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Hydrographic agency celebrates a hundred years of service

The Canadian Hydrographic Service, responsible for surveying and charting Canadian waters, is marking its centennial this year and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Pierre De Bané recently made an address at the opening of the Toronto International Boat Show on the services provided by the organization.

The following are excerpts from the minister's speech:

...Today \$40 million a year is spent on surveying and charting Canadian waters and there are charts that are specifically designed exclusively for the recreational boater. When the service was established 100 years ago, the situation was very different.

Back in 1882 there was a terrible marine disaster. The steamer, *Asia*, foundered in a great storm in Georgian Bay and 150 lives were lost. This accident made it clear that early nineteenth century charts designed for small sailing vessels simply were not adequate for the iron-hulled steamships of the 1880s. Thus the Canadian Hydrographic Service, under the name of the Georgian Bay Survey, came into being....

The service and the wide range of charts and publications which it provides today bears little resemblance to that early organization. Today the service publishes more than 1 500 nautical charts covering all of Canada's navigable waters. With a staff of 600 people working out of five offices across the country, Canada has developed a world-wide reputation for excellence in its hydrographic activity.

Where once survey soundings were painstakingly made by dropping a lead-line overboard at regular intervals, today we have research and development projects to study how to use laser technology in surveys. We are already employing satellites and remote sensing technology to work in the survey data collection process and we have made great strides in automating chart production through computer technology.

Current and accurate charts

What does all this mean to the recreational boater? As the recreational boater is purchasing more than 60 per cent of



Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Pierre De Bané (centre) presents Toronto's Harbour Master, Captain John Mann (left) with a copy of the first nautical chart of the Toronto area at the Toronto International Boat Show. The person on the right is dressed as British Admiral Henry Wolsey Payfield who charted Canadian waters from 1816-1856.

the half million charts sold annually in Canada — all this technological improvement will ensure continuing production of up-to-date, accurate charts by the most efficient and cost-effective methods.

In fact, the Hydrographic Service is spending in excess of \$3 million on research and development in new technologies during the current fiscal year.... One area of research that may prove particularly useful for the production of recreational charts is the increasing use of aircraft remote sensing technology for

Department of Fisheries and Oceans



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