly mute witnesses of the incident related by R. E. Gosnell of " a peppery young lawyer from the East " who was intolerant of McCreight's knowledge and somewhat impatient criticism, and in a fit of

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 86. Judge McCreight's library now forms part of the New Westminster Court-house library.

(12) W. C. Moresby, K.C., in a letter to the author dated October 22, 1946.

temper hurled an open ink-bottle in the direction of the Judge, only to have it splash over the law books on the shelf behind.[13]

That a man of such superb knowledge should be at times impatient with the ineptitude of his juniors is only natural. McCreight might appear to be cold and reserved, but he had a certain hotness of temper—this was obvious in his clashes with Begbie. He did not suffer fools gladly, a point which the late Dr. Robie Reid illustrated from his own early experience in the New Westminster Courts:—

> It was difficult for us youngsters to practise law before him, he knew so much more than we did, and he had little patience with our ignorance. He would hardly give us time, in our fumbling way, to get our case properly before him. As soon as he saw a point to be decided, he would jump from his chair, reach for a volume of the Reports [English Law Reports], open it at a case, and slap it on the desk, saying, "You will find the law on *that* point in that case, Mr. ——." We found it embarrassing at times.[14]

From such incidents the picture is made clearer. It is that of a man who was deeply immersed in his chosen profession and who considered it to be of paramount importance to the exclusion of other interests. His great love for his studies perhaps obscured the kindlier and more human qualities that he possessed. He is regarded as being aloof and unapproachable. "He was very austere; he would pass by on the street without a 'good day,'" reported Mrs. Haynes, a resident of Victoria who came out as the wife of one of the Royal Engineers.[15] Magistrate Edmonds explained that although he practised before McCreight, the Judge never spoke to him, or anyone else, on the street. Mr. Justice Murphy took the view that McCreight was not so much austere as lonely, while Mr. Crease mentioned "his quiet but cheerful manner among friends, but in Court, whether at the Bar or on the Bench, he displayed a certain amount of diffidence."[16]

---

(13) R. E. Gosnell, "Premiers of British Columbia," Vancouver *Daily Province*, February 22, 1921. It has been suggested that the young lawyer in this anecdote may have been G. A. Walkem.

(14) R. L. Reid, "R.W. Bro. John Foster McCreight," *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. of British Columbia*, 70th Annual Communication, Vancouver, 1941, p. 173.

(15) This anecdote is related by Mr. G. H. Slater, Victoria, B.C.

(16) A. D. Crease in a letter to the author dated September, 1946.

It seems from this that McCreight was a very reserved man. His outward attitude was that of calm superiority—withdrawn dignity. Inwardly he was a friendly, cheerful person, but far too absorbed in his own thoughts to take much notice of other people. He was possessed of a speculative type of mind, and the law gave it much scope. In later years the life of his mind was, to him, the most true one, so he presented a somewhat detached appearance that could be mistaken for snobbishness. Without a doubt he did feel more at home among people of his own type—those who were learned and slightly aristocratic. He was not a democrat in the modern sense of the word, and for that reason he did not fit into the life of his times. Authority was worth more to him than personality, exactness more than individual variation.

It has often been said that McCreight never forgave Begbie for the insults heaped upon him in the Law Courts during the Chief Justice's early hectic days. Mr. Sydney Pettit recounts an anecdote received from the late A. E. Beck that does put this matter in a better light for both the men concerned:—

> As old men, McCreight and Begbie met on Birdcage Walk. One spoke to the other, so they stopped and made up a quarrel that had probably begun during the Cranford and Wright case.[17]

Commenting on this, Mr. Pettit made the point that:—

> Begbie had been fearless and honest as his old enemy McCreight admitted. McCreight indeed held him to be impartial. This was more than thirty years after the Cranford case and the honest Irishman had come to realize that what he had once considered partiality was more a defect of judgment than of character.[18]

Mention of Birdcage Walk brings to mind the home of John Foster McCreight. Although he lived for a short time in the Cariboo and for many years in New Westminster, he occupied for over twenty years a house on Michigan Street in Victoria, not far from Birdcage Walk, but quite a long trip across the James Bay bridge to the Law Courts. The matter of his residence leads on to the natural one of his immediate family. Did McCreight marry? No marriage record can be found in Ireland, Australia, or British Columbia, and no one that knew McCreight remembers a wife or anything more than rumours regarding

(17) Sydney G. Pettit in a letter to the author dated October 10, 1946.
(18) *Ibid.*

her. Yet a story persists that he had a wife separated from him and living in "the Old Country"—to quote the phrase used by Gosnell.

