CHAPTER 9

FROM OLD SHIPS TO NEW AND "VAGABOND CRUISES"

With the war over, the nature of Clarke's business was about to change from what it had been. Of the pre-war fleet, only the North Gaspé, Gaspesia and Sable I remained, and the company was going to have to rebuild its fleet to serve the post-war economy. Although the New Northland and North Star, now Prince Henry, had both survived the war, neither would rejoin the company. Instead, Clarke would acquire four new ships by 1946, with two more to follow in 1947. Within a few years, only the relatively modern North Gaspé would remain of the pre-war fleet.

A brief announcement of the resumption of Clarke's cruise business appeared in a newspaper wire story on July 22, 1945, just a few weeks after VE Day:

After a break of a few years due to wartime conditions, the Clarke Steamship Company is again undertaking the interesting cruises they operated before the war to the North Shore and the Gulf of St Lawrence.

Two of these cruises are worthy of special mention: a 5½-day journey between Montreal and Gaspé, and a 7-day voyage between Montreal,
Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands. In the first cruise, the steamer leaves Montreal at 7:30 pm on the Tuesday, stops at Quebec the following morning, touches Ste-Anne-des-Monts on the Thursday, and reaches Gaspé on the Friday. The steamer leaves Gaspé the same day and stops at Ste-Anne-des-Monts on Saturday, Quebec the next day, and docks on Montreal on the Monday morning.

The second cruise leaves Montreal at 7:30 pm on the Monday, stops at Quebec on Tuesday, Ste-Anne-des-Monts the next day, Gaspé on Thursday, and reaches Grindstone, Magdalen Islands, on the Friday. Departure from Grindstone takes place the same day, and the steamer touches at Gaspé and Ste-Anne-des-Monts on the Saturday, Quebec the next afternoon and is back in Montreal on the Monday afternoon...

In so far as service between Montreal and North Shore ports is concerned, two steamers are in operation, with sailings every Monday.

At first, as had been the case in the latter part of the war, only the North Gaspé was advertised for cruises but soon the North Shore ships too were back carrying cruise passengers. Instead of the West Indies cruise ships of pre-war years, however, the company's cruise ships would now be Gulf of St Lawrence coastal passenger and cargo traders, continuing the "Vagabond Cruises" that had been started in the 1930s.

Unlike American operators, however, most of whom who had lost their ships to the war effort and their traffic to the railways, the Clarke Steamship Co still had a viable business. Of the American ships that remained, only the Yarmouth and Evangeline would see long-term service, while others would be sold offshore. Turkish Maritime Lines, who had tried to buy the North Star in 1938, finally got Clyde-Mallory's Iroquois, as well as the Colombian Line's former Columbia and Haiti, while other ships, both American and Canadian, were sold to China. Clarke, on the other hand, had a future ahead of it and went looking for new ships. One of these would be a 95-berth passenger vessel, while the others would be cargo ships capable of carrying just twelve passengers each.

**Another Link to the Magdalen Islands**

Before acquiring any new ships, however, and just a week after VE Day, Clarke added another company to its network of local services with the formation at Pictou on May 11, 1945, of the Magdalen Islands Transportation Co Ltd, with a capital of $300,000. This company acquired the Lovat from William Fraser's Lovat Steamship Co Ltd, who it paid $150,000. The Lovat was the ship that the Père Arnaud had laid up with over the winter of 1932-33 at Pictou. Clarke renamed her Magdalen (ii) and appointed Capt Ivan Pelletier of IIIslet-sur-Mer as master. As an officer in the North Star pre-war, the little Magdalen and the run from Pictou to the Magdalen Islands must
The Magdalen took the same name as a 135-ton vessel that had been used in 1906 and continued the same service that the Lovat Steamship Co had been operating to the Magdalen Islands from Pictou and Prince Edward Island. Indeed, as the Lovat she had been built for the route in 1924, in return for a $50,000 a year ten-year contract. This was not the first time a St Lawrence operator had run on this route, however as the same subsidized service had been provided in years past by first Alexander Fraser & Co and then the Gulf of St Lawrence Shipping & Trading Co. With the North Gaspé serving the Magdalen Islands from Montreal, Quebec and Gaspé, Clarke decided that adding this local service to its own network made good sense.

Unlike earlier local services it had been involved in, where minority shareholders owned shares, Clarke owned the new company outright. This meant that the Magdalen took on Clarke's traditional steamship livery of black funnel with the same four white bands and black hull with white upperworks that Gaspesia and Sable I already wore. The new colours replaced a brown superstructure and the Scottish thistle that the Lovat had worn on her funnel, indicating an important branch of the Fraser family of Scotland. The Magdalen thus became the last Clarke ship to wear the black funnel with white stripes.

The Magdalen resembled the Sable I in many ways. Both were products of Bow MacLachlan in Paisley, Scotland, the Sable I having been built a decade earlier. Both had the same tall funnel, two tall masts and a single deck of accommodation sitting atop a flush-decked hull with straight businesslike stem and counter stern. And although the Sable I had been built for James Farquhar, the same William Fraser from whom Clarke was now purchasing the Magdalen had at one time also managed the Sable I.

The Next Generation

In October 1945, as William Percival returned to full-time duty as marine superintendent, Stanley Clarke, Desmond’s eldest son, joined the company as assistant superintendent reporting to Percival, to take part in its post-war renewal. At the same time, Ernest Lawson, who had also joined Desmond in Ottawa, rejoined as comptroller. Lawson would later be appointed a director of the company.

Stanley had first moved to Montreal long before the company, when he entered Loyola College in 1931 to finish high school. Thereafter attending Royal Military College and Queen’s University in Kingston, he graduated as a mechanical engineer. On June 24, 1939, at the age of 21, he had crossed in Canadian Pacific's Duchess of York, to Liverpool and travelled on to Newcastle to join Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson, builders of both the New Northland and Jean Brilliant. Intending to gain two years’ experience in
shipbuilding, Stanley ended up returning in the *Duchess of Atholl*, landing at Halifax on September 12, 1940. Between 1940 and September 1945, he served with the Royal Canadian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers in Canada, North Africa and Europe, and had reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by the time he was demobilized at age 27. During the war, he had crossed the Atlantic no fewer than six times by ocean liner. In April 1946, eight months after joining, Stanley was appointed operating manager.

On the other hand, Brock Clarke, Stanley's brother, who had seen active duty with the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve on the West Coast between 1943 and 1945, had graduated as the top student in Law at McGill University in 1942, and had begun a career with one of Montreal's pre-eminent law firms. Later named as a Queen's Counsel, along with Stanley he would become both a shareholder and a director of most Clarke enterprises. As well, he would become a director of several outside firms such as Donohue Brothers Ltd, which operated the Clermont paper mill, exporting its newsprint over Pointe-au-Pic wharf, the Charlevoix Paper Co Ltd, Liberian Iron Ore Ltd, a Swedish-backed company, and the United Provinces Insurance Co Ltd.

Their cousin, John Maguire "Mac" Clarke, the youngest of Frank's four sons, who had also been present for Churchill's visit to the Laurentians in 1943, had served in the navy, and joined Clarke for a time after the war as well. Mac met his future wife in 1939 while working as assistant cruise director on the *North Star*. On August 28, with war about to break out in Europe, he had left the *North Star* in Halifax to enlist in the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve. He became chief degaussing officer at Halifax and in 1941 married his shipboard sweetheart.

Peacetime conditions were beginning to return. The *North Gaspé*, *Gaspesia* and *Sable I* were busy in the passenger and cargo trades, other ships were chartered as necessary for cargo, and the *Jean Brilliant* had returned to the service of the Lower St Lawrence Transportation Co.

The *North Gaspé* was still a relatively new ship, but as the *Gaspesia* and *Sable I* now needed replacement, a search was begun for new ships that could be placed into service fairly quickly. With the war over, proven iron ore reserves on the Quebec-Labrador border were about to be opened up and with the increasing post-war need for additional shipping capacity, wartime shipbuilding programs would provide most of the ships Clarke needed for its busy Gulf of St Lawrence trades.

**Along the Lower North Shore**

On arriving back at Quebec after the war, Léo Chouinard was transferred from the *North Gaspé* to the *Sable I*, where he was given his first appointment as an officer. He recorded his memories of service to the North
On arriving at Quebec ... the superintendent had a message for me: I was to be second officer of Clarke Steamship's *Sable I*, tied up at Shed 19 at Quebec, where she was loading. Normally, this ship was on the Montreal-Blanc-Sablon run. The round voyage was made in two weeks with favourable weather conditions.

Departure was scheduled for the following morning for the North Shore as far as Blanc-Sablon. Very happy with my new situation, but unhappy that I couldn't see my family ... I only had time enough to tranship my bags.

At this time, the *Sable I* was the only ship in the fleet able to navigate by winter, due to her reinforced hull. The voyage lasted a month, because of the abundance of ice and ice floes along the Lower North Shore and in the Strait of Belle Isle. Returning to Quebec late, we did not proceed to Montreal for lack of time. The second voyage lasted only two weeks thanks to the northwest wind that opened up our route. On our return, we proceeded to Montreal for a two-day call...

The only navigational instruments we had on the *Sable I* were a magnetic compass and a lead line... When we encountered fog, a fairly frequent phenomenon in July and August, we had to drop anchor if possible or remove ourselves to deeper water and drift until the fog dissipated. I remember that during one voyage we drifted for more than two days off Cape Whittle before being able to resume our passage. We sounded frequently in order to determine the depth. With this information, we were able to check whether the currents were carrying us towards the shore or out to sea. Such situations held us up considerably. Depending on the delays we incurred the company had our cargo sent to the Port of Quebec or to Pointe-au-Pic in order to allow us to maintain schedule.

In 1946, as well as operating the winter service, the *Sable I* was briefly pressed into service as a ferry, when on January 16 she took some 300 lumberjacks from the South Shore back across the St Lawrence to the North Shore after spending Christmas with their families. Although this was usually the role of the Lower St Lawrence Transportation Co, the *Matane* and *Rimouski* were laid up for the winter at Quebec and the ice-strengthened *Sable I* was more than suited for this job.

That season, the *Sable I* gained another regular traveller in Monseigneur Lionel Scheffer, who on March 14, 1946, became the first bishop of the new Diocese of Labrador, based at Lourdes de Blanc-Sablon. With a territory that covered all of Labrador and the Quebec regions of the Lower North Shore, and Ungava as far west as Hudson Bay, Scheffer would constantly be travelling. At the time, Blanc-Sablon had no deepwater dock,
meaning that the *Sable I* had to anchor some distance offshore. But this shortcoming would soon be remedied after the arrival of the new bishop.

A passenger's perspective of travelling in the *Sable I* has been left to us by ornithologist Arthur Allen, who not long afterwards, with his wife Eva, travelled in her from Sept-Îles to Harrington Harbour, from where they proceeded to Blanc-Sablon in Samuel Robertson's 38-foot cruiser *Alca*. The Allens, both PhD's from Cornell University, had driven north and sailed overnight from Rimouski to Sept-Îles in the *Matane I*, and after a short layover there joined an eastbound *Sable I* at about 4 am one summer morning. Allen recorded his observations in the book "Stalking Birds by Color Camera," which was published by National Geographic in 1951: -

This was our first taste of the advertised "vagabond cruises" along the north shore. Because of whims of wind, fog and tide, no definite schedule of arrival and departure can be maintained, and the passenger who isn't ready will wait a week for the next boat.

Once aboard, he gets a cabin, if he is lucky, but if there are many passengers - and there often are - he may have to be content with the dining salon upholstery. Decks are crowded with oil drums, which, though empty, permeate the air with the odor of seal or cod. At his destination the vagabond is as likely to be cast ashore in the middle of the night as at noon and he may walk down a gangplank in a dignified manner or climb down a ladder into a bobbing dory.

After braving the chill blasts that whipped off the icebergs to the east, we found a warmish spot in the lee of the pilothouse where friendly fumes from the kitchen poured out of a ventilator.

Most of our fellow passengers were fishermen and small businessmen traveling from town to town. But some were sportsmen, heading for clubs on the Moisie, the Godbout or other famous salmon streams, still dreaming about the big ones that got away last year.

Others were returning from school or employment in Quebec and Montreal and looking forward to the simple pleasure of their rugged homes. On the boat was an interesting group of Anglican ministers and Catholic priests. Their flocks included many Montagnais Indians.

The Allens spent two days reaching Harrington, enjoying the local on board cuisine on the way. In some ways, although the *Sable I* was larger, it seemed that things had not changed much for deck passengers since Bernier's *Guide*. Twenty years after first coming to Quebec, the *Sable I* was now the stalwart on the run along the Lower North Shore to the Strait of Belle Isle at Blanc-Sablon. Her master, Capt Sylvio Bélanger, was another of the many Clarke shipmasters who hailed from l'Islet-sur-Mer. But the thirty-
two-year-old ship was now nearing the end of her time with Clarke.

The "Gaspesia" to Natashquan

That peace had finally returned was noted by Amy Ewing Oakley in her book "Kaleidoscope Quebec," when she sailed from Victoria Pier in Montreal on Canada Steamship Lines' Richelieu, on July 17, 1945: -

As we drew away from the neighbouring dock of the Clarke Steamship Co Ltd, where rode the Gaspesia and other freighters, we observed how, since our last visit, grim war paint and mounted guns had been abandoned. Grain elevators loomed, cathedral high.

Now that the grey war paint was gone Clarke ships were back in their usual garb of black, white and red for steamships or white, buff and green for motorships. Meanwhile, Léo Chouinard, now an officer, next moved over to the Gaspesia, where he was able to tell us about serving in her as well: -

In August 1945, I was appointed second officer on Clarke's Gaspesia. She was a steamship, like the Sable I, but bigger and older, with a less powerful engine - unable to cope with the ice, she finished her season with the onset of winter. She served the coast, but only as far as Natashquan, with two voyages a month...

In season, we brought back a lot of salmon. Without refrigeration chambers, we piled fish boxes high with snow, the whole of which we covered with tarpaulins in the holds. This kept the cargo fresh until our arrival at Quebec. We brought back cod and lots of salted herring and mackerel in barrels. In the autumn, it was blueberries from Sept-Iles...

Our route included only two small cities: Havre-St-Pierre, capital of the Mingan area and main town of the central North Shore, and Baie Comeau. In 1945, Sept-Iles, considered as the frontier to the North Shore, was only a village with a population of less than five hundred inhabitants. In this era, means of communication were for all intents and purposes non-existent. The steamer was the only link with the rest of the province. When the boat arrived, no matter at what hour, the villagers came down to the dock, lit up with lights, to get the latest news, see travellers and receive supplies.

Among the passengers on each voyage were representatives of companies such as Louis T Blais (wholesale & groceries), Chinic (hardware), and Gauvreau & Beaudry (clothing). Added to these were opticians, jewellers, denturologists and doctors...

In the month of December the buoys were lifted and the rivers lighthouses were extinguished as their keepers left their posts for the
winter season. Without these invaluable aids, it was dangerous to navigate above Pointe-au-Pic. During the months of December and January, we served the coast from this port. The railway from Quebec brought in all the cargo destined for the coast.

For now, the North Shore services carried on as they had throughout the war, but new ships would not only make up for pre-war tonnage that had not returned but would also replace older ships. And as well as the Sable I operating from Pointe-au-Pic each winter, Clarke ships were once again able to find winter commercial employment in the southern waters, where its cruise ships had been so popular before the war.

**The Miami-Nassau Route**

Although it had no more cruise ships, it did not take Clarke long to re-enter commercial service from Florida. For 1945-46, the Jean Brilliant relaunched the subsidized Miami-Nassau service, as performed by the New Northland eighteen years earlier. The "Miami Daily News" carried an item by reporter Rose Mallory on December 2, 1945, under the heading "Motorship Brilliant Fitted Here for Nassau Run": -

Passenger boat service out of Miami, first since the war, will resume Dec 10, when Clarke Steamship Co starts the m.s. Brilliant, a 36-passerger vessel, on regular cruises to Nassau.

The Brilliant, known in the navy during the war years as "Bright Eyes," was famed for carrying the Duke and Duchess of Windsor back and forth between Miami and Nassau under an escort of blimps and RAF planes.

Clarke Steamships, a Canadian company, is the first operator to resume steamship passenger service, out of the Port of Miami. The Brilliant will carry light cargo as well as passengers and at first will make bi-weekly trips. After the first of the year, she will make three trips a week.

Now berthed at Pier 1, the ship is being renovated and its navy gray being changed to a civilian blue and white. Her accommodations include two-berth staterooms, deluxe twin bed parlors with private bath, a bar and ship's dining room. Fares will be $20 one way and $35 round trip.

As the season wears on, there will be three and four-day all-expense cruises with layovers at Nassau where tourists can use the ship as headquarters.

James Hutcheson, general passenger agent for the Clarke interests
and representing Desmond Clarke, president of the company, and a Miami winter resident, arrived this week from Montreal. He and Mrs Hutcheson will winter at Coral Gables. Hutcheson was Clarke's city passenger agent for five years before the war.

The Clarke company dropped its Miami-Nassau service in 1939 when Great Britain declared war on Germany. At that time, a single ship, the New Northland, operated between the two ports.

Present plans of the company, Hutcheson said, in addition to the Brilliant's cruises, are to operate yachting cruises out of Miami.

"Bright Eyes" was the name of the 1934 Shirley Temple film that featured the song "On the Good Ship Lollypop.". Hutcheson, who with Desmond Clarke had tried to reflag the New Northland at the beginning of the war to operate from Key West, had now rejoined Clarke and was sent to Miami to manage the Nassau service. Now painted in Clarke Steamship Co colours, with buff funnel and four blue bands, the Jean Brilliant began service as scheduled on December 10.

An advertisement by American Express in the "Chicago Tribune," no doubt paid for by the Development Board, confirmed this on December 9, the day before her inaugural sailing: -

Nassau in the Bahamas is again prepared to welcome its many American friends with complete winter holiday accommodations and facilities. No passports required for US Citizens.

Pan American Airways provides service from Miami twice daily (new lower 30-day round trip rates in effect January 1st).

Overnight service from Miami by Clarke Steamship Company's m.s. Jean Brilliant. Sailings: December 10, 13, 17, 19, 22, 26, 29; January 2, 4. Thereafter: Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Similar advertisements appeared in the "Miami Daily News," which reported her first peacetime arrival at Nassau on December 12, with a story from the Bahamian capital, "Miami-Nassau Ship Hailed on First Trip": -

Nassau gave an eager welcome yesterday to the m.s. Jean Brilliant, first civilian passenger ship to tie up here in six years. The weather was a tourist's dream, with a smooth sea and bright sunshine. As the Brilliant, pennants flying, nosed into her berth, eager passengers at the rail got a taste of the Nassau greeting which tourists have missed since Great Britain and Germany went to war in 1939.

Crowds of Bahamians were gathered along shore. Small rowboats loaded with negro divers met the Brilliant to dive for coins passengers
tossed into the blue-green water. As the boat docked, the Hon Sidney Farrington, chairman of the Bahamas Development Board and Lady Oakes came aboard to greet Desmond Clarke, president of Clarke Steamship lines, which owns the Brilliant.

The ship will stay in port until tonight when she will sail for Miami. Most of her passengers are headquartering on the boat and will return to Miami with her. The Brilliant, which left Miami at 4 pm Monday, is the first passenger boat to leave the Port of Miami since the war. She carried 21 passengers, a crew of 28, five automobiles, mail and three canaries...

Capt William Tremblay, a seagoing man for 41 years, was at the helm of the Brilliant and is meeting old friends that he knew when he captained the New Northland, which sailed the Miami-Nassau route before the war. Two passengers, Mr & Mrs Donald Campbell of Tulsa, Okla, were aboard the Northland when she made her last trip before war was declared.

Desmond Clarke had flown down to Miami from Montreal on December 8, while also on board for the inaugural voyage was superintendent Willie Douville. Among the celebrations during this first post-war sailing was a gala dinner after departing Miami.

Rose Mallory gave her own account of what it was like to take that first post-war cruise out of Miami in a story headed "Pleasure Cruise," in the "Miami Daily News" on December 16: -

You don’t need to know a millionaire or be one yourself to take a luxury cruise to Nassau. All you need is about three days' time and $59.70, the price of a round-trip, all-expense tour on the m.s. Jean Brilliant.

The Brilliant, a ship of the Clarke Steamship lines, is built to accommodate 35 passengers, and, although she is in public passenger service, is every inch a yacht. During the war years, while in His Majesty's Navy, she served the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

Last Monday she started civilian life on the Nassau-Miami run, the first pleasure cruise ship to leave Miami after the war. As passengers started coming aboard late in the afternoon, Capt William Tremblay, a veteran of 41 years at sea, greeted them in white dress uniform. Ship's officers also were in white. Immaculate stewards whisked bags away to cabins and staterooms.

Shortly after the boat shoved off and passengers were settled below decks, afternoon tea was served on deck. Dinner followed an hour later.
"This is a French boat," exclaimed a surprised passenger at the sign "Salle à manger" (dining room). But it isn't. It's owned by a Canadian company and formerly used in Canadian waters. Everybody on board, being Canadian, speaks both French and English. After dinner there isn't much to do on a yacht, and as the boat nosed into the inky blue of the gulf stream and night settled down, some headed for deck chairs or the rail.

At breakfast time the next morning, the boat swung into Fort Montague bay at Nassau. The sun was shining and it was hot on deck - about 10 to 30 degrees hotter than Miami, it seemed.

When the boat docked, the passengers, until now all one big family, scattered in all directions after a minor skirmish with immigration officials. You only saw them after that when they returned to the ship for meals or you encountered them in the shops...

With the second and last day in Nassau comes sailing home time. A look around at your fellow passengers, if you've been doing the town like all good tourists should, will tell you that they're tired too, and it's going to be a quiet evening on the boat, with maybe a pleasant chat with the captain and so to bed.

Meanwhile, although it somehow missed the inaugural voyage in December, a further item in the travel section of the "Chicago Tribune" carried news of the revived passenger service on December 23, 1945, at a time when ships such as P&O's Florida and Cuba, and indeed the New Northland, were still carrying troops:

There are no ships sailing between Florida and Cuba, according to E L Walsh, Chicago manager of the American Express company, although there is a limited service once every three weeks - to Bermuda on the Fort Townshend and Fort Amherst. Beginning in January 1946, there will be overnight service from Miami to Nassau in the Bahamas every Monday, Wednesday and Friday by Clarke Steamship Company's Jean Brillant. No passports are required for United States citizens.

Clarke ticket envelopes once more sported a year-round cruising slogan: - "Summer Cruises, Gulf of St Lawrence - Winter Cruises, Miami to Nassau." Even the British Colonial Hotel got into the act, with a typical advertisement from the "Palm Beach Daily News" for February 17, 1946, stating:

Enjoy the Colonial Charm of Nearby Nassau. This luxurious world-renowned hotel is conveniently located in the heart of this picturesque resort. Private Beach and Pool - Golf - Tennis - Yachting - Riding. Just 80 minutes via PAA. Overnight by Clarke Steamship. John O Beck,
Managing Director. Miami Representative: Knox Eldredge, Pier 1, Miami Municipal Docks.

Bigger ships would replace the Jean Brillant on the run to Nassau, but for now she carried on for one more peacetime season after four winters of wartime service. She must have presented a jaunty sight leaving Miami, more like a yacht than a cruise ship, and her service turned out to be so successful that her three sailings a week were extended. Originally scheduled to have departed Miami for the last time on Wednesday, April 10, this was extended with four extra trips being run through Sunday, April 21. At the end of that winter, when she arrived back in Miami on April 22 before returning to Canada, she had carried well over 1,500 passengers on 54 voyages.

West India Fruit & Steamship Company Charters

Meanwhile, with the North Gaspé no longer needed to serve Bermuda, Clarke managed to find winter work for her trading between Florida and Havana for the West India Fruit & Steamship Co, a subsidiary of the Norfolk Warehouse Company that had just moved its base of operations from Norfolk to West Palm Beach. It had been nineteen years since the New Northland had run her winter cruises from Palm Beach, so this marked a return after a long absence. The "Palm Beach Post" carried the good news on December 20, 1945, with an item headed "Passenger Service to Havana Assured":

The first regular passenger steamship service out of here since shortly after the Florida boom is assured, it was learned Wednesday. Twice-weekly sailings to and from Havana will start at the Port of Palm Beach December 31, D E Taylor, president of the West India Fruit & Steamship Co announced...

The s.s. North Gaspé, of Canadian registry, will leave here for Havana every Tuesday and Friday, and will start northbound trips from Cuba every Sunday and Thursday, Mr Taylor said. The schedule will be maintained until May 1, he added, and may be continued longer if demand warrants.

The North Gaspé will carry general cargo as well as passengers, for whom there are accommodations for 50 each trip. The voyage will take about 18 hours. One of the two cargo service vessels now operated by the company between here and Cuba will be continued.

It had been seven years since Clarke had had two passenger ships operating from Florida and Jim Hutcheson, looking after the Jean Brillant from Miami, also took care of the North Gaspé. That the service was well-received was indicated in a short item carried in the "Palm Beach Daily News" on January 9, 1946: -
With all passenger space occupied, the motorship North Gaspé left the Port of Palm Beach docks yesterday at 11 am for its second crossing to Havana. The vessel is proving most popular with tourists who have been yearning for four years to see foreign lands. Passenger agent William L Heath is kept busy taking reservations for coming voyages. It is stated that for the present only 22 first-class cabins will be available.

West India Fruit became a regular charterer of Clarke ships in the winters immediately following the war. The president of this firm, Dan Taylor, was one of four brothers - the others were William, Leslie and Alfred. Originally based at Norfolk, in the 1930s it had used small steamers and schooners to bring cargoes of fruit into the old Merchants & Miners Line pier there but during the war had started developing new business into the port of Palm Beach. Many of these cargoes came from Frank Leslie Fraser, who now owned the Charlenest, Miron L and Père Arnaud. But things were changing. West India Fruit acquired from the Florida East Coast Railway the right to operate the railcar ferry service to Havana, which had been suspended when the ferries were requisitioned for use as wartime minelayers.

West India Fruit's first acquisition for its newly-acquired rail ferry service was the 2,320-ton Great Lakes railcar ferry Grand Haven, which it purchased in 1946 from Grand Trunk Western, the American arm of Canadian National Railways. But before it could get its new railcar ferry into operation in August, it needed a ship to start up operations. The North Gaspé fulfilled that role while the Grand Haven was being towed down the Mississippi.

The 46-berth North Gaspé entered service between West Palm Beach and Havana on January 3, 1946. Sailings left the Florida port on Sunday and Thursday one week and on Tuesday the next. The service was not sold as a cruise but as a "passenger, express and fast freight service." However, the brochure did state that "passengers wishing to remain aboard ship in Havana may do so by making arrangements with the Purser at an additional charge of $5 per night including meals and berth."

Her 5-day schedule called for an overnight voyage in each direction and a two-night stay in Havana, and she also stayed overnight at West Palm Beach on her return. One could thus book the round voyage fare of $65, add $10 for two nights in Havana and have a 4-night cruise for $75. As the North Gaspé left West Palm Beach at 10 am and didn't arrive back until 1 pm, this meant the best of part of five days on board.

The end of her Nassau and Havana season was reported in the "Palm Beach Post" on April 17, under the heading "Last Cuban Voyage":

With only one passenger cabin unoccupied, the motorship North Gaspé sailed at 10 am Tuesday for Havana, beginning the last voyage of a combined passenger and freight service which the West India Fruit
and Steamship Co has maintained from here since early January. Due back here Friday, the *North Gaspé* is to sail Saturday for Canada to resume its regular summer schedule.

