



# 1917 HALIFAX EXPLOSION 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Nova Scotia's  
Win-the-War  
Newspaper

## THE HALIFAX HERALD

ALL THE NEWS

HONEST VIEWS

HONEST ADVERTISING

Nova Scotia's  
Win-the-War  
Newspaper

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 14, 1875.

HALIFAX, CANADA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1917

VOLUME XLIII, NO. 291

# YET MORE APPALLING

## The Death Roll Still Grows and the Tremendous Property Loss Is Beginning to be Realized

### Sir Robert Borden Offers Federal Aid

SIR ROBERT BORDEN arrived in Halifax yesterday afternoon. The Prime Minister, while in Prince Edward Island heard of the terrible disaster which has overtaken Halifax. He could get no definite information as all means of communication had been cut off by the force of the explosion. Immediately after the meeting at Charlottetown he left for Pictou and upon arriving there this morning he at once cancelled his meetings at Antigonish and New Glasgow and started for Halifax by special train, where he arrived late yesterday afternoon in the midst of a tremendous blizzard. He has come to Halifax for the purpose of consulting with the authorities, and of assisting with all the means at the disposal of the federal government, in the arrangements for the relief of those who have suffered so terribly. Naturally he is most overwhelmed by the magnitude of the calamity to a city with which he has been associated for more than half his life-time, and which he has represented in parliament for more than twenty-one years. One does not feel disposed to engage in political discussion under the shadow of so awful a calamity.

Hon. A. K. Maclean spent a great part of the day at the city hall where the various committees were completing organization and directing relief. "It is splendid to see the energy and skill of the men and women of Halifax are putting into effect work," said Mr. Maclean to The Herald. "It is in a calamity such as this that the big heart of a nation becomes revealed."

boy in a basement and still alive. The little fellow was unconscious, but on being taken to a hospital soon recovered, but was still too dazed to give any statement which would help in his identification.

### German Perilously Near Venetian Plains

LONDON, December 7. In the bloodiest battle yet fought on Italian soil the Germans have won strong Anasero positions with a great bag of prisoners. The guns of Italy shifted their tactics, the whole force being concentrated on a ten mile front. The Teutons are perilously near the Venetian plains.

### British Withdraw From Bourlon Wood

BRITISH HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE, December 8.—The British have withdrawn from about Bourlon wood to a village. The Germans make their positions much stronger and more difficult in many ways. The retirement was carried out successfully mainly early Wednesday morning, and under cover of darkness. Not until many hours later did the enemy discover that he was firing on evacuated territory.

### War Declared on Austria

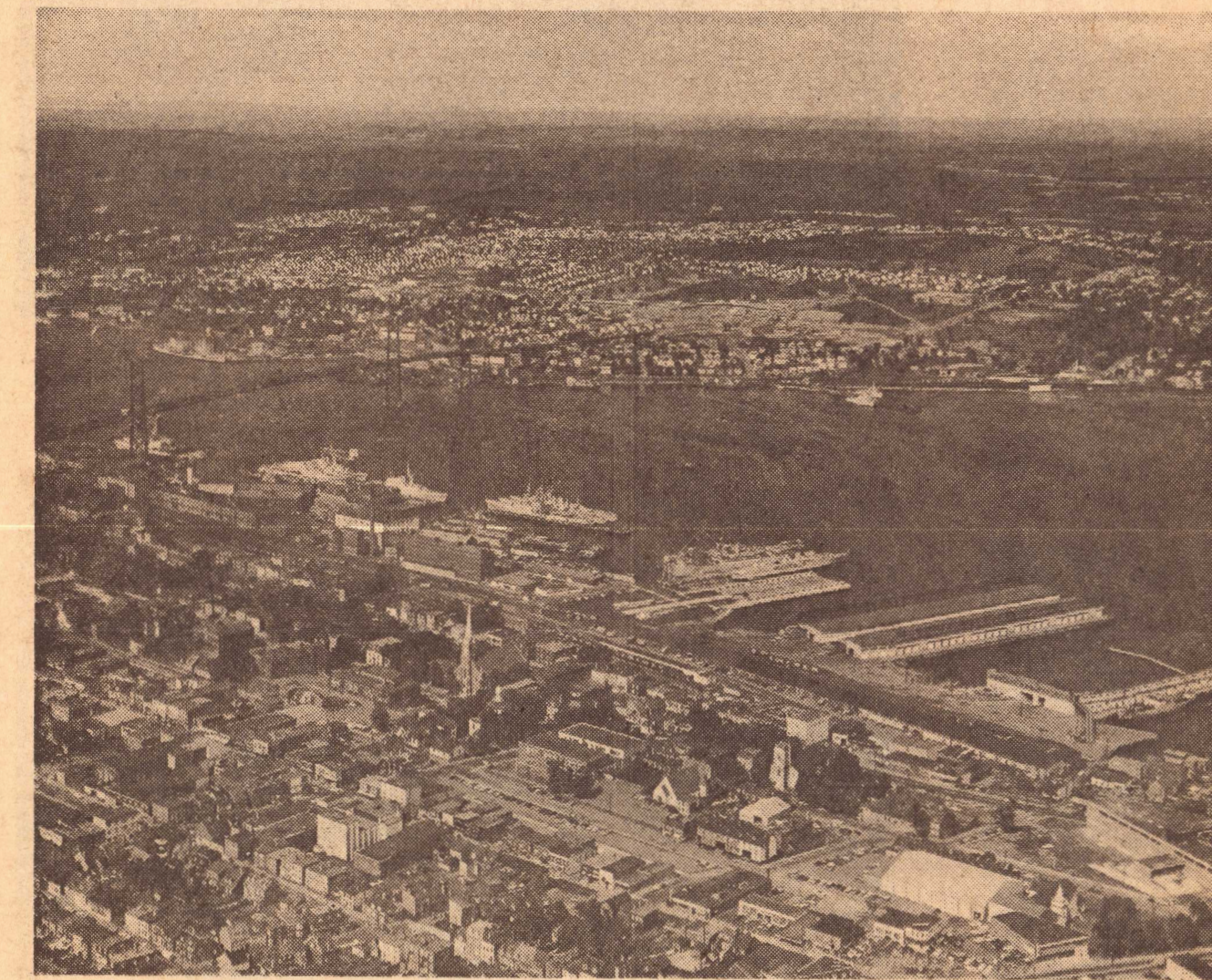
WASHINGTON, December 7.—With less than an hour's notice Austria today passed the resolution declaring