Definite evidence that Mrs. McCreight lived in Victoria is provided from an account of a ball given by Governor Frederick Seymour at New Westminster in November, 1864. Many guests were present from Victoria, as a special steamer had been chartered and a board-walk was laid down from the dock to the Governor's residence, so that all might arrive dry shod. Among the list of guests appeared the names "Mr. and Mrs. McCreight," but with no initials given. Furthermore, after descriptions of the dresses worn by the most important ladies, including the wife of the Governor of Vancouver Island, there appeared this item:—

Mrs. McCreight wore an elegant dress of white, trimmed with black lace, and a head-dress of white geraniums.[19]

Further evidence is provided in two letters written by E. G. Alston to H. P. P. Crease. The first, dated August 3, 1863, contained the following information:—

Mrs. Archdeacon [H. P. Wright] babby [*sic*], etc. have come down upon us for a visit—a regular flight from Egypt & the plagues thereof—no small addition to our small establishment. Mary & Fred are distributed at Mrs. McCreight's & Nina at Mrs. Reeces. I never saw such a whopping big baby & a terrific roarer.[20]

The second, dated December 5, 1867, is even more illuminating:—

Mrs. McCreight has *returned* to the astonishment of everyone, as her only reason for departing was the urgency of private affairs at home.[21]

No record of her death has been found, nor is she mentioned in McCreight's will. It seems that she must have separated from her husband sometime before 1870 and gone her own way. No mention of her occurs in the newspapers at any other time. The effect of this upon McCreight is hard to judge. He must have possessed a difficult temperament, and it is possible that his wife

(19) New Westminster *North Pacific Times*, November 12, 1864. Mrs. Arthur Kennedy's dress "was composed of rich maize silk, trimmed with black lace. Her head-dress was formed of a wreath of pansies, and black lace lappets, pearls and diamonds."

(20) E. G. Alston to H. P. P. Crease, August 3, 1863, Alston Letters, *MS.*, Archives of B.C.

(21) E. G. Alston to H. P. P. Crease, December 5, 1867, Alston Letters, *M.S.*, Archives of B.C.

found life with him exceedingly difficult, despite his respected position in the colony. The fact that no mention ever seems to have been made of her makes one think that McCreight regarded the affair as something better left in the past. It could only make a man of his lonely, aloof spirit retire more within himself.

One other incident in McCreight's life concerns the period just after his removal from the Cariboo. In 1884 he suffered an unusual and serious illness. The first mention of this came in a dispatch to the Victoria *Colonist* from San Francisco:—

> Judge McCreight of Victoria, B.C., was bitten today by some insect on the arm. The member swelled and became so painful that it was necessary to remove the unfortunate gentleman to St. Mary's Hospital, where he is lying to-night in a dangerous condition.[22]

Apparently this report was not entirely correct, for a few days later Captain G. C. Walker of the ship *Queen of the Pacific* returned from San Francisco and gave another version. He reported that he had seen Mr. Justice McCreight at Lick House after his arrival from Victoria, and that McCreight was suffering from a swelling in his hand that had to be opened by a surgeon. He then felt the wound to be better and had taken off the bandages, and as a result the wound got cold, the swelling extended, and he "was reduced to a pitiable state of bodily and mental suffering."[23] It happened that Alexander Dunsmuir was in San Francisco, and when he heard of the Judge's distress he called a doctor and had the sufferer removed to the hospital.

> Mr. McCreight's statement, made somewhat incoherently, is to the effect that while examining a plant in the garden of Lady Douglas some weeks ago he was stung on the hand by an insect, the virus from which entered his system and now threatens his life. Mr. McCreight's mental condition is also said to give his friends great anxiety and it is feared that he will hardly live to return to this city.[24]

Whether the gravity of the illness was exaggerated or whether McCreight made a swift recovery is not known, but the report of the following day is almost an anti-climax:—

> Judge McCreight of Victoria, B.C., is better and left for Victoria this morning on the Portland steamer.[25]

---

(22) Victoria *Colonist*, May 8, 1884.
(23) *Ibid.*, May 10, 1884.
(24) *Ibid.*
(25) *Ibid.*, May 11, 1884.

Thus he did live to return to Victoria, and it was not until twenty-nine years later, at the age of 86, that he died.

