



CANADA

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WINTER ENDS FOR ICEBREAKERS

Icebreakers of the Canadian Coast Guard are just about ready to call it a season after a winter in which ice conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were reported "moderate to occasionally heavy" by the Department of Transport Ice Operations Office at Sydney, Nova Scotia. The Gulf is now practically clear of ice, with the exception of an area in the vicinity of Cape Breton Island. In the 1961-62 season, icebreakers were still clearing some ports as late as May 28.

During the past season, up to April 15, a total of 236 reports of commercial vessels in the Gulf were recorded by the Ice Operations Office, compared to 216 in the same period of the previous winter. Coast Guard icebreakers answered 131 calls for assistance from commercial vessels, compared to 271 calls in the previous winter. In addition, they assisted five fishing vessels and four sealing ships, and took part in four search-and-rescue operations.

PASSAGE IN WINTER

Throughout the season there were considerable areas of open or partly open water in the Gulf, though from time to time storms caused one sector or another to become jammed with ice and ships had to be escorted by the icebreakers. All through the winter, many ice-reinforced ships were able to make their way across the Gulf with no more than routing instructions from the Ice Operations Office.

At no time did conditions become as difficult as in the previous winter, when prolonged bitter

weather resulted in an almost complete freeze-up between Newfoundland and the mainland. After March 15, icebreaking assistance was necessary in Maritime and Newfoundland waters only.

A total of 82 aerial ice-reconnaissance flights were made by the Transport Department's Meteorological Branch ice observers to provide information used in routing vessels so they would not require icebreaker help, and in planning the deployment of the icebreaking fleet.

From March 15 onward, an open-water route was available from the Atlantic right up the St. Lawrence River. Before that date, 18 ships proceeded from the open ocean to ports west of Baie Comeau, compared to 16 in the corresponding period of the year before. Four of the 18 reached Montreal East, the remainder going to Quebec or Trois Rivières. Many of these vessels proceeded unescorted, either because an open-water route was available or because their ice strengthening permitted them to negotiate such ice as existed at the time. Some took advantage of the anti-flooding ice-breaking programme that had been carried out by the Department of Transport below Montreal for the past 35 years to make their way up-stream as far as Montreal East.

In April, when the "batture" ice became dislodged from the shores of the St. Lawrence, a number of vessels were delayed for a time as a result of ice conditions.

The DOT does not provide icebreaking assistance to ships inbound from the Atlantic, west of Baie Comeau, other than ice-strengthened ships

(Over)