### Soldiers Cease Noto Search For Bodies of the Dead Now Numbering 2,000

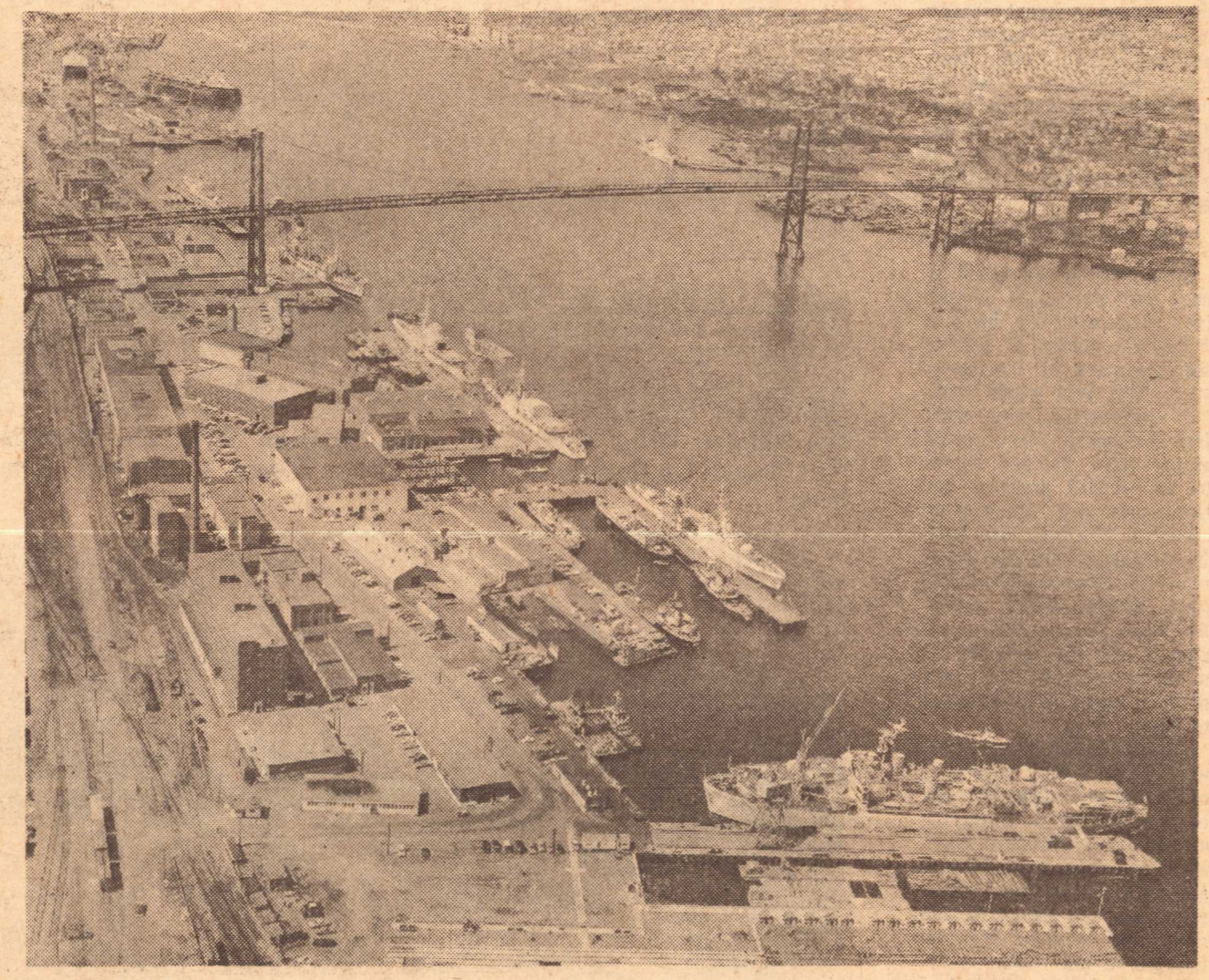
Scenes of Pathos and Sorrow as Mothers and Fathers Seek for Children, and Orphans Refuse to be Comforted Because of Parents Who Are Not