It would still be several months before the railcar ferry service could begin, but an initial plan to run from Port Everglades was abandoned in favour of West Palm Beach because of its better rail connections. While West India Fruit negotiated for more ferries to handle the expected trade, it still needed extra ships to carry cargo and a few passengers in the meantime, and it got them from Clarke in the winter time.

**Churchill Visits Frank Clarke in Miami Beach**

While the *Jean Brillant* crossed back and forth between Miami and Nassau and the *North Gaspé* between West Palm Beach and Havana, Churchill was once again a guest of Frank Clarke's, this time at his estate in Miami Beach. It was January 1946, and Churchill, no longer Prime Minister, was visiting for his health, enjoying some time painting, and almost certainly observing the ships sailing in and out of Miami.

He arrived at New York on January 14 in Cunard Line's 83,673-ton *Queen Elizabeth*, which had been delivered in 1940 and was still trooping with the *Queen Mary*. Travelling to Miami by rail, Churchill arrived there on January 16, detraining at a private siding at Northeast 72nd Street. Rather than go right into town, he was taken by private car to Frank Clarke's house at 5905 North Bay Road in Biscayne Bay. During his six-week stay with Frank, he would attend the Hialeah races with him and visit the Parrot Jungle at South Dade, as well as finish two paintings and accept an honorary degree from the University of Miami.

Churchill also took the opportunity to return to Havana, a place that he had visited as a young man, when he had travelled in Plant's *Olivette*. Had he wanted to this time, he could have taken the January 31 overnight sailing of the *North Gaspé* from West Palm Beach, and arrived in Havana at 1 pm on Friday, February 1, and returned to Florida on the next sailing. But as President Harry Truman put a plane at his disposal, Churchill and Frank Clarke flew to Havana on February 1, landing a couple of hours after the *North Gaspé* had pulled into port.

Churchill's party spent the week at the Hotel Nacional overlooking Havana's harbour, and the *North Gaspé* was in port from that Friday until 10 am Sunday morning and again from Wednesday lunch time until Friday morning. As a director and associate founder of the Clarke Steamship Co, it seems likely that Frank would have pointed out the little ship to Churchill at some point during their stay. While she was no cruise ship, she had escaped a German torpedo and served Bermuda for four winters during the war, until only a few months before.
During his stay, Churchill met Cuba's President San Martin and dined with Ernest Hemingway, as well as with the American Ambassador. He received gifts of several hundred Havana cigars and selected a stock of his own tobacco. Several years later, on October 8, 1952 (by which time Churchill would again be Prime Minister), a wire report would appear in various newspapers worldwide:

Colonel Frank Clarke, a friend of Mr Winston Churchill for the past 25 years and his host at Miami Beach, Florida in 1946, says the Premier is still smoking cigars made from tobacco he selected during a visit to Havana in that year. He chose a good vintage year, 1942, and enough tobacco for 10,000 cigars was set aside for him and stored in casks. Mr Clarke says that Mr Churchill is using up his stock at the rate of four or five eight-inch cigars and three or four smaller ones a day.

After returning to Miami Beach on February 8, Churchill went about working on one of the most important speeches of the 20th Century, his famous "Iron Curtain" speech, which he would deliver on March 5 at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. Not only did Frank Clarke host Churchill in Miami and join him in Havana, but he also accompanied him with the presidential party to Fulton on March 4 and 5, where President Truman introduced Churchill. The two men were still together on March 14 when Churchill visited Roosevelt's widow Eleanor at Hyde Park, New York.

Meanwhile, "Chicago Tribune" columnist Tahlia filed a special report from Miami that was carried on March 10, in which she not only acknowledged Churchill's presence in Miami but also the Jean Brillant's great success that season:

If there was one day when this already overcrowded, even overstuffed city reached a new peak of population, that day was Saturday, March 2, Widener race day at Hialeah, when cars from as far away as a couple of hundred miles filled with racing fans crept through Miami out to what enthusiasts say is the most beautiful race course in the world...

I also failed to see Winston Churchill, who is the most distinguished English guest that Miami has ever had. He was visiting Col Frank W Clarke of Quebec, who owns [sic] the steamship line which would have taken us to Nassau to visit the John McCutcheons on Treasure Island if every inch on the boat had not been booked for a month ahead. The plane trip of only an hour and a half was also so popular that the only possible chance, so I was assured, was to take up squatter's rights at the Miami airport and slip into a seat at the last minute.

While the North Gaspé and Jean Brillant were busy criss-crossing back and forth from Florida that winter, the Sable I was pounding through the ice
of the St Lawrence River and the *Gaspesia* wintering at Quebec. The *New Northland*, now British-owned but still registered at Quebec, was entering her final few months of trooping in West Africa.

At the end of the winter season, on April 22, a day later than originally planned, James Hutcheson and Mrs Grace Hardy, representing the Clarke Steamship Co, hosted a cocktail party on board the *Jean Brillant* in Miami. Among those invited were the British Colonial Hotel's John Beck, John Dey of "The Seahorse," once Clarke's advertising manager in Miami, and George Clarke, uncle of Desmond, plus local press and travel agents. This was her send-off party, as after sailing at 4 pm on her last crossing, the *Jean Brillant* would collect a number of RAF personnel in Nassau to take them to Halifax on her way back to the St Lawrence for the summer.

**A Slow Return to Peacetime Habits**

On April 14, 1946, the "New York Times" reported on the immediate post-war cruising scene under the heading "Few Ships for Tourists: Most Are Already Completely Booked":

The possibilities for pleasure travel at sea are strictly limited and the majority of sailings have been fully booked for weeks; lists of hopefuls await cancellations.

Furness Bermuda Lines reported last week that their service between New York and Bermuda is booked well through the summer; travelers who prefer early fall still have a chance. The little steamers, *Fort Townshend* and *Fort Amherst*, have long waiting lists through August...

The coastwise steamship *George Washington*, operated in the Bermuda trade by Alcoa for the War Shipping Administration, is accepting applications for accommodations, but no sailings are scheduled for more than thirty days in advance - an indication of the uncertainty of the Government's plans for this vessel.

One bright spot in the tourist business is the scheduled return to service of the 5,000-ton motorship *Stella Polaris*, which is being overhauled in a Swedish shipyard for charter to the American Express Company for ten months. About the end of June, depending on completion of her conversion, the *Polaris*, which used to make North Cape cruises out of New York, will start a series of two and three week cruises to the West Indies and the Saguenay...

Another cruise series offered by the Clarke Steamship Lines out of Montreal, will carry passengers for five and a half to thirteen days in the Gaspé waters of Canada.
But these craft are small and cruises are popular; it is idle for the great bulk of travelers to dream of them, unless they already have reservations or stop into their travel agent's office as a cancellation comes through...

Steamship operators are chafing at the delay in the return of their ships and they know that thousands of travel dollars will be spent this year in home areas. But even if their ships were returned immediately, in most cases they could not be ready before fall.

Until the Queen of Bermuda could return to the Bermuda route in early 1949, Furness Withy kept the Fort Amherst and Fort Townshend in a modified New York, Halifax, St John's, Corner Brook, New York, Bermuda and New York rotation. And the George Washington would remain on the run until Easter 1947. Meanwhile, the fact that the "New York Times" had mistaken "the Gaspé waters" for the whole Gulf of St Lawrence just shows the popularity of that area.

The surviving call at Corner Brook by the Furness Withy ships meant that instead of the New Northland carrying passengers to that port from Montreal, as before the war, the Furness Withy ships now offered the main passenger service in and out of Corner Brook, calling at Halifax and New York.

Meanwhile, Anticosti Shipping's Fleurus left Montreal on May 1, 1946, bound for Anticosti under Capt Maurice Lévesque with among other things two heavy tractors and two large trucks in her cargo, and would soon be carrying tourists as well.

### The Second "North Voyageur" and the "North Trader"

The New Northland and North Star were gone, and old days of large Clarke cruise ships would not return. But the North Gaspé was still on the weekly run for which she had been built, while the Gaspesia and Sable I between them ran the weekly service to the North Shore. Sidney Dean commented on Natashquan in his "All the Way by Water": -

Natashquan, biggest settlement on the Côte-Nord between Havre-St-Pierre and Blanc-Sablon, is the terminus of one line of vagabond voyages and the most important stop of another. It has good stores, a fish freezer, an excellent dock, and the last fresh meat to be obtained on the Coast.

Further upstream, "The Gazette" had announced the preparation of the company's cargo facilities in Montreal on April 3, under the heading "Market Basin Active": -
Erection of summer sheds along the wharf at Market Basin is under way, and one of Clarke Steamship's huts is ready for occupancy and the first ship from downriver. Although under water for several weeks, the ramps leading to the basin and the wharves are clean and clear of debris. Canada Steamship Lines' cargo and passenger sheds will be assembled here within the next few days.

With the opening of the 1946 season, as new ships were being completed to join the Clarke fleet, two new names appeared in timetables, when the company decided to give its older ships new "North" names in order to introduce a consistent naming scheme for its North Shore ships.

The Gaspesia became the North Voyageur (ii), renamed in honour of the ship that she had replaced eight years earlier. The original North Voyageur, sold out of the fleet at the end of 1937 and renamed Esperos, had been bombed off Crete on April 21, 1941, the day the Germans took Athens, while serving as a hospital ship. Eight months earlier, on August 15, 1940, the Esperos had escaped a torpedo fired at her by the Italian submarine Delfino off the island of Tinos, an attack in which the Greek light cruiser Elli had been sunk.

The Sable I, meanwhile, became the North Trader. By this time, probably when she had shed her wartime grey, her ventilators had been painted white instead of black, thus reducing the heightened appearance of her funnel. Carrying on to Blanc-Sablon, she worked one last season for Clarke in 1946, twenty years after first coming to the St Lawrence. It was planned that the North Voyageur would then take over the longer Blanc-Sablon route, and the North Trader would be sold off on the arrival of the new ships.

The spring newsletter of the American Society of Travel Agents reported the ships' new names in the company's plans for the 1946 summer season: -

The regular cruise ships of the Clarke Steamship Co are still in war work but the smaller boats, namely the North Gaspé, North Voyageur (formerly the Gaspesia), the North Trader (formerly the Sable I), will all be in service to Gulf ports and the North Trader will operate 7-13 day cruises to the Canadian Labrador. The Clarke Steamship Co however report that all these boats are sold out until September and the Canada Steamship Lines report an unusual demand for accommodation on their vessels.

This was the first time Clarke had advertised "Canadian Labrador" cruises since 1931, in the old North Shore. After the Sable I replaced the North Shore on the Blanc-Sablon route in 1932, she had never been included in Clarke's cruise brochures.
The continuing shortage of ocean-going cruise ships had the "New York Times" commenting on the local passenger ship line-up again on June 9, 1946:-

Canada Steamship Lines has resumed its St Lawrence and Saguenay River cruises this year, and also its summer-long Great Lakes service, offering among others a 1,600-mile cruise on the steamer Noronic.

Lakes voyages are also offered by the Canadian Pacific Line, being especially arranged for travelers going to the Canadian Rockies...

The Clarke Steamship Company in Canada is booking its ships, North Gaspé, North Trader and North Voyageur, on a series of cruises in the Gaspé-Magdalens-Saguenay country.

Later in 1946, a new vessel would be introduced to take over from the North Voyageur on the Havre-St-Pierre and Natashquan service, doubling the frequency as she did so. The North Voyageur would then replace the North Trader, which would be put up for sale. With a good reputation as a strong ship, the Sable I would not take long to find a new owner.

There were still no roads to the North Shore at the time, so the carriage of mails continued as before even as ships changed routes. Mail taken in Clarke ships was postmarked either "Quebec & Natashquan, Sea Post," the route which had been maintained until now by the North Voyageur, or "Quebec & Blanc-Sablon, Sea Post," the route she was about to take over. The mail stamps would change ships as their pursers passed them along to their successors. The carriage of sea mail dated back to long before the Clarke Steamship Co was formed, and would continue well into the 1960s.

**The "New Northland" Goes To Seaway Line**

When the spring newsletter of the American Society of Travel Agents was written no official announcement had yet been made as to the final disposition of the New Northland. But news of her sale to Seaway Steamship Line Ltd of Windsor, Ontario, was carried in the same newsletter, as was the fact that she would be managed by Eric Wharton, who had joined Seaway Lines in 1941. The ASTA newsletter mentioned Wharton's earlier connection with Clarke.

The New Northland finished trooping in West Africa in June 1946, and left Lagos by way of Gibraltar for Liverpool, where on July 14 she disembarked some 76 passengers before going for reconditioning. Although she was offered back to Clarke, and the Jean Brilliant had been maintaining her Miami-Nassau winter service during her absence, the New Northland had been absent from her main trade between Montreal, Gaspé and Corner Brook for seven years, and it would be eight before she could resume service.
Clarke was also scheduled to take delivery of a new passenger ship for the North Shore plus three new cargo ships, and finally decided not to take the New Northland back.

A huge wartime rise in seamen’s wages meant that the New Northland would not likely be able to operate economically in her old Gulf of St Lawrence trade. Things had also changed when Trans-Canada Air Lines, predecessor to Air Canada, started flying to both St John's and Gander on May 1, 1942. Gander International Airport would soon be handling 180,000 transit passengers a year.

On the other hand, Clarke was now busy developing new cargo services, which included an expansion to St John's. Although it had been advertising post-war cruises to Newfoundland in 1945, it came to the conclusion that the twenty-year-old New Northland no longer fit into its plans. The remaining story of the New Northland can be found in the appendix entitled "The Further Careers of the New Northland and North Star."

Clarke Rebuilds its Fleet

While the older ships carried on, Clarke's fleet renewal program gained speed. Four new ships were due for delivery in the second half of 1946. Unlike the 1930s, when the company had built only motorships, the new vessels were all steamships, an inheritance from wartime shipbuilding programs.

The most important of the new arrivals was a 95-berth 1,205-ton coastal express passenger ship to be named North Shore (ii). At the same time, three modified "B" Type standard cargo ships of the "China coaster" design, with capacities for 1,650 tons of cargo and twelve passengers each, were under completion on the West Coast. Two of these were intended for service to the North Shore and the third to the Gulf of St Lawrence and Newfoundland.

The corvette that would become the express passenger ship was purchased from the War Assets Corporation in Montreal, while the three "B" Types were acquired from Wartime Shipbuilding Ltdl. Clarke actually bought six corvettes, as although it only wanted one the price per ship was significantly less for a volume purchase. Four were sold on, one was converted and the last was kept on hand for a while, to be sold a year or two later, after it had determined that the company would have no further need of her. Although some correspondence was exchanged with Vancouver naval architect W D McLaren, who had been responsible for converting three "Castle" class corvettes into passenger ships for Union Steamships Ltd of Vancouver, no further corvette conversions ensued.
The New "North Shore"

Of the six "Flower" class corvettes, one, HMCS Lindsay was chosen to become Clarke's North Shore, the most important member of its immediate post-war fleet. After repairs at Saint John following her January collision in the English Channel, she had paid off at Sydney on July 18, 1945. Clarke awarded the conversion contract to the Clare Shipbuilding Co at Meteghan, while the concept was carried through by William Percival, who as well as being Clarke's superintendent, was also now general manager of the Clare Shipbuilding Co.

While Clarke had originally intended to build a new ship, which would no doubt have been a motorship modelled after the North Gaspé, the war had intervened and there were now plenty of ships available for conversion. The new North Shore was thus a steamship, and the pre-war idea of offering weekly sailings between Quebec and Natashquan, with fortnightly extensions to Blanc-Sablon, became a plan for weekly service between Montreal and Havre-St-Pierre, with extensions to Natashquan.

Working closely with Montreal naval architects German & Milne, Percival and other executives commuted to Meteghan by Canadian Pacific, whose night train from Montreal's Windsor Station connected at Saint John, New Brunswick, with the 4,055-ton Princess Helene, built for the Bay of Fundy service in 1930. A three-hour crossing to Digby then found a Dominion Atlantic Railway train waiting on the dock for the final sixty miles to Meteghan, an hour and a half down the line toward Yarmouth. The same routing had been used during the war except that the Princess Helene had then been escorted on her twice-daily round trips across the Bay of Fundy by either the RCAF or the RCN.

On December 9, 1945, as the North Gaspé and Jean Brillant prepared to go south to Florida and the Sable I was being readied for her winter service from Pointe-au-Pic, and less than five months after being paid off, the Lindsay arrived at Meteghan. There, Clare Shipbuilding set about stripping the former warship, built in 1943 by Midland Shipyards Ltd in Ontario, down to bare decks, hull, engine and machinery in preparation for her conversion into a passenger ship.

The North Shore's conversion was extensive enough that for all intents and purposes she emerged as a new ship. Clare went about plating in her main deck for its full length, extending her long corvette forecastle aft and building up her stern so that she became a flush-decked ship. An open promenade now surrounded her boat deck, and forward on this deck a new deck house was installed, with first-class lounge, lobby and purser's office. Above this, a new seven-windowed bridge was mounted, higher than the old corvette wheelhouse, which had been installed under an open bridge. The new bridge resembled the original closely enough that the craftsmen of
Meteghan may have found a way to reinstall it a deck higher. Amidships were her funnel, engine room skylight and cabins for four engineers, plus two sets of Schat gravity davits accommodating four lifeboats, two on each side. Another new deckhouse aft contained eight two-berth cabins for 16 first-class passengers.

Her dining saloon was forward on the new full-length main deck and sixteen two-berth outside cabins for another 32 first-class passengers were installed on either side of the engine room casing, aft of the dining room. Several four- and six-berth crew cabins, along with one single-berth cabin, were built aft of this, and a small lounge for second-class passengers was arranged in her stern. Her second-class passengers were allocated berths in a dormitory below this space on the lower deck.

The North Shore's arrangement of lounge above giving on to a lobby and stairwell aft of it, in turn giving access to a forward restaurant below, resembled that of the New Northland. Apart from the fact that the rooms were on a much smaller scale, the main difference was that the North Shore's dining room was one deck down whereas in the New Northland it had been two. The North Shore's restaurant was also differently arranged, in that three booths on each side of the room, each able to accommodate six passengers, looked into a central area with five tables, one for four, two for three and two tables for two, so she could seat 50 passengers per sitting.

As the company's premier post-war passenger ship, at 208 feet in length overall and with a beam of 33 feet, the North Shore was painted with a white hull and green boot-topping. A green riband was later added, after her delivery voyage to Quebec and Montreal. With accommodation for 48 first- and 28 second-class passengers, and 19 on deck, she had a crew of 49, including deck, engine and steward departments. Her role would be to carry passengers and fast freight, while other ships would handle bulkier and heavier cargoes. The North Shore's 76 berths gave her a higher overnight capacity than either the North Gaspé or the Gaspesia, and although she took far fewer deck passengers than either of those ships, she was equipped with a dormitory, a great advance on having to sleep on couches, in corners and in corridors.

For express freight, the North Shore was equipped with a single forward hold served by two three-ton derricks and she could carry 200 tons of cargo, of which 100 tons was refrigerated - mainly fresh fruits and vegetables for the North Shore. This refrigerated space was also important to the fisherman of the North Shore, as Louis Garnier related in his "Dog Sled to Airplane" not long after the new ship was delivered: -

Refrigerated holds have been built in the boats and refrigerated warehouses erected in the fishing centres. The fishermen who do line or net fishing thus receive a higher price for their salmon, halibut and filet of cod, which can now be sold fresh in Quebec and Montreal.
A deadweight of 368 tons allowed the North Shore to lift about 90 per cent as much weight as the North Gaspé, but her 7,500 cubic feet of reefer space and 6,000 feet of dry capacity was only just over a third of the equivalent space in the North Gaspé. The lower cubic was caused not only by the North Shore’s finer hull lines but also the fact that she had two foot less beam than the North Gaspé. But the North Shore was backed up by other ships sailing to the North Shore, while the North Gaspé had to handle Clarke's whole cargo requirement to the Gaspé and Magdalens on her own.

The North Shore’s 2,750 horsepower four-cylinder triple expansion reciprocating engine was powerful for a ship of her size, but a step back from the diesel engines Clarke had commissioned in the 1930s. Although high in fuel consumption, it did give her a turn of speed that allowed for a much quicker turnaround. Maximum speed was 17 knots, but at 14 knots she burned about 22 tons of bunker oil per day. By comparison, the slightly smaller motor ship North Gaspé could maintain 14½ knots on only five tons per day of more expensive diesel oil. The North Shore’s steam plant had been built by the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co, which, like Midland Shipyards, was now a subsidiary of Canada Steamship Lines.

The total cost of the North Shore after conversion came to $525,000, more than Clarke had paid for the much larger North Star only eight years earlier. Except for her speed, the North Shore was similar in terms of size, tonnage and passenger capacity to that other converted navy ship, the first North Voyageur, which had served the North Shore until nine years earlier. But it was her higher speed that was key, as when utilized on the shorter voyage, without crossing to Corner Brook, a weekly turnaround allowed her to perform twice as many voyages in a season.

The December 1946 issue of "Canadian Shipping & Marine Engineering News" covered the North Shore's conversion under the headline "Corvette Converted to Luxury Liner," and described the work as a "handsome reconversion job," but the sub-heading "Veteran Becomes Passenger Ship for Clarke Steamship Line" was perhaps closer to the truth. As the company's new flagship, she was much smaller than New Northland, and was of course not anything like the North Star. Nevertheless, as cargo became more important, the North Shore would remain the company's chief passenger ship for the next fifteen years. Ironically, though, she and Clarke's most important pre-war ship, the North Star, had both participated in the Normandy landings.

Once having completed their new passenger ship, the Clarkes no longer needed a shipyard and sold the Clare Shipbuilding Co at the end of 1946. The buyers, neighbouring Atlantic Shipyards Ltd, continued to build small merchant ships and trawlers at the yard, later renamed Clare Industries Ltd. A few months after the sale, on October 20, 1947, the new owners received a mention in "Time" magazine, in an article entitled "Boat
Boom" about shipbuilding in Nova Scotia: -

In the little shipyards that line the coast of Nova Scotia, builders are busier than they have been since the days of wooden ships and iron men. Now, as 70 years ago, saws screech through oaken timbers and pine planking; middle-aged craftsmen, wielding adzes, cut keels so that they look as though they had been planed. US yachtsmen and game fishermen set off the boom. They had discovered that Nova Scotians could still build stout, trim sailing craft, besides modern power boats - and build them cheap...

Not all the building is for sportsmen. In Meteghan, Atlantic Shipyards (builders of wooden ships for two centuries) has plans for turning out small steel freighters and has already converted a wartime corvette into a freighter and passenger carrier.

An interesting footnote from this era comes from a man who worked on the the North Shore. Bernard Robicheau, who had joined Clare Shipbuilding at the beginning of the war, stayed with the Clarkes, moving to Labrador Fisheries in 1947. After working at Forestville and Longue Pointe de Mingan, he moved to Sept-Iles, eventually leaving to work for the Hudson's Bay Co. Others left for elsewhere. Assistant chief engineer Harold Acres, for example, left for the E B Eddy Co Ltd, paper manufacturers of Ottawa, and then moved to the Great Northern Paper Company in Millinockett, Maine, later part of Georgia Pacific Corporation.

The Weekly North Shore Express

While the new North Shore did not have a large passenger capacity, she did have speed. Compared with ships the company had previously run to the North Shore, this allowed Clarke to repeat what it had done with the North Gaspé eight years earlier, which was to operate the ship on a weekly turnaround. In fact, with two ships now running on a weekly frequency, they were both in Quebec one after another on their return voyages, the North Gaspé on Sundays and the North Shore on Mondays.

Where the arrival of the North Star in 1937 had provoked editorial comment, "The Gazette" reported on the North Shore's first visit to Montreal in a very brief item on August 13, 1946, headed "North Shore Cruises Start": -

The s.s. North Shore, new passenger ship owned by Clarke Steamship Co Ltd, is scheduled to clear Market Basin at 7:30 o'clock this evening on the first of a new series of weekly St Lawrence north shore cruises. The new vessel will call at Quebec, Baie Comeau and Havre-St-Pierre among other ports. Desmond A Clarke, president of the line, will be a passenger during the maiden voyage, it was learned.
"The Gazette" would send a reporter along to report back in more detail from the maiden voyage. Meanwhile, Quebec's "Le Soleil" reported enthusiastically on August 14, in an article entitled "Revolution in Clarke's North Shore coastal service":

The Clarke Steamship Company is in the course of revolutionizing its North Shore coastal service to respond adequately to the needs of the tremendous developments in the region...

Company engineers have studied modern coastal services on the seacoasts of France, Holland and Sweden, and have been able to use the findings of their trips to improve the North Shore service. Henceforth the trip between Montreal and Havre-St-Pierre will be accomplished in the space of one week by the North Shore, a new vessel recently acquired by Clarke that can be viewed in the port of Quebec this morning from 9 o'clock. Other Clarke Steamship vessels perform the same run, but take a fortnight. This is the first vessel to serve the North Shore with such speed.

The North Shore left dry dock Tuesday morning at Quebec to proceed to Montreal, departure point for her itinerary. Company president Desmond A Clarke returned to Montreal yesterday to embark on board the vessel with several guests of honour that will be taking the inaugural voyage.

Thus did the new ship depart on her maiden voyage that August, on the first of many weekly sailings to North Shore ports to Havre-St-Pierre, to be extended to Natashquan every second voyage. It had been six years since the New Northland offered her last short-lived series of weekly cruises from Montreal in 1940, but the North Shore's schedule owed more to Clarke's experience with the North Gaspé's weekly voyages to the South Shore.

The Maiden Voyage

The North Shore's master was Capt Alphonse Bégin, who had spent the war in the North Gaspé. For her maiden voyage, "The Gazette" sent staff member Ron Marsh along to report back on events of the voyage and his first story, filed on August 15, was headed "North Shore now at Baie Comeau": -

Conned by a noisy flock of big white-winged St Lawrence gulls, Clarke Steamship Company's new s.s. North Shore nosed into this lonely, forest-fringed harbor this morning for a four-hour stay during which the Most Rev Napoléon Labrie, Bishop of the Gulf, wished the little vessel Godspeed on her maiden voyage, and the Quebec North Shore Paper Company, which owns the town, showed her passengers the sights.
The North Shore is now 339 miles from the foot of McGill Street, Montreal, and berthed alongside a modern wharf that clings to the edge of a primeval forest. Back of the town are the green woods that keep the presses rolling for the "New York Daily News" and "The Chicago Tribune."

As the ship butted shoreward this morning, Mayor H A Sewell and Arthur Schmon, who runs the paper mill for Col Robert McCormick, waved a cheery welcome from the high timber pier. To these men, the North Shore means a new link to the world beyond. With the two officials were a crowd of towns folk who gestured excitedly towards the new ship.

By sundown yesterday, this little steamer was gliding past the green waters of Baie-St-Paul, past purple mountains that were smooth with age, and heading toward the heaving Gulf of St Lawrence at a spanking 16 knots.

Occasionally, she passed rusty-hulled tramps as they plodded Montreal-ward to load grain and cheese and long tons of flour. As the little white-hulled passenger ship skimmed past the old work horses of the North Atlantic their masters whistled traditional "good luck" of one seafaring man to another, three long blasts that routed nesting birds from the gaunt hills to port.

By ten o'clock last night the North Shore was breezing past Murray Bay and high up on the port quarter lights in the swimming pool near the palatial Manoir Richelieu winked on and off in condescending salute to this vessel's first voyage to the Gulf.

Just before the North Shore cleared Baie Comeau this noon, Bishop Labrie blessed her and her crew with the same simple gestures that other bishops had used centuries ago when they sprinkled holy water about the white-sailed ships of hardy Jacques Cartier.