The City of Victoria, with its stately Parliament Buildings, whose Archives house his case-books, is a reminder of McCreight and his work in the government of the Province. As a political figure he was not a success. It is true that his position as the first Premier under the domination of Trutch was a difficult one, and that his setting-up of necessary legislation was done with efficiency and dignity. That he could not have continued to head the Government was obvious. He cared little for the people he represented; he was no part of the movement for responsible government. He was an individualist doing a necessary piece of skilled work. He never could have been and never wished to be a representative and leader of the people. In his connections with the church the same trait was evident.[26] He stood for a personal conviction of order and authority against a mass movement of the people. There is a feeling that the same thing may have been true in his Masonic connections.[27] He was a man of authority and position who gave orders well. He was not a member of a group on equal terms with others. His background was too aristocratic for that.

On the Bench he found himself in a much more desirable position. He could instruct others, and this he proceeded to do, but with dignity and perfect courtesy of the traditional aristocrat. When opposition became too great or too vocal, he reacted unfavourably towards it. A certain querulousness was evident, apparent at the beginning of his judicial career, when he thought he was being pushed into the background in the Cariboo.[28] He was a man striving for perfection, and sure that he could come closest to it by his own means. In one sense he was an egoist, concentrating upon himself and his powers. But he was quite sincere in his belief that his ability and knowledge were a great asset to the development of the law. As a student of the law he

(26) This subject will be dealt with in a subsequent article in this series.

(27) For details on McCreight's Masonic connection *see* R. L. Reid, "R.W. Bro. John Foster McCreight," *Proceedings . . . Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. . . .* Vancouver, 1941, p. 173 ff.

(28) Further details on this subject will be dealt with in a subsequent article in this series.

was at his best. His store of legal knowledge was his greatest contribution to the life of his times.

The City of New Westminster, with its rambling Court-House and sunny law library containing his well-loved law books, is a monument to what he so much wished to be—a great jurist.

> . . . whenever the history of these times shall be written there will be no greater honour or inducement that can be presented for the training and encouragement of thorough lawyers in this province, of the best style and class, than the honored and exalted name of John Foster McCreight.[29]

Add to this the memory of a man of principle, with the courage of his own hard-won conviction, a man who sought for perfection in an imperfect world and who found the nearest approach to it in the absolutism of the law and the picture will be complete of that little-known but fascinating personality — John Foster McCreight.

PATRICIA M. JOHNSON.

LADNER, B.C.

(29) Victoria *Colonist*, November 19, 1897.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Association was held in the Provincial Library, Victoria, on Friday, January 16, with over eighty members in attendance. The annual reports presented indicated a successful year of activity. Paid-up members at the end of the year showed a slight decline—497 as compared with 505 in 1946; of these, 172 were affiliated with the Victoria Section, 169 with the Vancouver Section, and there were 156 members-at-large. The financial status of the Association was satisfactory, for, after making a special grant of £20 to the restoration fund of Petersham Church, a bank balance of $180.52 was carried forward into the new year.

Mr. Willard E. Ireland presented his first report as editor of the *Quarterly*. Despite a decline in the membership of the sections the over-all paid-up circulation decreased only 4—from 536 in 1946 to 532. The *Quarterly* is now being regularly forwarded to all parts of Canada and the United States, and, in addition, there are members in England, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and Peru. Special tribute was paid to Miss M. Wolfenden for her considerable assistance in checking articles and proof, to Miss Inez Mitchell for the painstaking work involved in the annual index, and to other members of the staff of the Provincial Archives for assistance in preparing the *Quarterly* for mailing.

The twenty-fifth report of Major F. V. Longstaff, convener of the Marine Committee, was submitted, in which the main maritime events of the past year were outlined.

Mr. George White then delivered his presidential address, entitled *The Development of the Lower Fraser Valley*. Restricting himself principally to the area west of Hope and east of New Westminster, Mr. White gave a detailed synopsis of the history of the valley from the advent of the white man to the completion of the Sumas reclamation project. The text of the address will be printed in a forthcoming issue of this *Quarterly*.

The report of the scrutineers was then presented. A total of 181 ballots had been returned to the Honorary Secretary. The new Council met immediately after the adjournment of the annual meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Ireland, when the following officers were elected for 1948:—

Honorary President - - -	Hon. W. T. Straith, K.C.
President - - - - -	Mr. Willard E. Ireland.
1st Vice-President - - - -	Dr. Margaret Ormsby.
2nd Vice-President - - -	Mr. G. H. Stevens.
Honorary Secretary - - -	Miss Madge Wolfenden.
Honorary Treasurer - - -	Mr. J. K. Nesbitt.