HALIFAX, December 8.—Yesterday found Halifax in the grip of a blizzard which grew more severe as the day progressed. Before night automobile traffic was completely stopped, and now unassisted to

by the search for bodies among the ruins. As place after place they uncovered several members of a family. Shortly after noon, from a cellar in a room, a little eighteen months old girl was taken from beneath the debris which had fallen, so that it saved her life. A few feet distant lay the crushed and scorched remains of her mother and five other children. There were a number of other bodies among the last group.



This view of Halifax Harbor, looking towards the City of Dartmouth, 50 years after the Halifax Explosion of 1917, shows the rapidly expanding City



The Angus L. Macdonald bridge over Halifax Harbor now spans the area near where Iro and Mont Blanc collided 50 years ago today. This Canadian Forces aerial photo shows the Royal Canadian Navy Dockyard, Halifax Shipyards.



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# HALIFAX WRECKED

## More Than One Thousand Killed In This City, Many Thousands Are Injured And Homeless.

MORE than one thousand dead and probably five thousand injured, many of them fatally, is the result of the explosion yesterday on French steamship Mont Blanc, loaded with nitroglycerine and trinitrotuol. All of Halifax north and west of the depot is a mass of ruins and many thousands of people are homeless. The Belgian Relief steamer Iro, coming down from Bedford Basin, collided with the Mont Blanc, which immediately took fire and was headed in for Pier No. 8 and exploded. Buildings over a great area collapsed, burying men, women and children. Tug boats and smaller vessels were engulfed and then a great wave washed up over Campbell Road. Fires broke out and became uncontrollable, stopping the work of rescue. Not a house in Halifax escaped some damage, and the region bounded on the east by the harbor, south by North street and west by Windsor street, is absolutely devastated.

THE wounded and homeless are in different institutions and homes over the city. The Halifax Herald is collecting information regarding the missing, and citizens who have victims of the disaster at their homes are requested to telephone to The Herald office. Hundreds of the bodies which were taken from the ruins are unrecognizable and morgues have been opened in different parts of the city. Citizens' committees are being formed for rescue work. Bulletins will be issued thruout the day giving information for the assistance of those who have lost relatives and friends. While practically every home in the city is damaged, those who are able to give any temporary accommodation are asked to notify some of the committees. Military and naval patrols are keeping order and superintending the rescue work.

### THE AWFUL STORY OF DISASTER

AT 9.05 o'clock yesterday morning a terrific explosion wrecked Halifax killing over a thousand, wounding at least five thousand, and laying in ruins at least one-fifth of the city. The Belgian Relief steamer Iro coming down out of the Basin in charge of Pilot William Hayes collided with the French steamship Mont Blanc in charge of Pilot Frank MacKay. The French steamer was loaded with nitro glycerine and trinitrotuol. Fire broke out on the Mont Blanc and she was headed in for Pier 8. It was eighteen minutes after the collision when the explosion occurred. The old sugar refinery, and all the

buildings for a great distance collapsed. Tug boats and steamers were engulfed and then a great wave rushed over Campbell road carrying up debris and the corpses of hundreds of men who were at work on the piers and steamers. Without the loss of a moment hundreds of survivors rushed to the rescue of those buried in the ruins. Fire broke out in scores of places and soon the great mass of wreckage was in the grip of an uncontrollable fire checking the work of rescue. The military and naval authorities almost immediately took charge of the situation. Fearing that the fire would reach local magazines of explosives military messengers were sent over the city warning the people