Baie Comeau is a modern town set in a wilderness of dark forests and lofty, rolling hills. Its population numbers about 3,000 persons. Eight years ago it was a small logging village. Today it has a Hudson's Bay Company department store, a hotel, a movie house with continuous shows, a bustling main street, hawk-eyed taxi drivers, soda fountains with well-worn stools, lumbering buses and a community centre of Dutch design.

From the long wharf, a railroad runs a mile inland to the paper mill. Ships call here for newsprint and carry the ton-heavy rolls south to New York. There is a breakwater across the harbor. Thrice daily during the summer, ferries waddle the 40 miles across the St Lawrence to
Rimouski...

From Baie Comeau, the North Shore will push on to Clarke City. For the Hon Antonio Barrette, Quebec's minister of labor, who is on board for the trip, the North Shore's first voyage is providing his first rest in weeks. Mr Barrette's debonair features show signs of strain. But along the lower shores of the mighty St Lawrence there are no strikes. The air is clear and heady with the smell of pine woods.

Labrie, a native son of the North Shore, had moved the seat of the Diocese of the Gulf of St Lawrence to Baie Comeau on August 11, just the week before, and chose to bless the ship there to emphasize the town's growing importance in an age before the great North Shore mining developments had come on stream.

When the North Shore reached Penteôte on August 16, Marsh filed another report, which appeared in "The Gazette" the next day, headed "North Shore Brings Outer World To People Of Isolated Pentecost": -

Now three days out from Montreal on her maiden voyage to Havre-St-Pierre, the new s.s. North Shore dropped anchor at sundown yesterday of this Clarke Steamship Company trim small port to give its 300 inhabitants an action packed night they will remember for months.

Aboard the steamer is a party of government officials, businessmen with interests in this lonely region, and Mgr Napoléon Labrie, bishop of the St Lawrence Gulf.

When the North Shore was sighted, three luggers chugged out into the bay and eased alongside. While the small craft tossed like corks in the offshore swell, ladders were run down to their decks and within a few minutes, Bishop Labrie, Hon Antonio Barrette, Quebec's minister of labor, Desmond Clarke, the North Shore's owner, and the other passengers had clamored onto the luggers and were ferried ashore.

From the wharf, the visitors were escorted by lantern light to the Canadian International Paper Company's rambling staff house. As the bishop walked slowly through the village, young and old presented themselves and kissed his ring.

For the good folk of Pentecost, it was a night of nights. Of the 50 families that live in this tiny settlement, only a few persons have seen a train, fewer still a talking picture. There are no roads leading in or out of Pentecost. Supplies have to be shipped in from Montreal 470 miles to the west, or from Rimouski which is about 140 miles across the St Lawrence.

When the paper company resumed cutting here two years ago
Pentecost was little more than a cluster of weather-worn shanties. The company halted operations in 1929. After that, the men here fished for salmon and trout or trapped bear in the hills back of the settlement.

But the lean years have passed and today Pentecost is thriving. Buzz saws whine throughout the day, the green woods echo with the sound of sharp axes. The little port has its own doctor, and near the staff house, there is a new pool room with two tables and a grocery store with crowded shelves.

Pentecost has no electricity or telephones yet. Last night the village was aglow with flickering oil lamps and candles. Last night too, youngsters and parents stayed up late for the first time since Christmas. In Pentecost, everyone is usually in bed by 9:30 pm.

At the reception last night, W B Salkeld, who came here from Three Rivers to manage the company's holdings, his wife and teenaged daughter helped villagers distribute trays that were piled with sandwiches, cookies and home made cakes. Outside on the long balcony, some of the oldsters sipped lukewarm beer.

It was a memorable night for the bishop too. He last visited Pentecost 37 years ago. Mgr Labrie was born in Godbout, a small river settlement 45 miles west of Pentecost. As a boy he had studied under a priest who lived in a cabin here by the windswept shore...

Everyone in this isolated village appears happy. The girls are pretty and their clothes as sprightly as those seen along St Catherine Street in Montreal. The young men look healthy and strong and are friendly. They are soft spoken but not shy. Doors of houses here are never locked...

At eleven o'clock the bishop, the government minister and the businessmen walked down the shadowy hillside again while woodsmen showed the way with lanterns and flash lights. Back at the wharf, visitors and natives piled into the luggers and bore out to the anchored ship.

Within a few minutes, the *North Shore* was again underway and bound eastward for Clarke City. As she headed out into the moonlit sea, the men and women in the luggers waved goodbye, the turned around and chugged back to shore.

Marsh's third report to "The Gazette" was filed on August 18, from Baie Comeau once more, under the heading "s.s. North Shore Homeward Bound from Terminus at Havre-St-Pierre": -

Bound for Montreal with her holds full of mail and fish from the paper
ports that dot the St Lawrence River's north shore, Clarke Steamship Company's little s.s. *North Shore* put into this port shortly before sundown today after a speedy voyage from Havre-St-Pierre, small fishing village north of Anticosti, which is her eastern-most port of call.

The *North Shore* sailed from Havre-St-Pierre at noon yesterday after a two-hour stop during which Bishop Napoléon Labrie, Hon Antonio Barrette, Hon Onésime Gagnon and the other passengers stretched their legs in the village.

The narrow streets of Havre-St-Pierre are carpeted with grass and swept clean by the salt winds that blow in from the strait of Jacques Cartier. Anticosti lies 20 miles southward. Montreal is nearly 700 miles to the west.

In Havre-St-Pierre there are no telephones, no newspapers, no soft drink signs, and save for the thunder of the surf as it breaks on the shore, there is no noise. The weathered wooden houses of the fishermen hug the steep winding beach.

Within a stone's throw of the wharf is the white-painted church. There is one store in the village operated by Labrador Fisheries Limited, a subsidiary of Clarke Steamships Ltd. In this store, the fishermen trade mackerel, herring and halibut for groceries and clothing.

Big shaggy huskies are tethered behind many of the houses here. In winter, the villagers use these dogs for hauling sleds.

A white fog that followed the *North Shore* into port here also grounded a pontoon-equipped Norseman aircraft that flies between Havre-St-Pierre and Ungava Bay, 900 miles to the north. Ray Roy, the Norseman's 32-year-old pilot makes his living flying prospectors and Indians into the Northern Quebec wilderness...

Bishop Labrie, whose diocese includes 30,000 persons along this rugged north shore, will next visit Havre-St-Pierre in October. As he and the other passengers returned aboard the *North Shore*, two fishing schooners putted in from the halibut ground off Eskimo Island, a long gaunt rock that shelters Havre-St-Pierre from the fury of the open gulf. The fishermen in the schooners doffed their Souwesters when they saw the Bishop, then crossed themselves.

Havre-St-Pierre's entire population was on the wharf to wish the white-hulled passenger ship bon voyage. As she eased past the breakwater a choir of girls sang *Ave Maria*. Then those on the wharf and the passengers in the *North Shore* joined lustily in *O Canada*.

As the ship eased out of the harbor she passed a group of islands
owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. The islands are for sale and range in price from $15 to $1,500. On one of these tree-capped rocks a foghorn was baying a warning.

Half a mile from the wharf those in the North Shore could still hear the voices of the children back on the wharf. They were still singing O Canada.

As the North Shore steamed westward from Havre-St-Pierre, she bore past the mouth of the Moisie River. Some miles inland on its banks is the Adams Fishing Club, a cluster of richly-furnished villas and a lodge that costs its members $10,000 a year in dues. Entrance fee to this select community is $30,000. Its twenty members are mostly American millionaires. Each family is allowed one rod and all salmon caught are recorded.

Toward evening yesterday the North Shore called at Mingan, where the United States Army Air Corps maintains a flying base with a 5,000-yard long runway. The North Shore's passengers were welcomed at the wharf here by Lt Col Edward Kern, commanding officer of this remote base. It lies about eight miles inland at the head of a wide sandy road hewn out of the bush by US Army engineers. It was built in 1942 and comprises hangars, a hospital, stores, garages, gasoline and kerosene dumps and a theatre for enlisted men and the people of Mingan. The field is about two hours flying time from Gander. It will be maintained for "quite some time," it was learned.

Near the wharf here at Mingan is an old weather-scarred cabin with a caved-in roof. Years ago it was the home of a young Scot named Donald Smith who was the Hudson's Bay Company factor in this region. Smith traded with the Montagnais in this cabin for beaver, fox and lynx skins which the Indians brought in from the wild woods. Legend has it that when Donald Smith left Mingan he walked along the St Lawrence's north shore to Montreal. The young Scot became Lord Strathcona.

The North Shore's route followed the same course that the Gaspesia had adopted in 1942, but the North Shore would sail weekly instead of every ten or eleven days. Quebec's "L'Action Catholique" summarized its view on August 20: -

With the conversion of a wartime corvette the Clarke Steamship Company has found a marvellous solution to weekly service between Montreal and the various ports of the North Shore up to Natashquan.

The North Shore was not the first ship to attempt weekly service to the North Shore, but she was the first to do so successfully and would soon be performing up to thirty round voyages each season. Canada Steamship Lines
had tried weekly sailings with its former Great Lakes passenger ship *Saronic* more than thirty years earlier, but her cargo handling role had held her back. The *North Shore*, however, carried only mail, express and a small amount of refrigerated cargo.

"The Gazette" reported the ship's return to Quebec on August 19 in a story "*North Shore* Returns to Quebec; Well Known Ornithologist on Board": -

When the s.s. *North Shore* called at Mingan Saturday on the return voyage to Montreal, she picked up a 30-year-old ornithologist who had spent the last three months studying the birds that make their nests along the barren reaches of the St Lawrence River's north shore. The naturalist was Dr Oliver Hewitt of Ottawa, chief migratory bird officer of Canada's National Park Bureau...

Most of the *North Shore*'s passengers said goodbye to the ship and to Desmond Clarke, president of the Clarke Steamship Company Limited, who had been their host during the 571-mile trip to Havre-St-Pierre when she docked at Quebec this morning. During the six days they had lived aboard, the *North Shore* had carried them nearly 1,260 miles.

They had enjoyed brief but intimate glimpses of little paper ports from which flow newsprint for the metropolitan newspapers of Canada, the United States and Great Britain. They had visited the homes of the hardy Canadians who spent their lives in the sweet-smelling woods of pine, balsam and black spruce and from the decks of the *North Shore* they had watched grampus and white whales spouting on the sparkling surface of the mighty St Lawrence...

The *North Shore* will clear Quebec this afternoon. She is expected to reach Victoria Pier early tomorrow morning. Tomorrow night she sails on her second voyage to the Ports of Pine along the St Lawrence River's north shore.

Onésime Gagnon, now Treasurer in the Quebec Government, was an old hand at maiden voyages in Clarke ships. Not only had he been on two cruises of the *North Star*, including her Caribbean inaugural in 1938, and the maiden voyage of the *North Gaspé* the same year, but he had also been at the christening of the *Rimouski* in 1939. Meanwhile, Louis Garnier, in his book "Dog Sled to Airplane," said of the new ship: -

Politicians, industrialists, businessmen, clergymen and other people who take the beautiful cruise that Desmond Clarke has made possible are now becoming ever more familiar with this region. They are convinced that, now that the North Shore is but a week away from Quebec and Montreal, the Clarke Steamship Company will considerably influence the development of this part of the province in every
The introduction of the corvette *North Shore*, by providing for quicker long-distance trips, has indeed added to the ever-increasing progress of the North Shore.

The little 76-berth *North Shore* was now the biggest overnight passenger ship in the fleet. While smaller than pre-war ships, her weekly frequency gave her the ability to move as many passengers as the much larger *New Northland* had carried when new. Two trips by the *North Shore* could take 152 passengers to the North Shore, while as built the *New Northland* could carry 142 first-class passengers over the same period. The *North Shore* was also a great improvement on the second *North Voyageur*. Not only did she have more berths in cabins, 48 to *North Voyageur*'s 41, but she also offered dormitory accommodation for 28 passengers who previously would not have had berths. Deck passenger numbers were reduced from 95 in the *North Voyageur* to just 19 in the *North Shore*, but with her 19 deck passengers included the new ship could carry up to 95 revenue passengers.

Soon, Clarke's "Vagabond Cruises" brochures were featuring "Weekly Cruises to the North Shore of the Gulf of St Lawrence" by the *North Shore* instead of the "Regular Service to North Shore Ports" that had been offered in the *Gaspesia* and *Sable I*. The *North Shore*’s ports of call included Baie Comeau, Franquelin, Godbout, Baie-Trinité, Pentecôte, Clarke City, Sept-îles, Rivière-au-Tonnerre, Mingan and Havre-St-Pierre, with alternate extensions to Baie-Johan-Beetz and Natashquan. Cruise fare was $110 for the 6-night voyage to Havre-St-Pierre or $120 for the 7-night trip to Natashquan, from mid-June to mid-September, with off-season fares of $88 and $96. The summer fares were similar to what the *New Northland* and *North Star* had charged for much longer voyages before the war.

The new Clarke flagship left Montreal's Victoria Pier every Tuesday at 7:30 pm in a schedule that ran from late April through to late November. Tuesday sailings followed Clarke's traditional practice of scheduling evening departures from Montreal during the first half of the week, but with the addition of the *North Shore*, Clarke's passenger capacity to the North Shore had pretty well doubled from the war years. And like the pre-war passenger ships, the *North Shore* would also, at least initially, be able to find winter employment in southern waters after ice closed the St Lawrence.

**The Gaspé Coast and Magdalens**

While the *North Shore* served her namesake coast, the *North Gaspé* carried on in the Gaspé and Magdalen Islands service for which she had been built eight years earlier. The *North Gaspé*’s schedule still took her from Montreal and Quebec to Cap Chat, Ste-Anne-des-Monts, Mont-Louis, Rivière Madeleine, Grande-Vallée, Cloridorme, Rivière-au-Renard and Gaspé, with
every second voyage continuing to Havre-Aubert and Cap-aux-Meules in the Magdalens.

As they had since 1938, the North Gaspé’s round voyages took six days to Gaspé, and seven to the Magdalens, with the Gaspé departure leaving Victoria Pier every second Tuesday at 7:30 pm, and the Gaspé and Magdalens sailing at the same time on Monday the week following. Confirmation that the North Gaspé had done a good job of serving the Magdalens via Gaspé came about in October 1946, when the Magdalen Islands finally became part of the Diocese of Gaspé. Until then, they had been part of the Diocese of Charlottetown as this had been the easiest route of access for bishops travelling to the Magdalens before the arrival of the North Gaspé.

Like the North Shore, the North Gaspé ran from early April through late November, performing between twenty-five and thirty round voyages a year. Cruise fares were set at $100 for the 5½-day Gaspé cruise, and $120 for the 7-day Magdalens voyage, with early and late season fares at $80 and $96. This would rise in the 1950s to $112 for 5½ days and $140 for seven days, with off-season fares of $88 and $110. And as before, inter-port service was provided for both first and second-class passengers.

**Revised Sailing Schedules from Montreal**

Clarke departures for both the North Shore and the Gaspé coast still left Montreal every week, April through November, but only two ships were required where four had been needed previously. In the summertime, from June through August, they were joined by Canada Steamship Lines’ Saguenay steamers, which also sailed from Victoria Pier. CSL offered a daily departure with the Quebec, St Lawrence and Tadoussac leaving Montreal every evening at 6:45 pm. And just as before the war, the Clarke ships followed at 7:30.

On a typical summer Tuesday evening, those of the North Shore’s passengers who were on deck could observe the much larger Saguenay steamer leaving her berth ahead of them. Casting off from her berth at Victoria Pier at quarter to seven, the broad-beamed CSL ship would pass by the North Shore and catch the downstream current as she cleared Victoria Pier. Forty-five minutes later, the North Shore herself would depart, following the Saguenay steamer downstream through the night until both ships arrived at Quebec in the early morning.

On those Tuesdays when the North Shore and the North Gaspé left together, three ships sailed from Victoria Pier, with the Clarke ships following the Saguenay steamer downstream at 7:30. On other weeks, it would be the Monday night Magdalen Islands sailing of the North Gaspé and the Tuesday North Shore sailing of the North Shore, each ship in turn following the
Canada Steamship Lines night boat down to Quebec.

The North Shore and North Gaspé sailed later than Canada Steamship Lines and no dinner was served on Montreal embarkation nights. On the Saguenay ships, which also served as night boats for Quebec, it was. Clarke passengers had to have an early dinner ashore before embarking or bring food with them to last until breakfast. But this was the same practice had been followed before the war with the North Star and New Northland.

When the Clarke ships arrived at the company berth in the Louise Basin in Quebec, between 6 and 6:30 am, the Canada Steamship Lines ship was already tied up to the CSL stage in the Lower Town, having arrived at 5:30. The Saguenay steamer then sailed again at 7:30, leaving the Clarke ships in port for passengers to tour while she loaded more cargo and boarded more passengers before sailing at noon.

The "B" Type Coasters

On the cargo side, the three "B" Type coasters joined the fleet as the 1,387-ton North Coaster and North Pioneer, to serve the North Shore, and the 1,334-ton Island Connector, intended for a new route between Montreal and St John's via the Magdalen Islands and Charlottetown. These ships were intended to carry a lot of cargo but very few passengers, as the line's North Shore passengers would now be carried on the weekly departures of the North Shore.

The "B" Types had been launched by North Van Ship Repairs Ltd of North Vancouver, but not yet completed, a job that was effected by the Pacific Dry Dock Co Ltd, as the yard became known in January 1946. Their dimensions of 224 feet overall by 37 feet were greater than the company's passenger ships and they could carry 1,650 tons of cargo in two holds. Two sideports were also fitted on each side of the ship. Clarke modified the original design to take twelve passengers, along with their crew of 34, and the crew messes were reduced from the originally-planned four for Far East service to just two, one for officers, where passengers also dined, and one for unlicensed personnel.

The new ships were powered by triple-expansion steam reciprocating engines built by Canadian Allis-Chalmers Ltd in Montreal. These gave a service speed of 10 knots with a fuel consumption of 11 tons per day. All had been launched with "Ottawa" standard names - the North Pioneer as Ottawa Panda on October 29, the Island Connector as Ottawa Parapet on November 28 and the North Coaster as Ottawa Patrol on December 28, 1945.

Intended to supply Admiral Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command in the war against Japan, these three and twelve other British Columbia-built sister ships had not been completed in time for the war and ended up in the
peacetime merchant marine. Seven were also built in the Great Britain for the British Ministry of War Transport.

Only five of the fifteen Canadian-built "B" Types were sold to Canadian owners, three to Clarke and one each to Union Steamships of British Columbia and Blue Peter Steamships Ltd of St John's, all for cash. The going price for a "B" Type was between $300,000 and $400,000, but Ottawa gave better terms to foreign buyers, who could pay for them over seven and a half years at low rates of interest. Clarke, while it was able to purchase the three for $300,000 each, had to arrange its own financing. The largest single sale was to the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company of Shanghai, who took seven of them. Elder Dempster Lines, who had been managing the New Northland out of Freetown, acquired three of the British-built "B" Types, to which it added two former Canada Steamship Lines canallers for its West Africa coast service.

When the "B" Types joined the fleet, the old system of separate shipowning companies was revived. The sales having been announced in March, all three were registered in Montreal in May 1946, with the Inter Island Steamship Co Ltd owning the Island Connector, the Caribbean Steamship Co Ltd the North Coaster and the North Pioneer Steamship Co Ltd the North Pioneer. Although they started out this way, the owners of record for the "B" Types would change occasionally over the years. To begin with, the Caribbean Steamship Co would change its name to the North Coast Steamship Co Ltd in September 1949.

Because of charter work, the "B" Types did not all take Clarke colours at first, the North Pioneer appearing with a black hull and a buff funnel with black top and the North Coaster with a grey hull. However, all three soon adopted the usual black hull and white upperworks, but they took on the buff funnel and four blue bands that since 1935 been used for either passenger ships or motorships.

A company specification for the "B" Types stated that "these vessels are very fast working and in First Class condition and equipped with the latest aids to navigation such as direction finder, radio telephone and radar," giving us an idea of how they were viewed compared to the older Gaspesia or Sable I, at least for cargo. That Clarke looked favourably on its new acquisitions is not surprising considering their capacity for 75,000 cubic feet of cargo, half again more than the Gaspesia, and six cargo derricks, which could variously be worked as six three-ton, three five-ton or two ten-ton units.

The North Pioneer was completed in February 1946 and the North Coaster in April. These two were intended for service to the North Shore, while the Island Connector, also completed in April, would enter the new service to Prince Edward Island, the Magdalen Islands and Newfoundland.
The North Pioneer worked her way east over the winter of 1946 and she and the Island Connector were the first to enter service for Clarke. At first, the North Pioneer ran in fortnightly service to the North Shore, sailing on alternate Wednesdays opposite the North Voyageur, while the Island Connector began her service to Newfoundland.

Passengers in the New Coasters

Passengers in the "B" Types were accommodated in the forward accommodation block, with two cabins facing the forward hatch and four the port side, with the lounge and public facilities on the starboard side. The dining saloon was aft on the port side. Four navigating officers were accommodated in a unique octagonal-shaped house on the Bridge Deck, a deck up from the passengers and just below the navigating bridge. While built for cargo, the twelve passengers could enjoy an interesting alternative to the North Shore's weekly express service or the North Voyageur's more distant voyage to Blanc-Sablon. Each season, the two new ships would complete between sixteen and twenty-three round voyages each.

The North Pioneer, and later the North Coaster, offered a 12-day voyage, from Montreal on specified dates for Quebec, Baie Comeau, North Shore ports to Clarke City and Sept-Iles, and thence ports to Havre-St-Pierre. In this service, they worked opposite the North Voyageur's 12-day sailings to Quebec and then direct to Lower North Shore ports from Havre-St-Pierre to Blanc-Sablon. Fares for the 12-day voyages were the same on all ships, $160 from mid-June to mid-September and $128 in the off season.

The Large Goélette "Orléans"

While the three new coasters were finding their way east, Clarke chartered one particular ship that would trade for them for many years. One of the earliest long-term chartered ships, the 337-ton goélette Orléans was owned by Ernest Coulombe and built at St-Laurent, Ile d'Orléans, in 1946. She had dimensions of 144 feet overall by 30 feet and the significant carrying capacity of 550 tons deadweight.

This was the ship that Desmond Clarke had told Hector Coulombe to go and build after buying his Charlenest in 1943. The largest of her type ever built in Quebec, she entered service in 1946, the same year as the North Shore. She would work for Clarke for fifteen years, performing between sixteen and twenty-one voyages a year in service to Sept-Iles, backing up the other ships.

Not a typical goélette, her engine and accommodation were amidships rather than in the usual position aft. The Orléans was based on Coulombe's original design for the Charlenest, but was an improved version with a deeper
Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s Clarke employed the *Orléans* every season from April through November in the Montreal-Sept-Iles cargo service, calling also at Quebec and other North Shore ports. She usually loaded pulpwood at South Shore ports on her way back towards Montreal.

**Post-War Shipping to Newfoundland**

On March 20, 1946, meanwhile, long before any announcement had been made about the introduction of Clarke's *Island Connector*, W J Furlong, Montreal-based general foreign freight agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway, circulated a summary of Newfoundland shipping operators to freight agents in Canada, Europe and in the Pacific. In it, he commented on the various lines as follows:

1. Newfoundland Canada Steamships Ltd. Furness Withy & Co Ltd, Montreal, act as agents for this company, and they expect to operated the s.s. *Lucius W Robinson* between Montreal and St John's, Newfoundland. This ship is scheduled to load Montreal approximately every 18 days...

2. Newfoundland Railway Steamships. The Montreal Shipping Co Ltd, Montreal, act as agents for this particular company, and expect to have a steamer from Montreal every three weeks to and from St John's, Newfoundland. This vessel will in all probability be the s.s. *Dalwarnic*. In addition, the Newfoundland Railway operate a regular steamship service daily between North Sydney, NS, and Port aux Basques...

3. Shaw Steamship Co Ltd, Montreal, will have two vessels operating between lake ports, Montreal and St John's, Newfoundland. The first vessel is scheduled to load at Montreal only about April 20th, and will be either the *Ashleaf* or *Bayleaf*. The second ship will probably load at Hamilton, Toronto and/or Buffalo or Port Colborne, finishing off at Montreal May 1st. Thereafter, they will operate these ships on a fortnightly service.

4. Clarke Steamship Company Limited. The Clarke Steamship Co Ltd, Montreal, will have a fortnightly service between Montreal and Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

5. Job Brothers, St John's, Newfoundland. Shipping Limited, Montreal, act as agents for the two vessels operated by these people, i.e. s.s. *Seneff* and s.s. *Silver City*. Both of these ships are equipped for the carriage of refrigerated traffic between St John's and Montreal. The service, however, is not on any regular established basis but will
probably be operated if, as and when required. These are the two ships that bring in the frozen blueberries for New England states and frozen fish for the Middle West.

6. Furness Red Cross Line. The Furness Red Cross Line operate a service on a three weeks basis with the s.s. \textit{Fort Townshend} and s.s. \textit{Fort Amherst}. These ships depart from New York, proceed to Halifax, thence St John's and Corner Brook, Newfoundland, back to New York and then down to Bermuda and return to New York from Bermuda. ...

7. Johnston Warren Line. Furness Withy & Co Ltd, Montreal, act as agents. Prior to the war, this line operated a service from Liverpool to St John's, thence to Halifax and Boston, returning from Boston via Halifax and St John's to Liverpool, with the steamers \textit{Newfoundland} and \textit{Nova Scotia}, both of which ships were lost during the war. These people presently have building at Newcastle on Tyne two new passenger and cargo ships to be called \textit{Newfoundland} and \textit{Nova Scotia}, which are expected to be completed in the autumn of 1946 and spring of 1947.

Several canallers continued trading to Newfoundland, not only the \textit{Lucius W Robinson} and those used by Clarke to Corner Brook, but now also the 1,521-ton \textit{Ashleaf} and 1,544-ton \textit{Bayleaf}, conventional lakes-style vessels dating to 1903. These two had been rebuilt in 1942 when their after cabins had been plated in and their forward bridges reinforced for heavier seas, and were chartered from Leaf Lines, a division of Marine Industries of Sorel, which also operated the Branch Lines tanker fleet.

Newfoundland Railway Steamships had also chartered the \textit{Cedarton} in September 1945 to carry a full cargo of barreled herring from Curling to Montreal for shipment to Europe by the United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Administration. The 2,394-ton Newfoundland Railway charter \textit{Dalwarnic}, meanwhile, had been completed in 1921 as the Canadian Government Merchant Marine's \textit{Canadian Harvester} and had worked for Canadian National during the war. The little 313-ton \textit{Silver City}, meanwhile was a Scottish-built coaster dating to 1901.

A late season sailing was also offered by Federal Commerce & Navigation Co Ltd, a Toronto firm that had been established by the Pathy family in 1944 to operate war-built merchant ships. Its 2,878-ton \textit{Beresford Park}, built at Pictou in 1944, departed Shed 9 in Montreal on December 1 with a cargo of flour, general cargo and hay for Corner Brook. She had been operated by Montreal Shipping but would soon become the \textit{Federal Ambassador}, operating with three sister ships in the newly-formed Canada Mexico Line. She went to Danish owners in 1948, however, as part of the $13 billion Marshall Plan program to rebuild post-war Europe.

The new 7,438-ton \textit{Nova Scotia} (1947) and \textit{Newfoundland} (1948)
would replace Furness Withy's original 6,795-ton sister ships of the same name that had been introduced in 1925-26, around the same time as the Northland. The new ships were designed to carry 155 passengers as well as a large cargo between Boston, Halifax, St John's and Liverpool and traded on the coast as well as Transatlantic. They would last on this route, renamed Furness Warren Line in 1947, until 1962.