Members of the Council—

Miss Helen R. Boutilier. Mr. Burt R. Campbell.
Mrs. M. R. Cree. Rev. John Goodfellow.
Dr. W. Kaye Lamb. Mr. B. A. McKelvie.
Dr. W. N. Sage.

Councillors *ex officio*—

Mr. G. H. Stevens, Chairman, Victoria Section.
Mr. L. S. Grant, Chairman, Vancouver Section.
Mr. George White, Past President.
Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Editor, *Quarterly*, and Provincial Archivist.

The Council discussed the possibility of joint meetings with the Canadian Historical Association which will be holding its sessions in British Columbia this coming June. In addition, the Council approved the preparation of tentative plans for the celebration of the establishment of British rule in the Pacific Northwest as symbolized by the creation of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island.

VICTORIA SECTION.

A general meeting of this Section was held in the Provincial Library on Tuesday, November 25, with the Vice-Chairman, Mr. J. A. Heritage, presiding, owing to the illness of the Chairman. A considerable discussion ensued on the question of the preservation of Indian petroglyphs at Seton Lake and Pavilion discovered by Major H. F. Tasker-Taylor. The congratulations of the Section were tendered Major Taylor for his efforts in persuading the Provincial Government to set aside the Seton Lake site as a Provincial park. Through the courtesy of Mr. Clarence Ferris, of the Motion Picture Branch of the Government Travel Bureau, two very interesting films were shown, on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway and the Okanagan Valley.

The annual meeting of the Section was held in the Provincial Library on Monday, December 15, with over sixty members present. Reports were submitted which gave evidence of an interesting and satisfactory year's endeavour. The Honorary Secretary reported that eight regular meetings had been held, with an average attendance of sixty, as well as the Blanshard Day reception and the Summer Field-day. The Honorary Treasurer reported a balance of $38.23 on hand. The Chairman, Mrs. M. R. Cree, then read her address, entitled *Behind the Palisades*, dealing with events in the early career of George Simpson McTavish at Fort Churchill. Mr. McTavish came out to the fort as a young lad and served the Hudson's Bay Company faithfully for many years, eventually rising to the rank of chief factor. Many interesting sidelights on life in the Company's service were provided in extracts read from the reminiscences written by Mr. McTavish, and it is to be hoped that some day this interesting account may be given wider publicity. The report of the scrutineers was received and a meeting of the new Council was held on December 16 at the home of Mrs. W. Curtis Sampson, when the following officers were elected:—

Chairman - - - - - - -	Mr. G. H. Stevens.
Vice-Chairman - - - - -	Dr. F. W. Gray.
Honorary Secretary - - - -	Mr. Willard E. Ireland.
Honorary Treasurer - - -	Miss Madge Wolfenden.
Members of Council—	
Miss Kathleen Agnew.	Mr. J. A. Heritage.
Mr. R. H. Hiscocks.	Dr. Wm. Hackney.
Major H. T. Nation.	Miss Alma Russell.
Mrs. W. Curtis Sampson.	
Mr. H. C. Gilliland (*co-opt.*).	Mrs. J. G. Parmelee (*co-opt.*).
Mrs. George Stelly (*co-opt.*).	
Mrs. M. R. Cree (*ex officio*).	Mr. Willard E. Ireland (*ex officio*).

VANCOUVER SECTION.

Captain C. W. Cates, of North Vancouver, was the speaker at the meeting of the Section held in the Hotel Grosvenor on the evening of Tuesday, November 18. His subject was *The Growth of Marine Commerce in the Seaports of British Columbia.* Captain Cates referred first to some of the earliest steamers to ply the Pacific, including the little-known Spanish *Telica.* She was not a success, and her harassed owner ended both her career and his own by blowing her up when he himself was on board. The famous *Beaver*, the first steamer to operate in North Pacific waters, arrived in 1836; and Captain Cates recalled that after she was wrecked at the entrance to Vancouver Harbour in 1888, his father offered to salvage her and place her in Stanley Park for $600. Knowing that the Cates family has a habit of accomplishing what it sets out to do, it is indeed a thousand pities that the offer was not accepted.

Captain Cates dealt next with the navigational difficulties met with by sailing-ships approaching the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and explained why the west coast of Vancouver Island had for years the reputation of being a vast marine graveyard. Steamships as well as sailing-ships came to grief in the days when navigational aids were few, as the tragic loss of the *Valencia* and other vessels demonstrated.

