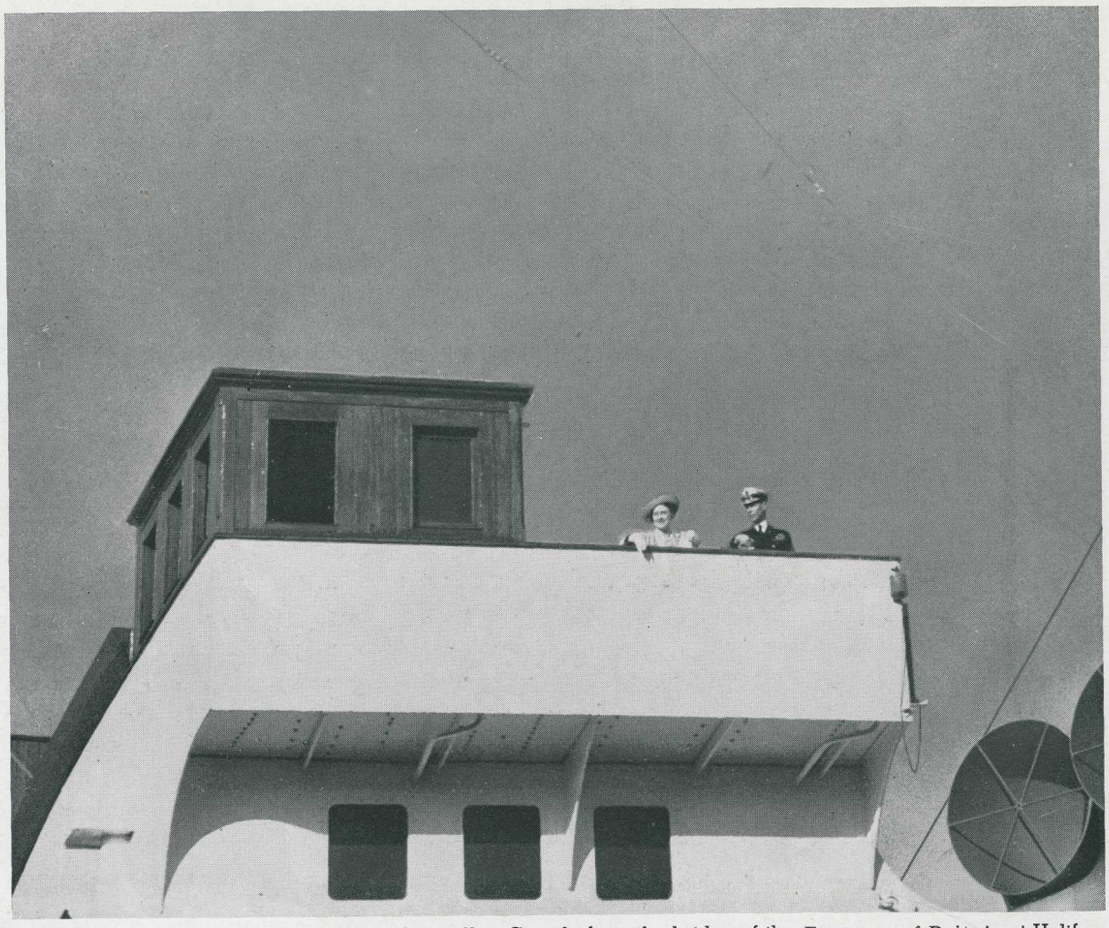
Empress of Britain

Lost in action in the service of her country
October 28 - 1940

Canadian Pacific Railway Company
Montreal, Canada



Their Majesties the King and Queen say farewell to Canada from the bridge of the *Empress of Britain* at Halifax, N.S. June 20th, 1939.

A ROYAL TRIBUTE

"Sir Edward Beatty, Canadian Pacific Railway Co.,
Montreal.

OTTAWA, Ontario,
October 29th, 1940

"I have been asked by the King and Queen to convey to you and the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway their sincere sympathy in the loss of that fine ship the *Empress of Britain*, in which Their Majesties had such a pleasant voyage from Canada last year."

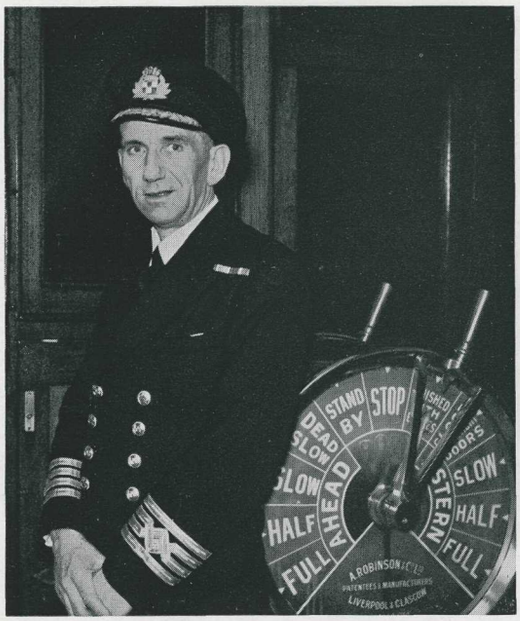
(Signed) ATHLONE.

◆ ◆ ◆

"Rt. Hon. Earl of Athlone, Government House,
Ottawa, Ontario.

"I shall be very glad if you will be good enough to express to Their Majesties our directors' and my own deep appreciation of their kind message of sympathy in the loss of the *Empress of Britain*. She was a beautiful ship, of which all Canadians were very proud. In my judgment, she was one of the finest examples of the skill of the Clyde shipbuilders and she ended her life gloriously in the service of the nation."

(Signed) E. W. BEATTY.



Captain C. H. Sapsworth, C.V.O.

THE SINKING OF THE EMPRESS OF BRITAIN . . . . .

"To the many thousands of passengers who had travelled on the *Empress of Britain* across the Atlantic or on Cruises round the world, her loss was felt as that of a personal friend rather than as an inanimate vessel, magnificent though that vessel was."

The news of her sinking came to Montreal, in a large sense her home town, as a bolt out of the blue. It is true that Montreal, like all Canada, is at war and that sort of thing was to have been expected. Nevertheless it came as a shock. We knew the ship and we knew the men who manned her and it was fitting that her passing should be appropriately marked. So, on the afternoon of Sunday, November 10, a memorial service for the ship and her men was held in the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. The church was filled with Montreal's prominent citizens and hundreds of others who had known the ship as passengers or as officers of the Company she represented. In the course of his address Rev. Dr. Geo. H. Donald spoke the words that are quoted above, and he added:

"There is something intimate and personal about all ships, but she was one of the greatest that sailed the Atlantic and the further seas. The whole world was proud of her, and mourns today as for one who died before her time."