of the buildings and advising them to take to the citadel and open spaces. This was not by authority. Practically every house in the city was damaged. The entire business district was windowless and to prevent pillaging patrols from warships in port were paraded thru the streets. All along Gottingen street and throughout the northwest part of the city there was a pitiful scene as women and children lacerated with flying fragments of glass rushed from their homes. Truckmen, hackmen, and taxi-cab drivers rushed victims to the hospitals for dressing. At the Naval hospital many of the sick sailors were badly cut and, fearing an explosion from the magazine at the Welling-fon barracks, they were taken away.

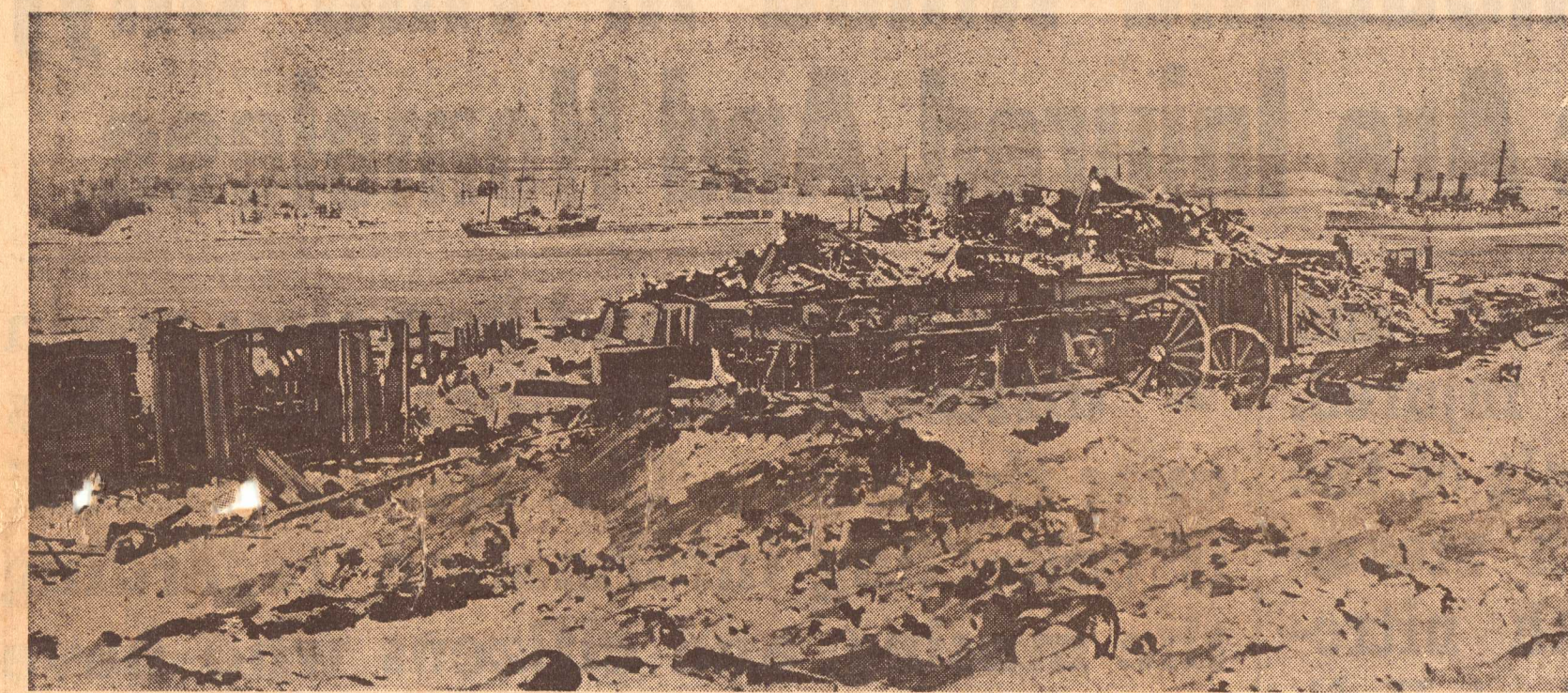
THE home of The Halifax Herald and The Evening Mail is badly wrecked. Every pane of glass and window in the building is smashed. Partitions have been blown down. Our press is filled with glass. Some employees have lost their homes and families. Our power service is cut off. We are sending out a copy of this hand printed bulletin to every town in order that as many of our readers as possible may know at least some of the details of the disaster. We hope to be in a position to publish tomorrow. In the meantime we ask for patience. A public meeting is called for city hall at 11.



