

# PROGRESS *Squamish* CITIZEN EDITION

SECOND SECTION

## First ship expected here in October

### Squamish Port called most modern in western Canada

A promise which is almost fifty years old may come true for Squamish. Squamish Terminals Limited, operators of the first dock facility on the Squamish waterfront expects that deep-sea ships will be calling at this year. It has been almost fifty years since Squamish residents first heard reports that its port would become an ocean freight terminus. That was in the days when real estate speculators, so impressed with the town's new destiny, changed the name to 'Newport'.

Since that era, there have been several 'rumours' of port development, but only in the last year have these been converted to a reality which is now a part of the town.

The date of the first ship's arrival is still indefinite. Squamish Terminals' manager, Jerry Jerwa, in an interview with the Citizen last week, pointed out that construction delays caused by strikes this summer have made the date of arrival of the first ship somewhat uncertain. However, he adds, "We'll be ready to receive ships by around October 1 and it will be just a question of when the freight is there for shipping."

Though little 'uncertainties' still exist, they are nothing like those which plagued the port over the past ten years. While it may well prove to be the westcoast's most modern forest products terminal, and developers from Squamish Terminals are certain it will be, the history of the port has been slow and difficult from the beginning.

Chief among the obstacles which had to be crossed in building the port was the need to bring the Squamish River under some kind of control. In the early days, the river not only made port development difficult because of its meanderings at its mouth, but the threat of flooding to the downtown area was of great concern to all Squamish residents and the local government.

Mayor Pat Brennan began to attempt to overcome the problems which the River posed

to the town in the days when Jimmy Sinclair (Margaret Trudeau's Father) was the member of Parliament for Squamish, and also the Minister of Fisheries, a position now held by Jack Davis.

Discussions between Brennan and Sinclair were aimed at providing some control over the Squamish River to secure the downtown area. It was at this time that the first serious thoughts of Squamish's port potential were aired. A thriving port, however, would never come to an area whose downtown would annually face the threat of flooding from the Squamish River.

The federal Department of Fisheries undertook studies of the Squamish River but changes in time and government left real work undone and Brennan turned to the provincial government for help.

Under the direction of Lands, Forests and Water Resources Minister, Ray Williston, the so-called Squamish River Control program was begun four years ago with studies which in the last three years have caused all of the Squamish River south of its confluence with the Mamquam River to be dyked.

It was the thinking of both local and provincial officials that a port could not be built before the town itself was secure. With funding from the provincial government, Squamish began a unique program of dyke building which saw virtually all of the work carried out by local men and machinery. Only engineering services were provided from outside the town.

In three years, Squamish residents built a dyke which easily withstood the test of record summer rains last month. The \$2 million dollar project was an outstanding success in its first real test and a credit to the local people who built it. In addition to its functional success, the dyke has become somewhat of a marvel economically as well since the cost of its construction using local people has been shown to be far below costs of similar projects elsewhere.

### Efficiency the key to successful port

With the downtown area made 'water-tight' in 1971, interest in the development of a port in Squamish gained momentum. The extension of the B.C. Railway to the north brought indications of large mineral deposits and a wealth of forest products, all of which would require transshipment for export to other nations.

Within the last two years, two major decisions sealed the destiny of the Squamish port. Robert Cattermole, a prominent forestryman in B.C. made the initial investment to build the first wharf facility on the waterfront.

As work began on 'Cattermole's Wharf', Williston and the B.C. Railway could see that the wandering mouth of the Squamish River would have to be isolated. Silt coming down the River would run out into Howe Sound and disrupt the areas where boats are to be moored. Depths of between 30 and 40 feet are required wharf-side for the big ships which will haul freight from Squamish. To preserve these depths, the silt running out the river mouth had to be directed away from the berths. And so the decision was made to construct a 'training dyke' at the mouth of the Squamish River. The training dyke was completed last spring and it now extends a good half-mile into Howe Sound from the mouth of the River on the Squamish River delta. The dyke holds the mouth of the river in a constant position and sends silt straight out into Howe Sound away from the berths under construction.

With the decision to build the training dyke, interest in the port was stimulated and last year, Cattermole, who had built

the first wharf entered into an agreement with Star Shipping, a Norwegian company, to expand wharf development through a joint venture, Squamish Terminals Limited.

Squamish Terminals is now building a deep-sea wharf complex approximately four times the size of the facility originally contemplated by Cattermole. It will be the most modern facility for handling forest products coming from the north of B.C.

To house forest products waiting to be loaded on ships, the company is building a storage warehouse, the largest and most modern of its kind in B.C., which will be 400 by 400 feet, 160,000 square feet in size.

The warehouse will have a storage capacity of 28,000 tons of freight, more than enough to fill even the largest freighters which will call at Squamish.

Adjacent to the warehouse will be the open areas where ships take on their cargo. Squamish Terminals local manager, Jerry Jerwa says that ships will be loaded at the rate of 500 tons per hour meaning that a ship could arrive in Squamish empty and be fully loaded in less than two days. Both Jerwa, and Squamish Terminals president, Odd Gronnerud, stress the importance of efficiency in the terminal operation. "We will attract ships and cargoes to Squamish," says Gronnerud, "if the shippers know that the freight will be handled in the most efficient manner possible."

Gronnerud's emphasis on efficiency makes sense. A modern freighter costs approximately \$5000 a day, a very high price to pay to keep the ship standing by waiting for its freight, something which often happens at less efficient ports.

### Many companies to use facility

Though both Gronnerud and Mayor Pat Brennan stress the importance of the construction of a modern port to Canada and British Columbia, it will have an important influence on Squamish. At least 50 long-shoremen will eventually be required to work here. That's Jerry Jerwa's department and he says, "We have every intention of seeing the development of a Squamish local of long-shoremen. We think at least 50 men will be required on a regular basis, and more than that may be required during peak periods." He adds, "Our objective now is to get functioning and get a nucleus established."

Much of the optimism expressed by Squamish Terminals people stems from their policy of building what they call "a free port", something which is rather unique in B.C. The Squamish Terminals wharves will not be reserved for any one shipping company, or any one shipper. The facilities will be open to anyone wishing to use them. In all likelihood, ships from many countries will be calling at Squamish to pick up freight from many different companies in the B.C. North.

As the port develops, Squamish Terminals

has plans to expand its facility from its present 21 acre size to approximately double. Tentative plans call for that expansion to begin sometime in 1974.

It is for this reason that the company has

chosen a modularly constructed building to house company offices on the waterfront. This same building has been the source of recent controversy as a result of the Municipality's decision to give only a one year permit to the building.

Squamish Terminals officials candidly admit they don't think they got a fair deal on that decision. "We chose the modular construction because when we expand, we want to be in a position to move the building out of the way," says Jerwa. "The Municipal Council thought we were proposing to erect trailers but as far as we are concerned we are building a permanent structure which is relocatable."

The building will cost around \$55,000 and officials promise that it will be first-class all the way. The company contends that the modular construction was the only way they could have permanent facilities which would fit into the long range plans. Specifically, if the plans for development of the second 20 acres go ahead, the building will have to be moved. Says Tim Chapman, traffic manager for Squamish Terminals, "That's a pretty big investment for us if we can only use it for one year." The Municipal Council expressed strong opposition to the building at a recent meeting contending that the construction-type was that of trailers and it has been a long standing policy of the Council to refuse trailer-type construction for offices in Squamish.



Training dyke at the mouth of the Squamish River