The story of her last hours is another of those countless tales of heroism and devotion to duty which are without end in the annals of the British Mercantile Marine, and it was with no astonishment that we learned that the loss of the great flagship of the Canadian Pacific fleet had been attended by examples of courage and devotion to duty worthy of the undying traditions of the Merchant Navy.

An official report of the action of the morning of Saturday, October 26, 1940, has not been made available, but from newspaper reports of official communiqués, it was learned that the 42,348-ton liner, which had been in the service of the British Government since November 24, 1939, was attacked by enemy aircraft while 150 miles from the Irish coast.

On Monday, October 28, newspapers reported a British Government communiqué as saying that the *Empress of Britain* had been bombed and had sunk following an explosion while the vessel was being towed to port. On November 5th, a further communiqué implied that the final blow had been struck by a submarine, which torpedoed the ship as she was being towed from the scene of the aerial attack.

Though the decks and bridge of the Canadian Pacific's great flagship were raked fore and aft by withering machine-gun fire, her anti-aircraft guns silenced by bombs, her decks split by

explosives and her great hull set afire when an incendiary bomb penetrated deeply amidships, Captain Sapsworth, set the example for the others, remaining on his bridge until it crumbled beneath his feet, directing the saving of the passengers, encouraging the defenders at their guns and manoeuvering the ship to minimize the danger of the flames. Forced to leave the bridge, he continued to direct the defence and the eventual evacuation of the ship from the forward deck.

His devotion to duty was equalled by that of his officers and men, from the chief officer, who was wounded by machine-gun fire and shrapnel, and the chief engineer, who was among the missing, to the humblest laundry-boys, two of whom were among the six crew members who lost their lives.

The work of defence and rescue was carried out under the most difficult conditions, due not only to the repeated attacks of the aircraft but also because, following the penetration of the incendiary bomb, the interior of the ship became a choking inferno of acrid smoke. Particularly appalling were conditions in the engine-rooms, where, nevertheless, men kept machinery going as long as was humanly possible.

In the words of one of the crew as reported by the "Toronto Daily Star":

"In no time at all the ship was a mass of thick choking smoke—we couldn't see. We tried to beat out the flames which were steadily gaining. We all stood by our posts until the order to leave ship was sounded. I and two other fellows tried to get at the boat deck but the dense smoke drove us back. We were forced to put on our gas masks. Only for them we would never have been able to get to the boats and get them away. By this time many of them were afire.

"After the bomber had dropped his missiles he circled the ship and machine-gunned the passengers and crew. The chief officer was wounded in the leg by machine-gun bullets and also a piece of shrapnel in the back, yet he carried on in the work of rescue.

"Twenty-two officers and men tried to get away in a motor-launch which had been afire. We came alongside and took off an injured man. A short time later the launch capsized when it filled with water—it had been peppered with machine-gun bullets. Eight of them were saved.

"After leaving the ship we went around and picked up survivors who had jumped overboard or who were hanging on ladders. I fell into a lifeboat when the ladder I was climbing down burned away. We drifted around from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. when two destroyers came to our rescue. Some of those who jumped over the side died of exposure right away. Those in the boats kept their spirits high singing.

"It was my first ship, and to see her go down was like losing your best friend."

THE CASUALTIES WERE:

KNOWN DEAD

S. MILLER, storekeeper
J. ALLEN, assistant storekeeper
A. TILL, waiter
A. POWELL, laundry boy
J. WATTS, wash-house man
J. WILKIN, laundry boy

MISSING

E. REDMOND, chief engineer
S. BRADLEY, junior fourth engineer
C. LYONS, junior tenth engineer
J. ENGLAND, engineer's writer
W. WESTON, second barkeeper
C. MORETON, third barkeeper
A. ATKINSON, barber
N. READING, lounge steward
J. ALLEN, waiter
J. AINSWORTH, waiter
D. BRITTON, fourth baker
J. McPHERSON, assistant butcher
J. ROBERTS, ordinary seaman
M. MACKRELL, boiler attendant
A. JEAMES, boiler attendant
A. KNIGHT, greaser
A. RUSSELL, greaser

WOUNDED

H. H. DAVIES, chief officer
S. KEAY, first officer
G. POTTS, second radio officer
H. ARNOLD, second storekeeper
L. CASSWILL, waiter
E. MEYER, waiter
P. BECK, laundry foreman
K. FIELDER, laundry boy
J. DELANEY, laundry boy

Captain R. G. Latta

Captain R. N. Stuart, V.C., D.S.O., R.N.R., U.S.N.C.

THE COMMANDERS

The *Empress of Britain* had five commanders during her career. First master was **Captain R. G. Latta,** who had commanded the *Empress of Australia* for four years previous to his appointment to the bridge of the *Empress of Britain* for her maiden voyage.

Captain Latta's sea-going career began in 1896 in sail. He joined the Canadian Pacific service in 1904 as a junior officer and was rapidly promoted, gaining his first command in 1937. He became well known in ports around the world as commander of Canadian Pacific cruise ships, being master successively of the *Empress of Scotland, Empress of Australia* and the *Empress of Britain*.

On reaching the age of 60, when under the company's rules, ship masters retire from the sea, Captain Latta was appointed general superintendent for the Canadian Pacific Steamships Ltd. in Montreal and subsequently became general manager of the company with headquarters in London.

He was succeeded in all three posts by **Captain R. N. Stuart, V.C., D.S.O.,** who became commander of the *Empress of Britain* on Captain Latta's retirement from the sea in 1934. When Captain Latta moved up, Captain Stuart succeeded him in Montreal and in 1938 became general manager of the Company on Captain Latta's retirement.

Captain Stuart was born in 1886, went to sea "in sail" at the age of 16 and joined the company's service in 1913. During the war he was a Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve, commanding destroyers and "mystery ships." It was during his service aboard one of the latter ships, the *Pargust*, that he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Other war-time decorations worn by Captain Stuart are the Distinguished Service Order with Bar and the United States Naval Cross.

After the war Captain Stuart returned to the company's service and was rapidly promoted. He achieved his first command in 1927 and before succeeding Captain Latta on the bridge of the *Empress of Britain* he commanded successively the *Brandon, Minnedosa* and *Duchess of York*.

