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Capt. Gomes: We carry an ice observer a-board ship. And all our icebreaker officers are well versed in the type of ice; they can look and see. Gulf ice, we know, is only seasonal. It's only lasting from December until May, that's the end of it. It doesn't get that hard. It's like new ice, gray ice, gray-white ice, and white ice. And you know, it can't get any thicker than that. That's up to 6 feet thick. (Each colour is a different kind of thickness?) Yeah. You start off with maybe 4 or 5 inches. Arctic ice is about the easiest-- especially if you get late in the season. You can tell multi-year ice, which is older than two years. You get second-year ice, multi-year ice, and just strictly polar ice. And this stuff is there, and it's not going anywhere. It's going to smash you. It looks like craters of the moon. And it has drain patterns where they start to melt, but it freezes again every year. You get 8, 10 feet thick, and ridges up to 30 feet. And you've got a problem. You respect that stuff. You don't let a propeller hit it. You try to move as slow as you can. Up in the Arctic you're dealing with ice that's 8 or 10 years old. And if you go in the Beaufort Sea, you've got as much as 50 years old. It never melts. And you're dealing with ice that has no salt whatsoever, it's all freshwater. And it's just like hitting steel. You're actually running the ship aground when you're breaking ice. 'Cause when you're climbing over it, the weight of the ship breaks it down. (You don't break it by cutting into it?) No, you can't. You have to have an awful lot of horsepower to get the ship above the ice. As soon as she raises it, she breaks. Provided the ice is not too thick. 'Cause she can go off, and not break it at all, just slide back off it. That's what we call ramming--you ram the ice, try to get the ship up as high as you can. It's got to break. 'Cause this ship is 9000 tons. I've seen odd times didn't break the ice, and goes like this (sideways?), kind of fall over. And that's a danger to ship. It could damage an icebreaker. But she's got to do it. You've got to get the run completed. You've got an escort behind you trying to get out of the Arctic. One year, it was in November, we had to get out. And there was some heavy ice. We had it 10 metres--a little over 33 feet thick. Some of the ice. It took a lot of pounding. This ship's getting old now-- it's 26 years old. The John A. MacDonald. Over the years, the ice seas are getting less. It's getting severe maybe for a month--a quick freeze, then it's gone. Years ago, I've seen the ice all the way to Scatarie, And all the way it was heavy, battling all the way out. All the way to Port-aux-Basques, all along the west coast of Newfoundland, right up to Quebec practically. All ice. It does seem like every year it seems to be easing up. They have historical data in Ottawa--it's computerized. (For) the last 10 years, it can show the stages of ice forming. And it seems like it's getting less. I remember here, I was on Labrador, first officer, 10 years ago, and we came in here (Sydney) then. In those days, the ferries didn't get high priority. The freighters were the ones we were moving. And we were moving

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