# Major Disaster Of Halifax Recalled

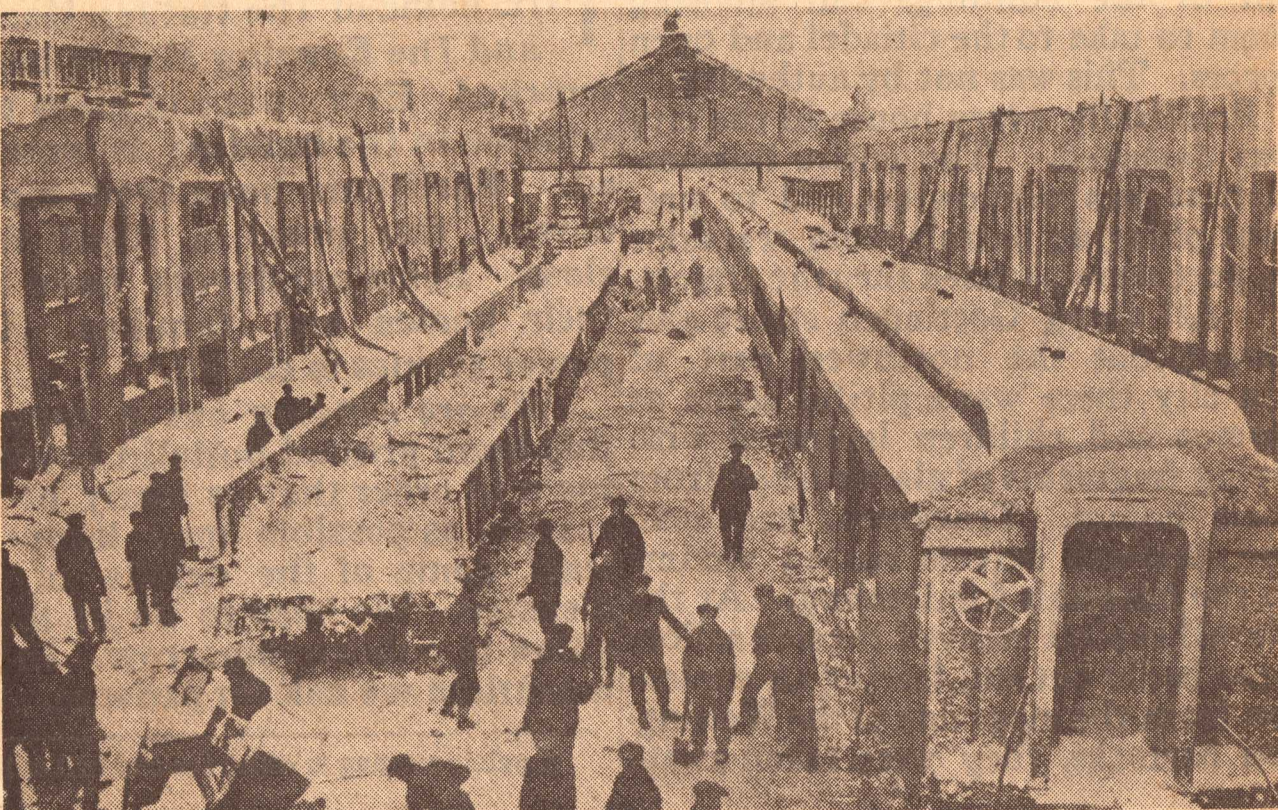


This Was Part Of The Scene Of Death And Desolation In The North End of Halifax After The Disasterous Explosion of 1917.



The Wreckage Of Grove Street Church And Richmond School, Where Many School Children Died. Spire Of The Church Lies At Left Foreground.

A Blizzard Added To The Agony Of Halifax-Dartmouth Citizens Following The 1917 Explosion, Providing This Scene Of The Disaster. From The Fort Needham Area This View Shows The Rubble On The Harborfront Opposite Where Imo And Mont Blanc Collided, Sending Imo (Background) High And Dry On The Dartmouth Shore. Huge Pile Is All That Was Left Of The Acadia Sugar Refinery.



Burial Of Nearly 100 Unidentified Dead Was Attended By Citizens And Dignitaries, While The Garrison Band Played The Funeral Dirge. This Was The Scene At Chebucto Road School, Emergency Mortuary. Sixty Persons Lost Their Lives At The North Street Railway Station When The Force Of The Explosion Caved In The Glass Roof Of The Depot. Photo Shows Cleanup Operations.