Captain G. R. Parry, the *Empress of Britain's* third commander and presently general superintendent in Montreal, is a Canadian. He was born at Beaver River, N.S., where generations of Parrys have been bred to the sea. He was apprenticed in sail at an early age, served his time and entered the service of the Canadian Pacific in 1911 as a junior officer, ascending the ladder of promotion until in 1922 he became chief officer of the *Empress of France*. His first command came in 1933 when he was appointed master of the *Beaverhill* and he subsequently was master

of the *Melita, Duchess of York* and *Duchess of Bedford.*

Captain Parry was master of the *Empress of Britain* from 1936 to 1937 and was succeeded by **Captain W. G. Busk-Wood,** who sailed many years in wooden ships before going into steam. Captain Busk-Wood joined the Canadian Pacific in 1910 as a junior officer and achieved command in 1934. Ships under his command at one time or another were the *Beaverhill, Montcalm, Montrose, Duchess of Bedford* and *Empress of Australia.*

Captain Charles Howard Sapsworth, master of the *Empress of Britain* from 1938 until the end of her career, and whose skilful manoeuvring of the big liner prolonged her life until most of her company were safe, began his seafaring career at the age of 14.

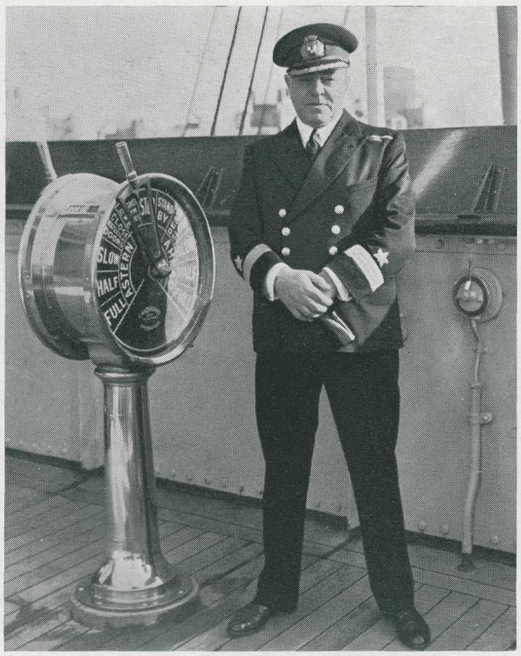
After two years' training in H.M.S. *Worcester,* he was apprenticed aboard the barque *Lynton,* in which he made several voyages in the Chilean trade. Four years later he completed his first round the world trip in the same vessel, the voyage occupying 18 months.

In 1905, Captain Sapsworth went into steam with the Bristol City Line; later he managed a nautical school at Cardiff for a while, saw more service in steam, and then in 1912, joined the Canadian Pacific service.

Never a junior officer, Captain Sapsworth was promoted to first officer in his second year with the company. As first officer of the *Ionian* he took part in the Gallipoli Campaign, landing troops in face of heavy fire from Turkish batteries early in 1915 and being active also in the evacuation in 1916. He later had a narrow escape when the troopship *Missanabie* was torpedoed. He had served aboard her until her last voyage when he was transferred elsewhere.

In peacetime service following the war, Captain Sapsworth served in the *Minnedosa, Grampian, Metagama, Corsican, Melita* and the old *Empress of Britain.* In 1923, he became chief officer of the *Marburn* and later was chief and then staff-captain aboard the *Empress of Scotland.* He also served as staff-captain of the *Empress of Australia.*

Captain Sapsworth's first command came in 1934, when he was appointed master of the *Beaverburn.* Since then he has commanded the *Montclare, Duchess of York, Duchess of Atholl, Duchess of Bedford* and *Empress of Australia.* He was master of the *Empress of Britain* on her proud voyage from Halifax with Their Majesties the King and Queen on board and was decorated by them with the personal decoration of the British Sovereigns, the Royal Victorian Order, with the rank of Commander.



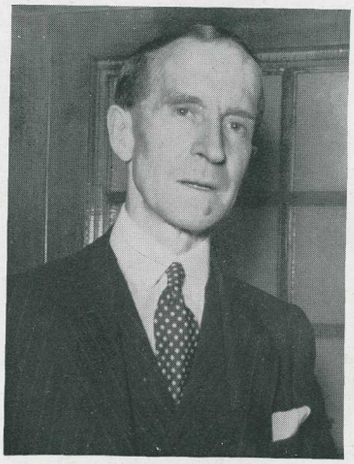
Captain W. G. Busk-Wood, R.D., R.N.R.

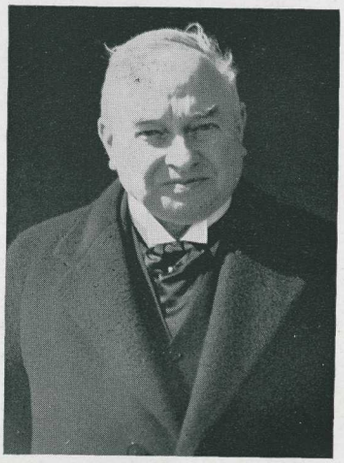
Captain G. R. Parry
R.D., R.N.R.

Captain C. H. Sapsworth
C.V.O.

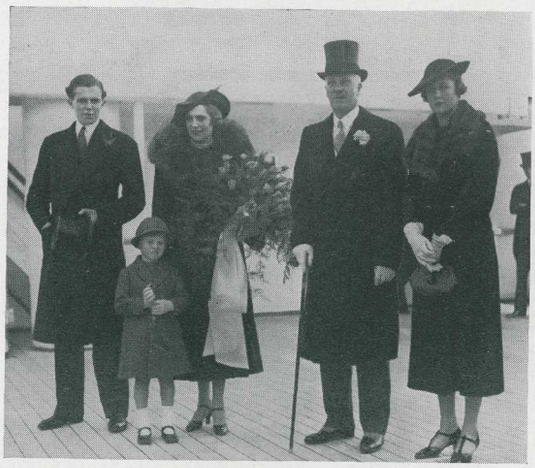
SOME DISTINGUISHED PASSENGERS

Top Row—Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, P.C., Premier of Canada. Rt. Hon. Sir Lyman P. Duff, P.C., Chief Justice of Canada.