The Inter Island Steamship Co Ltd

Not long after this memo was circulated, Clarke announced that the Island Connector, the third of its new "B" Type coasters, would open a new service between Montreal and Quebec, the Magdalen Islands, Charlottetown and St John's. Her owning company, the Inter Island Steamship Co, signified the various islands she would connect. In a way, this was a renewal of the "Maritimes & Newfoundland" service that Clarke had offered with chartered canallers pre-war, except that the new line proceeded to St John's instead of Pictou or Corner Brook.

The route was similar to the "Charlottetown & St John's" service the New Northland had operated in 1934 and 1935, but apart from wartime calls by the New Northland and North Gaspé, Clarke ships had not traded to St John's since. The Charlottetown call followed the precedent set by many Montreal-St John's lines - Black Diamond, Canada Steamship Lines, Furness Red Cross and Newfoundland Canada Steamships had all called there. Prince Edward Island, the "Garden of the Gulf," offered regular cargoes of livestock and produce, mainly potatoes, butter and cheese, bound for the rock-bound island of Newfoundland. The Island Connector would offer a sailing on this new route every three weeks under Capt Aurèle Fraser, the first master of the North Gaspé when she had opened service to the Magdalens eight years earlier.

The inclusion of the Magdalen Islands meant that Clarke now had three ships serving those islands, with the North Gaspé running fortnightly from Montreal, the Island Connector every three weeks while continuing to Prince Edward Island and St John's, and the Magdalen running from Pictou and Prince Edward Island. For a few years, the Magdalen Islands, from whence had come the first labourers for Clarke City, would receive more service from Clarke than they had received from any shipping line previously. Neither the regular calls of the New Northland in 1932 nor the fortnightly service the North Gaspé had introduced in 1938 had given islanders this level of service.

At Charlottetown, several ships, including Newfoundland Railway Steamships' little 265-ton auxiliary schooner Henry W Stone, had been used in service to St John's since a Canadian subsidy had been introduced in 1942. The latest, the 968-ton John Cabot, was a Norwegian ship that Montreal Shipping operated for Newfoundland Railway Steamships in 1945. To improve
the service, the Department of Trade & Commerce awarded a four-year contract to the Inter Island Steamship Co, with an annual subsidy of $54,000. For this, the Island Connector would provide twelve sailings a year, carrying produce and livestock from Charlottetown to St John's. As the new contract was awarded without competition, this led to complaints from Newfoundland Canada Steamships and the Shaw Steamship Co. W A Shaw in particular had been trying to negotiate a subsidy for his sixty-five year old Meigle, which held the original contract in 1942, but he would now use her to compete against the Island Connector without subsidy.

Corey Slumkoski outlined the circumstances in an article entitled "Let Them Eat Beef: The Prince Edward Island-Newfoundland Beef-Cattle Trade 1942-46," in the Spring 2006 issue of "Acadiensis" magazine:

F E Bawden, Ottawa's director of trade routes and steamship subsidies, justified this decision to the minister of Trade and Commerce by outlining the substandard service that the Newfoundland Railway's John Cabot had given to PEI the previous year.

The Newfoundland Railway's boat, Bawden wrote, "was frequently late, which caused considerable distress to Prince Edward Island shippers who had their cattle and produce down on the wharf waiting in some cases several days before the ship arrived to take them."
Dissatisfaction persisted even after Island products were loaded on the boat. First, the John Cabot was not originally designed to carry livestock and was therefore unable to carry as many cattle as Island exporters wished. Second, the boat was notoriously slow, with a maximum speed of a mere eight knots.

Clarke, meanwhile, promised a new 1,000 ton-ship specifically designed to transport livestock, with a top speed of 11 knots, which he would deliver for the same price as was paid Newfoundland Railway for the unsatisfactory John Cabot. As Bawden informed MacKinnon in recommending Clarke, "I know of no one else who would be capable of handling this business ... and this offer [of a $54,000 subsidy] would provide a better service than has at any time been previously performed on this route." Based on this strong endorsement, MacKinnon quickly approved a four-year contract for Clarke to provide for the Charlottetown-St John's route without issuing a tender for alternative bids.

Clarke had hoped to start service in early May, but the Island Connector was delayed coming out of the shipyard. To stand in for her, it chartered ships for the first two sailings, going back to Keystone Transports for the 1,739-ton Surewater, which left Charlottetown on April 29, and the 1,723-ton Keybar, which sailed on May 16. Under Capt Fraser, the Island Connector finally left Montreal on her first departure for St John's via the islands on June 5, with twelve passengers and a general cargo. Soon,
however, she suffered propeller damage and after leaving Charlottetown on July 12, did not sail again until September 14. In the meantime, the *North Coaster* filled in for her, with two sailings over the intervening weeks.

Near the end of the season, W A Shaw argued, quite unfairly, that his *Meigle* had made more sailings than the *Island Connector*, as in addition to the latter's eight sailings, Clarke had provided ships for four substitute voyages to ensure the contract requirement for twelve sailings. The Clarke ship also sailed twice as far as the ancient *Meigle*, covering the 678 nautical miles to Montreal as well as 531 miles between Charlottetown and St John's on each voyage. The *Meigle* would not be around for much longer, however. Although she traded briefly between Montreal and St John's later in 1946, after eleven years with Shaw she was wrecked on the Newfoundland coast on July 19, 1947, while carrying a cargo of livestock and general cargo from Halifax and Charlottetown to St John's. The competitive situation did not bode well for Clarke being able to renew the contract when it expired in four years, but it did allow the company to enter the St John's trade again after an absence of more than a decade.

Although the *Island Connector* carried passengers, the service was quite different to what had been offered pre-war. Many of the earlier ships that had operated between Montreal, Charlottetown and St John's, including the *New Northland*, had carried significant numbers, but the new ship carried only twelve. Although the Furness Red Cross Line ships still carried passengers out of Halifax, airline service had now taken a good share of the passenger trade.

Such passenger trade as remained was usually sold as a round-trip cruise, and Clarke's "Vagabond Cruises" brochure included the Inter Island Steamship Co's *Island Connector*, offering ten or eleven 19-day cruises each season from April through November at a fare of $200. The voyage took 19 days because she called at St Lawrence, Newfoundland, on her way back from St John's to load fluorspar for delivery to Alcan at Port Alfred. In all, each round voyage now called at half a dozen ports and had the added bonus of a cruise up the Saguenay River to Port Alfred.

**Clarke Charters to Newfoundland Canada Steamships**

Just as Clarke had decided not to take back the *New Northland* after the war, so, after inspecting the *Belle Isle*, Newfoundland Canada Steamships decided not to take her back either. Having finished the war as an accommodation and stores ship for the Americans in Greenland, she had taken quite a beating and been laid up in the James River. In May 1946, therefore, the US Army Transport Service sent her to Newport News to be refitted as a supply ship to run between Brooklyn and US bases in Newfoundland. In 1948, like many other North American coastal ships, she would find her way to China.
While it had abandoned the passenger business, Newfoundland Canada was still very active in the cargo trades. In 1946, for example, it had the chartered *Lucius W Robinson* on the Montreal-St John's route, and the *Savoy* running between Halifax and St John's. That summer, however, Hall Corporation accepted an offer for the *Lucius W Robinson* from the Wah Shang Steamship Co, the same firm that purchased the *Georgian* and *Saguenay*. Like them, she steamed out to Shanghai under her own power, departing Montreal on June 29, 1946, as the *Hai Lin*, still under command of Capt John Ivany. Loaded with general cargo, her delivery voyage took her 122 days. Newfoundland Canada chartered Canada Steamship Lines' 1,906-ton canaller *Elgin*, a 1923 product of the Swan Hunter yard at Wallsend, to replace the *Robinson* in its Montreal-St John's service. Like the *Robinson*, the *Elgin* was a bulk carrier, but had two samson posts for the handling of cargo.

Despite Newfoundland Canada's protestations at the *Island Connector*’s participation in the Charlottetown-St John's trade, it arranged to charter the six-month old Clarke ship for the winter season of 1946-47. Newfoundland Canada made the announcement at Halifax on November 13, 1946: -

The m.v. *Savoy*, which vessel has maintained regular direct sailings between Halifax and St John's, Newfoundland, will complete the summer schedule on her sailing from here about November 21, after which the same regular direct service will be maintained by the s.s. *Island Connector*.

We are very pleased to be able to announce the securing of the s.s. *Island Connector* to maintain our Halifax-St John's service during the winter. This is a new oil-burning ship, modern in every respect, with sufficient speed to enable her to maintain regular sailings from this port every 9 to 10 days; exceptionally well suited for the handling and carriage of general merchandise. A limited amount of passenger space is available on this carrier.

The receiving period dates for cargo at Halifax for the first trip of this steamer have been listed for November 28-30, and as stated, it is fully anticipated she will make a sailing every 10 days during the period December to April inclusive.

The *Island Connector* charter even put Newfoundland Canada Steamships back into the passenger business for that winter, although the demand for winter passages between Halifax and St John's must have been quite meagre. And Furness Withy was now advertising the *Island Connector* as Newfoundland Canada's agent in Montreal.

**New Ships for Newfoundland Canada**
Neither the Island Connector nor the Elgin would work for Newfoundland Canada Steamships for long, however. In 1947, the Kent Line Ltd of Saint John converted five corvettes into cargo motorships at Thompson Brothers Machinery Ltd in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, installing some war surplus General Motors diesels they had acquired. Kent Line and Thompson Brothers both were part of New Brunswick's Irving Group.

On completion, Newfoundland Canada Steamships immediately chartered two of these ships for its services from Halifax and Montreal. In fact, the 1,104-ton Galloway Kent, an ex-"Flower" class corvette, and the 1,529-ton Wellington Kent, ex-"Castle" class, would prove so useful that Newfoundland Canada would eventually buy them. When they finally did, in 1951, through a subsidiary called Chebucto Steamships Ltd, the larger Wellington Kent renamed Belle Isle II and the Galloway Kent the Bedford II. For the first four or five years, however, they would remain on charter under their Kent Line names.

Newfoundland Railway Steamships to Blue Peter Steamships

Another competitor in the St John's trade, Blue Peter Steamships, took over Newfoundland Railway Steamships' Montreal-St John's service at the end of 1946. The new line took its name from the Newfoundland fish factory ship Blue Peter, and was the refrigerated shipping arm of the St John's fishing firm of Job Brothers & Co, which used the "blue peter" as its houseflag. This blue flag with a white rectangle is the international signal flag for the letter P, and is used to indicate a vessel that is ready to sail. Although the ownership changed, Montreal Shipping remained as agents in Montreal.

Blue Peter was incorporated on May 12, 1946, with a capital of $400,000, soon increased to $600,000, and acquired the "B" Type coaster Blue Peter II, a sister ship of Clarke's Island Connector, to serve the Montreal-St John's route, with winter service from Halifax. A small reefer ship was also planned to replace the Job Brothers steamers Seneff and Silver City, which had been carrying the refrigerated traffic and would be sold in 1946-47. Having Montreal Shipping as agent came in handy in November 1946 when Blue Peter was able to engage that company's 7,141-ton Mont Sorrel, on one of her Montship Lines voyages to the Mediterranean, to take some cargo into St John's between voyages of the Blue Peter II.

The Blue Peter II, which turned at Montreal, remained the mainstay of the line, while smaller refrigerated vessels engaged in the carriage of frozen fish and blueberries from Newfoundland ports to Montreal, Toronto, Buffalo and Cleveland, as well as to New England, a trade in which Clarke did not participate. Blue Peter soon also added a twice-monthly contracted call at St Pierre in its service between Montreal and St John's, in which it also carried a
few passengers. But the number of berths available on the Blue Peter II was far fewer than what Newfoundland Canada’s Belle Isle had offered pre-war.

With sister ships Island Connector and Blue Peter II running to St John’s for different owners, not to mention the ships of other operators, Clarke was now very much engaged in the competitive trade to St John’s. Further developments would soon see more Clarke ships running to Newfoundland.

An Unusual Gulf Pulp & Paper Co Loader

While the Clarkes were no longer directly involved in the Gulf Pulp & Paper Co, it is worth having a look at what was happening at Clarke City, which was still shipping woodpulp to Europe forty years after it had been built. In fact, there was beginning to be talk that Clarke City might become a year-round port. Sidney Dean tells about being there in his cruiser Margot in September 1946 in "All the Way by Water": -

Clarke City, where most of our time was spent, is the pioneer paper port of the all and represents a gamble of millions and a siege of years of hard work... Ice and water came from 9 miles up from the "City" proper, in and on the tender of a locomotive, hauling gray blocks of pulpwood like exaggerated bunches of blotting paper on a standard-gauge line from plane to dock. Bread and pies could be obtained from the company lodging house at this paper port.

There was even fishing! A period of apparently endless waiting was enlivened by a school of éperlans, big fat smelt, at least 6 or 8 inches long, which appeared overnight in the waters beside Margot. Some thirty members of pulper and freighter crews appeared almost as quickly, to fish all around her and off her decks. The locomotive engineer was among those present, having brought down his rod on the tender.

For its woodpulp, Gulf Pulp & Paper usually chartered ships from the market, but that December it received a rather unusual loader, when the small 499-ton Dutch-flag Marleen loaded a cargo of woodpulp for Philadelphia. After sailing, her cargo shifted in rough weather and she was reported adrift on December 13, twelve miles off Bonaventure Island. Her crew was evacuated and she was towed in to Gaspé by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police patrol boat Irvine. From there the salvage tug Foundation Franklin eventually delivered her to Halifax, which she reached in January.

The Marleen was a steam-powered "C" Type coaster, recently completed by Morton Engineering in Quebec as the Ottawa Maycliff. She was one of two acquired by her new owner, Paul Moes, the other being the Marinier, ex-Ottawa Maybank, which had also loaded at Clarke City. Small
ships for the Atlantic, they had sought cargoes for their eventual delivery to Europe, but the *Marinier*, having hit the same heavy weather as the *Marleen*, had put into Port Hawkesbury.

The "C" Type coasters were a British Ministry of War Transport design, built at the same time as the "B" Types, but quite a bit smaller. Twenty "C" Types were completed in Eastern Canada in 1946, all too late for the war. Some were steam-powered but most were motorships, with dimensions of 152 feet overall by 27 feet and a deadweight of about 500 tons. Their cargo capacity of 35,000 cubic feet was less than half that of the larger "B" Types. While Clarke had bought three of the "B" Types, it would only occasionally charter "C" Types, when they suited requirements.

**A Late Christmas Voyage in 1946-47**

Since 1928-29, Clarke had maintained its North Shore winter service from Pointe-au-Pic, most of the time using the trusty *Sable I*, which performed her last season in 1945-46. Briefly renamed *North Trader*, she was sold within less than a year to Northlantic Sealers Ltd of St John's, who took her in 1947. Northlantic, a joint venture between Job Brothers and the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Company, an American firm that also held a patent on a type of fish filleting machine, revived her original name, *Sable I*, and returned her to sealing. A sister company, Northlantic Trawling Co Ltd, was established in 1947 to operate trawlers and process sea products at St John's and Port aux Basques.

Meanwhile, the *North Voyageur*, which had been used in the winter service in the early years, was placed back on the run from Pointe-au-Pic. The winter of 1946-47 proved to be particularly harsh, however. Not heavily powered for navigation in ice, the *North Voyageur* had her difficulties, but she would serve until a suitable replacement could be found. After becoming stuck in an ice jam off Quebec on December 30, 1946, she finally left Pointe-au-Pic under Capt Sylvio Bélanger on January 7, 1947, two weeks late for Christmas. With the amount of ice there now was along the North Shore, help was needed and was enlisted from Ottawa.

Not five months after Ron March's reports from the maiden voyage of the *North Shore*, another series of stories began to appear in "The Gazette," this time concerning this first winter voyage in some time by the *North Voyageur*. In a January 7 front-page story "The Gazette" reported that help had arrived under the heading "Icebreaker Grinds Clear Passage For Ship Relieving North Shore."

Hard astern of the Government icebreaker *Ernest Lapointe*, Clarke Steamship Company's little coaster *North Voyageur* is butting eastward through the ice-cluttered St Lawrence River off Baie Comeau with food and supplies for the United States Army Air Force base at Mingan and
for the isolated lumbermen and fisherfolk who live along the shores of the St Lawrence Gulf.

Through a change in the wind, which usually blows from the north, the Gulf from Anticosti Island to sheltered Murray Bay opposite Rivière-du-Loup is jammed with masses of ice which threaten to cut off the tiny north shore pulp ports from their main link with civilization - the North Voyageur...

The Ernest Lapointe will batter a channel through the ice for the North Voyageur so that the coasting steamer can unload supplies off-shore from her ports of call. She is bound for Mingan, Seven Islands, Havre-St-Pierre and Ellis Bay, Anticosti. North Voyageur is carrying supplies enough to last Ellis Bay until April.

Thursday night the Ernest Lapointe steamed out of Quebec harbor to rendez-vous with the North Voyageur off Baie Comeau, which produces newsprint for Col Robert McCormick's Chicago Tribune. From Quebec to that port, the North Voyageur was escorted by the N B McLean, the Government's largest icebreaker.

On the bridge of the Ernest Lapointe with Capt Robert Marchand, is Col Stanley Clarke, Clarke Steamship's operating manager. Col Clarke will supervise deliveries of North Voyageur's cargo as she beats in toward the frozen-in ports.

This winter, the area to which the coasting steamer is carrying food and equipment will produce nearly 1,000,000 cords of wood. The regions 10,000 inhabitants, few of them have seen a train or a talking picture, are dependent on the North Voyageur for much of their food, mail and mill supplies. For the lonely little hospital at Havre-St-Pierre, the coasting steamer has medicine and new instruments. She has 90 tons of goods for Ellis Bay. Also aboard are 1,400 bags of mail, due before Christmas.

Capt Sylvio Bélanger of the North Voyageur will be satisfied if he can get his ship to within four miles of his ports of call. Through abnormal weather conditions, ice has swept north across the Gulf, jammed along the shores and in some spots, stretches away from the little wharves for five or ten miles.

When the Ernest Lapointe has cleared a channel through the ice-fields toward a port as far as she is able, dog-teams and horse-drawn sleighs will mush out to the North Voyageur to unload her cargo...

For the Clarke Steamship Company of Montreal, this week has been packed with action. Yesterday, the company's North Pioneer reached Tampico harbor, Mexico, 24 hours late after battling mountainous seas
in the Gulf of Mexico. The ship made the voyage safely.

Clarke Steamship has been servicing north shore ports [by winter] for the last 15 years. Only twice previously have the services of icebreakers been required.

The fifteen years of service referred to by "The Gazette" were actually consecutive years, as Clarke's first winter service had been operated eighteen years earlier, in 1928-29. The contract had gone for one season in 1930-31 to the still-independent Bras d'Or Bay Navigation Co's *Sable I*, but Clarke had chartered the *Sable I* for its own account in 1931-32.

On January 10, 1947, the *North Voyageur* reached Franquelin, from where "The Gazette" filed its report, "Steamship Arrives with Bags of Yule Mail and Other Supplies": -

Children of this small north shore settlement along the St Lawrence some 230 miles below Quebec City eyed with anticipation bags of Christmas mail today as the steamship *North Voyageur* docked with the first boat load of supplies received here in over a month.

The 1,200-ton Clarke line freighter, which later continued on further down the Gulf, to Godbout, Trinity Bay and Shelter Bay, brought Franquelin food, hardware, clothing, cigarettes, 43 cases of liquor intended for Yuletide consumption and 37 tons of oats for horses hauling wood in the area. The supplies were met by three trucks of the Quebec North Shore Paper Company which carried them to the local general store for distribution.

Continuing her arduous task of cutting a channel through massive ice fields so the *Voyageur* can get supplies to 16 villages along this northern shore, the icebreaker *Ernest Lapointe* is off Clarke City some 75 miles east of here, and is expected to get alongside the wharf Saturday or Sunday.

At Clarke City today, villagers lined the dock as the *Lapointe* struggled against the massive ice blocks to clear a path into the harbor for the *North Voyageur*.

The Clarke ship next made for Sept-Iles and Havre-St-Pierre, with "The Gazette" filing a detailed report from Sept-Iles on January 13, headed "Seven Islands Pulpwood Station Receives Yule Supplies At Last": -

The freighter *North Voyageur* brought welcome relief to the residents of this little North Shore pulpwood loading station today when she landed a cargo of food and supplies to replenish stocks that had become dangerously low.
Preceded by the government icebreaker *Ernest Lapointe*, which cut a path through the foot-thick ice of Seven Islands Bay, the 1,200-ton Clarke Steamship Company freighter steamed here from Clarke City, four miles across the bay and about 250 miles east of Quebec.

These were the most remote points visited so far on the 500-mile voyage down the coast to isolated settlements cut off from ship-borne supplies since the first week of December. Storms and ice conditions delayed a scheduled pre-Christmas voyage.

Conditions here were closer to being serious than at any of the several other ports visited so far. Milk, butter and eggs were almost unobtainable and canned foods, becoming short, had to be supplemented by wild game, frozen meat and fish. Supplies of laundry and toilet soap ran out before Christmas and the French-Canadian residents who derive a living from the pulp and paper industry and from salmon and halibut fishing, fell back on home-made products.

Christmas was a glum time for the several hundred people of this town. Turkeys were unobtainable, chickens were scarce, there were no plum puddings, not liquor, candy nor cigars. Fresh fruit and vegetables have not been on the market since the fall. The *Voyageur*’s arrival was welcomed not only for the food she brought. There were many mail bags with Christmas presents and cards and there were 45 cases of liquor and quantities of cigarettes and cigars.

Mail is an important factor in these North Shore ports. Letters, magazines and papers are dropped from the air at regular intervals at Franquelin, Godbout, Trinity Bay, Pentecote, Shelter Bay, Clarke City and Seven Islands, but parcels come in by boat. Ship deliveries are scheduled every two weeks but when conditions are severe as they have been this winter, long periods sometimes pass without shipments...

Since leaving Godbout, 80 miles west of here, Saturday, the *Voyageur* has stopped at Trinity Bay, Pentecote, Shelter Bay, Clarke City and Seven Islands, unloading supplies at every port, sometimes under extremely difficult conditions. A heavy snow storm which limited visibility caused an eight-hour delay in arrival at Clarke City and forced the freighter to anchor two miles off shore near Shelter Bay.

Due to lack of harbour facilities at Pentecote, freight was removed by a small barge which pulled up alongside, one mile off shore. Food, liquor, mail and a snowmobile were unloaded there in addition to general supplies.

Clarke City's 500 residents lacked some of the little luxuries which help to brighten Christmas but turkeys, chickens, meat, canned goods
and plum puddings were available. Approximately 100 bags of mail were put ashore, many of them containing gifts for the children. Clarke City is nine miles from the loading wharf and a small freight train operated by the Gulf Pulp and Paper Company hauled the supplies and provisions into town after the freighter pulled up beside the wharf yesterday. Cargo unloaded ranged from chicken to chop suey in the food line and from paint to shoes in general supplies. Several cartons of medicines for the town's hospital were also unloaded.

The Americans also followed this story in the "Chicago Tribune" and through its news service, not only because the newspaper group had installations on the North Shore but also because the Americans had an air base at Mingan. In Canada, the reports were also circulated by the Canadian Press. This was not the end of the story, however, as on January 20, "The Gazette's" coverage continued with another story from Sept-Iles, headed "Vessels Unable To Land Supplies On Anticosti Isle": -

The supply ship *North Voyageur* and the Dominion government icebreaker *Ernest Lapointe* prepared to set sail for their home port of Quebec today, following an unsuccessful attempt yesterday to break through the Gulf of St Lawrence ice and land food and supplies at the tiny village of Port Menier on Anticosti Island, last stop for the two ships on their 500-mile mercy mission.

The 1,200-ton *North Voyageur*, following closely behind the *Lapointe*, plowed to within five miles of Port Menier, but impassable fields of ice several inches thick forced both ships to turn back.

After a conference, the captains of both ships decided it would be too dangerous to make another attempt to break through to the village which has been without delivery of essential supplies since early December.

It was believed that an airplane operating from the Seven Islands airport would have to be used to drop supplies to the village inhabitants.

The *Ernest Lapointe* finally returned to Quebec on January 28, having had to lay over at Pointe-au-Pic for three days to await favourable winds and ice conditions. She had made it as far as Kegashka, 850 miles downstream from Quebec, with cargo trans-shipped from the *North Voyageur*. Meanwhile, the *North Voyageur*'s 1,662-mile winter round voyage had taken 21 days, covering about eighty miles a day. Another icebreaker, the CGS *Saurel* had been used to bring supplies in to Natashquan from Prince Edward Island.

The "North Pioneer" Braves the Gulf of Mexico
The January 7 report of the *North Pioneer* surviving mountainous seas in the Gulf of Mexico was carried in yet another story by "The Gazette" on the same day as the *Ernest Lapointe* was despatched to assist the *North Voyageur*. That story, headed "North Pioneer Safe in Tampico Harbor," reported as follows: -

Shipshape and sound despite a six-day battle with a near-hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, Clarke Steamship Company's *North Pioneer* put into Tampico harbor yesterday for fuel before proceeding to Brownsville, Texas.

*North Pioneer* plies between Texas and North Tampico, Mexico. Desmond Clarke, president of the shipping line, said here last night that the *North Pioneer*'s captain, J A Dionne of Quebec, had informed him that the ship and her company were "safe and sound."

Earlier, the United States Coast Guard at New York had reported that the little vessel was overdue on a voyage from Puerto Mexico, and that an air search was contemplated.

The ship was delayed about 24 hours by mountainous seas that struck her when about five days out of Coatzacoalcos. Capt Dionne decided to heave to and ride out the storm. At times the wind reached hurricane force, Mr Clarke said. *North Pioneer* operates under charter to the Newtex Steamship Company.

The Newtex Steamship Corporation, a New York-based company operated four C-1 cargo liners between New York, Houston and Brownville, and had only resumed postwar trading six months earlier. At that time, it had hired the *North Pioneer* to carry cargoes to and from Mexico, connecting with its weekly main line service at Brownville. At first she ran every ten days but this was soon adjusted to weekly, with the *North Pioneer* arriving at Brownsville every Friday.

**The Canadian Maritime Labour Scene**

As we shall see later, the Seaway Line, which had now purchased the *New Northland*, would suffer from post-war union troubles, something that came about because of the massive wartime increase in the Canadian merchant marine. But Clarke, for the most part, would be able to avoid most of these problems. As a traditional Quebec-based operator and a family company, its crews would remain for the most part loyal. Although at the end of the war Clarke crews had been represented by the Canadian Seamen's Union, they soon voted not to be represented by this Communist-led organization that was causing such strife in Canadian shipping.

The "Windsor Daily Star" paid particularly close attention to the 1946
Great Lakes strike of the Canadian Seamen's Union. In pursuit of an eight-hour day for sailors, instead of three four-hour watches, the strike began on May 24, lasted a month and affected more than a hundred ships of the major Canadian fleets.

Towards the end of this strike, the *North Gaspé* became involved in one of the few instances affecting a Clarke ship. The Windsor newspaper reported this very small part of the bigger story on June 12, 1946, under the heading "Crew Joins Strike": -

The crew of the *North Gaspé*, a motor vessel owned by the Clarke Steamship Company, walked off the ship in Montreal harbor last night a few minutes before the ship was due to sail on a seven-day cruise of the Magdalen Islands with a full passenger list.

Dan Daniels, Canadian Seamen's Union official, said that 20 unlicensed personnel left the ship just as the ship's whistle signalled "get ready to cast off," and joined the strikers' picket line at the union hall. He could not say whether all those that walked off were CSU members.