For many years sailing-ships were an important factor in the trade of Vancouver and Victoria, but by 1912, or thereabouts, they had become few and far between. That same year the arrival of the motor-vessel *Siam*—the first ocean-going example of her type to visit Vancouver—marked the beginning of a new era in the evolution of the ocean freighter. Speaking of such, Captain Cates referred particularly to "the Blues"—the giant freight steamers sent to the Pacific by the Blue Funnel Line. So sturdily were they built that a ship described as being their equal in strength was regarded as having gained a rating superior to the well-known 100 A1 at Lloyd's. In conclusion Captain Cates mentioned some of the outstanding captains who had spent a lifetime guiding ships through the crooked waters

of the British Columbia coast. Captain Moody, for example, had spent twenty-seven years in the service of the Union Steamship Company and another twenty-five years in the Pilot Service, yet throughout the whole period of fifty-two years had never had an accident.

The election of officers resulted in the following slate for 1948:—

Honorary Chairman	Mr. E. G. Baynes.
Chairman	Mr. L. S. Grant.
Vice-Chairman	Mr. J. W. Eastham.
Secretary	Miss Kate McQueen.
Treasurer	Mr. Cyril S. Chave.

Members of the Council—

Miss Helen R. Boutilier.	Mr. Noel Robinson.
Miss Lillian Cope.	Dr. W. N. Sage.
Mr. A. G. Harvey.	Rev. F. G. St. Denis.
Mr. George Green.	Dr. G. F. G. Stanley.
Mr. D. A. McGregor.	George B. White.

Rev. William Stott (*ex officio*).

On Tuesday, December 9, the Section met again to hear an address by Mr. Norman Hacking, the well-known authority on marine history, entitled *The Romance of Two Rivers: the Columbia and the Kootenay.* Mr. Hacking first outlined the curious geographical formation of Eastern British Columbia, and the fashion in which the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers between them almost surround a vast inland "island" of land. In the region now known as Canal Flats the rivers approach within 3 miles of one another, and, as the name implies, a canal was once constructed that connected the two. The scheme—which was only one part of a vaster land reclamation and land speculation plan that involved 70,000 acres—sprang to life in the brain of W. A. Baillie-Groham, who arrived in British Columbia in 1882. A land grant from the Province and money secured from credulous investors in England enabled the plan to go ahead, but opposition to it quickly developed, notably from the Canadian Pacific Railway, which feared that the canal would divert so much water from the Kootenay into the Columbia that the latter would wash away tracks and bridges near Revelstoke and elsewhere. For this reason a lock was introduced into the canal, and for the same reason the Provincial Government decided to fill it in as soon as it was completed and handed over to them.

In spite of this the canal remained more or less in existence for a good many years, and two steamers are known to have passed through it. The first was the 85-foot *Gwendolen,* built at Golden in 1893. By that time the canal had been filled in, as already noted, but when the *Gwendolen* desired to pass through it the Provincial Government obligingly had it excavated again. Then came the flood of 1894, which swept all before it at Canal Flats as elsewhere, including dykes that had been erected along the sides of the famous canal.

The second steamer to pass through was the much larger *North Star,* which appeared on the scene in 1902. As she had a length of 120 feet and

the lock of the canal measured only 100 feet, the passage would have seemed impracticable to most people; but Captain Armstrong, the enterprising skipper of the *North Star*, was not in the least dismayed. He first enlarged and lengthened the lock by building up the sides with sand-bags, placed his steamer in it, and then blew out the end next to the Columbia with dynamite, thereby producing a tidal wave that swept the *North Star* some way towards her destination. After the steamer had run on the Columbia for a season or two, the Canadian Customs officers finally woke up to the fact that she had been brought from the United States and that no duty had been paid on her. She was therefore seized and laid up, but this did not embarrass her owner for long. Clandestinely and by degrees he proceeded to remove her machinery and equipment, all of which he installed in a new hull. It is said that when the process was finally completed, he actually purchased the stripped hull of the old steamer for $25 and converted it into a barge which the new steamer towed!

All this was merely the starting-point from which Mr. Hacking proceeded to tell the fascinating story of sternwheel steamboating in East Kootenay. The details are too numerous to recount here, but fortunately they are being incorporated in an article that will appear at a later date in this *Quarterly*.

UNVEILING OF THE OREGON BOUNDARY TREATY CENTENNIAL PLAQUES.

Representatives from the Washington State Historical Society, the British Columbia Historical Association, the International Peace Arch Association, and other interested organizations assembled at the Peace Arch Park, near Douglas, B.C., and Blaine, Wash., on Saturday afternoon, November 8, 1947, to witness the unveiling of the bronze plaques attached to the marker which had been dedicated at the time of the centennial celebration on June 15, 1946.