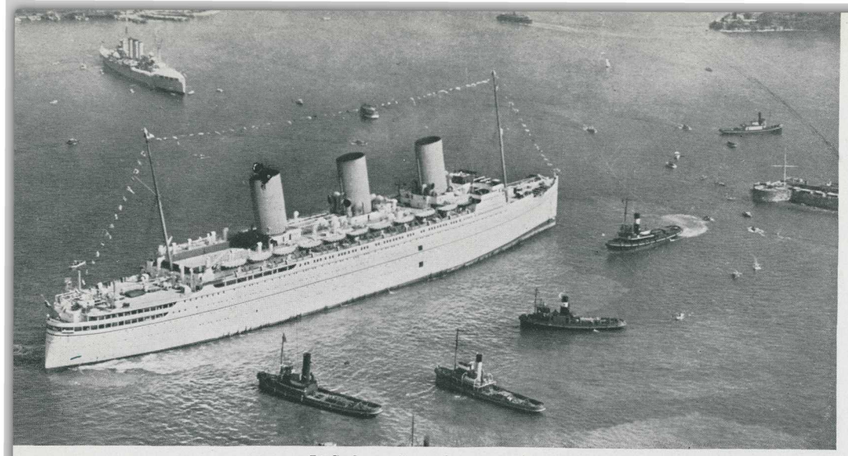




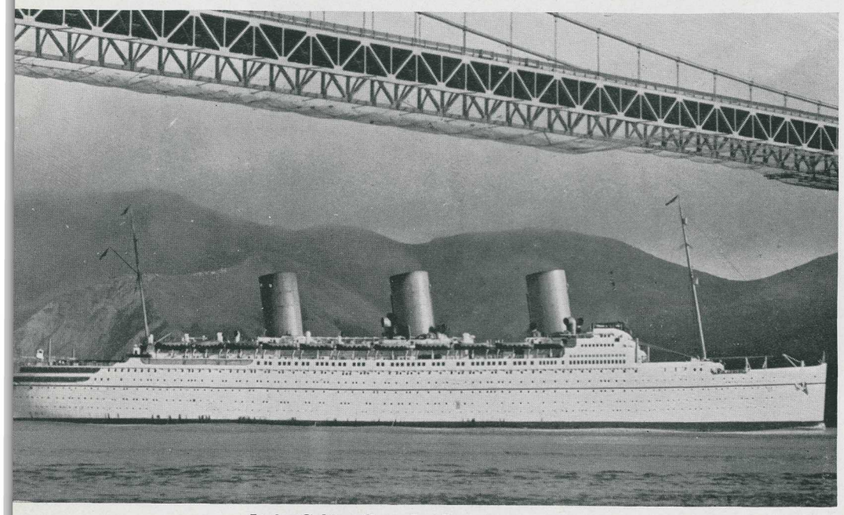
Middle Row—Rt. Hon. Lord Tweedsmuir, P.C., Governor-General of Canada 1935-40. Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett, P.C., Premier of Canada, 1930-35. Rt. Hon. Lord Hewart of Bury, P.C., Lord Chief Justice of England.



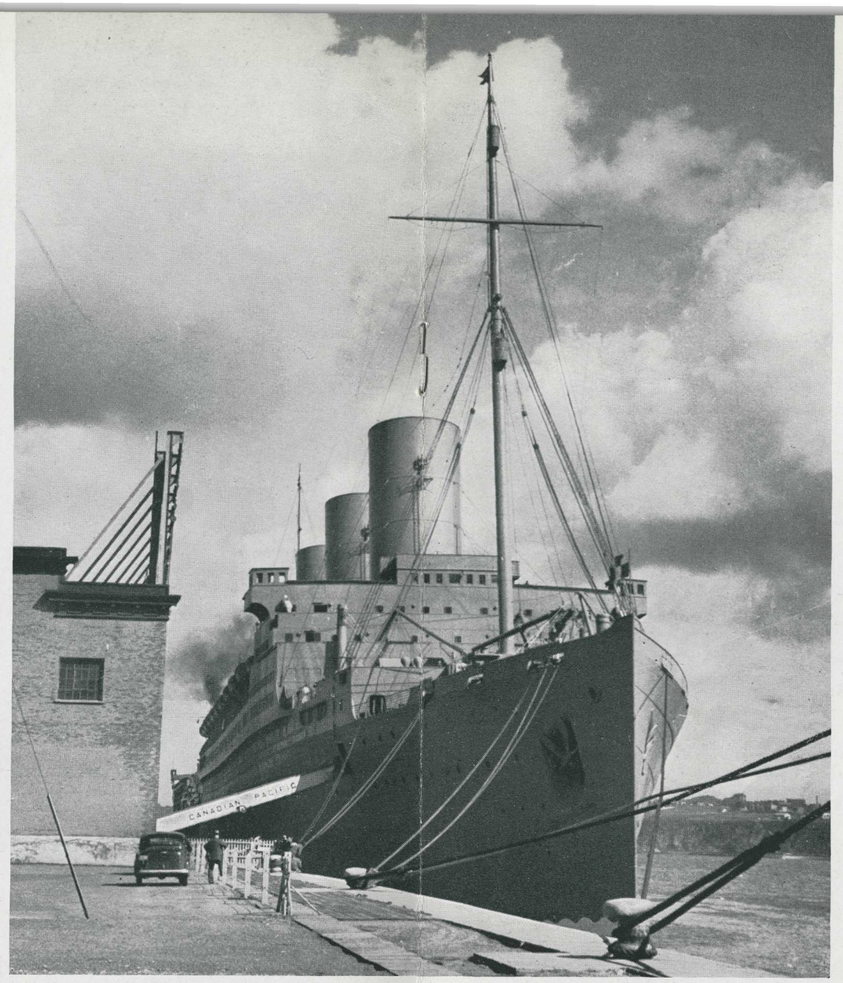
Bottom Row—Rt. Hon. the Earl of Bessborough, P.C., Governor-General of Canada 1931-35, with Lady Bessborough and their three children—Viscount Duncannon, Lady Moyra Ponsonby, and the Hon. George St. L. N. Ponsonby. Members of the British Cabinet en route to the Imperial Economic Conference, Ottawa, 1932. Left to right—seated, Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, P.C.; Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, P.C., Prime Minister; Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, P.C. Standing, Rt. Hon. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, P.C.; Rt. Hon. Lord Hailsham, P.C.; Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman, P.C.; and Rt. Hon. Sir John Gilmour, P.C.