This seems to have been an attempt by the CSU to intervene, as in January of the previous year the unlicensed personnel of the *Gaspesia, North Gaspé* and *Sable I* had all signed agreements with the Canadian Association of Maritime Transport Workers. The Canadian Government soon moved to end the strike, however, by appointing a controller, and the *North Gaspé* was soon back in operation.

That July, the crews of the Lower St Lawrence Transportation Co ships followed Clarke's main line ships and signed with the Canadian Association of Maritime Transport Workers as well. By April 1947, all Clarke ships were covered by new labour agreements, with each crew or set of crews having its own union local. The officers, meanwhile, were represented by the Canadian Navigators Federation, which later became the Canadian Merchant Service Guild.

There were costs of employing union crews of course. Post-war demands inevitably increased crew sizes and also prevented crew members from handling cargo in port. But by 1949, with Clarke having avoided the worldwide strike of the Canadian Seamen's Union in March, its employees would be rewarded with a new benefits plan that included medical cover, life insurance and a pension plan. The company had maintained a policy of seeking harmony, rather than confrontation, with its seagoing personnel, as well as with its shore staff.

**West India Fruit & Steamship Cruises**

Although the *New Northland* was now operating for others, this did not
stop Clarke from getting back into cruising from Florida, albeit in a slightly different way. In 1946, only four months after the North Shore's maiden voyage, Clarke delivered her to West Palm Beach for a winter's charter with the West India Fruit & Steamship Co. "Clarke News" remembered Jim Hutcheson's post-war role in its May 1975 issue:

Hutcheson returned south, managing the thrice-weekly operation of the Jean Brilliant between Miami and Nassau. His name became so well known in the area that in 46, when Clarke chartered two vessels to the West India Fruit & Steamship Co for both freighter and passenger service the owner agreed to sign the charter agreement "only if I can have Hutcheson."

The vessels concerned were the North Shore and North Coaster. Based on West India Fruit's publicity releases to the travel trade, which described the North Shore's voyages as "yachting cruises," one journal mistakenly and rather amusingly described the ships as "palatial super-yachts." Contemporary literature in the St Lawrence described the same ships as "the Clarke freighters North Shore, North Coaster and North Pioneer."

Capt Alphonse Bégin, who had been in command of the North Gaspé the previous winter, returned to West Palm Beach in the North Shore. After a last North Shore voyage, departing Montreal in November with food, fuel oil, hardware and a pair of aircraft skis for Sept-Iles, she left for Halifax and carried a cargo of 100 tons of turkeys and meats, or about five truckloads, to Nassau on her way to Palm Beach, where she arrived on December 18. Once there, she began a series of 7-day cruises from West Palm Beach to Nassau and Havana that followed the route of the New Northland's first cruises from Palm Beach to Nassau and Havana twenty years earlier. Havana was reopening after the war and while the North Gaspé had been able to offer a basic service the previous year, the newer and larger North Shore would now be used for cruising as well.

The North Shore's first cruise, a Christmas one, left West Palm Beach on December 23, 1946, just five days after the New Northland sailed from Jacksonville on her first cruise for Seaway Line. And on the same day the North Shore left Palm Beach, the North Coaster arrived at Quebec on her last trip of the season before heading south to join her fleetmate. The "Palm Beach Post" covered the North Shore's first West Indies cruise on the day she sailed:

A step higher in the ranking of Florida harbors will be taken Monday by the Port of Palm Beach when the first of a series of 17 cruises to Nassau and Havana starts here.

D E Taylor, president of the West India Fruit & Steamship Co, leased the new 1,205-ton s.s. North Shore for 7-day all-inclusive yachting type cruises and the vessel has been given the usual trip-end cleaning
up since arriving here Thursday after a 3-week voyage from Halifax, Nova Scotia, via Nassau.

The port was placed in a unique position several months ago, when the s.s. Grand Haven, also operated by Mr Taylor's company, started a railroad car ferry service to Havana which since has been swamped with business.

A second passenger service will start Jan 11, when the s.s. North Coaster, to carry freight as well as passengers, starts the first of 13 round trips to Havana.

Completed only this year, the North Shore, which has a capacity of 80 cruise passengers, has the latest equipment in every respect, including safety devices. It is under the command of Capt J A Bégin of the city of Quebec, who was master of the North Gaspé, a smaller vessel which successfully provided a passenger service between here and Havana last season.

Mention of cooking, an important item to cruise passengers who will use the ship as their hotel during stops of a day and a half in Nassau and two days and a half in Havana, brings a gleam to the eye of James Hutcheson, passenger agent transferred here with the vessel, chartered from the Clarke Steamship Co. For an interviewer, he produced Norman Payne, the chef, who despite the English-sounding name is a real French-Canadian, like all the crew. The cuisine, said M Payne, is Canadian French, not too different from what you would have eaten in pre-war Paris, save for French-Canadian specialties such as soupe aux pois, Quebec pork and beans and fresh Gaspé salmon.

The dining room has small booths and tables, the lounge is comfortably furnished, and there is deck chair space on two levels. Two-berth cabins have wash basins...

To celebrate the starting of this service from the Palm Beaches, Mr Taylor gave a party Saturday afternoon aboard the North Shore.

The North Shore's 7-day winter cruises were described as "a yachting holiday of adventure and romance," and her last departure was scheduled for April 14, 1947. Fares were $182.50 each in two-berth cabins or $132.50 per person in dormitory berths for the full round voyage.

While round-trip passengers had been able to cruise in the North Gaspé the previous winter by paying the purser to stay on board in Havana, the new longer voyage of the North Shore was sold as a cruise, and was outlined in a new West India Fruit cruise brochure: -

The ship is your hotel. Transportation, berth and all meals, deck chairs
and pads, all Government taxes are included in the price of ticket. This applies to the entire period of the cruise including the time spent in Nassau and/or Havana.

That magic phrase "the ship is your hotel" had been used twice before by Clarke, in 1927 when the New Northland first went south to cruise to Havana, and again in 1935 when she had returned to Miami to introduce 3- and 4-day cruises to Nassau. On Tuesday the North Shore stayed overnight in Nassau and both Friday and Saturday nights were spent in Havana.

Probably because it now had Jim Hutcheson, West India Fruit's publicity for the North Shore was reminiscent of Clarke's advertising for the North Star in the 1930s: -

Three foreign countries in one week! And that's practically what's in store for you as you board the sleek, trim vessel at the Port of Palm Beach. ...

"A Touch of France" - The French-Canadian atmosphere aboard ship will delight you, and you can feel yourself transported to your "first foreign country." Manned and staffed by Quebec stewards and seamen, your trip is launched with an old world flavor. French cuisine ... tempting dishes are devoured with a gusto born of sea-going inspiration ...

"A Bit of England" - Tuesday finds your "Yacht" tied up at Nassau in the Bahamas...

"A Breath of Spain" - Havana ... Paris of the Western Hemisphere ... gay ... sophisticated ... warm with the fervor of Spain ... bright with modern splash and brilliance.

Compare this to a typical 1939 advertisement heading for the North Star, "Three Foreign Countries in a Week! A Bit of England ... Nassau, A Bit of France ... Haiti, A Bit of Spain ... Cuba." All that had happened was that the French cuisine on board the North Shore had now replaced Haiti.

The emphasis on the French-Canadian on board atmosphere might have echoed the Quebec Steamship Co's cruises from New York fifty years earlier, with the mention of "French chief stewards," but actually it followed from the "French cuisine second to none on the Atlantic" that had been promised before the war in the North Star and New Northland. By now, any mention of "British service" had been dropped.

Occasionally, in early 1947, the "yacht-like" North Shore met the New Northland, still registered in Quebec but now operating for Seaway Line, in either Nassau or Havana. As her cruise duration was seven days and the New Northland's ten, such meetings occurred only by chance, and by the following
winter, the *New Northland* would be tied up in Jacksonville, after a fateful last cruise for Seaway Line.

The 101-berth difference between the pre-war and post-war ships showed the scale as well as the nature of Clarke's post-war passenger operations. While the *New Northland* had at first carried a few second-class passengers, about a third of the *North Shore*'s cruise passengers were carried in dormitory class. Cargo would be plentiful, especially in the Gulf of St Lawrence, but Clarke's post-war cruising business would be much more modest than it had been before the war.

**The Duke & Duchess of Windsor Travel in the "North Shore"**

Nevertheless, during her period running between Nassau and Florida the *North Shore* carried her most famous passengers. When she went south in late 1946, as well as replacing the *North Gaspé* with West India Fruit, she had effectively succeeded the *Jean Brillant*, which had operated the Miami-Nassau service in early 1946, and in which ship the Duke and Duchess of Windsor had left Nassau in 1945.

On Monday, February 17, 1947, a US Navy guard paid full naval honours to the Duke and Duchess when they crossed to Nassau in the *North Shore* for their first visit to the Bahamas since the war. The "Palm Beach Post" published the full ship's passenger list that Thursday, after the Windsors had landed in Nassau, with the following note:

The list of passengers who departed this week on the s.s. *North Shore*, which took the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to Nassau in the *North Shore* for their first visit to the Bahamas since the war. The "Palm Beach Post" published the full ship's passenger list that Thursday, after the Windsors had landed in Nassau, with the following note:

The list of passengers who departed this week on the s.s. *North Shore*, which took the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to Nassau, was received today from the West India Fruit & Steamship Co. Most of them will continue the 7-day cruise, with a stop at Havana, ending up back at the Port of Palm Beach next Monday.

Travelling with the Windsors was Sydney Johnson, the Duke's valet, a Bahamian who had left with them in the *Jean Brillant* in 1945. Johnson would remain with the Windsors for thirty-five years before going to work for the Ritz Hotel in Paris. Another passenger that voyage was Mrs Yvette Bégin, the captain's wife, from Montreal. As she started her ninth cruise of the winter season, the *North Shore* was carrying a full load of 65 passengers, not including the Windsors and Sydney Johnson, who made only the overnight voyage to Nassau.

**West India Fruit’s Passenger-Cargo Operation**

In the winters, beginning in 1946-47, West India Fruit also chartered the *North Coaster* for a 6-day cargo service between West Palm Beach and Havana. In this service, she carried 5-night freighter cruise passengers at a
fare of $132.50 in a double cabin, which included two nights southbound, three nights in Havana while handling cargo and one night northbound. She sailed every Saturday night at 11 pm and returned to West Palm Beach at 8 am on Friday.

The *North Coaster* actually replaced another Canadian ship, the *Colony Trader*, a vessel that had been built in 1909 and traded to Newfoundland since 1925, first as Farquhar Steamships' *Sambro*, then as the *Man Isle*, and from 1937 for the Shaw Steamship Co as the *Colony Trader*, before being chartered by West India Fruit & Steamship. This old-timer had brought the first cargoes of Cuban sugar into the United States since the war, 1,000 tons at a time. But she was accused of being intended to smuggle Jewish immigrants into Palestine when she was seized by the British at Gibraltar in May 1947, under Costa Rican flag. The *North Coaster* now took up the weekly freight service and would remain on the route until more railcar ferries could be put into service.

From 48 berths and 410 tons in the *North Gaspé* in 1946, West India Fruit had gone to 88 berths and almost 2,000 tons of cargo capacity with the *North Shore* and *North Coaster* in 1947. The extra cargo space was needed until West India Fruit could get three rail ferries into operation, which happened in the middle of 1947, after it had managed to obtain the 2,406-ton ex-Florida East Coast ferries *Henry M Flagler* and *Joseph R Parrott* from the US Navy in March. The rail ferries could carry twelve passengers, but their main employment was moving railcars to and from Havana, for which purpose the company also acquired a fleet of about a hundred refrigerated rail cars. In 1949, West India Fruit also acquired the Palm Beach Biltmore Hotel from Hilton.

The *North Shore* would return to West Palm Beach again in 1947-48. As the railcar ferries arrived, however, these winter charter opportunities diminished. They would disappear completely with the 1951 delivery of the world's largest railcar ferry, the 5,044-ton *New Grand Haven*. The February 25, 1951, issue of the "New York Times" announced "New Big Car Ferry Built for Cuba Run": -

One of the first vessels to head down the St Lawrence River as soon as the ice goes out, late next month or early April, will be the new 7,250-ton railroad car ferry *New Grand Haven* of the West India Fruit & Steamship Company Inc.

The ship, now nearing completion at the yard of Canadian Vickers Ltd at Montreal, has been ordered by the company for its route between West Palm Beach, Fla, and Havana, putting the car ferry service on a daily schedule.

The *New Grand Haven* was launched and christened on November 21, 1950, and the tonnage given by the "Times" was displacement, still so often
used by American public relations types. On December 29, 1951, the "New York Times" eventually announced daily passenger service to Cuba: -

Year-round ship passenger service between Palm Beach and Havana is now available. Daily service will be carried on by three railroad car ferries, equipped with first-class passenger facilities. The newest ship has five de luxe staterooms each with private bath. Rates one-way including meals will be $30 for cabin accommodations and $37.50 for de luxe staterooms, plus taxes. Robert Rickett, with offices at the West India Fruit and Steamship Co, Port of Palm Beach, is the passenger agent.

Two former passengers of the Jean Brillant and the North Shore, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, would return to travel to Havana and back in the New Grand Haven in the winter of 1955.

In late 1954, West India Fruit opened a second railcar ferry service between New Orleans and Havana, and in 1955 it placed the 3,431-ton car ferry City of Havana into service between Key West and Havana. Capable of carrying 500 passengers and 125 automobiles, the new ferry made a relatively quick six-hour crossing between Key West and Havana, unlike the much longer cruises that had been offered on board the Clarke ships from West Palm Beach.

While Clarke was still involved in trade to Cuba, came the marriage in Havana on February 27, 1949, of Stanley Clarke to Josefina Delgado y Angula. The couple first met while Josefina was on holiday with her family at Murray Bay. Murray Bay had obviously retained its romantic charm as, by coincidence, Stanley's sister Rosemary met her husband, Charles Rathgeb, at the same place at around the same time.

"Vagabond Cruises": Passenger and Cargo Services

Clarke's post-war passenger services would soon come to focus on the Gulf of St Lawrence, where the company had got its start. The title "Vagabond Cruises," used during the 1930s for cruises in the first North Voyageur and the Gaspesia, and then the North Gaspé, was now adopted for all of the line's routes, which now tended to concentrate on cargo. The Spring 1947 issue of the "Revue Canadienne de Géographie" summarized the new line-up for the North Shore: -

Clarke Steamship has three ships in service for its summer itineraries. The finest and the fastest (17 knots), the former corvette s.s. North Shore, operates a weekly service between Montreal, Quebec, Baie Comeau and Havre-St-Pierre (572 miles). Another new ship, the s.s. North Coaster, specially fitted out to carry lots of cargo but just a few passengers, maintains bi-monthly service between the same ports.
She turns at Havre-St-Pierre. Finally, well known on the North Shore, the s.s. *Gaspesia*, renamed s.s. *North Voyageur*, travels every fortnight as far as Blanc-Sablon. During the course of 1946, another old ship disappeared from the coast that it had so long served when the s.s. *Sable I* was sold to Newfoundland.

These were joined by the *North Pioneer* and a May 3, 1947, notice in "The Gazette" outlined the company's cruising plans for the summer in more detail, under the heading "North Shore Cruises Departures Due Soon":

First cruise of the season out of Montreal will start May 13 when the Clarke Steamship Company's s.s. *North Shore* clears Market Basin for a seven-day voyage to the North St Lawrence Shore as far as Natashquan. The ship's sailing dates have been set from May 13, June 10, July 8, August 5, September 2 and October 14. *North Shore* is commanded by Capt A J Bégin.

New ships this season in the Clarke fleet are s.s. *North Coaster* and s.s. *Island Connector*.

The motor ship *North Gaspé* begins her summer cruising to the Gaspé Coast June 10 ... July 8, August 5, September 2, October 14.

North Coast cruises aboard the s.s. *North Pioneer*, a 12-day voyage, start July 23 ... August 6, September 3, October 1.

*North Voyageur* starts her 12½-day cruises to the Canadian Labrador July 16 ... August 13, September 10, October 8. *North Shore* and *North Gaspé* clear Montreal 7:30 pm. and *North Pioneer* and *North Voyageur* leave Market Basin at 3:00 pm.

Market Basin was an alternate name for the location of the Clarke Steamship dock, located inside Victoria Pier, just below the Canada Steamship Lines Saguenay docks. With the arrival of the new ships, the two roles of offering cruises at the same time as providing a passenger-cargo ship service were comfortably combined into a single operation on all company vessels.

Elsewhere, Montreal Shipping was advertising sailings from Montreal to St John's by Blue Peter Steamships' *Blue Peter II* on May 15 and 31, and June 15. Furness Withy, meanwhile, advertised sailings of Newfoundland Canada Steamships' *Elgin* from Montreal on May 20 and its own *Fort Amherst* and *Fort Townshend* from Halifax on May 10 and 17 and June 3 and 10, all for St John's.

**The "North Voyageur" in 1947**
Most Clarke crews of course wanted assignment to the newer and more glamorous North Shore and North Gaspé, but there were still good jobs available on the North Voyageur. One teenager, Robert Bouchard, managed to land a job in her that spring, joining as a waiter. Many years later, he recorded his memories of joining her after working the winter as a measurer in the backwoods of the Saguenay:

In the spring, when I left this work, I went to Montreal where I spent some time, and after having spent a goodly portion of what I had earned during the winter, I decided to sign up for work on the North Voyageur, a Clarke Steamship Co vessel that left from Montreal, called at Quebec and then headed for the Lower North Shore, calling first at Havre-St-Pierre and then each little coastal village all the way to Blanc-Sablon, last settlement in Quebec, on the Strait of Belle Isle opposite Newfoundland.

I enjoyed this shipboard work, because I got to travel and was well paid. Working on board as a waiter, I had the opportunity to meet many people. At meal times, I served the passengers at their tables and they often left me large tips, significantly augmenting my salary.

After eight o'clock in the evening, work finished, I went up onto the bridge, where a Gaspésien, monsieur Francoeur, the ship's first officer, demonstrated the navigation charts and the compass to me and showed me how to plot a course on the chart. We rarely sailed at night. Once tied up to a pier in a small port in the shelter of a bay, especially at low tide, with evening approaching, we usually stayed the night.

The people of the village were allowed on board and entertained themselves with the passengers and crew. It was a village fete. Each time we arrived at a quay in a new port, everyone came down to greet us in order to find out if they had a new visitor or if someone was returning home.

One day during one of these voyages, we were subjected to quite a storm in the Gulf of St Lawrence. For two days, access to the main deck was forbidden, as anyone who ventured out onto deck ran the risk of being washed overboard into the enormous seas that were sweeping over the side of the ship.

On the third day, once the sea had calmed, a very thick fog covered the sea. We could not see more than a hundred feet ahead. The ship's whistle signalled our presence with a sharp blast every few minutes. Suddenly, we heard the whistle of another ship approaching us, but we couldn't see a thing in the thick fog. Finally, she passed us very close by, like us, proceeding at reduced speed. We recognized the Empress of Canada, a huge white ship headed for Quebec, full of passengers.
waving at us. What a feeling to meet such a giant after having suffered a storm where we thought we were the only ship at sea.

The last voyage I made to the Lower North Shore is engraved in my memory because of the events that followed. As we were leaving one of the bays for the open sea at low tide, our ship hung up on a rock, something that caused an indentation in the hull about eight feet long and four inches wide. Water rapidly entered the bottom of the ship and the floor of the engine room. The ship listed dangerously and remained thus for the rest of the voyage.

We had to reassure several passengers who were somewhat shaken after this unexpected accident. We had to retrace our route and go into drydock at Davie Shipbuilding in Lauzon to undergo repairs. This happened at the end of September, I believe. That October, I left the ship to enroll in the armed forces at HMCS "Donnacona" in Quebec.

Canadian Pacific's Empress of Canada (iii) was the pre-war Duchess of Richmond, now an "Empress." Her 20,000 tons to the North Voyageur’s 1,000 must have created quite a contrast indeed. The grounding referred to by Bouchard took place at Harrington Harbour after Capt Sylvio Bélanger took an unusual route to get out of port, following the suggestion of an employee of Louis T Blais who was absolutely sure that there was enough water for her. Unfortunately, this proved not to be the case and she had to spend some time out for repairs.

**A Single Traffic Department**

The increasing importance of cargo in relation to passengers was again indicated in 1947 when Clarke merged its separate passenger and freight departments into a single traffic department in Montreal. Tom Calhoun, who had been purser of the New Northland, became traffic manager, and Jim Hutcheson, from the passenger department, was appointed assistant traffic manager. Tom had joined the company in 1932, and served as a purser in both the Gaspesia and the New Northland before coming ashore in 1939 as chief clerk for customs and wharfage at Montreal.

When Jim Hutcheson rejoined Clarke in 1945 his first task had been to re-establish the passenger department, an important part of which had been the post-war business with West India Fruit. Now he would get more involved with cargo but this change was natural now that the company's passenger operations took on less importance than had been the case when the company operated larger ships.

**The "Gulfport"**
In January 1947 the Park Steamship Co Ltd offered for sale two ex-
German war prizes that it had acquired through the Allied Reparations
Agency. One, the 6,951-ton ex-Hamburg-American Line cargo-passenger ship
_Huascaran_, was purchased by Canadian Pacific Steamships and converted at
Sorel to carry cargo to Europe and 770 immigrants on her return voyages to
Canada. In February 1948, she became the Canadian-registered 9,034-ton
_Beaverbrae._

The second ship, the 2,836-ton "Hansa" type _Empire Gatehouse_, was
inspected and purchased by Clarke. Refitted for the Montreal-Corner Brook
service, the company renamed her _Gulfport_. The "Hansa" type was a wartime
standard design, of which about two hundred had been planned, to be built
not only in Germany but also in occupied shipyards in the Netherlands,
Belgium and the Baltic. Forty-five had been completed before the Allied
invasion of June 1944. The _Gulfport_ was the first of two "Hansa" ships to be
acquired by Clarke.

With dimensions of 301 feet overall by 44 feet, and a deadweight
capacity of 3,450 tons, the _Gulfport_ became Clarke's largest ship. Her bale
capacity of 166,670 cubic feet included just under 12,000 feet of refrigerated
space that was installed by Clarke for her new service. Almost the same
length as the _New Northland_, but three feet narrower, the _Gulfport_ was a
cargo carrier and had no real need of passenger accommodation, especially
after the arrival of airline service to Newfoundland. Nevertheless, Clarke
fitted her to carry twelve, the maximum allowed for a cargo ship, in addition
to her crew of 30. Four double cabins below the bridge, on the boat deck,
port side, were fitted out for passengers, three with forward views. Also on
this deck, on the starboard side, was the captain's cabin. The main deck
below featured a forward-facing passenger saloon, and a four-berth forward-
-facing passenger cabin on the port side. Clarke also updated the ship's galley
and mess rooms to Canadian coastal standards. The new ship's crew were
accommodated in the traditional way, officers and engineers amidships with
the passengers, deck crew in the foc's'le forward and bosun, firemen, oilers,
cooks and stewards in the stern.

Built in 1943 by Lübecker Flender-Werke of Lübeck as the _Tiefland_, she
had been managed by the Hamburg-Südamerikanische Dampfschifffahrt's
Gesellschaft of Hamburg. After capture by the British at Brunsbüttel in May
1945, she had been renamed _Empire Gatehouse_, employed in Europe and
the Mediterranean and awarded to Canada after the war. She had had an
exciting time, however, on the night of December 28, 1945, when, in winds
of 90 miles an hour in the North Sea, with a cargo of ammunition on board,
she had developed a fire in one of her holds off Suffolk. Six of her crew were
evacuated by the Aldeburgh lifeboat but the remainder managed to stay and
extinguish the fire, after which she went to anchor at Hollesley Bay, near
Felixstowe, with twenty crew still on board.

Clarke registered the _Gulfport_ to the Gulf Ports Steamship Co Ltd, a
firm that it incorporated on February 6, 1947, and converted her from coal to oil-burning. She was powered by a compound four-cylinder steam reciprocating engine built by Ottensener Eisenwerk of Hamburg, which gave her a speed of 10 knots. The latest addition to the Clarke fleet entered service between Montreal and Corner Brook in May 1947 under Capt Alphonse Bégin, who had commanded the North Gaspé during the war and brought out the North Shore the year before. Succeeding Bégin in the North Shore was Capt Georges Caron, who had continued in command of the Gaspesia throughout the war. Caron would now remain with the North Shore through most of the 1950s.

While the Gulfport operated the traditional Corner Brook route, the Island Connector sailed to St John's, so Clarke ships now served both ends of the island. The Gulfport left Montreal every second Thursday and proceeded directly to Corner Brook, while on her return voyage she called at Dingwall, Nova Scotia, on northern Cape Breton Island, to load gypsum for Montreal. Dingwall had followed Cheticamp as a National Gypsum load port in 1940. The gypsum was usually for Canada Cement, in whose building Clarke had its offices in Montreal, and which also engaged its own ship, a self-unloader, in the gypsum trade. Purpose-built in 1929, the 2,376-ton Bulkarier carried bulk cement from Montreal East to company distribution facilities in Quebec, Halifax and Saint John, New Brunswick, and on her return loaded gypsum, at first at Cheticamp and later at other Nova Scotia ports.

When the Gulfport joined Clarke, the terminal operator at Corner Brook, Western Terminals Ltd, spent $100,000 extending its piers and warehouse facilities, not only to handle more cargo but also to be ready to attract more in the event that Newfoundland joined the Canadian union. At the time, Western Terminals was still a subsidiary of Bowaters Newfoundland Pulp & Paper Mills Ltd. But Clarke would acquire the company when Bowater sold off some of its surplus operations. Western Terminals also handled Newfoundland Railway steamships and acted as stevedores and general shipping agents in Corner Brook, work that Clarke also took over when it acquired the company. As well as Corner Brook, the Gulfport often called at nearby Humbermouth, sometimes to load return cargoes for Montreal.

**Hudson's Bay Co Charters the "North Pioneer"**

In August 1947, Clarke obtained a rather unusual contract when it chartered the North Pioneer to the Hudson's Bay Co for a relief voyage to the Eastern Arctic with food, fuel and medical supplies. The regular supply ship, the Nascopie, had been lost at Cape Dorset, Baffin Island, on July 21 after hitting an uncharted reef on her thirty-third northern supply voyage. The Nascopie's crew and 37 passengers were rescued by the CGS N B McLean, which was 1,200 miles away in the Strait of Belle Isle at the time of the accident, and taken to Churchill. But as the Nascopie's voyage had not been completed, it was urgent to send another ship north to replace the supplies
that had been lost.

It might have seemed natural for the Hudson's Bay Co to look to Job Brothers, once part owners of the *Nascopie* and later a subsidiary, for this. Job Brothers' Blue Peter Steamships' *Blue Peter II* was even a sister ship of the *North Pioneer*. But there had not been a direct link between the two companies for four years now, the Hudson's Bay Co having disposed of its interest in Job Brothers in 1943.

The *North Pioneer*, with Capt Waters, formerly of the *Nascopie*, and his first officer and second and third engineers on board, was scheduled to leave Montreal on August 16. Her task was to carry a replacement cargo to the Hudson's Bay posts in Baffin Island that the *Nascopie* had not yet reached. An August 15 Canadian Press wire story from Montreal reported under the heading "Supply Ship Sails From Montreal To Relieve Outposts": -

The trim coaster *North Pioneer*, her holds packed with vital food, fuel and other supplies for the far north, is scheduled to sail from here tomorrow to finish the voyage the Hudson's Bay Company's ill-fated *Nascopie* failed to complete.