## Mighty Blast Tossed People Like Feathers In Storm Of Metal

By W. J. BILL McCALL  
News Editor, The Mail-Star

Fifty years ago today — Dec. 6, 1917 — Halifax harbor was alive with the shipping of a world at war. The National Hockey League, organized in Montreal, was only two weeks old. Nova Scotia was mourning the loss of favorite sons killed in France.

We had just "discovered" Brightwood golf links on the hilly slopes overlooking Dartmouth, and we were among the school kids of that era who were students in old Park School overlooking the Dartmouth side of Halifax Harbor, when it happened . . .

With a crash of sound that still lives in our memories of that fatal day, our world that was the Grade 4 classroom in Old Park School, seemed to explode around us.

And we had survived the Halifax Explosion of 1917 — a calamity brought about by the collision of two ships in the harbor near the Narrows between the City of Halifax and the Town of Dartmouth.

TRAGIC TALE  
The disaster claimed more than 1,600 lives, injured more than 5,000 persons, young and old, and left many thousands of others homeless.

Most of the North End of Halifax was destroyed, as was the north end of Dartmouth. But the damage in the Harbor Town was slight compared with the devastation wrought by the blast upon the province's capital city extending from Fort Needham in the north and west end sections of the historic garrison.

WITNESS  
These are my own recollections of what happened. Subsequent recordings of events tell us that when the munitions ship Mont Blanc blew up in the harbor not far from where I lived on Fairbanks Street, following a collision with the Belgian relief ship Imo, the force of the blast released by the explosion of about 2,500 tons of TNT provided history up to that time with its greatest man-made disaster.

Mont Blanc was blown to bits, shower-

ing pieces of metal far and wide, causing death and destruction. Part of the ship's anchor, weighing almost a ton, was hurled a couple of miles westward over Halifax and still rests at a site on the Edmonds Grounds the other side of the North West Arm. The twisted barrel of the ship's gun, at least half a ton in weight, went the other way and plunged through thin ice of Albro Lake, then outside the limits of Dartmouth.

My mother and younger brother David escaped serious injury or possible death that day because they were called outside our Fairbanks Street home to "look at the ships burning in the harbor." They hadn't gone far when the explosion occurred and both were tossed, as if scooped up by a giant lift, high over old oak trees near the corner of Best Street. Both were untouched by the hall of flying metal in the air around them and were watted like feathers in a breeze and finally deposited softly on the street. Their survival, like that of many others involved in similar incidents, was miraculous.

Back at home, it was found the glass from the kitchen windows right where they had been sitting at breakfast had been driven through and partly through an opposite wall.

See FEARED GERMAN Page 15E

# 'Our Little World Exploded Around Us'

## Feared German Zeppelin Dropped Bomb On City

Continued From Page 2E

ground, leaving a single tall tower standing.

This surely was a bombing attack by the Germans, we thought, using a cloud screen to hide the Zeppelins in the sky! Our Evening Mail of a day or two previous had described such a hideous means of attack invented by the Germans.

But as if by some magic communication the word spread that a ship had blown up in the harbor, devastating city and town. It was not for days before the death toll was counted at more than 1,000. Later, the figures went to 1,844 dead, thousands injured; many more missing.

FIRST AID  
Somebody pulled the piece of glass from Syd Jenkins' head and we patched him up with an old towel before we ran through the park. There were some strange-looking men in the group running heading. We heard shouts of "Poo-dar" or some such jargon and later were told that the men may have been among those crewmen who escaped from one of the ships in the harbor.

Eventually, we got downtown, past old Central School, which had been stripped clean of window glass, and some of us sought shelter for a time with the Mott family on Queen Street. It was there, in a corner of a downstairs room, I found there was blood on my hand. I had worn no ring, but it looked as if I had been cut by something like an iron ring or iron washer on one finger.

By this time we all began to worry about what had happened at our homes in the northern part of Dartmouth. We could see smoke and some flame from the Halifax billowing over Synott's Hill side and black smoke was and Park School, indicating some fire burning in our own north end.

RIDE IN A WAGON  
We hitched a ride on one of Jim Mott's express wagons, the only means of transport. There must have been about 20 kids in that canvas-covered, flat-bottomed wagon behind a team of galloping horses. After a halt at the old water trough above Synott's Hill, the wagon took us northward into a scene of devastation. Houses were standing in that neighborhood, but some had whole sections torn out by the explosion. Our place on Fairbank Street, three houses in one actually, built four years earlier by John Forsyth, merchant, and William MacKenzie, the police chief, was damaged like the rest, but magnified in our young minds by the personal tragedy of it.

Missing was our Newfoundland puppy, a great shaggy fellow which had seized my brother's arm and been tossed up over the trees at the moment of the explosion. The dog apparently took off in terror for the bush and was not seen again for three days.