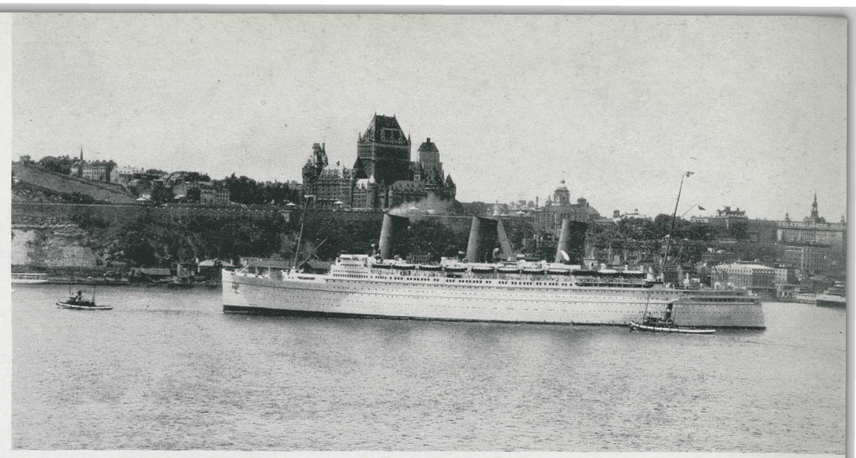
At Sydney, Australia



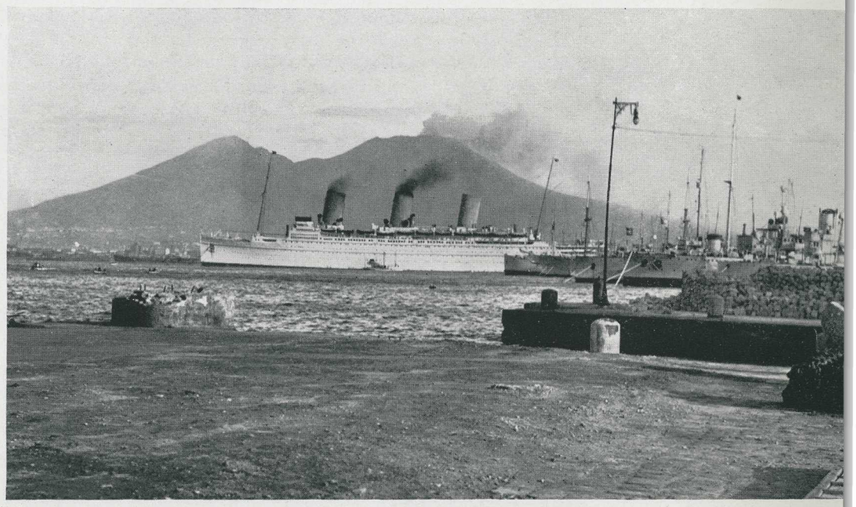
At the Golden Gate, San Francisco



At Quebec in war-time Admiralty gray



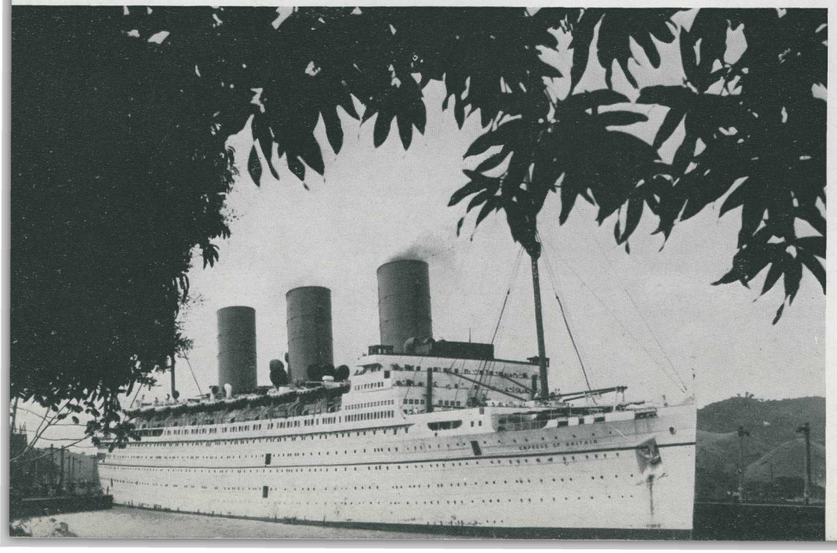
At Quebec in peace-time



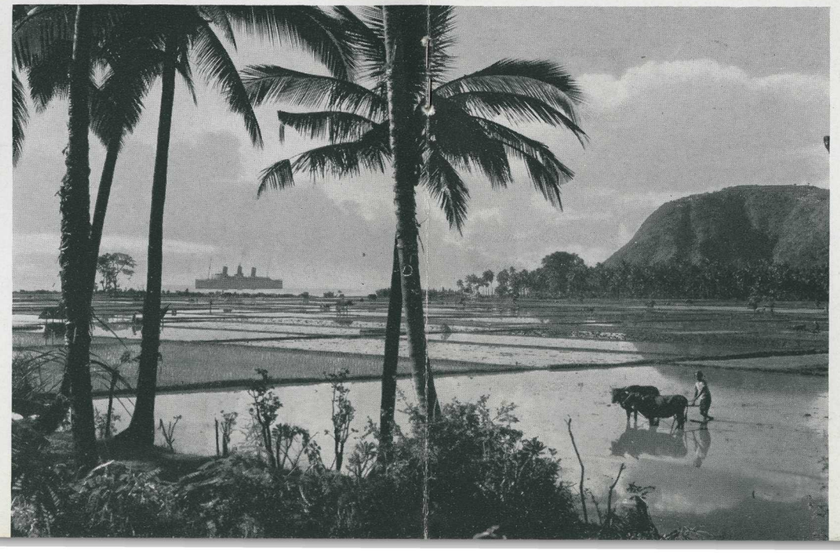
At Naples

PORTS VISITED BY THE EMPRESS OF BRITAIN

ALGIERS
ATHENS
AUCKLAND
BAHIA, BRAZIL
BALBOA
BALI
BEPPU
BERMUDA
BEIRUT, SYRIA
BOMBAY
CAPETOWN
CHERBOURG
CHINWANGTAO (for Peiping)
COLOMBO
CRISTOBAL
DURBAN
FUNCHAL, MADEIRA
GIBRALTAR
HAIFA (for Jerusalem)
HALIFAX
HAVANA
HILO
HONG-KONG
HONOLULU
KOBE
KINGSTON, JAMAICA
LAS PALMAS
MANILA
MELBOURNE
MONACO
NAPLES
NASSAU
NEW YORK
PADANG, SUMATRA
PAKNAM (for Bangkok)
PENANG
PORT OF SPAIN
PORT SAID (for Cairo)
QUEBEC
RIO DE JANEIRO
ST. HELENA
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND
SAN FRANCISCO
SAN PEDRO (for Los Angeles)
SEMARANG
SINGAPORE
SOUTHAMPTON
SUEZ
SUVA
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
TANDJONG PRIOK (for Batavia)
WELLINGTON
WOOSUNG (for Shanghai)
YOKOHAMA
ZAMBOANGA



In the Panama Canal



At Bali

At Hong-Kong

THE LIFE STORY OF AN "EMPRESS"

ON a dull November day in 1928, a small group of workmen laid some flat plates in a straight line on wooden blocks in the huge echoing ship-building yards of John Brown & Co., at Clydebank on the River Clyde, near Glasgow.