To prevent any suffering by the inhabitants at the ports of call the *Nascopie*, veteran of 35 years' service in the northern waters, did not reach as a result of her foundering off the rocky coast of Dorset Island almost a month ago, the company has chartered the *North Pioneer* to deliver the annual provisions.

The coaster will carry several stoves, potatoes, canned milk, medical supplies, flour, canned goods, lumber, bagged coal and government weather instruments to replace those which went to the bottom of the Arctic waters when the *Nascopie* was lost.

Company officials have said that every bit of cargo lost in the *Nascopie* has been made up and that there is little danger of any hardship for the northern residents to be served.

Five ports of call - Clyde River, Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, Dundas Harbor and Pangnirtung - are on the itinerary of the *North Pioneer* and it is expected that the vessel will be back here the latter part of September, much earlier than the *Nascopie* would have completed her journey.

On the bridge of the *North Pioneer* will be two of the *Nascopie* officers who were the last to leave the latter ship. They are Capt James Waters, who will guide the relief vessel through the treacherous northern waters, and First Officer Leonard Edey, who has completed 13 years on the *Nascopie*'s bridge...

Several Hudson's Bay Company officials and a small government party,
including four Dominion weather bureau experts who will be stationed at various northerly bases for weather survey work will sail in the North Pioneer.

Also on board when the North Pioneer departed Montreal on August 16 were two of the passengers from the Nascopie. These were James Wright, Eastern Arctic superintendent for the Hudson's Bay Co and chief of the Nascopie expedition, and Alex Stevenson from Ottawa, who was responsible for distributing the family allowance credits to the locals, off to complete their duties.

When she returned to Montreal on September 27, from one of the longer voyages of her career, she brought back with her sixteen passengers. These included Hudson's Bay Co fur traders, their wives and three children, an Oblate father and two Anglican priests. On deck was the steel landing barge that Capt Walters had taken north with the Nascopie in July and which had been used by the crew to escape, plus a cargo of white fox and seal skins.

To continue the Eastern Arctic Patrol, the Canadian Government ordered a ship of its own, which would be named the C D Howe. Meanwhile, the Hudson's Bay Co ordered a smaller twelve-passenger supply ship for its own requirements. Launched at Govan on November 30, 1948, the 662-ton Rupertsland was built in time to arrive at Halifax on January 6 and leave Montreal on her first Arctic voyage on July 8, 1949. The 3,628-ton C D Howe, on the other hand, did not enter service until 1950. The old Nascopie, after thirty-five years' service, was in fact replaced by two new ships.

Although the North Pioneer's 1947 voyage to the Eastern Arctic was instructive, it would be another eight years before Clarke itself began to participate in the Arctic re-supply business. The Nascopie was not the Hudson's Bay Co's only loss that season. On July 26, only five days after the Nascopie, its 150-ton motor vessel Neophyte also ran aground, seven miles outside Churchill, becoming a total loss with cargo.

Not long after her return from the north, on October 19, with Capt Alfred Ouelette in command, the North Pioneer came to the rescue of another ship. This time she assisted the stranded 5,600-ton British-flag cargo liner Manchester City at Cap Saumon, 100 miles below Quebec. The British ship had run aground on a voyage from Manchester to Montreal and the North Pioneer, also bound for Montreal, took her twelve passengers off by lifeboat, landing them at Montreal the next evening. The cargo liners fifty crew members, meanwhile, stayed on board to await the salvage tug Foundation Franklin and her lighter, the 317-ton Traverse.

A tragic note was to touch the North Pioneer the following season, however, when her master, Capt Ivan Pelletier, only 37, had to be evacuated from the ship in the Gulf while she was en route from the North Shore to
Dingwall to take on a cargo of gypsum. Taken to hospital in St Anthony, Newfoundland, he died there on August 2, 1948. Pelletier had been with Clarke since 1933 and had also commanded the Cape Gaspé, Magdalen, North Shore, North Gaspé and Island Connector.

The "North Voyageur" Cruise to Blanc-Sablon

With the introduction of the North Voyageur to the Lower North Shore service, more berth capacity was now available to Blanc-Sablon than had been available in some years. Following on from the original North Shore in the 1920s, her "Canadian Labrador" cruises were finally included in the "Vagabond Cruises" brochure. In the interim years, with her limited accommodation, the Sable I, latterly called North Trader, had not offered been able to offer cruises. But when the North Trader was finally sold out of the fleet in 1947, the Bras d’Or Bay Navigation Co continued to be the company that operated the winter service, at least for the next few years.

The impact of this on the company's publicity showed in the following narrative that was now carried in the "Vagabond Cruises" brochure: -

You may take a week's cruise to the famed Gaspé Coast and Magdalen Islands on the trim, yacht-like North Gaspé or aboard the new North Shore to north coast ports. Or, be a real vagabond voyageur and cruise along the North Coast in rough-and-ready freighthouse style, so in keeping with the simple trading-post life and austere beauties of Canadian Labrador.

Your twelve-day vacation on the North Coaster brings you an amazing variety of scenes: historic Quebec, up-to-the-minute paper ports, Indian settlements, fishing villages. On the North Voyageur you venture even farther north-east to Grenfell Mission posts and through the rugged beauty of the Inside Passage to the very Strait of Belle Isle.

Your fellow passengers themselves, like the characters of a novel of the northern wilds, may include lumberjacks, habitants, millionaire sportsmen, Indian fur-trappers, traders, fishermen, or even crimson-coated "Mounties." With daytime excursions afloat and a camp-fire atmosphere on board, this is a homespun holiday that is truly "out of this world."

Not only had the North Voyageur brought additional berths to the Lower North Shore, but she had also brought cruise passengers back to the Grenfell country for the first time since before the war. And by extending the North Shore’s weekly Havre-St-Pierre service on to Natashquan in weeks when there was no sailing by the North Voyageur, the company was also able to offer weekly sailings to Natashquan.
The "Empire Gangway"

The second of the "Hansa" ships, the 2,828-ton Empire Gangway, was originally managed by the Montreal Shipping Co Ltd, and had worked in various trades, including the Canada Mexico Line between Montreal and Vera Cruz in May 1947. This ship, a war prize like her sister, had a more convoluted history however. In December 1945, she had been assigned by the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board to the United States. Following the Potsdam Agreement, however, she had been re-allocated to Canada. How this complicated matters was indicated in a Department of External Affairs memorandum dated March 18, 1948: -

The s.s. Empire Gangway (s.s Weserwehr) was one of three German vessels allocated to Canada as reparations on May 24th, 1946, by the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency. Unlike the other two vessels, the Empire Gangway was a United States prize of war, and it is necessary for the Canadian Government to obtain from the United States Government a bill of sale for this vessel before its sale to private operators can be completed.

Delivery of the vessel was taken in October 1946, by Park Steamship Company, as agent for War Assets Corporation, and from that date until August 1947, Park Steamship Company endeavoured, without success, to obtain the necessary bill of sale from the United States Government. Their inquiries were met with the reply that transfer of title was being delayed pending a decision by the United States Department of Justice whether Prize Court proceedings were necessary before the United States Maritime Commission could transfer title to Canada. On August 27th, the Canadian Ambassador, Washington, addressed a note to the State Department, pointing out that this vessel had been allocated to Canada by the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency, and that the Canadian Government was anxious to secure title to the vessel at the earliest possible date.

The other two ships allocated to Canada had been the Empire Gatehouse, now Gulfport, and Huascaran, now Beaverbrae. Meanwhile, in September 1947, the Park Steamship Co Ltd called for tenders for the sale of the Empire Gangway, to close on October 1. Details were given in "The Gazette" on the same day: -

The s.s. Empire Gangway, the last of the "reparations" vessels allocated to Canada by the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency, is offered for sale by tender by the Park Steamship Company Limited, acting as agents for the War Assets Corporation...

This third and last vessel received as reparation, the Empire Gangway, is now lying afloat at Montreal...
The conditions of sale are similar to those which governed the disposal of the m.v. *Huascaran* and s.s. *Empire Gatehouse*. The purchaser is to undertake to operate the s.s. *Empire Gangway* under Canadian registry, and all repairs necessary to put the vessel in class and any reconditioning or converting by the purchaser, to suit his requirements, are to be affected in Canada.

Clarke was the successful bidder and after a winter trading south, the *Empire Gangway* would enter service in 1948 between Montreal and St John's, running on a 21-day round voyage opposite the *Island Connector*, which sailed via Charlottetown.

A third ship used in the Montreal to St John's service over this period was the *North Pioneer*, which made a number of voyages to St John's between 1948 and 1950. Of the three, two usually operated as a pair, forming the basis of Clarke's early St John's service, with a sailing about every ten days. For a while in the spring and summer of 1948, the *Gulfport* sailed to St John's via Corner Brook while the *Empire Gangway* also made some supplemental calls at Corner Brook after calling at St John's. This sort of flexibility allowed the company to tailor its schedules to meet cargo demand.

**The "Gulfport" and "Empire Gangway" Find Winter Work**

In December 1947, the *Gulfport* and *Empire Gangway* were chartered to the North Atlantic & Gulf Steamship Company for service between New York and Nuevitas, Cuba. An announcement of the impending charters appeared in the "New York Times" on November 13, 1947:

> The addition of two new vessels to its fleet was announced yesterday by the North Atlantic and Gulf Steamship Company Inc of 120 Wall Street. The freighters, the *Empire Gangway* and the *Gulfport*, will be placed on the company's New York-Nuevitas run and will provide fortnightly sailings from New York. The ships are of modern design and can carry about 3,200 tons of cargo. They can also handle heavy sugar machinery. The first trip of the *Empire Gangway* is scheduled for Dec 10 and the *Gulfport*'s on Dec 24.

At the end of the each St Lawrence season the *Empire Gangway* loaded potatoes in Prince Edward Island for delivery south. This was of course the same cargo that the *New Northland* had taken south to Havana at the end of the 1927 season. A typical year-end cargo carried by the *Empire Gangway* was 48,544 hundred-pound bags of seed potatoes for Jacksonville, for planting in Florida and Georgia.

The North Atlantic & Gulf Steamship Co, known as Norgulf Lines, had
started its service to Cuba in October 1934, succeeding Munson Line on the run. While working with Norgulf Lines, the Gulfport and Empire Gangway usually returned to New York with cargoes of Cuban sugar. Bulk cargoes soon became familiar to both ships as they were familiar sights as well in Dingwall, Nova Scotia, where loaded return cargoes of gypsum for Montreal in the summer time.

The pair were popular and two winters later, in 1949-50, the Gulfport and Empire Gangway would return to New York to work for Flota Mercante Grancolombiana between Brooklyn and Colombia.

Winter Service to St John's

In the same year that Newfoundland Canada Steamships chartered its converted corvettes, Clarke announced the start of its own winter service between Halifax and St John's, with the first departure of the North Pioneer from Halifax to take place on December 19, 1947. The charter of the Island Connector to Newfoundland Canada Steamships had taught Clarke a thing or two about year-round operations to Newfoundland.

Unlike Corner Brook, which was frozen in in the winter, merchants in St John's were used to year-round service from Boston and New York and it was logical that Clarke should start its own Halifax-St John's operation in order to continue its service while the St Lawrence was closed. And despite opening a Halifax winter service in direct competition with Newfoundland Canada Steamships, the Island Connector would not be the last Clarke ship to be chartered by them, as the Gulfport would follow later.

Only a year after opening service to St John's, Clarke had extended it to a year-round operation, with cargo loaded at Montreal in the open season and delivered by rail to Halifax and Saint John when the St Lawrence was closed. While Canadian National Railways served Halifax winter service was also offered from Saint John to accommodate shippers located on the Canadian Pacific Railway system. The distance from Halifax to St John's was 531 nautical miles while Saint John to Halifax was a further 278 miles. McLean Kennedy (Maritime) Ltd were the mainland agents for the new winter service.

While the North Pioneer was busy opening Clarke's new winter service from Saint John and Halifax to St John's, Newfoundland Canada Steamships once again chartered the Island Connector, for a second winter season in its own Halifax-St John's service. Typically, the February 11, 1948, issue of "The Gazette" therefore listed Halifax departures for February 21 and March 1 and 10 for the Island Connector working for Newfoundland Canada while sister ship North Pioneer was advertised to sail for Clarke on February 24 and March 6, 17 and 27. Although the two ships ran in almost direct competition, the arrangement served to generate revenue for Clarke on both ships.
Towards the end of the winter, on March 10, 1948, as the *North Pioneer*’s final Halifax sailings were set for March 17 and 27 and April 7 and 17, the first Montreal sailing was announced, with the 1,985-ton Hall Corporation canaller *Leecliffe Hall* to receive cargo at Montreal April 17-21. The *Leecliffe Hall*, a new ship with good cargo handling gear, had been completed by Canadian Vickers in September 1947, but she was still steam-powered and capable of only eight knots. Clarke typically chartered canallers to open its Montreal-Newfoundland service while its own ships were still making their way north from winter charters. The winter service marked the first time in twenty-five years of serving Newfoundland that Clarke had been able to offer year-round service, with sailings switching to Montreal in April and back to the East Coast in December.

**More Canallers**

These St Lawrence canallers that Clarke had begun chartering in the 1930s were a Great Lakes style vessel of 2,500 to 3,500 tons deadweight, built to the maximum dimensions permissible in order to pass through the old canals between Montreal and Lake Ontario. They usually measured about 259 feet overall by 43 or 44 feet and could load to a maximum draft of 14 feet.

With bridge on the forecastle and engines aft, they were nearly all powered by coal-fired steam reciprocating engines, and operated by a crew of about twenty-five. Large numbers of these ships had been built in British shipyards in the 1920s, and they had proved useful during the war. There were both geared and gearless canallers, the latter without derricks and used for bulk cargoes. Ships Clarke used in its general cargo trades had to be equipped with cargo-handling gear.

While the *Leecliffe Hall* was owned by Hall Corporation, the most popular source of canallers would be N M Paterson & Sons Ltd of Fort William, the former Paterson Steamships. Paterson was primarily a grain house, but it operated a large fleet of steamships and also maintained an office in Montreal. Clarke chartered canallers from Paterson nearly every year for its Newfoundland trades, usually at the beginning of the season but also to fill occasional gaps in its schedules.

It also occasionally chartered canallers from Quebec & Ontario Transportation but it nearly always chartered ships from Montreal owners, or owners who had an office in Montreal. Hall Corporation, for example, was in Common Street, in the old port district, while Quebec & Ontario was in the Quebec North Shore Paper building on Sherbrooke Street. The Keystone ships were ultimately owned by Montreal Light, Heat & Power, who had a coke operation at Ville LaSalle, while Gulf & Lake Navigation was located in St James Street, across from Paterson’s office. Most were a short walk away
from Clarke's head office in the Canada Cement Building.

Although Canada Steamship Lines, just down the hill in Victoria Square, also owned a large fleet of canallers, Clarke had not chartered any of its ships since the Winona in 1934. CSL canallers were mainly engaged in their own scheduled package freight services between Montreal, Cornwall, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Leamington, Windsor, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie and Fort William, part of which was a 36-hour express service between Montreal and Toronto. The others were bulk carriers, many of them gearless, and not suitable for the general cargo trades.

Clarke used canallers mainly to Newfoundland, although several would stop off at North Shore ports in the course of their voyages, and one in particular would later run a dedicated cement shuttle in the St Lawrence. Meanwhile, with the exception of the Island Connector's calls at Charlottetown between 1946 and 1950, service to the Maritime Provinces had ended with the war.

Over the next fifteen years canallers would perform about a dozen voyages a year for Clarke. Another dozen or so might be performed by seagoing ships that had been built to the same early St Lawrence canal dimensions.

The Canada Newfoundland Sealing Company

As its involvement in Newfoundland increased, Clarke also entered the sealing business, with the Canada Newfoundland Sealing Co Ltd, a company it formed in 1948 to participate in the annual hunt in the Gulf of St Lawrence. The North Voyageur and the Magdalen Island Transportation Co's Magdalen were to be fitted out for this trade and much was made of Canada joining the hunt, which had always been regarded as an almost exclusive preserve of Newfoundlanders, still then separate from Canada.

Despite the fact that Farquhar had sent his Nova Scotia-based Sable I to the front many times prior to 1926, she had been regarded as a sort of honourary Newfoundland ship due to her usual trade and the fact that she had so many Newfoundlanders in her crew. This time, the seal pelts would be taken back to Canada for processing. The January 1, 1948, issue of "Shipbuilding & Shipping Record" gave some background to the new venture:

Canada will for the first time engage in North Atlantic sealing operations, which up to now have been carried on almost exclusively by Newfoundland vessels. Clarke Steamship Company's little coaster North Voyageur will go to Halifax to be refitted for sealing operations. The main purpose of the North Voyageur's sealing venture will be to augment Canada's supplies of fat. L T Blais & Company, Quebec, will
work in conjunction with Clarke Steamships and seals taken by the *North Voyageur* will be processed at Blais's oil processing plant at Tabatière on the Labrador coast.

Several Newfoundland passenger ships had gone sealing in days past, particularly those of the Red Cross Line. And the *Sable I* had been designed for sealing as well as trading. Had Clarke still owned her, she would undoubtedly have been one of the candidates, but she had now been sold to Job Brothers to do the same thing. Instead, Clarke installed a new barrel crowsnest, very similar to that which had been installed in the *Sable I*, in the *Magdalen*.

The *North Voyageur* ended her 1947 St Lawrence season with a very late voyage to Corner Brook and St John's, not leaving Quebec until January 13, 1948. From Newfoundland, she loaded a cargo of herring for Halifax, where she arrived on January 29. After discharging her cargo, she went to Dartmouth to start a six-week refit for her duties as a sealer, which consisted primarily of installing wooden "pounds" in the holds to hold the catch. With the *North Pioneer* now running in winter service to St John's, there were days when the two Clarke ships, both familiar sights on the North Shore, could now be found at Halifax.

"The Gazette" carried further details on February 25 in a story headed "*North Voyageur, Magdalen* Sail On Clarke Steamship Seal Trip": -

From the dingy reaches of Halifax harbor tomorrow morning two small Montreal-owned steamers will nose out into the Atlantic, then head north on the 500 miles to St John's, Nfld, from which port they will sail on the greatest adventure of their respective careers.

For the next two months, the *North Voyageur* and the *Magdalen* will cruise the icy waters off Newfoundland's east coast, the Strait of Belle Isle and the St Lawrence Gulf in search of seals.

Sealing is a new venture for Clarke Steamship Co Ltd, owners of the two ships. Normally, *North Voyageur* and *Magdalen* spend this time of year resting up from summer schedules which have them toting passengers and perishables between Montreal and the string of little ports that fleck the St Lawrence River's north shore.

Stanley Clarke, who with his father Desmond Clarke, president of Clarke Steamship Company, planned the sealing voyage, said the company was going into sealing to secure more fats for export to Europe. With seal fat to send overseas, Canada will be able to keep a corresponding amount of other fats for home consumption. Price if the catch is announced before the sealing fleet sails from St John's March 4...
"Our ships are supposed to be back at St John's before May 1," Mr Clarke told "The Gazette." "If there are plenty of seals this year, they will probably return before that."

North Voyageur and Magdalen, which have been refitting in Halifax for the past few weeks, have been provisioned for two months at sea. The vessels will pick up their sealing captains and sealers at St John's. Crews of both vessels will include Clarke navigating officers and engine room ratings, but the majority of the men will sign on especially for the sealing voyage. North Voyageur will carry 180 men and the Magdalen, about 120. Both steamers will be captained by Newfoundlanders for the hunt.

Capt Stanley Barbour will walk the bridge of the Voyageur and the Magdalen will be under command of Capt Llewellyn Kean, noted sealing navigator whose father is credited with having killed 1,000,000 seals during his career...

Stanley Clarke said seals brought in by the North Voyageur and the Magdalen will be taken ashore at La Tabatière on the North Shore, where there is a fully-equipped processing plant.

The North Voyageur now carried a crew of 21 and 160 sealers. The same proportions held true for the Magdalen, with the passenger accommodation being used to great advantage in both ships. On the first day of the hunt, March 5, the North Voyageur took 3,000 pelts and the Magdalen 2,000. When the pelts taken by these two ships were delivered to that old Clarke associate L T Blais Ltée at La Tabatière, the North Voyageur was returning to a port that she now served by summer as well. During that same season, two small sealers, the 82-ton Teazer from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the 74-ton Monica Walters from Port aux Basques, were lost with their cargoes of sealskins within a week of each other, both crushed by ice.

This new activity lasted but one season, however, with the ships soon going back to their usual business. For reasons of its own, possibly because it was competing with some of its own Newfoundland customers, Clarke decided not to pursue this venture, even if it gave them a month or two of extra winter employment for a couple of ships. Other Canadian owners such as the Shaw Steamship Co and the Margaree Steamship Co did join the sealing trade, however.

The North Shore Winter Service

In 1947-48, with the North Voyageur trying her hand at sealing, the ice-strengthened North Gaspé, no longer needed in the south, replaced her in the winter service from Pointe-au-Pic. It must have come as quite a blow for
the crew of the *North Gaspé*, accustomed as they were to the Bahamas sunshine, but at the end of 1947 she left her Gaspé and Magdalens route to start winter service from Pointe-au-Pic to the North Shore as far as Havre-St-Pierre.

Although she would no longer go south each winter, the *North Gaspé* would still operate year-round, and over the next decade and more, would prove to be an even better ship than the *Sable I*. In the course of this service, on February 20, 1949, in one of those odd voyages that tend to make the papers, the *North Gaspé* would even be reported carrying horses from Godbout to Pointe-au-Pic, an indication of an early end to lumbering operations for that year. But more important, after she was introduced, it was found that the *North Gaspé* could augment the previous fortnightly schedule as she was able to make additional trips when required.

The *North Shore*, on the other hand, had not been built with ice strengthening, so from the early 1950s, when she could no longer rely on winter employment from Florida, she had to lay up for the winter at Quebec. Despite the change of ships, the St Lawrence North Shore winter service continued to be contracted to the Bras d'Or Bay Navigation Co, the former owners of the *Sable I*, so the *North Voyageur* spent one winter season and the *North Gaspé* three officially working for the Bras d'Or Bay Navigation Co.

The North Shore winter contract would remain with Bras d'Or Bay Navigation until the winter of 1950-51, when it was finally awarded to the Clarke Steamship Co. From then on, still with Garon Pratte as president and Wilfrid Clarke as vice president, Bras d'Or Bay Navigation became a dormant company, until finally being wound down on November 15, 1958.

**Financial Losses on the North Shore**

The introduction of the *North Shore* and other new ships in 1946 unfortunately led to a situation where Clarke was making substantial losses on its North Shore service. With the *North Gaspé* well into her first North Shore winter season and the *North Voyageur* and *Magdalen* preparing for the seal hunt in Halifax, Desmond Clarke wrote to Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis on February 3, 1948: -

In the spring of 1946 the need for an improved service to the North Shore was brought to your attention and ... you immediately gave the matter your sympathetic consideration. However, no final decision was reached and in the intervening time the situation has changed considerably...

You are well aware of the many developments that have taken place in the district and which have taken place in even shorter time than was anticipated when our services were reviewed and revised two years
ago. The service put into effect in 1946 has demonstrated the necessity for such an improvement but now requires still further expansion.

Whilst operating expenses had doubled in the period 1937-1945, it is unfortunately the fact that since that time they have spiralled and are continuing to do so. The cost of everything under the headings of labour, victualling, maintenance and repairs is continually increasing and one item alone, fuel oil, is 50% higher today than in 1946...

During the 1947 season, 89 trips were made from Montreal or Quebec to the North Shore, this being 59 more than required by contract. Of these 89 trips, 30 were performed by the express ship North Shore. As you know, this ship is extremely expensive to operate due to the high speed and consequent high fuel consumption as well as the limited revenue derived, since we are limited to carrying only mails, passengers, cold-storage and express shipments in order to perform a weekly service.

The excessive number of additional trips were required to cope with the industrial expansion in the district which has accelerated to a degree hitherto unknown. In servicing the isolated settlements of the North Shore, the difficulties presented by nature must be taken into account with each trip performed and ... we have learned that the gap between revenue and operating cost increases in direct ratio to the development of the district.

Thus there are two main features which have resulted in this service showing a most severe financial loss, (1) the increased and improved service called for by the industrial development of the district and (2) the unprecedented overall rise in prices. However, there is still another matter which has contributed to the deficit. We have been exceptionally fortunate in the cordial relations that have existed between our ships' crews and company management, but union regulations now prevent our crews from taking any part in the loading of cargo, thus necessitating the employment of additional longshoremen and greatly increasing our freight handling cost. Furthermore, ships' payrolls and victualling costs have increased because of union regulations which oblige us to carry a larger number of officers and crew than formerly.

We may confidently assume that during the next five years the North Shore of the St Lawrence will witness more activity in its development than any other part of Canada due to Labrador mining activities, the Kennecott Copper development and the expansion in lumbering and papermaking operations...

A statement is attached showing a loss of $270,545.76 for the 1947
season, before crediting the sum of $49,000 paid by the Federal Government under the Stabilization Fund, which has been discontinued as of January 31, 1948. Neither has credit been shown for Provincial Subsidy as no contract has been made for this service covering 1947 and subsequent years.

After consideration of the foregoing, it will rapidly be seen that a substantial increase in the annual subsidy will be required, and we respectfully request that an opportunity be given to discuss the matter with you in order to find a solution to the problem which will enable us to perform, without deficit, a service to the North Shore commensurate with its development.

Eventually, after negotiations with both Quebec and Ottawa in 1947 and 1948, agreements would be put into place that would end these losses. Meanwhile, more developments were yet to come. The Kennecott Copper project referred to by Desmond was an ilmenite mine north of Havre-St-Pierre, while the discovery of 300 million tons of iron ore reserves on the Quebec-Labrador border would lead to even more activity.

The North Shore would always be an expensive ship to operate, but she now provided the main subsidized express passenger service, while the Lower North Shore service operated to Blanc-Sablon. There would be a plentiful supply of both general and project cargo for the rest of the fleet over the next two decades. Meanwhile, "The Gazette" recorded the opening of a new season on May 10, 1948: -

Sailing of the Clarke Steamship Company's motor vessel North Gaspé from Victoria Pier tomorrow evening will mark the opening of passenger and cargo service to the Gaspé coast ports and the Magdalen Islands. Capt Emile Bélanger is master of the North Gaspé. Besides operating on her regular 5½-day cruises to the Gaspé, North Gaspé will also visit Magdalen Islands ports on an itinerary of seven-day cruises.

Other Clarke Steamship sailings from Montreal this week include the North Shore on May 12 to ports along the St Lawrence River's north shore as far east as Havre-St-Pierre and Natashquan. The North Shore will operate on regular six- and seven-day voyages to the coastal region. Another ship, the North Voyageur, will run on 12-day trips as far as Blanc-Sablon and the North Coaster will run to Havre-St-Pierre.

This month, Clarke Steamship's Island Connector begins a series of 19-day voyages from Quebec to the Magdalen Islands, Prince Edward Island, St John's, Nfld, and Saguenay River ports. Another Clarke service connects Pictou, Souris and the Magdalens.

For its direct sailings to Corner Brook and St John's, Nfld, Clarke
Steamship Company is operating the *Empire Gangway* and the *Gulfport*. Both vessels carry 12 passengers besides cargo.

Meanwhile, representative of what was happening at Baie Comeau, the established centre on the North Shore in the days before iron ore, was the traffic handled at its airport. In 1948, this would come to 32,755 passengers, 204 tons of express and 118 tons of air freight. Within three years, passenger traffic would increase by almost a third, but express would double and air freight would treble, taking away some of the traffic that was handled by either Clarke or Quebec Airways before the war.

