

# Canada Weekly

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## Canada's giant transporters improve productivity in forestry industry

She looks odd to start with: barge-like with a high foc'sle superstructure, a high after deck, two 36-tonne cranes starboard side fore and aft, and amidships, more than 9 000 tonnes of logs.

What happens over the next 30 minutes or so is even odder and, at first glance, alarming. She settles a bit and then starts to develop a list to port. The list reaches more than 20 degrees. She keeps going over slowly.

At 30 degrees or so, the mass of logs lets go with a muffled roar. Giant bundles of logs splash into the water, sending a small tidal wave rushing to shore. Relieved of her burden, the *Haida Brave* kicks back and bobs in the cloud of spray and bark. Slowly she settles back on an even keel.

For seven years, MacMillan Bloedel has been using these self-propelled, self-dumping log transporters to move timber from cutting operations to its mills on the British Columbia coast. In 1975, the *Haida Monarch* started moving logs from the Queen Charlotte Islands on an 800-kilometre deep sea route to mills on the southern British Columbia coast. Three

years later, the *Haida Brave* began operations on the west coast of Vancouver Island, carrying timber to Port Alberni.

Other forestry companies rely on self-dumping barges provided by towboat companies, such as Seaspan or Rivtow Straits, to move their harvest to mills. The self-dumping ships and barges, a Canadian innovation, have greatly helped the coastal forestry industry.

### Logs lost

Not long ago, tugboats towed all logs through coastal waters in large flat booms. For longer trips, across open seas, logs were piled and chained together to form giant Davis Rafts. Many valuable logs were lost, either sinking or breaking free to become hazards to navigation. Often for days or weeks poor weather delayed tows across open waters. Even the huge Davis Rafts were broken up in heavy seas. MacMillan Bloedel estimates that the salt alone from water-soaked logs was costing them up to \$30 million a year in equipment damage and maintenance.

At first, old ships' hulls, that could bear the massive weights, were converted



Bringing home the timber — the *Haida Brave* being listed to one side to dump its cargo.



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