The ceremony was presided over by Mr. Rogan Jones, of Bellingham, Wash., Chairman of the International Peace Arch Association, and opened with the singing of the national anthems of Canada and the United States. Colonel Howard A. Hanson, representing the Washington State Historical Society, donor of the American plaque, was then called upon and delivered the following address:—

"I am deeply sensible of the honour of representing the Americans on this important occasion. The simple ceremony to-day is the fitting and closing act in the dedication of this centennial cairn, or marker, which was unveiled June 15, 1946, on the International Boundary.

"Here, in this scenic park, partly Canadian and partly American, we meet on common ground and, without let or hindrance, pass and repass the Border Line on which this historic, commemorative granite is erected. Yonder in the park stands the renowned Peace Arch, its portal walls bearing the inscription voiced by the people of our two countries—'May these gates never be closed.'

"The British Columbia Historical Association and the Washington State Historical Society proposed a joint celebration to be held here in 1946 to

commemorate the centennial of the establishment of the International Boundary between Canada and the United States from the Rockies to the Pacific. The plan met with prompt and cordial approval, private and official, resulting in the largest and most spectacular celebration of an international character ever held west of the Rockies.

"That celebration has passed and become a cherished memory. This simple, well-proportioned cairn, now adorned with commemorative inscriptions on two bronze plaques—one on the Canadian, the other on the American side—remains as a permanent reminder. One other tangible and important reminder remains in the historical booklet *The Boundary Treaty Centennial*, sponsored by the two societies and published by the Department of Conservation and Development of the State of Washington and the Department of Trade and Industry of the Province of British Columbia, which has been distributed to the schools and libraries of the State and Province.

"As the visitor pauses at this cairn and reads its inscriptions, he is forcibly reminded that, while the land beyond is part of an independent nation, its people are not foreign to his own, but kindred, in blood, in language, customs, laws, and institutions—a people whose aims and aspirations parallel those of his own land. This cairn is commemorative of the treaty establishing the International Boundary—a treaty based on reason, not on might and power, and framed with due regard to the interests of the nations involved. The Boundary has always remained undefended and unfortified, an object lesson to the nations of the world.

"We rejoice in the settlement of the treaty question, in the peace and tranquility which has characterized the relations of our two Governments and of their citizens. We face the involved and pressing problems of the future with the will and courage of free men, determined that reason, law, and order shall prevail over might and power, and in full confidence that we shall always enjoy the most cordial relations with the splendid people of the land across the Border."

Dr. W. N. Sage, the official representative of British Columbia and Yukon on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, donors of the Canadian plaque, then made the following remarks:—

"On June 15, 1946, we held a joint celebration here at Blaine and unveiled the stone memorial on which the two bronze plaques have now been placed. Captain A. M. Sobieralski, U.S.N., removed the Stars and Stripes from the Canadian side of the stone and to me fell the task of simultaneously removing the Union Jack from the American side. The action typified the oneness of feeling of the two nations.

"To-day we unveil the plaques. That on the Canadian side has been provided by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and I have been directed by the Chairman and my fellow members to represent the Board on this occasion. The Board is a consultative body of historians which advises the Canadian Government on the subject of national historic sites. The Board wishes me to convey their best wishes and felicitations on this happy occasion.

" In August, 1946, on Campo Bello Island, N.B., Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt unveiled a tablet erected by the Board to the late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. On that occasion the Chairman of our Board, Dr. J. Clarence Webster, Ph.D., LL.D., C.M.G., alluded to our ceremony of June 15. Canada was proud to do honour at Campo Bello to a great American President, who had for many years owned a summer residence on that island, situated almost on the International Boundary. That unveiling also typified the strong bond of attachment between our two nations.

" It is not my intention on this occasion to recount the long series of negotiations which led to the settlement of 1846. That was well and truly done at this spot on June 15 a year ago. All I wish to do is very briefly to indicate the historical significance of the Oregon Treaty. Its importance is that it provided a peaceful solution for a most difficult problem in diplomacy, the claims of Great Britain and the United States to ' Old Oregon '—the territory between the northern boundary of California and the southern limit of Alaska, from 42° to 54°40' north latitude. The actual territory under dispute, in spite of President Polk's war cry ' Fifty-four forty or fight,' was only that portion lying south of the 49th parallel and west and north of the main stream of the Columbia River.

