

Stories from the Archives — Ice 12 Inches Thick on Burrard Inlet near Port Moody; Boats Frozen-in Solid; Mill Workings Hampered

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Researched by Ralph Drew, Belcarra, BC, March 2013.

A solid sheet of ice, about six inches thick, has closed the head of Burrard Inlet from the Government Wharf at Ioco to a point nearly a mile west of Port Moody.

During the past week, no small boat has left Port Moody to plow its way to clear water beyond the head of the inlet. A tug 'J.W. Dickie' has sprung a leak ramming itself against the ice barrier.

It was reported that the ice broke through four inches of planking on a scow towed by the tug 'Maple Prince'.

For the first time in 17 years, the residents of Port Moody and Ioco are skating on the inlet. Several persons have skated all the way between these two points.

SKATERS DUCKED

Rise and fall of the tide has prevented the formation of a thick cover of ice along the shoreline. It is reported that many skaters have been ducked [dunked] because they failed to take proper precautions in reaching the shore.

The formation is thickest at Barnet, where one mill made an unsuccessful attempt to blast through 12 inches of ice.

Freezing at the head of the inlet is assisted by the fact that several creeks and small rivers, draining the mountains beyond, enter the inlet there. For this reason the salt content of the water near Port Moody is less than it is in the *Port of Vancouver*.

The dock of the *Imperial Oil Company* at Ioco is open to the clear water and the freeze-up has not interrupted the operation of that plant.

The dock of the *Union Oil Company*, on the south side of the inlet, is surrounded by ice though an oil tanker broke its way through a few days ago.

MAKESHIFT ICE-BREAKER

William Baird, tugboat owner at Port Moody, says that he intends to hammer at the ice again in an attempt to break through to the clear water.

One of his tugs, 'Our Best' with a 160 h.p. diesel engine, has been fitted-up as an ice-breaker. Two heavy logs have been fastened to either side of the boat and chained together at the bow to form a plow. A previous attempt to break-up the ice was not successful.

The *McNair Shingle Mill*, closed down for repairs, has been unable to reopen. Two nearby mills have been able to keep going by the use of blasting powder and ice-breaking tugs.



Source: Port Moody Station Museum, Acquisition #1009.024.021

Tug Boat 'Our Best' breaking ice in Port Moody harbour, January 1942.



Source: Port Moody Station Museum, Acquisition #1009.024.004

Tug Boat 'Our Best' breaking ice in Port Moody harbour, January 1942.