

After the oil-tanker *Arrow* had ruptured herself on Cerberus Rock at the entrance to the Canso Strait, spilling a million gallons of oil along 120 miles of shoreline in Nova Scotia's Chedebucto Bay, clean-up attempts – never wholly successful – cost a lot of money. If the ecological disaster can be said to have had any beneficial effect, however, that must be the resulting installation in the Straits of Canso of one of the most modern navigational systems in the world.

The incident came at a crucial time in the development of Canada's newest deepwater "superport". The Department of Transport, already planning safety routes for the coming "supertankers", redoubled its efforts, and among the safety devices installed as part of a multi-million-dollar program is a set of 14 aluminum range towers of differing heights that may well become a Canadian standard for such markers. The towers carry lights and huge daymarkers that enable pilots to keep supertankers to the middle of the ship channel.

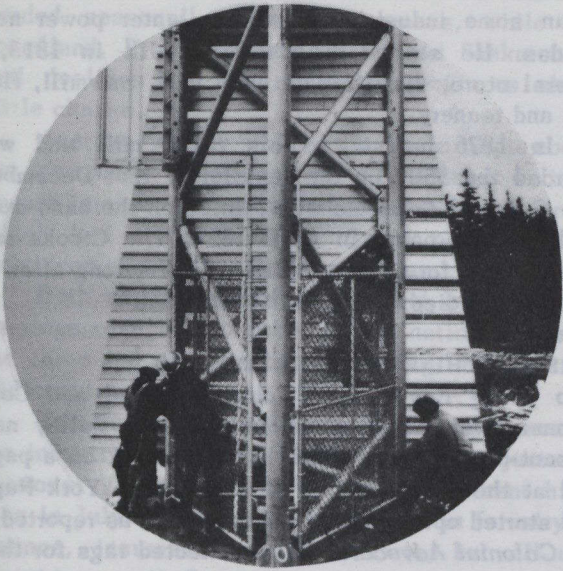
Made from huge extruded sections of Alcan corrosion-resistant aluminum by DAF, Dominion Aluminum Fabricating Ltd., of Toronto, the free-standing towers vary in height from 24 to 72 feet, and were designed to be bolted together on site.

Aluminum towers are nothing new – they've been used many times before as control and firefighting towers, for area lighting standards, and so on. These towers however, are special since they had to be erected in remote locations, often where no road access existed, and often had to be air-lifted by helicopter to the sites. For all that, some of the towers, complete with security fences, took less than 12 hours to erect.

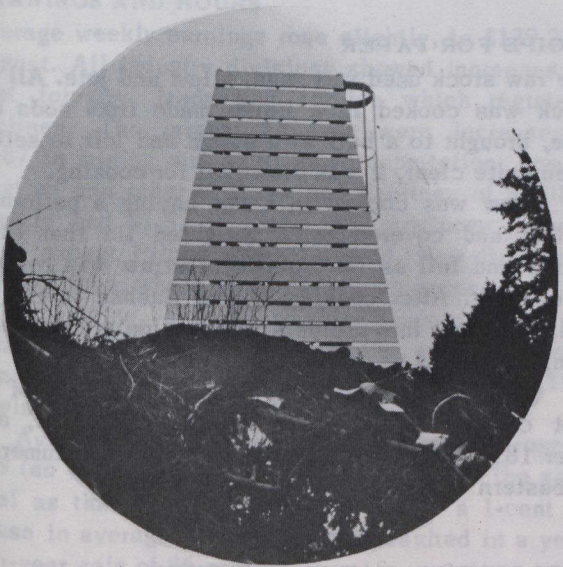
Moreover, because the Canso Strait area is well known for storms, unpredictably changeable weather conditions, heavy icing, and very strong winds, the towers had to be engineered to withstand tremendous weather stresses, as well as for ease of handling in the field, and very low maintenance. They had, in short, to be foolproof.

The sequence of photos shown on these two pages was taken in a single day. The crew, local Cape Breton metalworkers under DAF supervisor Mike Lahtinen, arrived on site about 8 a.m. – later than usual for them, but this tower was closer to home base than most. Several bundles of aluminum parts and a low concrete pad at the water's edge greeted them. By 5 that same afternoon, the tower, complete with daymark panels and security fence in place, was erected, tested, and ready for navigation.

Story and photos *Alcan News*, November-December 1971 issue.



*By 4 p.m. the final security fence is going into place. All that remains is to make a final check of the whole assembly, and retest the sliding panel and winch mechanism that raises and lowers the daymark sign.*



*The completed range tower faces out to sea as the late afternoon light fades quickly. To get this shot, photographer Walter Parker had to stand ankle-deep in sea-water, so close is the tower to the water's edge.*