There was no ceremony. It was just part of a day's work, but they felt the pleasure and satisfaction that all shipyard workers feel at the start of a long shipbuilding job. Those plates were the beginning of the keel of the *Empress of Britain*.

Slowly during the next eighteen months the huge hull of the liner took shape, first as a big U-shaped skeleton, then as a towering white-plated ship.

Then came the launching and a civic holiday for Glasgow as the Prince of Wales journeyed to the Clyde to sponsor the *Empress of Britain* and the whole world listened-in to the first universal broadcast of a launching. That was on June 11, 1930.

Twelve more months elapsed before builders, engineers and decorators had finished with the new 42,348-ton addition to the British Mercantile Marine and the ship was ready for her maiden voyage. On May 27, 1931, amid the widest acclamation, she set out on her first ocean trip.

This was a triumph for her owners, builders and personnel, for, in spite of bad weather, the Empress used her 24 knots to good advantage and easily established a new record for the passage between Southampton, Cherbourg and Quebec, her time for the voyage between pilot stations at Cherbourg and Father Point being four days, 22 hours and 26 minutes.

This record, however, did not stand for long, as in voyages favoured by better weather the big ship lowered her marks from time to time until a passage was made between Father Point and Cherbourg in four days, six hours and 58 minutes. This record, made in August, 1934, on the *Empress'* 46th voyage still stands.

The significance of the *Empress of Britain* to Canada and to the St. Lawrence route in particular was tremendous. Her shining white bulk, propelled by the finest machinery the marine engineers could design and offering the finality of luxury and comfort to ocean travellers, was Canada's first challenge to the New York route's monopoly of "super-ships." In nine summer seasons on this route, she accumulated a total of well over half a million miles.

Important was her performance. Designed to maintain with one other ship a service that had previously needed three liners, the *Empress of Britain* shouldered the major part of the burden and, in short, acted as "an Atlantic ferry." Season after season, from 1931 until the outbreak of war in September, 1939, she made fortnightly departures from either side of the Atlantic.

Empress of Britain boat trains became famous. As the Canadian Pacific is the only railway company in the world to own and operate trans-ocean steamers, so it has the only system where trains and ships are operated in co-ordination with a view to ensuring connections.

Passengers leaving the *Empress of Britain* at Quebec, stepped aboard special trains bound for Montreal or Toronto on which were through cars routed to New York or Chicago. Sometimes, indeed, there were special through trains to Chicago. It all depended, of course, on the volume of business.

It was near the end of her life that the *Empress of Britain* touched the high point of her career. This was when Their Majesties the King and Queen sailed from Halifax aboard her at the end of their official Tour of Canada and visit to the United States. Just before departure King George decided that as she left port the *Empress* should fly the red ensign instead of the white ensign of the Royal Navy. This was regarded as a special honour to the *Empress of Britain* and to the British Mercantile Marine, as it was the first time that a British sovereign had sailed beneath the famous old "red duster."

Flags flown by the *Empress* on that historic occasion were: at the foremasthead, the King's

flag as Lord High Admiral; at the mainmasthead, the Royal Standard; at the main gaff, the Red Ensign; at the bow, the House Flag of the Canadian Pacific Steamships, Ltd.

Less than three months after her proud voyage with the British monarchs on board, the British Empire was again at war with Germany. The day before Britain's declaration of war the *Empress of Britain* sailed from Southampton with a capacity passenger list, including hundreds of people fleeing back to their homes in Canada and the United States.

That departure from Southampton on September 2, 1939, was the *Empress of Britain's* last commercial sailing. Soon after her arrival at Quebec, tons of dull grey paint began to accumulate at the dock and soon the gleaming white hull of the Canadian Pacific flagship, which had always made such a gay sight in the brilliant sunshine of world-cruise ports, was converted into a dull grey mass—the battleship grey prescribed by the British Admiralty for all ships in naval service during wartime. Porthole windows had already been temporarily blacked during her last voyage, now they were permanently covered and all her shining brasswork was smeared with grey.

She remained in Quebec until November, awaiting a call to serve the Empire under the flag of the Royal Navy. The call came, and on November 24, at another Canadian port she went under charter to the British Admiralty.

Her entire service until her tragic end has not been made public by the Admiralty, but it is known that she assisted in the transport of the First Division, Canadian Active Service Force, from Canada to Britain, and that she helped bring the First Division of Anzacs from the Antipodes. She was also believed to have seen service in carrying troops between Britain and the Near East.

The *Empress of Britain* steamed 858,436 miles in the service of the Canadian Pacific, 277,242 of this mileage being performed on World and West Indies Cruises.

Designed especially for world-cruise travel, she became the company's Round-the-World Cruise ship in her first season, 1931-2, Captain R. G. Latta, who had commanded the previous world-cruise ship, the *Empress of Australia,* taking her on her 30,000-mile circumnavigation of the globe.

In succeeding years she followed the regular route of the Company's world cruises until 1936, when the Italo-Ethiopian War and attendant tension between Britain and Italy caused an alteration in her itinerary. The Mediterranean was avoided and instead the *Empress of Britain* took her cruise company to South Africa and thence to India, there to resume the regular cruise route.

In 1938, the popular regular route was again followed, but in 1938 international trouble, this time between Japan and China, affected the cruise, and it was decided to send the big flagship on the first visit any Canadian Pacific ship had ever paid to Australia and New Zealand.

This was carried out. The *Empress* steamed on the regular route as far as Bali and then turned south to the Australian continent. Calls were made at Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington and Auckland, and also at Suva, capital of the Fiji Islands. Tumultuous welcomes were accorded the great white liner at each port visited.

