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EFFECTS OF SEAWAY WINTER NAVIGATION

The Chairman of the Atlantic Development Board, Mr. Ian M. MacKeigan, recently released the following statement:

The Atlantic Development Board was directed to undertake a study of the effects on Atlantic ports of winter navigation in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf. The study has been concerned, among other things, with estimating the amount due to winter navigation of any present loss of traffic to Saint John and Halifax, the two large general-transhipment or through-traffic ports in the Atlantic region, and the potential future loss which might be entailed in more extensive navigation to St. Lawrence River ports. The study has also taken into account the benefits of winter navigation to other ports and areas of the Atlantic region.

PORTS ADVERSELY AFFECTED

It is estimated that the ports of Saint John and Halifax have experienced a combined loss due to the direct and indirect effect of winter navigation in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf of some 150,000 to 250,000 short tons per season of transhipment or through cargo. Because of the difficulty of estimating what the traffic patterns of Atlantic and Lower St. Lawrence River ports — chiefly Quebec, Trois Rivières and Montreal — would have been in the absence of winter navigation, assessments of traffic loss must be regarded solely as broad approximations. It is considered by the consultant, however, that an approximate amount of 200,000 short tons is a reasonable estimate of the annual traffic loss of Saint John and Halifax due to winter navigation. The loss of 200,000 tons of general

cargo-transhipment traffic per season would represent a loss each year of about \$3 million of direct income to the port economies and 3,600 man-months of seasonal employment. The main weight of the loss falls upon Saint John, reflecting partly the greater volume of general cargo-transhipment traffic through that port.

If winter navigation were to become fully developed in the St. Lawrence River, the ports of Saint John and Halifax would, it is estimated, suffer substantial additional losses.

PORTS FAVOURABLY AFFECTED

Some ports and areas in the Atlantic region have benefited significantly from the availability of and assistance by the Federal Government's icebreaking vessels and supporting services. The value to the pulp and paper mills at Dalhousie, New Brunswick, Corner Brook and Botwood, Newfoundland, of savings in transportation costs on newsprint as a result of direct shipments in the winter period is estimated to be of the order of \$1.6 million per season. The port of Sydney, Nova Scotia, benefits from its position as the operating base of the winter icebreaker fleet. Various other ports and areas also derive advantages from the presence of and availability of icebreakers and supporting services.

In summary, the ports of Saint John and Halifax together have experienced in the period under review a significant loss of their annual general cargo-transhipment traffic, with consequent losses in income and employment. Partly this has come about due to the direct and indirect effects of winter navigation in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf; partly, it reflects the existence of other problems. It is

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