As well as the coastal and cross-river services offered by Clarke and the Lower St Lawrence Transportation Co, Baie Comeau now also benefitted from a daily bus service to Tadoussac, from where people could catch the bus to Quebec or one of the Canada Steamship Lines' steamers running to Montreal or Bagotville.

Elsewhere in 1948, with Clarke no longer having any ships large enough to host this sort of event, Canada Steamship Lines' *Quebec* took the 37th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Port Authorities on a special cruise from Montreal to the Saguenay between September 28 and October 3.

**A New Saguenay River Trade**

Canada Steamship Lines had always sailed to the Saguenay and Clarke's *New Northland* first cruised the fjord in 1928, but the *Island Connector*’s calls at Port Alfred were the beginning of twenty years of a new business. This was cargoes of fluorspar from Alcan's mine at St Lawrence, Newfoundland, which Clarke ships would now carry to Port Alfred for the Alcan smelter at Arvida. Along with thousands of tons of cargo, small numbers of passengers would also sail up the Saguenay in Clarke ships returning from Newfoundland.

Alcan had started in 1902 as the Canadian unit of Alcoa, and had become Alcan in 1928. Aluminum production at Alcan's Arvida plant had been increased substantially during the war, to a level of 500,000 tons per annum, through the installation of the gigantic Shipshaw hydro-electric power development in 1941-43. "Time" magazine wrote about Alcan in its issue for May 24, 1948: -

Last week, with the ice gone at last from the flat water downstream, ships of many nations furrowed the glacier-carved Saguenay. Inbound, most of them carried cargoes of orange-colored bauxite (aluminum ore) from British Guiana. A few were laden to the Plimsoll mark with cryolite from Greenland, fluorspar from Newfoundland, pitch and coke from the US. At Port Alfred on Ha! Ha! Bay, fine ores were loaded into
railroad cars for a 20-mile journey beyond the deep water. The freighters were reloaded with aluminum, in ingots or billets, for the industry of Canada and foreign lands.

Land of Tourists. By this month's end, cruise ships of Canada Steamship Lines will enter the Saguenay, their rails lined with the first of the season's 250,000 tourists, mostly from the US. Off the frowning, forbidding, 2,000-foot cliff of Cape Eternity, the ships will slow down. Their jazz orchestras will grind out Ave Maria and searchlights will play on a statue of the Virgin placed high on Cape Trinity by an habitant grateful for his recovery after a fall through the Saguenay's ice. Then the whistles will sound, while passengers marvel at the long-drawn echoes between Capes Trinity and Eternity...

Most of the ships go to Bagotville. A few passengers will see the sturdy French-Canadian workmen on the docks of Port Alfred, sweating in the sun, Virgin's medals on their hairy chests. A few will get to the end of the deep water and to Chicoutimi, now a cathedral city of 30,000... But few will get more than a glimpse of the twinkling lights of Arvida, seven miles away.

In the new kingdom of the Saguenay, aluminum is king and Arvida is its capital. Named for Arthur Vining Davis, 80-year-old founder of Aluminum Company of Canada Ltd. ("Alcan"), Arvida has two aspects. As a company town it is one of the best laid out and best run on the continent. Its schools (for adults as well as children) and recreation facilities are topnotch.

Land of Earners. Arvida's other aspect is industrial. The great aluminum plant (the world's largest individual producer) is a mile long, half a mile wide. There habitants who have forsaken the logging camps and rock-strewn farms work in vast Dantesque chambers among massive vats and electrolytic furnaces. The metal they turn out goes into pots & pans, airplanes, building materials, cigarette holders, poker chips, electric conduits. Soon, Alcan will build an aluminum bridge across the Saguenay.

None of the materials used in making aluminum is found in the Saguenay valley. But the water racing out of Lake St John provides the most vital of all resources needed in the industry: electric power. The urgent river has been thrice dammed to drive generators which produce 1,740,000 hp, day in & day out.

Clarke shipshad navigated the Saguenay, the New Northland as far as Bagotville on Ha! Ha! Bay, and others to Cape Trinity, with thousands of tourists before the war. But now Clarke cargo ships called at nearby Port Alfred, bringing with them a new industrial cargo from Newfoundland and up to a dozen tourists each voyage. The first was the Island Connector, but the
Gulfport and others soon followed.

The "Blue Seal"

In 1948, the Sable I changed trade once again, when she was transferred to Job Brothers' affiliate Blue Peter Steamships, and renamed Blue Seal to run opposite the Blue Peter II in service between Montreal and St John's. "Canadian Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering" carried news of the former Clarke ship entering her new 10-day service: -

The fast-growing freighter fleet of the Blue Peter Steamships of St John's, Newfoundland, added another ship in mid-August, when latest addition, the Blue Seal, departed from the country's capital for Montreal.

The article reported 49,000 cubic feet of cargo space, of which 4,200 was refrigerated, and added that she had "accommodation for 10 passengers in first class, there being one de luxe cabin ... besides a saloon and dining lounges." The thirty-four-year-old steamer even became a motorship, with Blue Peter installing an eight-cylinder 1,000 horsepower Enterprise engine. The once-proud Clarke ship had come back to compete with her former owners, and would remain on the route for about five years.

That same month, Blue Peter started a new service from Halifax and North Sydney to St Pierre et Miquelon, for which it engaged the 540-ton Atlantic Charter, a US war-built wooden cargo ship that could also accommodate 30 passengers. This vessel became the Government of St Pierre and Miquelon's Miquelon in 1949 and would remain in this service until 1967.

Meanwhile, that October, with the Gulfport serving Corner Brook and the Empire Gangway and Island Connector St John's, Clarke placed a notice in its usual sailing cards, saying: -

The Newfoundland Government Railway services are presently tied up with the general strike. This does not interfere with our services to Corner Brook and St John's, our sailings will be as scheduled. We may not, however, be able to accept shipments for furtherance by rail from either of these ports.

This strike by nine international unions shut down the railway and kept it closed for five weeks. Corner Brook ran very low on meat and eggs, and the US Air Force resorted to bringing supplies in to its Newfoundland bases by airlift.
Montmorency Shipping Ltd

Frank Clarke, still a director of the Clarke Steamship Co, also became a director of another shipping business, Montmorency Shipping Ltd, for which Montreal Shipping acted as managers. This company chartered the ships needed to look after Montmorency Paper’s shipping requirements from Quebec, Chandler and Botwood to US East Coast and Gulf ports, as well as to Mexico and Argentina. Incorporated in Charlottetown on February 27, 1949, with a capital of $1 million, Montmorency Shipping was a subsidiary of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Co, and replaced an earlier Panamanian concern called Montmorency Shipping Inc.

Wickliffe Moore would succeed Frank Clarke as president of Montmorency Paper in 1950, with Frank becoming chairman. Moore had joined Anglo-Canadian at the depth of the depression in 1932 and been one of the co-founders with Frank of the Montmorency Paper Co. Another Montmorency Paper hand, A C Hill, in turn would succeed Moore before going on to become president of Anglo Paper Products Ltd.

Montmorency Shipping formalized the shipping pool arrangements of Anglo-Canadian Pulp & Paper, Anglo-Newfoundland Development and Gaspesia Sulphite. A later president of Montmorency Shipping, Ross Moore, would also head up the Grand Falls Central Railway Co Ltd, formed to take over the narrow gauge rail lines that linked Anglo-Newfoundland’s Grand Falls paper mill with its docks at Botwood. Moore later became president of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Co, as well as the shipping and rail companies. Anglo-Newfoundland would also acquire 50,000 shares in Anglo-Canadian Pulp & Paper Mills at Quebec, of which Ross Moore became a director.

Schedules for 1949

By 1949, the Clarke fleet had settled into its post-war routine and it is worth looking at their schedules. Of the passenger ships, the North Shore started on May 31, sailing from Montreal every Tuesday on alternating 7-day voyages to Natashquan and 6-day voyages to Havre-St-Pierre. The North Gaspé, meanwhile, continued alternate Monday Magdalens sailings with Tuesday Gaspé departures, with her first Magdalens departure on June 20. Both the North Shore and North Gaspé departed Montreal at 7:30 pm, with latest boarding at 7 pm. Departures from Quebec were set for noon the following day for both ships.

Except for May, when she sailed on Wednesdays, the North Coaster left Montreal every other Friday for Quebec and the downriver ports of Baie Comeau, Franquelin, Godbout, Baie-Trinité, Ile aux Oeufs, Pentecôte, Shelter Bay, Clarke City, Sept-Iles, Rivière-au-Tonnerre, Magpie, Rivière-St-Jean, Mingan and Havre-St-Pierre, all of which were also served by the North
Shore. The North Coaster returned to Montreal on a Wednesday to load her next cargo.

The North Voyageur left Montreal on alternate Wednesdays for Quebec and the lower coast ports of Havre-St-Pierre, Baie-Johan-Beetz, Natashquan, Romaine, Harrington Harbour, Tête-à-la-Baleine, Mutton Bay, La Tabatière, St-Augustin, Vieux-Fort, Baie des Saumons, Bonne-Espérance, Bradore and Blanc-Sablon. Like the North Coaster, she left Montreal at 3 pm and Quebec the following day at 5 pm, and both offered 12-day cruises. Even though it was now 1949, not a lot had changed at some of the smaller wayports. Sidney Dean described a typical North Shore situation, in this case at Rivière-St-Jean, in his "All the Way by Water": -

All such fishing ports, although often anchor-stops (a mile outside) for freighters, are difficult of entry. The big boats unload into small local craft, which gather like chickens around a mother hen.

To Newfoundland, with the exception of a single Thursday sailing in June, the Island Connector left Montreal every third Friday, starting on April 29, for Quebec, the Magdalen, Charlottetown and St John's, with return calls at St Lawrence, Newfoundland, and Port Alfred. In charge of the Island Connector at his stage, in succession to Captains Fraser and Pelletier, was Capt A R Hallett, the singular exception to the rule that French-Canadian masters commanded Clarke ships. The Gulfport, meanwhile, offered "direct freight and passenger service" from Montreal to Corner Brook.

On three Fridays in 1949, August 12, September 23 and November 4, the Island Connector and North Coaster sailed from Montreal on the same day. Friday sailings were an innovation for Clarke ships, which had usually sailed earlier in the week. But with half a dozen owned ships now in service, this allowed the workload to be spread over the week and made better use of the labour force now that cargo was so important.

Newfoundland Joins Confederation

The big event of 1949 was Newfoundland becoming the tenth province of Canada and the "New York Times" ran a story in its travel section on March 13, 1949. Under the heading "Newfoundland Joins the Dominion," it referred to Clarke's cruises to Newfoundland and Labrador: -

Newfoundland, which with Labrador will be joined to Canada as a tenth province on March 31, holds many attractions for the vacationist...

A mountainous island with a heavily wooded interior, Newfoundland is sparsely settled. It is about the size of New York State yet it has fewer than 320,000 inhabitants. For this reason, it is popular with hunters and fishermen; its coastal waters and inland lakes are filled with fish.
and its forests abound with game birds, caribou and moose...

Newfoundland also has a railroad, government-operated, which runs from St John's westward across the island in a sweeping curve to Portaux-Basques. The 550-mile route has considerable scenic interest, passing through coastal villages and pulp and paper-mill towns. It touches the famous Gander Airport, stopping point for international air travelers, and crosses the rugged inland mountain region...

Although the island is well-suited for summer vacations, at present it lacks facilities to handle a large influx of tourists. St John's, the capital and port on the Atlantic, has one large hotel with 150 rooms and a number of smaller hotels. Rates are $6 per person in the larger hotels, meals included.

In the smaller towns and resorts of the island there are lodges and small hotels with rates averaging $5 a day and up, American plan. One of the largest hotels in Newfoundland outside St John's is in Corner Brook, a pulp and paper-mill town on the Gulf of St Lawrence. Rates at this seventy-room establishment are from $6.50 a day per person, American plan...

Several steamship companies in Halifax maintain weekly service to St John's, with rates varying according to accommodations from around $75 and up round-trip. The trip takes two days... There is also steamship service between Boston and St John's.

Cruises to Newfoundland and Labrador from Montreal are scheduled each summer by Clarke Steamships. These take about nineteen days and cost from $200 up, depending on accommodations.

The Labrador cruises presumably referred to the North Voyageur's sailings to what had until then been the Canadian Labrador. But the number of cruisers was now in the dozens rather than hundreds.

With the Newfoundland Railway becoming part of Canadian National Railways in 1949, Clarke also found a way of lowering freight rates to Newfoundland. It negotiated new through rail/water tariffs with the Canadian Pacific Railway Co from inland points in Canada to Newfoundland, thus giving Canadian Pacific direct access to the new island province. On June 28, three months after Newfoundland joined Confederation, implementation of the new arrangement was noted in the "New York Times," under the heading "Ship-Rail Service Planned":

The Clarke Steamship Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway plan to establish a joint direct freight service from Montreal by ship to Newfoundland in the near future, it is announced by Desmond A Clarke, president of the shipping company. A vessel will carry freight
trans-shipped from the railway to Corner Brook and St John's every ten days.

Not to be outdone, this agreement was followed on August 20 by one with Canadian National Railways that established joint rail/water tariffs with Clarke over Montreal to Corner Brook and St John's, with Blue Peter Steamships and Newfoundland Canada Steamships over Montreal and Halifax to St John's and Furness Withy over Halifax to St John's. Clarke started advertising these arrangements in Canadian newspapers such as the "Winnipeg Free Press," which carried this story on August 29: -

Ship your merchandise direct to Newfoundland by these new fast routes. By using the combined resources of Canadian Pacific or Canadian National services to Montreal, and the fast Clarke Line freighters direct to Newfoundland, you can be sure of landing your goods safely and on time right in St John's - heart of Canada's newest provincial market - or in Corner Brook - metropolis of the West Coast - in the fastest time possible. Check these points: Competitive Routes, Simplicity of Billing, Less Handling, Marine Insurance

Sailings were fast by comparison with those before the war as the ships now sailed direct to Newfoundland rather than stopping at various ports along the way, as they had before the war. These advertisements listed Clarke offices in Montreal, Quebec and St John's, but with the expansion of cargo services to include both of Newfoundland's major ports, Clarke now also found itself in need of booking agents in Ontario. In Toronto, it had appointed Muirhead Steamships Ltd, who had offices in the Terminal Warehouse Building and a branch office in Hamilton, and in Waterloo, the local office of Muirhead Forwarding Ltd. This gave it not only a network of booking offices in Ontario but also a means of getting small shipments to Montreal through its own rail forwarding services.

Mac Clarke and Monsen-Clarke Ltd

Frank Clarke's son "Mac" Clarke had only stayed with Clarke Steamship for a short time after the war before moving to Montreal Shipping, where he met a Norwegian shipping man called Thorleif Monsen. These two formed a new shipping agency called Monsen-Clarke Ltd in 1948, with the idea of opening a new monthly cargo service between Montreal and Vancouver and Victoria via the Panama Canal, a service that had been offered by others before the war.

In the spring of 1949, therefore, Monsen-Clarke, operating from offices it shared with March Shipping at 400 Craig Street West, opened this new service, for which it would charter ships from Canada Asiatic Lines Ltd. This line had been founded by John P Goulandris, founder and president of the Orion Shipping & Trading Company and Atlantic Shipping Agencies in New
York and the Andros Shipping Co Ltd in Montreal.

Monsen-Clarke had managed to obtain the backing of Guy Tombs Ltd, which had been operating a railway pool car service to the west coast. In its own announcement, Guy Tombs said that the re-establishment of steamship pool-car service would result in "favourable delivery costs" to British Columbia, adding that it had operated the original steamship pool-car service in 1932. As part of this arrangement, Monsen-Clarke also opened a branch office in Vancouver.

The new line, Atpac Steamship Lines Ltd, had scheduled the 7,202-ton Gulfside to leave Montreal on April 25 on its first sailing to Vancouver. Instead, however, she found herself immobilized in Bristol by a strike of the Canadian Seamen's Union. The line went ahead, however, using other Goulouandris ships such as the 7,200-ton Islands and 7,158-ton Oceanside. But the railways, not liking this revived waterborne competition, reduced their rates on affected commodities under what they called an Agreed Charge. Despite efforts by Monsen-Clarke to find new cargoes for California or transhipment cargoes for South America via Panama, the line did not last for more than a couple of years.

Monsen-Clarke also acted as booking agents for the Canada Asiatic Line, which used many of the same ships on sailings to India, Pakistan and China. In the midst of all this, on July 9, 1950, 43-year-old John Goulandris died while on a trip to Paris. That same year, Thorleif Monsen returned to Aall & Co Ltd in Tokyo, where he had worked before the war, becoming president of that company in 1956. In 1962, Mac relocated to Stowe, Vermont, there to enter the hotel and residential development business and later open a travel agency called Travel Unlimited.

A "Vagabond Cruise" in the "North Voyageur"

Despite the huge growth in cargo, Clarke ships were still popular for passengers who wanted to sail to the Gulf of St Lawrence, both north and south, and to Newfoundland with many booking the full round voyage as a cruise.

In the summer of 1949, Mr & Mrs Clive Planta made a round trip in the North Voyageur. Planta was manager of the Fisheries Council of Canada and the first few lines of their "Jottings of a trip to the Canadian Labrador" give us a flavour of a typical post-war cruise to the Lower North Shore on the second North Voyageur. On reading the first paragraph, one can't help but to compare their reaction to that of William Carlos Williams on boarding an earlier North Voyageur in 1931: -

At her berth within the shadow of skyscrapers of the city of Montreal, the s.s. North Voyageur would pass unnoticed by anyone who scanned
the harbour to witness by contrast the huge freighters and palatial passenger ships making their way up and down the St Lawrence River to the trade lanes of the world. At the ports of Natashquan, Harrington, Bradore Bay, Blanc-Sablon or any other of the fourteen ports of call along the Canadian Labrador the *North Voyageur* looms larger in size and of greater importance than would the *Queen Mary* at the port of Quebec.

Tourists who long for an escape from the wearisome monotony of vacations which are bound close to the conventions of civilization are attracted by the "Vagabond Cruise" which is a term used to describe the trip of the *North Voyageur* from Montreal to Blanc-Sablon and return. Their superficial brush with the people who live within the fringe of the Arctic, the thrill of seeing cargo unloaded from a ship's hold and slung over the side of the vessel by winch to small open boats that make their way out from settlements along the coast to the ship at anchor are never to be forgotten. The occasional visit to shore for an hour or so while the ship unloads cargo at the few communities that are equipped with wharves is as entirely new as it is fascinating.

But to the people who live in each of the fourteen ports of call the arrival of the *North Voyageur* has an entirely different meaning. From the opening of navigation in the spring of the year until the ice closes the area to all navigation in the late fall, each fortnightly trip of the *North Voyageur* is the only contact these people have with the outside world.

With the introduction of the *North Voyageur* to the Lower Coast run, cruise passengers were once again sailing to the Strait of Belle Isle. But as so often happens with these things, the Planta review ended up being written during her last full season and rather than acting as a guide, ended up becoming a memorial of these cruises.

**Navigating the Lower North Shore**

Neither Huard in the *Otter* in 1897 nor Rochette in the first *North Voyageur* in 1926 had been able to give us an idea of what was entailed in navigating the Lower North Shore, as neither had steamed the full distance. Both men had disembarked early in order to make their way by smaller boats between the various outports, where they wanted a longer stay than the brief calls allowed by the coastal steamer. Bessie Jane Banfill, meanwhile, had travelled as far as Mutton Bay in the *North Shore* in 1928. The Plantas, however, did the whole round voyage to the Strait of Belle Isle and give their own view of the voyage: -

The lack of adequate light beacons, bell buoys, range lights and adequate ship to shore communications means that this essential
service is almost wholly dependent on the experience, judgement and ingenuity of the captain. In fact, the only person who could captain a vessel to serve the numerous settlements along the coast of the Canadian Labrador is one who knows the seas in the area, has experienced the vagaries of the weather by seasons and has been trained through each step in the rigorous labour and exacting knowledge required in handling a ship in these treacherous waters. Such a man is Capt Sylvio Bélanger, who signed on the articles ... as an able-bodied seaman in 1930 and worked his way up to captain of the ship in 1944...

At every hour of the day and night when the North Voyageur is winding her way in and out of the myriad islands which skirt the shore for three hundred-odd miles from Natashquan to Blanc-Sablon and through the narrow inside passages, sometimes only 500 feet in width, Capt Bélanger will be found at the wheelhouse or walking the bridge, ever alert to the dangers that lurk on every hand, for even though he knows each rock, shoal and island, he is never prepared to take a chance.

At times during long watches one finds him in casual conversation with the first or second officer, mate or wheelsman about family or community affairs and sometimes even domestic and world politics. Again his face becomes set with an expression of alert determination and his eyes flash at all of the familiar landmarks. In moments of tension in making his way through closely grouped islands and through narrow inland channels he will softly hum and whistle alternately the first few bars of some familiar tune over and over again, stopping only to give the wheelsman the not infrequent orders which the ever changing course demands...

In foggy weather he will often be compelled to alter the course of the ship to find a suitable location where the depth of water will permit safe anchorage, to await the lifting of the fog. Such experiences are not uncommon in the month of July. Delays may be anywhere from twenty-four hours to sixty hours. In rainy weather the vessel will often have to delay discharging cargo owing to inadequate shore facilities and wharves to protect perishable goods.

Travel at night is impracticable excepting in the area where the ship may travel the outside passage and then only to the four points provided with night markers. As the ship must stop at several communities between each of the areas provided with night markers the many reefs and rocks at the entrances of the harbours or shelters where the vessel must make her way to drop anchor are too hazardous to permit the vessel proceeding until daylight. Day markers can then be observed as a guide to safe navigation. Although the vessel is equipped with an echo-sounding device, radar equipment has
not been installed. It is admitted that radar equipment would not add greatly to the safety of navigation without radar deflecting buoys, bell buoys and adequate night lights...

In the event of a clear moonlit night which permits safe navigation to some ports which are equipped with night markers, the ship's arrival will find the community asleep. When the ship has dropped anchor, four long blasts on the whistle sing out "Come and get it." Lights come on in the houses on shore, dogs set up a howling chorus and the putt, putt of engines denotes the small boats making their way to the ships side to take cargo.

The Blais family had sailed its schooners as far as Blanc-Sablon and steamship lines had extended the North Shore service beyond Natashquan to Harrington Harbour. Other lines had made occasional voyages to Blanc-Sablon, but Clarke had been the first to offer scheduled service all the way to the Strait of Belle Isle. It had been doing so now for twenty-eight years, originally to Bradore Bay and then to Blanc-Sablon.

The Plantas having returned from their voyage, on August 22 Clive Planta sent the Fisheries Prices Board a "Report of the Distressful Conditions Prevailing on the Coast of the Canadian Labrador." In this document, Planta revealed that many of the local fishermen were now deeply in debt, with the cod fishery having once again diminished since the war. As a result of his report, Quebec issued $80,000 in relief cheques and Canada sent $35,000 worth of butter, cheese, powdered milk and honey to the coast to help them survive the winter, while Clarke carried the cargo at cost rather than full tariff.

**A Plane Crash in the St Lawrence**

Gloom also darkened the autumn of 1949 when on Friday morning, September 9, a Quebec Airways DC-3 crashed with its 23 crew and passengers. A bomb had gone off on board while it was flying from Quebec to Baie Comeau, killing all as it exploded over Cap Tourmente near Sault au Cochon.

The regular flight from Montreal to Sept-Iles with stop-over at Quebec included among its passengers the president, president-elect and vice-president of Kennecott Copper. These gentleman had intended to board a bush plane at Sept-Iles to fly on to Havre-St-Pierre, where the first ship was due to start loading ilmenite ore. Also on the DC-3 were two engineers from Quebec North Shore Paper, a number of woodsmen from Consolidated-Bathurst and an unfortunate wife. Her husband, a Quebec jeweller who murdered her for $10,000 in life insurance, his girlfriend, who had delivered the bomb to Quebec airport as air express, and her brother, who had made it, were all arrested, tried and later executed for their crime.
The North Shore, which had left Baie Comeau the day before the crash, was at Sept-Îles, where the Quebec Airways plane had been due later that day. The North Shore duly left Sept-Îles and arrived at Havre-St-Pierre as the first ilmenite ship was loading, but with the huge loss and the shock that went with it, there was no celebration. The North Voyageur was on her way back from Blanc-Sablon, the North Coaster due to leave Montreal and the North Gaspé at Gaspé. This incident may have made some think twice about flying, but Clarke, although no longer involved, had been one of the founders of Quebec Airways and a shareholder until seven years earlier. Indeed, Desmond had been president before Canadian Pacific had bought them out.

Not all the news was bad, however, as on Sunday, October 9, a month after the Quebec Airways crash, one of the passengers on board the North Shore gave birth to a baby boy. The intending mother had been making her way from Pentecôte to Quebec for the birth when the North Shore hit a storm and she started to deliver. Her accompanying nurse, the wife of the doctor in Pentecôte, managed to deliver the child with hot water supplied by the crew and the help of a pair of manicure scissors.

Ottawa Pays for the Mails

After much negotiation, the problem of losses being incurred by the North Shore and other ships serving the North Shore was somewhat abated when a new arrangement was arrived at for handling the mails. An order of the Privy Council in Ottawa, under date of October 4, 1949, said in part:

That mails have been conveyed previous to 31st March 1949 between Quebec and ports on the North Shore of the River and Gulf of St Lawrence under contract between the Canadian Maritime Commission and the Clarke Steamship Company, Limited, of Montreal, PQ, which contained a clause providing for the conveyance of all such mail and that no payment may be made or required by the contractor over and beyond the amount of subsidy provided for;

That in consequence of a recent change in policy, subsidies granted by the Canadian Maritime Commission commencing with the fiscal year 1949-50 will no longer cover the cost of mail conveyance and payment for mail conveyance must be arranged entirely independent of such subsidies;

That in order to maintain mail service on the Quebec, Natashquan - North Shore water route, the Post Office Department authorized the continuance of mail service between Quebec, PQ, and ports on the North Shore of the River and Gulf of St Lawrence on a temporary basis effective the 1st April 1949, with the Clarke Steamship Company,
Limited, of Montreal, PQ;

That representations have been made by the Clarke Steamship Company, Limited, for payment by the Post Office Department for this service on a commercial basis.

The Canadian Maritime Commission had been formed in 1947 to take over the administration of subsidies, among other things, from the Department of Trade and Commerce. The result of the negotiations was a two-year contract, retroactive to April 1, 1949, between Clarke and the Railway Mail Service Branch of the Postmaster General's Department, under which the Post Office would pay separately for the carriage of mail.

Freight rates were now quoted separately for each of the Quebec to Natashquan and Quebec to Blanc-Sablon services. Although 100,000 pounds of air mail, or about a ton a week, would soon be handled to and from Baie Comeau, and an additional volume to and from Sept-Iles, it was still far cheaper to send mail to the North Shore by ship.

**Furness Red Cross Line Charters the "North Coaster"**

The Furness Red Cross Line's *Fort Amherst* and *Fort Townshend* were now back on their usual New York, Halifax and St John's rotation. And just as the *North Pioneer* had been called in to replace the Hudson's Bay Co's *Nascopie* in 1947, so the *North Coaster* was called on to replace one of the Furness Red Cross ships in the winter of 1949-50. After the *Fort Townshend* suffered a breakdown at Halifax in October, Furness Withy chartered the *North Coaster* to replace her in their schedule.

Between November 1949 and February 1950, the *North Coaster* thus made several voyages from New York to Saint John, Halifax and St John's. As repairs to the *Fort Townshend* neared completion, the January 20, 1950, edition of the "New York Times" announced the end of the charter: -

Boiler repairs to the Furness Red Cross liner *Fort Townshend* are nearing completion at Halifax, NS, and the ship will resume regularly scheduled service between New York and Eastern Canadian ports with a sailing on Feb 11, the line announce yesterday.