Her New Zealand visit established a record for a ship of her size and justified the boast that she was the Symbol and Pride of the British Empire, for she is the only liner that ever visited all of the British Dominions Beyond the Seas, Canada, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, to which might be added as further tokens of her Imperial standing the Crown Colonies of Gibraltar, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, The Bahamas, Jamaica, Bermuda, Trinidad and St. Helena.

Her only visit to St. Helena was made during her final cruise, in the winter of 1939, when, the war in China still dragging on, she was again forced from the regular world cruise belt. This time it was decided that she would revisit South Africa. She followed, therefore, the regular cruise route to Bali and Java and then turned south and west for Durban and Capetown, carrying on from there to St. Helena and on to Brazil, where she paid her first visit to beautiful Rio de Janeiro. The last ports of her final world cruise were Bahia, Port of Spain, Havana and New York.

The then Prince of Wales, Sir Edward Beatty and Lord Aberconway of John Brown & Co. Ltd., the builders, at the launching.

TRIBUTES

Tributes to the great Canadian ship came fast upon the news of her loss.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the RT. HON. W. L. MACKENZIE KING, P.C. said: "She will long be remembered by Canadians as a brave ship who did her duty in peace and war.

"Canadians have heard with profound regret of the loss of the *Empress of Britain,* and with pride of the heroic conduct of her officers and men. For many years she carried the name and fame of Canada with high honour into most of the world's great ports. When war broke out she was assigned to the sterner tasks of war, and in those tasks played a memorable part.

"To the relatives of the heroic seamen who lost their lives when their ship sank in the Atlantic, I send the deepest sympathy of the people of Canada."

SIR EDWARD BEATTY, G.B.E., K.C., LL.D., Chairman and President Canadian Pacific Railway, issued the following statement:

"News of the loss of the *Empress of Britain* will come to the great army of people who have travelled aboard her very much as would that of the loss of a personal friend, while all Canadians will hear with a feeling of deep regret that the gallant ship which for nine years proudly represented Canada in all the world's great ports has met her fate at the hands of the enemy.

"The *Empress of Britain* was designed and built to help maintain for the St. Lawrence gateway to Canada a position of high importance among the world's ocean ports, and splendidly she accomplished that duty. She had many proud moments in her all too short career. Those who saw her first entry into Quebec harbor will not forget the tremendous demonstration that greeted her. That was an event second only in interest to the day the ship bore Their Majesties the King and Queen from Halifax on their way home.

"To the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company her loss brings an especially keen regret. We were proud of her beauty and of her consistently fine performance and we had reason also to be gratified by the fact that, while her building might have been termed a bold experiment, it was seen to be thoroughly justified very early in her career. The ship has met her end gallantly in the service of the country, as have many others, but when the war is finished and won, still others equally as fine will be built to take their places and carry on the work of maintaining our British supremacy on the seas.

"Of the loss of forty-five of her crew one can only speak with sorrow, which may be somewhat mitigated by pride in the fact that they went to their death with their faces bravely turned towards their duty as is the manner of British seamen. To their relatives and friends will go the country's heartfelt sympathy."

LESLIE HOWARD, actor, during his talk in the B.B.C. radio series "Britain Speaks," November 4.

"Those of us who knew that magnificent British ship will not forget her easily. She was unique of her class, great in size yet not a monster, modern in line but in no way freakish, powerful and sturdy but of a graceful symmetry, solid and steady in action yet flexible in movement to the waves that bore her. She was a real ship of the sea, fashioned

by a race of shipbuilders, her name, appearance and significance known and respected all over the world which she had circled so many times. She will not be forgotten. Indeed it is safe to guess that one day she will live again, for surely Canada will recreate for her a daughter, in her own name and something like her own image, a daughter perhaps even more beautiful than the mother."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, October 29.

"No ship ever fitted her name more truly than the *Empress of Britain*. She was, indeed, an empress, with pride and grace and dignity in every inch of her. She had millions of devoted subjects, in many countries... Her white paint was a coat of ermine that set her apart from the throng... it was always an event in our own harbor when the great white Empress came in... She carried thousands of troops from the free Dominions to the Old Country; she played her part in keeping England free. She now lies blackened and twisted on the ocean bottom, the largest of all ships that have gone down in this war; but she lived up to the traditions of her flag to the very end, for the Admiralty has praised 'the resolute and efficient handling' of her anti-aircraft guns in her death struggle. The memory of this fine ship will survive until a new *Empress of Britain* inherits her name."

G. Ward Price in THE DAILY MAIL, LONDON, October 29.

"When shall we again see such an ocean luxury as was revealed to us on your memorable maiden voyage."

FAIRPLAY, WEEKLY SHIPPING JOURNAL, LONDON, November 7.

"The *Empress of Britain* was one of the liners of the British mercantile marine we could ill afford to lose. She was considered by many good judges to be one of the most satisfactory ships ever turned out from Messrs. John Brown's yard at Clydebank, which is, perhaps, as high praise as can be given to any vessel... That such a fine vessel should come to an end by being bombed, and that all the foresight of the Company who ordered the ship, the skill of the designers, the honest craft of the workmen who fashioned her, and the ability and experience of the crew who ran her, should be wasted by this destruction, is perhaps, a negligible matter when viewed in the light of the other devastation which has been caused by Hitler and his satellites, but the effect is cumulative, and we may hope that the reckoning will take account of every item."

THE GAZETTE, MONTREAL, October 29.

"Canadians... will regret very deeply the destruction of the magnificent *Empress of Britain,* because she was the pride of the Canadian service, because she was symbolic of the growing greatness of the Dominion and reflected that greatness wherever she went."

THE MONTREAL DAILY STAR, October 29.

"The extent to which the tragic fate of the *Empress of Britain* has stirred the imagination and evoked the eloquent tributes of many neutral admirers is at once a tribute to the vessel herself and to the officers and men of her crew. She was in very truth Canada's ambassador-at-large, known and admired throughout the Seven Seas...

"The gallantry of her captain and his officers and men was as we should have expected—true to the highest traditions of the British mercantile marine... This is our abiding solace. British ships and British seamen never fail us. Ships may be sunk and men may die in the cause of freedom, but so long as the Empire endures others will replace them to carry the Flag and keep the Faith throughout the years."

THE DAILY COLONIST, VICTORIA, B.C., October 29.

"This is the largest individual loss of tonnage yet inflicted at sea in warfare. The Empress ranked among the ten greatest vessels in the world's merchant marine... In the time of her career afloat she became probably better known than any other passenger liner, because of the great number of those who, at one time or another, travelled aboard her."

