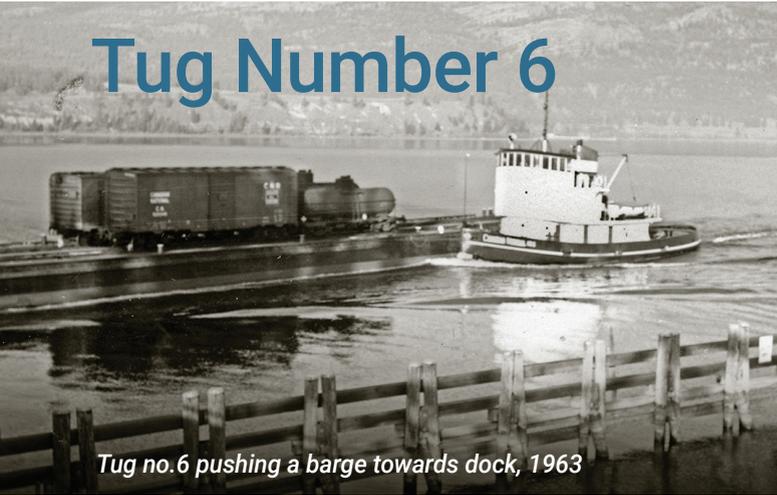


Tug Number 6



Tug no.6 pushing a barge towards dock, 1963

clearing the way for tugs. The CNR eventually commissioned three tugs on Lake Okanagan, the Pentowna and Tugs no. five and six. The tugs could handle two barges; they were secured to the front of the tug, forming a “V” shape, with the tug in the middle providing power and direction. The wooden barges could carry eight railcars and the steel barges ten. The barges had two parallel sets of rails, which would connect with

a corresponding set of rails on the dock.

Moored next to the Naramata and close to the venerable SS Sicamous in Penticton, Canadian National Railways Tug no. 6 floats serenely on Okanagan Lake. Like all vessels of its kind, it is a no frills ship, sturdy and well-suited to its purpose. And, like the Naramata and the Sicamous, Tug no. 6 has its own story to tell.

Working on the tugs was strenuous but rewarding. The biggest danger came in the winter time, when deck hands had to venture out onto the barges to remove ice building up on the bows. Slipping and falling into the lake would be fatal unless you were fished out promptly. In 1953, at the height of the tug service, deckhands were paid \$204.00 per month, plus overtime of about \$100.00. Board was included as well.

Built in 1948 by Yarrows Shipbuilders in Esquimalt, Canadian National Tug no.6 had an all steel hull powered by an eight cylinder, turbo-charged diesel engine producing 575 horsepower. Steered by a single blade rudder, the tug weighed in at 158 tons. Three double cabins accommodated the crew.

For the tugs, the busiest time of year was the fall. Packing houses up and down the Okanagan were full of ripe fruit that had to get to market without delay. The biggest volume was found on the Penticton to Kelowna route. Fruit from Oliver and Osoyoos came by this route as well. In 1972, the CPR lease on their dock and railyards expired, and they chose not to continue. The CNR followed suit in 1973.

Tug no. 6's main purpose was to bring barges, loaded with railway cars, to the railhead in Kelowna. Although sternwheelers like the Aberdeen and the Sicamous could tow barges, they were deemed not suitable,



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