" Many factors were involved, chief among them the fur trade and the American immigration into the southern portion of Old Oregon. The Hudson's Bay Company had a strong hold on the fur trade, and the American pioneers who came over the Oregon Trail and settled in the Willamette strengthened the claim of the United States. But the diplomatic negotiations were not finally determined by the British fur-traders or the American settlers. As in the case of the disputed northeastern boundary between Maine and New Brunswick, settled in 1842 by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, the actual settlement was a compromise. That it was sound has been proven by the century of peace which we have enjoyed since then on the Pacific Coast.

" In the shadow of the Peace Portal we have met once more to celebrate the mutual understanding between our nations. To be sure, in 1846, what is now Canada was then British North America, but Canadians are proud that at a time when the Eastern Provinces were separate British colonies and what is now British Columbia a fur preserve, such a settlement was possible. Those of us who have gathered to-day on both sides of the International Boundary are proud indeed to celebrate once more our hundred years of peace. The gates have been open one hundred years! May they never be closed! "

The actual unveiling was performed by Donald Holmes, Life Scout, representing the youth of the United States, and Robert Allen, Boy Scout, of New Westminster, representing the youth of Canada. Mr. Chapin D. Foster, Secretary of the Washington State Historical Society, was then called upon to read the inscription on the American plaque:—

1846 1946

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OREGON TREATY CENTENNIAL

In commemoration of the signing of the Oregon Boundary Treaty of 1846 this monument was erected jointly by Canadians and Americans on the International Boundary line which has always remained unfortified and undefended, the symbol of peace and amity between two great peoples.

July 15, 1946

Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist of British Columbia, then read the inscription on the Canadian plaque:—

THE OREGON TREATY OF 1846

Prior to the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, Great Britain and the United States by providing a peaceful settlement to a difficult boundary problem strengthened the ties existing between the two peoples. Canada has been proud to do her part in perpetuating this relationship and in forging new links of friendship with our Neighbour to the South.

A.D. 1947.

UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO AMOR DE COSMOS.

Official recognition of Amor De Cosmos as an "eminent Canadian" was made by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in an interesting ceremony held in the main lobby of the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament Buildings, Victoria, on Friday, January 16. Dr. W. N. Sage, British Columbia and Yukon representative on the Board, presided, and, in the absence of the Premier, the Hon. W. T. Straith, K.C., Minister of Education, received the plaque on behalf of the Provincial Government. The inscription reads as follows:—

AMOR DE COSMOS

A leader in the struggle for Confederation and Responsible Government. Premier of British Columbia, 1872–74. Born in Windsor, N.S., 20th August, 1825. Died in Victoria, B.C., 4th July, 1897.

In making the presentation, Dr. Sage spoke as follows:—

"This evening we are unveiling a tablet in memory of a great British Columbian who was also a great Canadian. He was a most interesting person, rather eccentric in his way, but a doughty fighter for responsible government and a leader in the movement for the federation of British

Columbia with Canada. He established the *British Colonist* in 1858 and made it the mouthpiece for reform. He attacked Governor James Douglas and denounced the rule of what he termed the 'Family-Company-Compact.' From 1872 to 1874 he was Premier of the Province of British Columbia.

"Most of us are not granted the opportunity of choosing our own names. Amor De Cosmos did so. He was born at Windsor, Nova Scotia, on August 20, 1825, as William Alexander Smith, third son of Jesse and Charlotte (Weems) Smith. In 1851 the California Legislature changed his name to Amor De Cosmos. None of his brothers or sisters relinquished the family name of Smith, and as Amor De Cosmos never married, his new name died with him. The story is current that it was post-office difficulties in California which caused the change of name. Be that as it may, it is as Amor De Cosmos that we remember and honour him.

"During De Cosmos's boyhood and early manhood Joseph Howe was carrying on his well-known campaign for responsible government in Nova Scotia. De Cosmos seems to have been greatly influenced by Howe, but it is difficult to trace a direct political connection between them. None the less, when he arrived in Vancouver Island from California in 1858 and studied the political situation in the island colony, De Cosmos must have been struck by the parallel between Governor Douglas' rule and that of the 'Old Colonial Governors' of Nova Scotia whom Howe attacked. De Cosmos plunged at once into a struggle for reform. But Vancouver Island was not Nova Scotia, and political conditions were really not at all similar. Nova Scotia was maturing rapidly, both economically and politically. Vancouver Island was still in its infancy, and its political and economic life was controlled by the Honourable the Hudson's Bay Company. During Douglas' regime De Cosmos made little progress. Then followed the stormy period of the governorship of Arthur Edward Kennedy. The union of the two colonies in 1866 initiated what has been termed 'the critical period of British Columbia history.' It was then that De Cosmos came to the fore as the champion of responsible government and Confederation. In 1867 De Cosmos in the Legislative Council of British Columbia moved a resolution favouring the admission of the Pacific colony into Canadian federation, but the opposition of Governor Seymour and his officials was too strong. The next year De Cosmos was one of the founders of the Confederation League which held the Yale Convention and drew up tentative terms of union with Canada.