ANOTHER THREAT  
Everybody in our neighborhood was warned of another impending explosion because there was threat of fire to the magazine at the Dockyard. This sent whole families scampering with what few belongings they could gather from wrecked homes to the wooded areas of the Dartmouth park. Many of us crouched down where the Dartmouth Bicultural Junior High School stands today. Put there was no further explosion and the main threat to the people was that many of them might have no place to sleep.

That Thursday, Dec. 6, 1917, was bright, sunny, clear and cold. The next night was one of new terror as a terrific storm, heavy wet snow, blanketed the area and added to the problems of the rescue operations, the search for the dead and missing persons trapped in the rubble covering most of the north end of Halifax.

After enduring ice-cold rain and snow sweeping into bedrooms that were partly blown open to the elements,

with the work and found the remains of Mrs. Henneberry and her other five children.

The heroic, but futile, efforts on the part of volunteers from the Navy's depot ship Niobe and a party from the HMS Highflyer who went to the aid of Mont Blanc should never be forgotten. The Canadian sailors died in their small boat en route to the munition ship while the Highflyer party was already aboard trying to scuttle her. All of them died without trace.

At the Sugar Refinery dock, the harbor lighter Ragus was destroyed with all aboard. Only the body of one, a fireman, was found in the wreck of the harbor craft.

A salvage ship, Stella Maris, with twenty-four aboard, was towing two scows to Bedford Basin. Stella Maris was ordered by a naval officer to go to aid of the Mont Blanc, then fire near the Narrows. Hawkers were ready to put aboard Mont Blanc when she blew up, killing Captain Brennan and most of his crew along with workmen aboard from the Dry Dock.

As shore, at Pier 8 in Halifax, Fire Chief Condon and all of his men who answered the fire call that fatal day with the exception of Billy Wells, driver of the Patricia, were blasted into oblivion.

Heard At Truro  
Sound of the blast was heard as far away as Truro where the concussion also rattled dishes on shelves. But news of the tragedy had already been broadcast. Vin-

cent P. Coleman, Canadian National operator at Richmond, died at his post, a hero remembered to this day for sending out this message over the wires: "A Munition ship is on fire and is making for Pier 8. GOOD BYE."

The sights that greeted those of us who were able to roam around after the explosion will linger long in our memories. Most of the schools were so badly damaged that classes could not be restored for some time. This presented an opportunity to the venturesome ones to feast our memories upon one of the great disasters of history.

From Fairbank Street to Tufts Cove we saw the carnage of the Mont Blanc blast. Almost on the spot where the North Star boat-house and Naval Armament Depot stand today we were able, almost, to touch the hull of the Relief Ship Imo, tossed up on the shore near the railway tracks alongside the old Stone Pier.

Indians Exited  
Further north along the tracks we prowled around the ruins of the MicMac Indian village. The Indians never went back to the site, but some later lived in huts provided by the Relief organization. Many times, in succeeding years, we saw Chief Lone Cloud shuffle by our district on way to Halifax via the ferry.

And nearby, too, we saw what was left of Olands' brewery, a great mound of rubble which claimed the lives of Conrad Oland and his fellow workers. Near this broken there was a dump of broken bottles where we kids of the Black Rock gang tested

our mettle, or rather epidermis, by walking across the area barefoot.

Dartmouth casualties of the explosion numbered about 40, small in comparison to the 1600 lives lost in Halifax. We had a ringside seat, almost, on what was happening on the Halifax side, for we could see clearly a mess of debris piled up from shoreline to the top of Fort Needham, where the giant chimneys of the old cotton