THE LEADER-POST, REGINA, SASK., October, 28.

"Thousands of prairie people will feel the loss of the *Empress of Britain*."

VICTORIA DAILY TIMES, VICTORIA, B.C. October 28.

"When the history of the war comes to be written it will be found that this Canadian ship, like the grim grey warriors which have convoyed precious argosies over the same route ever since the war began, will be credited with an important chapter in the Commonwealth's service."

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, TORONTO, October 29.

"...The loss is tempered by the gallant behavior of the crew, who maintained the highest traditions of the sea for bravery and coolness. Captain Sapsworth stuck to the bridge, a target of Nazi machine-guns, until it was crumbling in flames. The fight put up in defense is one of which Britishers can be proud."

THE CHRONICLE-TELEGRAPH, QUEBEC, October 28.

"This was the home-port of the *Empress* and Quebecers have regarded her as being as much part of themselves as the Citadel or the Legislative Buildings... While the destruction of the *Empress* in action has caused a profoundly painful impression here, for her own sake and for that of her officers and crew, no one could have wished for her a better end. Having been the personal yacht of Their Majesties and flagship of Canada's merchant marine, how much more fitting that she should find a watery grave in the service of her country than that she should be broken up for scrap metal, the fate that would normally have overtaken her."

THE CITIZEN, OTTAWA, October 29.

"Canada's finest ocean liner, the Canadian Pacific *Empress of Britain,* and one of the most formidable warships of the Canadian navy, H.M.C.S. *Margaree* were casualties of fierce naval fighting on the North Atlantic front last week. The ships were the least important casualties, however . . . On the *Empress of Britain* there were 643 persons. British warships were happily able to rescue 598, but the loss of 45 of the liner's crew is another grievous addition to the list of casualties in the merchant service."

THE DAILY GLEANER, FREDERICTON, October 28.

"The *Empress of Britain* was one of the world's greatest ships. She was emblematic of the advance of Canada in sea-borne commerce and in commercial organization. War has taken her, but many ships are left and the shipyards are turning out others as fast as the riveting machines can vibrate."

THE KINGSTON WHIG-STANDARD, KINGSTON, ONT., October 28.

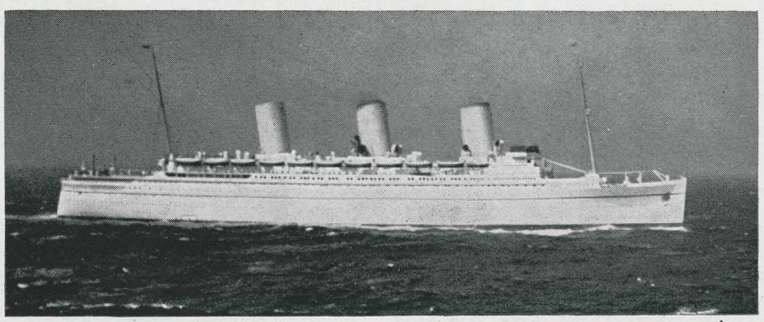
"The sinking of the *Empress of Britain* removes the pride of Canada's merchant marine..."

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR, HAMILTON, ONT., October 29.

"Loss of the *Empress of Britain*...brings a pang of sorrow to the people of Canada... for wherever she went she carried something of Canada with her... A fortunate circumstance is, however, that most of those aboard are reported to have been saved. This is war, and the lovely *Empress* was playing her part valiantly in the grim struggle."

THE HALIFAX MAIL, October 29.

"The loss of the *Empress of Britain* is one of the bitterest tragedies of this war. The des-



Message received from His Majesty the King on board the *Empress of Britain* to the passengers, officers and crew on the *Empress of Australia,* the ships passing each other about 100 miles from Bishops Rock on June 21st, 1939:

"We are delighted to see the *Empress of Australia* so close. We have many happy memories of our trip to Canada on her. Best of luck to you all."

REPLY

"We humbly beg to present our thanks for your generous message."

truction of this beautiful ship—the 'White Empress'—is another foul crime to be charged to the black account of Barbarism... Of all the big liners, the *Empress of Britain* was, by common consent, the most delightful to the eye of the naval architect... we like best to remember her, in all her compact beauty, as she moved majestically out of this port at the conclusion of the Royal Visit."

THE HALIFAX CHRONICLE, October 30.

"In this province the people will feel particularly keenly the loss of such a fine ship. Nova Scotians love and appreciate ships. They know something of the beauty of line and proportions, and the functional excellence of great modern liners. And *Empress of Britain* was one of these... Nova Scotians all their lives will remember her as she steamed so majestically out of Halifax harbor, in the rich warm light of a beautiful June evening, bearing the King and Queen home to Britain after a tour of Canada and the United States. She was a liner fit for a king and a queen."

THE WINNIPEG TRIBUNE, October 28.

"The loss of the *Empress of Britain* touches Canadians deeply. She was the pride of the Canadian merchant marine and there was no finer sight in the world than the lordly ship on the broad St. Lawrence, steaming out to the highways of the world. But she served in war as proudly as in her ten years of peace. There are tales of her service as a troopship, carrying men of the Empire from the ends of the earth, to be told when the foul menace to humanity is overcome, and men in ships can plow the sea once more as harbingers of good will, joining continents in the pursuit of peace."

R.M.S.
"EMPRESS OF BRITAIN"

Length (overall),	760 feet 6 inches
Breadth	97 feet 6 inches
Depth	100 feet 6 inches
Gross Tonnage	42,348
Net Tonnage	22,545
Shaft Horse-Power	62,500
Normal Speed	24 knots
Capacity for Passengers—	
Cabin	465
Tourist	260
Third	470
Total	1,195
Officers and Crew	714

Fastest Passage—Steaming Time 4 days 6 hours 58 minutes between Father Point, Que., and Cherbourg, France, August, 1934.

Date First Keel-Plate Laid, November 28, 1928.

Date of Launching . . June 11, 1930

Maiden Voyage May 27-June 1, 1931

Port of Registry	London
Official Number	162,582
Code Letters	GMBJ

Chartered for War Service November 24, 1939.

Attacked Oct. 26 by Enemy Aircraft and Submarine, and sank Oct. 26, 1940

A Copy of the Cabin Plan of the Empress of Britain *is enclosed with this booklet on the suggestion of a number of passengers who wished to have such souvenir of a former voyage.*

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