"Governor Seymour's death in 1869 paved the way for federation. The new governor, Anthony Musgrave, had fought and lost the battle for confederation in Newfoundland. He was anxious, as was Sir John A. Macdonald, that British Columbia should join Canada. In the Confederation debate of 1870 De Cosmos took an active part in support of the movement. After federation he sat in the first Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia and was also elected to the House of Commons as member of parliament for Victoria. Although he had taken a prominent part in bringing about confederation, Lieutenant-Governor Joseph William Trutch

did not include him in the first Provincial Cabinet. De Cosmos denounced John Foster McCreight's ministry as 'the nominees of Governor Trutch' and called upon the 'Liberals of the Province' to rally round their old leaders to oppose the new administration.

"After the defeat of the McCreight Government De Cosmos became premier in December, 1872. But it at once became evident that he could not attend to his duties in Victoria and Ottawa at one and the same time. 'Double representation,' as it was termed, was abolished, and De Cosmos elected to retain his seat in the Parliament of Canada. Attorney-General George Anthony Walkem reconstructed the Cabinet and became the third premier of British Columbia in 1874. De Cosmos remained a member of the House of Commons until 1882, when he lost his seat. He retired to Victoria and lived quietly in this city until his death on July 4, 1897.

"It is the policy of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which I have this evening the honour to represent, to commemorate the work of eminent Canadians by suitable memorial tablets. There is always the question as to where these plaques should be erected. There is a strong case for placing the tablet to De Cosmos in Windsor, Nova Scotia, but the Board has decided that he should be honoured in Victoria, British Columbia."

The actual unveiling was performed by Mr. H. T. Matson, publisher of the Victoria *Colonist*, which newspaper De Cosmos had established in Victoria in December, 1858. Added interest to the ceremony was the presence of two nieces of De Cosmos, Mrs. Maud Harvey and Miss Jessie Simpson, and the reading of a congratulatory telegram from Mrs. Richard S. Giese, Sewickley, Penn., a granddaughter of Arthur Bunster, friend and fellow parliamentarian of De Cosmos.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE.

W. Kaye Lamb, Ph.D., Librarian of the University of British Columbia and formerly Provincial Librarian and Archivist and founder of this *Quarterly*, is a well-known authority on the history of British Columbia. For years he has made a hobby of the history of the marine activities of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and has written several articles thereon that have appeared in this *Quarterly* and elsewhere.

Patricia M. Johnson, M.A., is a teacher at the Ladner Junior-Senior High School, Ladner, B.C., as well as a reader in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia. Her study of the life of John Foster McCreight, for which she received her M.A. degree at the University of British Columbia, was partially made possible by a scholarship presented by the Native Daughters of British Columbia.

VICTORIA, B.C.:
Printed by DON MCDIARMID, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty.
1948.

650-1247-7878

The BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized October 31st, 1922.

PATRON.

His Honour CHARLES A. BANKS, *Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.*

OFFICERS, 1948.

Hon. W. T. STRAITH - - - -	*Honorary President.*
WILLARD E. IRELAND - - - -	*President.*
GEORGE B. WHITE - - - - -	*Past President.*
MARGARET ORMSBY - - - -	*1st Vice-President.*
G. H. STEVENS - - - - -	*2nd Vice-President.*
MADGE WOLFENDEN - - - -	*Honorary Secretary.*
J. K. NESBITT - - - - -	*Honorary Treasurer.*

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

HELEN R. BOUTILIER.	BURT R. CAMPBELL.	MURIEL R. CREE.
JOHN GOODFELLOW.	W. KAYE LAMB.	B. A. MCKELVIE.
	W. N. SAGE.	
WILLARD E. IRELAND (Editor, *Quarterly*).	G. H. STEVENS (Victoria Section).	L. S. GRANT (Vancouver Section).

OBJECTS.

To encourage historical research and stimulate public interest in history; to promote the preservation and marking of historic sites, buildings, relics, natural features, and other objects and places of historical interest, and to publish historical sketches, studies, and documents.

MEMBERSHIP.

Ordinary members pay a fee of $2 annually in advance. The fiscal year commences on the first day of January. All members in good standing receive the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* without further charge.

Correspondence and fees may be addressed to the Provincial Archives, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C.