The vessel, which had been out of commission since Oct 15, when she developed boiler trouble shortly before sailing for Halifax, will leave from the Canadian port on Feb 7 and will arrive here two days later.

The line also announced that the freighter *North Coaster*, which had been chartered to take the place of the *Fort Townshend*, would be returned to her owners immediately. The *North Coaster* is due here Monday and will leave again the same day.
The North Coaster's cargo capacity was 75 per cent of the Fort Townshend's by deadweight and 60 per cent by volume, but that was sufficient for the purpose. And her passenger capacity was a tenth of the Furness Red Cross Line ship's, but as it was winter there were no tourists to be catered for. This was the second time the Furness Red Cross Line had chartered a Clarke ship for this run as it had also briefly engaged the New Northland on the route in April 1931.

The Red Cross Line did not survive much longer, however. Over the winter of 1950-51 the "Forts" operated several 21-day West Indies cruises from New York, and returned to her usual northern route. Then, as Newfoundland started to trade more with Canada and less with the United States, Furness Withy sold the Fort Amherst. The Fort Townshend lasted a little longer, but ultimately made her last passenger sailing from New York on September 12, 1951, and from Halifax on the 14th before entering the New York-West Indies trade in 1951-52. After two years operating cargo ships only, the Furness Red Cross Line would shut down completely in 1953.

**The "Island Connector"**

The Island Connector's Prince Edward Island sailings ended with the expiry of the four-year subsidy contract at the end of 1949. Her last sailing under this agreement left Montreal for the Magdalen Islands, Charlottetown and St John's on November 25, ending a participation in the Montreal-Prince Edward Island trade that had started with the Gaspesia in 1922 and then been carried on by the New Northland and North Star and chartered canallers. Thereafter, she moved to the winter "fast freight service" between Saint John, Halifax and St John's.

In the early morning hours of March 18, 1950, while engaged in the winter service, the Island Connector, under Capt Joseph Giasson, had a serious collision in Halifax harbour. Departing for St John's in fog, she rammed the 115-foot motor fishing schooner Gertrude de Costa, an inbound schooner of the Lawrence Sweeney fleet from Yarmouth, which quickly sank off McNab Island. The Island Connector had been doing about ten knots just before the collision, about full speed for her, but had reversed on seeing the lights of the Gertrude de Costa, meaning that on impact she was doing about 3-4 knots. After the accident several crew members of the Island Connector went down the side of the ship on ropes and ladders to rescue the survivors. The Clarke ship then swept the area for more than an hour in search of more survivors before bringing the rescued men and two bodies ashore, docking at Pier 30 shortly after 4 am. The Associated Press carried a story under the heading "Nova Scotian Vessel Sinks after Crash" on the day of the sinking:

A jinxed Nova Scotia trawler was rammed and sunk in the early morning darkness off Halifax harbor today, carrying 11 of her 17 crew
members to a watery death. Only six escaped from the 115-foot *Gertrude de Costa*, out of Yarmouth, NS, after a sudden collision with the Inter-Island Steamship Co Ltd vessel *Island Connector*.

Sitting in the steaming engine room of the *Connector*, the still shivering survivors told of a frantic scramble for safety during the few short minutes before their craft took her last plunge.

All were taken to a hospital shortly after the 1,386-ton *Connector* brought them into port. Some suffered injuries and shock. In the companionway outside lay the bodies of two of their shipmates, the only two recovered. All the survivors - one actually was carried under with the ship but lived to tell the story - are from Nova Scotia. All the dead, except one from Grand Bank, Newfoundland, also were Nova Scotians.

Among the dead were Capt Haslen Knickle of Lunenburg and his father, Otto. Another father and son, George Schrader and his son, Dave, also were lost in the crash, which climaxed a jinxed voyage for the *de Costa*. On the banks a few days ago a dory upset and one crew member was lost. His dory-mate, Morton Tanner of Blue Rocks, was saved. Today, Tanner was one of those lost.

The vessel carried only a partial load of fish - fishing has been bad on the banks this season - as she came in the harbor.

The *Connector*, outbound for St. John's Nfld, was not visibly damaged and her officers declined to comment on the crash.

Edward Tanner, elderly cook aboard the *De Costa*, told of his own escape. "I was below asleep but I heard someone yell 'lower the sails' and that woke me. Then the crash came and someone cried 'My God, what happened?' By that time I was out on deck. Someone near the stacked dories was yelling for a knife to cut them loose but no one had one. I ran below and got one and took a couple of swipes at the ropes before she went under. My arms were twisted in the rigging as she sank. I still don't know how I'm here. I went down with her and then came up in the wreckage near a bunch of dories - somehow they had got loose."

Robert Parker of Canso said he was at the wheel just before the crash. "We saw her coming," he said, "and the skipper gave me the 'hard over' order. Then he took the wheel himself just before the crash. She hit us almost straight on at the after end."

For the summer of 1950, the *Island Connector* sailed directly from Montreal to St John's via Quebec, while the Prince Edward Island Industrial Corporation took over the Charlottetown to St John's portion of the route.
with the 379-ton wooden coaster *Eskimo*. The latter was a former Royal Canadian Air Force supply ship that had served Goose Bay and had then been purchased by the Hudson's Bay Co for use between the loss of the *Nascopie* and the introduction of the new *Rupertsland*. Prince Edward Island, which had been looking to acquire its own ship since the war, now did so with the *Eskimo*. The new vessel had to struggle with ice when she began service. Leaving Pictou on April 23, after battling her way all day through ice to get to Charlottetown, she had to give up and return to Pictou to wait for the ice to clear.

Although the Prince Edward Island contract had not been renewed, Clarke was now well established in the year-round St John's market, with regular sailings from Montreal during the season of navigation and from Halifax and Saint John by winter. Without the island calls, the *Island Connector* was able to increase her frequency from Montreal to St John's to about once a fortnight instead of every three weeks. The Magdalen Islands, meanwhile, went back to relying on the *North Gaspé* and the *Magdalen*.

The 1950 season would be the *Island Connector*'s last with Clarke. She left Montreal on her first sailing on Wednesday, May 3, and for most of the season sailed on either a Friday or a Tuesday, a change from the previous every third Friday. And as the *North Coaster* sailed every second Friday, the two ships occasionally left Montreal together, as they did on season opening on May 3. From St John's, the *Island Connector* continued to return by way of St Lawrence and Port Alfred, with cargoes of Alcan fluorspar. The fare for this shorter 14-day itinerary was $185, only slightly down from the $200 she had been charging for 19 days.

**The "Novaport"**

It had been intended to give the name *Novaport* to the *Empire Gangway*, but the question of title delayed this happening and had not been finally resolved until October 27, 1949, when the Attorney General of the United States, in response to a formal enquiry on the matter, arrived at the following conclusion: -

This is in response to your inquiry as to whether, in the circumstances described below, title to the s.s. *Empire Gangway*, a captured German merchant vessel formerly known as the *Weserwehr*, may be transferred to the Canadian Government without authorizing legislation...

The *Empire Gangway* is one of seven captured German merchant vessels which were assigned for use of the United States by the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board...

The United States Maritime Commission, after consultation with the
Coast Guard and representatives of the American shipping industry, determined that it would be uneconomic to attempt to convert any of the seven vessels so allocated to the United States (including the *Empire Gangway*), for use in the American merchant marine. The Commission also determined that advantageous use could be made, however, by this country of certain other vessels found in the German fleet and accordingly requested the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency established by the Final Act of the Paris Conference of December 21, 1945, to allocate them to the United States. Thirteen such vessels have been received by the United States...

On May 24, 1946, in further pursuance of the Potsdam agreement, the *Empire Gangway* was reallocated to Canada by the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency. The vessel is now in the possession of Canada on a bare-boat charter basis.

You have advised us of your conclusion that the international agreements and arrangements relating to this matter constitute a binding obligation upon the United States to transfer possession of and such title as it may have to the *Empire Gangway* to the country to which it was finally allocated, namely, Canada...

The decree in the prize proceedings, which, as stated above, were instituted with the understanding that they were to be without prejudice to the ultimate disposition of the vessel to another country, forfeited the vessel to the United States. It does not follow, however, that in these circumstances the rights of allied nations, whose participation in the war contributed to the capture of the vessel, were thereby extinguished as against the United States. As the Acting Legal Adviser has pointed out, moreover, even if title to the vessel has technically vested in the United States in this instance, the United States must, in the circumstances, be regarded as holding such title only as a trustee for all its Allies pending ultimate disposition in accordance with the Potsdam Agreement...

In response to your inquiry, therefore, I see no reason as a matter of law why the United States may not, without legislation specifically authorizing such action, take whatever formal steps may be necessary to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements and arrangements referred to above by transferring such title as it may have to the s.s. *Empire Gangway* to the Government of Canada.

By this time, of course, Clarke had already taken delivery, and on October 25, 1949, two days before the final decision was set down, the *Empire Gangway* had made the news in another way. With Capt William Tremblay, late of the *New Northland* and *Jean Brillant*, in command, she had featured in a Canadian Press story from Montreal entitled "Ship's Skipper Drives Locomotives Off Vessel": -
Navigation is more in Capt William Tremblay's line than engineering but the Montreal skipper proved last week he can turn his hand to that too when he got two big locomotives ashore from the Canadian freighter *Empire Gangway* without help of cranes at Havre-St-Pierre PQ.

Shipping men today told how the *Empire Gangway* arrived at the isolated Gulf of St Lawrence port, 600 miles northeast of here with two 115-ton locomotives for Quebec Iron & Titanium Company.

There were no cranes to lift them and it looked like a long wait for the freighter until they arrived. Then Capt Tremblay had an idea. He had a spur line built along the edge of the wharf. When the tide was right, he joined it to his ship. Then he steamed up the locomotives and drove them off the vessel.

This particular delivery was for Quebec Iron & Titanium's 27-mile long Romaine River Railway, whose first four locomotives were delivered between 1949 and 1951. From entertaining presidents of General Motors subsidiaries in the *New Northland* to carrying the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in the *Jean Brillant* and now taking railway locomotives to raw wilderness mining railways in an ex-German war prize, Capt Tremblay had seen a few changes in his years with Clarke.

Although the question of title was eventually resolved, for some time after Clarke took her on, the *Empire Gangway* kept her wartime name. She even appeared under that name in the 1950 "Vagabond Cruises" brochure, as she was not renamed *Novaport* until that September. Meanwhile, Capt Emile Bélanger, who had joined Clarke in 1925 as bosun on the *Nayarit*, came over from the *North Gaspé* to succeed Capt Tremblay as master of the *Empire Gangway*.

The *Novaport* finally became a full member of the Clarke fleet in late 1950. As a sister ship of the *Gulfport*, she was of course a known quantity, and gave the company two compatible ships for service to Newfoundland. Completed by Deutsche Werft AG at Hamburg in 1944, as the *Weserwehr* she had been managed by North German Lloyd. Captured by the Allies at Bremerhaven on May 9, 1945, the British Ministry of War Transport had given her the name *Empire Gangway*.

Like the *Gulfport*, the *Novaport* had dimensions of 301 feet overall by 44 feet and a deadweight of 3,450 tons. And, as with the *Gulfport*, Clarke had already outfitted her with accommodation for twelve passengers and space for refrigerated cargo. Just as the *Gulfport* had introduced a residual post-war passenger service to replace the *New Northland* at Corner Brook, so the *Island Connector* and now the *Novaport* succeeded the *Belle Isle* and predecessors at St John's.
The Novaport and Gulfport both had certain German peculiarities that had to be looked after in operation. One of these was a problem with their steel classification at Lloyd's. The Novaport's coal-fired machinery was the same as Gulfport's, giving her a speed of 10 knots, but had been built by Rheinmetall-Borsig in Berlin. Clarke ran her as a coal-fired ship for a while, but after some initial mechanical difficulties, she was converted to burn fuel oil, like the Gulfport. Soon named master of the Novaport was Capt Jacques Chouinard of St-Jean-Port-Joli, who would remain with her through much of her career. Although he came from the same vicinity as the brothers Georges and Léo Chouinard, Jacques Chouinard was not a direct relative.

Clarke's 1950 brochure laid out twelve sailings by the Empire Gangway and thirteen by the Island Connector so that, with the two ships alternating, Clarke was able to offer a sailing between Montreal and St John's about every seven to ten days. In May, July, September and November, service was almost weekly, with four departures each month. And like the Island Connector, the Novaport usually left Montreal on a Friday or a Tuesday. But rather than calling at St Lawrence for fluorspar, the Novaport returned by way of Dingwall to load gypsum for Montreal. Although Terra Nova is the Latin name for Newfoundland, the name Novaport could thus also be read in this context as having a connection to Nova Scotia.

The Terra Nova Steamship Company to St John's

By the time she was finally renamed, the Novaport had been registered to yet another company, the Terra Nova Steamship Co Ltd, which had operated her as the Empire Gangway. Terra Nova was something more than a pure shipowning company, however, as it had been incorporated in St John's on October 11, 1947. What was different was that Terra Nova brought in eight leading Newfoundland businessmen as minority shareholders to operate a direct shipping service between Montreal and St John's, a distance of 1,043 nautical miles. In this case, Clarke acted as managers for both the ship and the company in which the Newfoundland merchants now held a minority interest. In addition to St John's, ships in this service made secondary calls at outports such as Bay Roberts or Wabana to deliver smaller lots of cargo, or occasionally Argentia or Clarenville.

The Island Connector had at first provided this Montreal-St John's service, but as the trade developed it became evident that she was too small for the route, even after dropping her calls at the Magdalen Islands and Prince Edward Island. Following on the success of first the Gulfport to Corner Brook and now the Novaport to St John's, Clarke would soon decide to dispose of the smaller Island Connector to charter in larger ships.

Caribbean Trading
The North Shore, North Gaspé and North Coaster all worked for West India Fruit & Steamship after the war, continuing the pattern of the New Northland and the North Star by finding winter work in Florida. Likewise, most of the post-war cargo ships, at least those that weren't needed to maintain the winter services to Newfoundland and the North Shore, found winter work on West Indies charters. Ships that didn't go south were usually laid up in the Louise Basin at Quebec for the winter, as Clarke ships always were.

In the winter of 1950-51, the Gulfport and Novaport, which also offered refrigerated space, were chartered to Alcan's shipping arm, Saguenay Terminals Ltd, for sailings from Halifax and Saint John to and from various islands in the Caribbean as well as Venezuela and British Guiana. Their passenger space, although limited, was also used. that winter. The two sisters and the trio of Island Connector, North Coaster and North Pioneer all found their way south at various times, as would later ships, bringing in extra revenue for Clarke and providing winter cash flow in what was after all a seasonal business.

With the exception of the North Pioneer, which would have additional passenger capacity added in 1950, this winter activity would continue every year throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. And even in the summer time, company ships could occasionally be found working in the south, as the North Coaster did when she carried a cargo of sugar from Cuba to Baltimore for A H Bull & Co in August 1947.

When not chartered to West India Fruit or operators such as Norgulf Lines, Caribbean Lines or Saguenay Terminals, Clarke ships traded for their own account, carrying tramp cargoes around the Caribbean. Time charters were done using the normal New York Produce Exchange contract but for cargoes such as sugar from Cuba or cement to Venezuela, Clarke developed its own charter parties, as these contracts of carriage are called.

Meanwhile, back in the St Lawrence River, Clarke would have heavy competition from both existing competitors and new companies that entered the trade between Montreal and Newfoundland.

Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamships

Between the acquisition of the Gulfport and the Novaport, the Dominion of Newfoundland had become a Canadian province, joining Confederation on March 31, 1949. In the same year, another competitor came onto the scene when Charles H Tregenza of New York formed Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamships Ltd (NGL). "The Financial Post" carried further details on March 26, 1949: -

The anticipated increase in business moving from Canada to
Newfoundland following Confederation has led to the formation of a new shipping company, Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamships Ltd, to provide a freight service direct from Hamilton and Toronto to St John's, Newfoundland...

President and managing director of Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamships is Charles H Tregenza, Hamilton, Ont. He is president of Falmouth Steamships Inc and connected with several other corporations. Until recently he was president and co-owner of Lunham & Moore Shipping Ltd, in Montreal and New York...

Chairman of the board is Dr F J Bennatto, Hamilton, Ont. Dr Bennatto is president of Wood, Alexander & James Ltd, a large wholesale hardware firm, and a director of a number of other companies. Head office of the new company will be in St John's, Newfoundland, with executive and business offices in Toronto.

Main service will be from Toronto and Hamilton every 14 or 15 days. Last port of call will be Toronto, with steamers sailing direct to Newfoundland taking seven or eight days to complete the voyage from there. It is planned to include ports as far west as Sarnia, Windsor and Leamington and eventually to service the mining districts in Labrador and Quebec.

As the vessels must go through 28 St Lawrence locks, a particular type of shallow-draft vessel is necessary. Further, the Canada Shipping Act will apply, making it obligatory to use only Canadian or British flag vessels which will have to be licensed to freight out as far as Newfoundland. Before the war, there were some 126 of these vessels in existence but [at] war's end only 68 were left. As only 14 have been built since, it is difficult to secure the proper type of ship. New ships must be built but in the meantime the best possible vessels will be used.

The new company was based in the Terminal Warehouse Building in Toronto, the same building where Clarke's own agents, Muirhead Steamships, were located. In fact, Newfoundland Great Lakes hired its first traffic manager from Muirhead. Agents in St John's were the ubiquitous A Harvey & Co and Lunham & Moore, a company that had been started in New York as a freight forwarder, would act as Montreal agent. Although Montreal calls were at first ruled out, they would eventually be added.

To start, Newfoundland Great Lakes used the same two steam-powered canallers, the *Ashleaf* and *Bayleaf*, that had previously worked for the Shaw Steamship Co, announcing that they "recently were completely rebuilt" at a cost of $600,000 for use as package freighters. While some cargo handling modifications may have been carried out for Newfoundland Great Lakes, they had in fact been rebuilt from bulk carriers and renamed by
Marine Industries in 1942.

The *Ashleaf* and *Bayleaf* went to new owners in the Great Lakes in 1950 and Newfoundland Great Lakes then chartered two bridge-aft steam-powered coasters, the 1,579-ton *Springdale* and 1,627-ton *Springtide*, from the Springwell Shipping Co Ltd of London.

These older ships allowed Newfoundland Great Lakes to get a start, but in the autumn of 1950, they received a visit from the Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Company, which operated modern motor coasters between the ports for which it was named. In his book "DP&L: A History of the Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Company," Graeme Somner outlined how this came about: -

With the constant need to find employment for the coastal ships during the summer months, Mr John R Cowper who had taken over from his father as general manager of the company in 1947, travelled to Canada in October 1950 to explore the possibility of vessels being chartered to operate from the Canadian eastern seaboard to ports such as Hamilton, Detroit and Cleveland on the Great Lakes. At this time the St Lawrence Seaway was still under construction and only ocean-going vessels under 260 feet in length and 45 feet beam could pass through the 21 locks between Montreal and Lake Ontario. He was successful in arranging a three-year contract between April and November each year with the Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamship Co, initially for two vessels, to carry general cargo from Hamilton and Toronto to St John's, Newfoundland, returning with tramp bulk cargoes. *Perth (vi)* sailed from Southampton on 12th April 1951 for Montreal and was followed by *Lunan*. The next year *London (vii)* joined the other two in Canadian waters, the *Lunan* being fixed to carry 800 tons of structural steel to Detroit on her outward trip.

Newfoundland Great Lakes sailing schedules carried a clear message in those pre-container days, "direct without transhipment to Newfoundland," one that echoed back to the Chaffey Brothers in the 1860s. The new line went after Ontario firms such as Hiram Walker in Walkerville, H J Heinz in Leamington and Christies Biscuits and Canada Packers in Toronto. Yet another was Carnation, who shipped canned milk from Aylmer, Ontario. Condensed milk was popular in Newfoundland because of the island's lack of dairy cattle. Clarke of course carried much of the same cargo, shipped in rail cars to Montreal wharf for furtherance, but the new line was beginning to make inroads.

Dundee, Perth & London ships that participated in this trade would include the 1,321-ton *Perth (vi)*, at 237 by 36 feet, the 1,018-ton *Lunan*, 226 by 34 feet, and the 706-ton *London (vii)*, 213 by 36 feet, all of which were within the old maximum lock dimensions of about 260 by 44 feet.
The Shaw Steamship Company

With the *Ashleaf* and *Bayleaf* gone to Newfoundland Great Lakes Steamships, the Shaw Steamship Co continued to operate smaller ships like the 521-ton *Mayfall* and *Mayfall*, two steam-powered "C" Type coasters built by Davie Shipbuilding in 1946, which were converted to motorships in the mid-1950s. These two were owned by Shaw affiliates and while they worked mainly between Atlantic Canada and the Caribbean, they also occasionally came into the St Lawrence. Another trade in which Shaw was involved was the Arctic char fishery in Frobisher Bay at the southern end of Baffin Island, which they had developed in 1947 and 1948.

Shaw began to acquire superannuated tonnage at auction, including Admiral Byrd's 648-ton Arctic exploration ship *Bear*, which he purchased from the US Coast Guard in 1948 for use as a sealer. The *Bear* had participated with his *North Star* in the 1939-41 Antarctic expedition. The *Arctic Bear*, as she was renamed, was intended to replace another ship he had acquired in 1947. President Theodore Roosevelt's former yacht, the 1,780-ton *Mayflower*, had burned on her delivery voyage to Halifax and had been resold to other owners. The *Bear* herself would last until she was lost south of Cape Sable on March 19, 1963, while being towed to Baltimore for use as a polar exploration exhibit ship and floating restaurant.

The "North Pioneer" Replaces the "North Voyageur"

In 1949, the *North Voyageur* was forty years old, so Clarke decided that modifying the *North Pioneer* would give them an almost-new four-year-old ship with which to replace her. To meet the passenger requirement for the Lower North Shore service, Clarke needed to increase her berth capacity significantly. This they did by doubling the number of passenger cabins and providing facilities for 26 deck passengers, so that she could carry up to 50 passengers. The *North Pioneer* spent the winter of 1949-50 at Canadian Vickers in Montreal undergoing these modifications, as well as having some ice damage repaired. Capt Sylvio Bélanger, who had commanded the *North Voyageur* on the same route, was nominated to take over the *North Pioneer* when she took up her new duties sailing between Montreal and Blanc-Sablon.

The new passenger arrangement included five twin-berth cabins in the forward accommodation block and seven more aft, for a total of 24 berths. Six cabins were added at the forward end of the after deckhouse facing over the hatches. All passenger cabins were located on the upper deck. The ship's dining room remained aft and a new passenger lounge was added on the boat deck sft. Her hull was reinforced with steel belting in order to class her as an ice-strengthened ship with Lloyd's Register. And finally, she was fitted with refrigerated cargo space for her new route.
The new cabins and top deck lounge increased the North Pioneer’s gross registered tonnage by about 6 per cent to 1,473 tons. And the weight of extra steel meant that she had lost 90 tons, or about 5½ per cent of her deadweight carrying capacity. This was not significant when her consignments were high-volume general cargo such as she carried to the North Shore, as no hold space was lost, but it did reduce her ability to lift heavy bulk cargoes or steel. For this reason, she was no longer sent to the Caribbean in the winter time, although she could still be used to Newfoundland.

With half the number of berths the North Voyageur had offered, and about the same number as the North Trader, the North Pioneer was not able to sell these voyages as cruises. All her berths would be needed for the local trade, subsidized by the Canadian and Quebec Governments. She thus reverted to the practice that had been followed with the Labrador and the Sable I, with her timetable and fares appearing only in the company’s "White Sailing Schedule." Only a decade later, after other ships had been sold, would the North Pioneer offer "Vagabond Cruises" again.

The North Pioneer sailed from Victoria Pier every other Wednesday at 3 pm, well before the Canada Steamship Lines Saguenay steamer at 6:45 pm. Calling at Quebec the next day, she then sailed directly for the Lower North Shore. Her schedule was the same as the North Voyageur’s, with calls at Baie-Johan-Beetz, Natashquan, Kegashka, Romaine, Harrington Harbour, Tête-à-la-Baleine, Mutton Bay, La Tabatière, St-Augustin, Rivièr-St-Paul, Bradore Bay and Blanc-Sablon. The port situation was by now changing, as noted in Cléophas Belvin in "The Forgotten Labrador": -

In the early 1950s ... the Canadian government built much-needed wharves and storage sheds in many of the communities, including Harrington Harbour, Bradore Bay, St-Augustine River, Blanc-Sablon, St Paul's River and Tête-à-la-Baleine. These new facilities helped to ease many of the difficulties encountered by the Clarke Steamship Company and the local residents during the summer navigation season.

In conjunction with the North Shore, the North Pioneer now provided one-way and return inter-port passenger service in both first and second class. While she served points below Baie-Johan-Beetz and Natashquan, the North Shore served those above. Between them, the two ships also continued the weekly schedule to Natashquan, with the North Shore sailing beyond Havre-St-Pierre to Natashquan in weeks when there was no service by the North Pioneer. Each season, the North Pioneer would complete between fourteen and seventeen round voyages to the Lower North Shore.

The Clarke Fleet in 1950

At the end of 1950, Clarke's main line fleet consisted of six ships. Two
coastal passenger and cargo ships, the *North Shore* running to Natashquan and the *North Gaspé* to Gaspé and the Magdalens, the "B" Type coasters *North Pioneer* and *North Coaster* to the North Shore, and *Island Connector* and the "Hansa" class freighters *Gulfport* and *Novaport* to Newfoundland. All the freighters carried twelve passengers except the *North Pioneer*, which could now carry 24.

Six more ships ran in local services. The *Jean Brillant*, *Matane* (the *Roman I* had been dropped in 1946) and *Rimouski* ran in the Lower St Lawrence, the *Rivière-du-Loup* across the St Lawrence and the *Jacques Cartier* across the Saguenay, with the latest acquisition, the *Magdalen*, running between the Maritimes and the Magdalen Islands.

While the six ships in the main line fleet had berths for 194, the whole of the owned fleet now numbered twelve ships with berths for 296 passengers and a total gross tonnage of 14,624. Compared to a pre-war main line fleet of six ships with a total gross tonnage of 13,240 and berths for 642 passengers, Clarke’s passenger capacity was less than a third of what it had been at its peak, and about two-thirds of what it had been before the *North Star* joined the fleet.

Both the *North Shore* and *North Gaspé* now ran weekly, however, so the number of berths offered over the year was actually higher than what a simple berth count might indicate. These two ships, with 124 berths between them, could carry 248 passengers in a fortnight, while other Clarke ships had only sailed fortnightly before their arrival. With more frequent departures, this more efficient use of ships meant that the company could carry pretty well the same number of passengers as it had been able to in the days when the *New Northland* was flagship.

Starting in 1950, each voyage of the North Shore, whether to Havre-St-Pierre or to Natashquan, was also scheduled to take seven days, with a common fare of $130, or $104 off-season. Inter-port fares were also quoted for local traffic. The fleet was thus now fully rebuilt and this composition would last throughout the 1950s.

**A New General Manager**

By 1950, Stanley Clarke had been promoted to general manager, responsible for planning and operating the company fleet. During this time he would concentrate on the operation of the company's main line ships, and also on the requirement for more ice-strengthened tonnage. And once this was done, he would work on improving the local services operated by the Lower St Lawrence Transportation Co, La Traverse Rivière-du-Loup-St-Siméon and La Compagnie de Navigation Charlevoix-Saguenay and a general fleet renewal program.