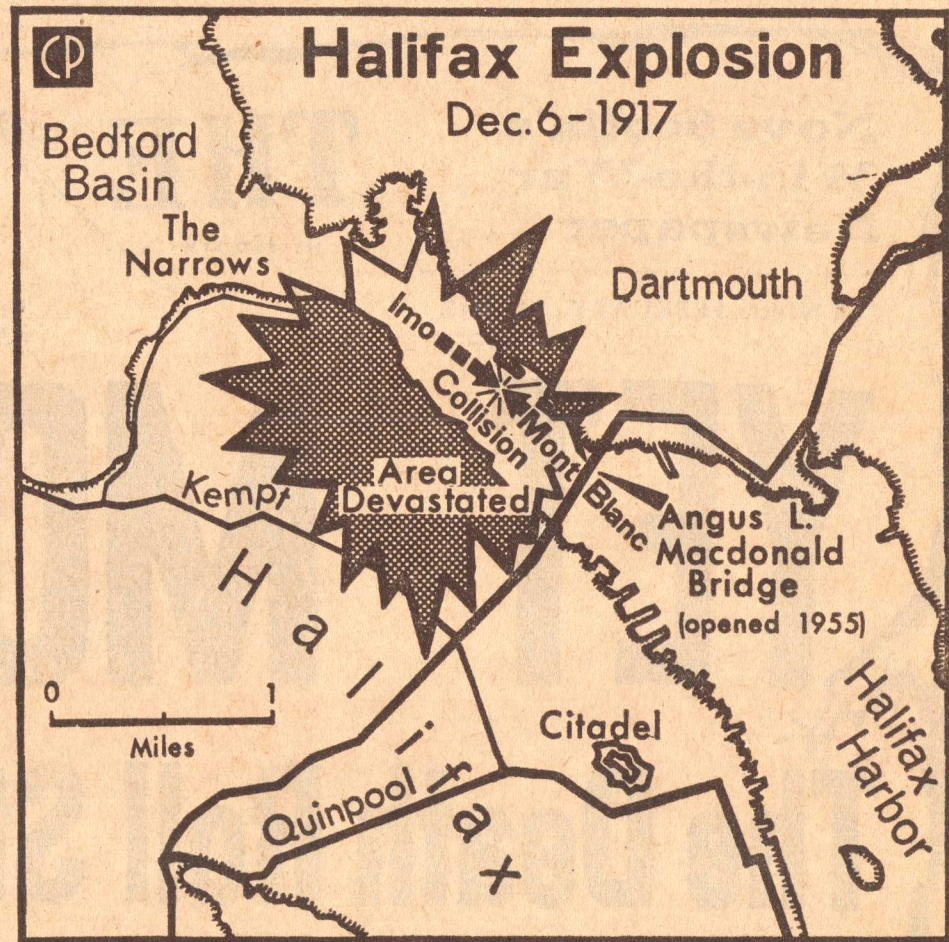
factory stood out against the skyline.

Many millions of dollars poured into Halifax for the relief of the disaster victims and the record of those who contributed to the rebuilding of Halifax and Dartmouth after the 1917 Explosion is a story in itself.

If you had a certificate from a clergyman or relief commissioner, you could get food and clothing at the relief stations. A few of us, with the

help of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur C. Pettipas, key people in the relief for our area, got jobs as delivery boys to some destitute families, and were thus able to feast upon store cookies that more than often broke out of the packages.

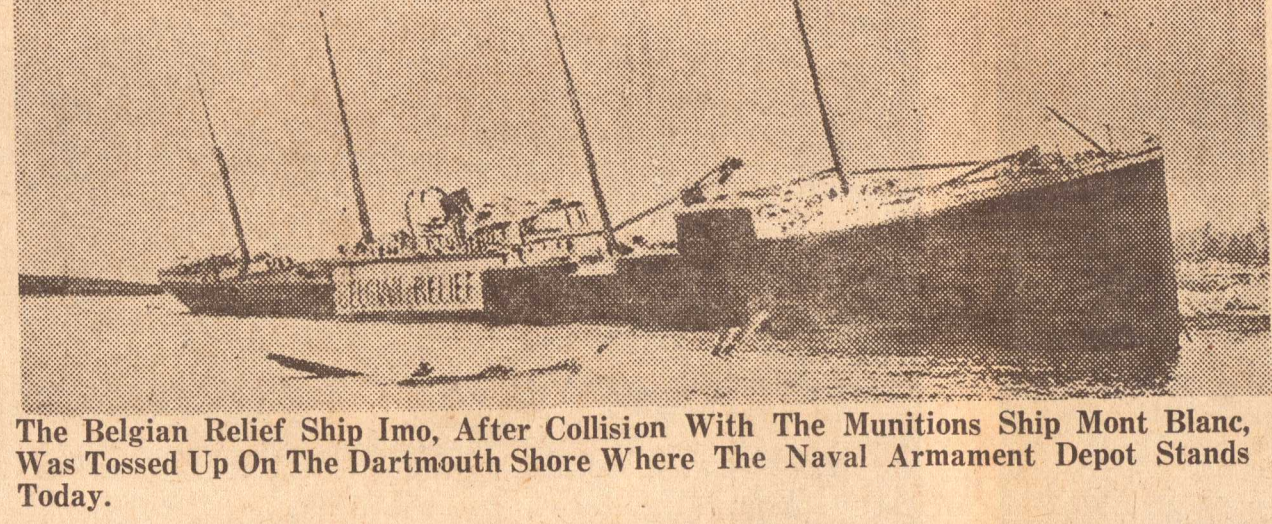
What I remember best is that my dear mother's main concern was that she be compensated for the loss of her cherished window blinds and curtain rods destroyed by the blast on that Day of Anguish, Dec. 6, 1917.



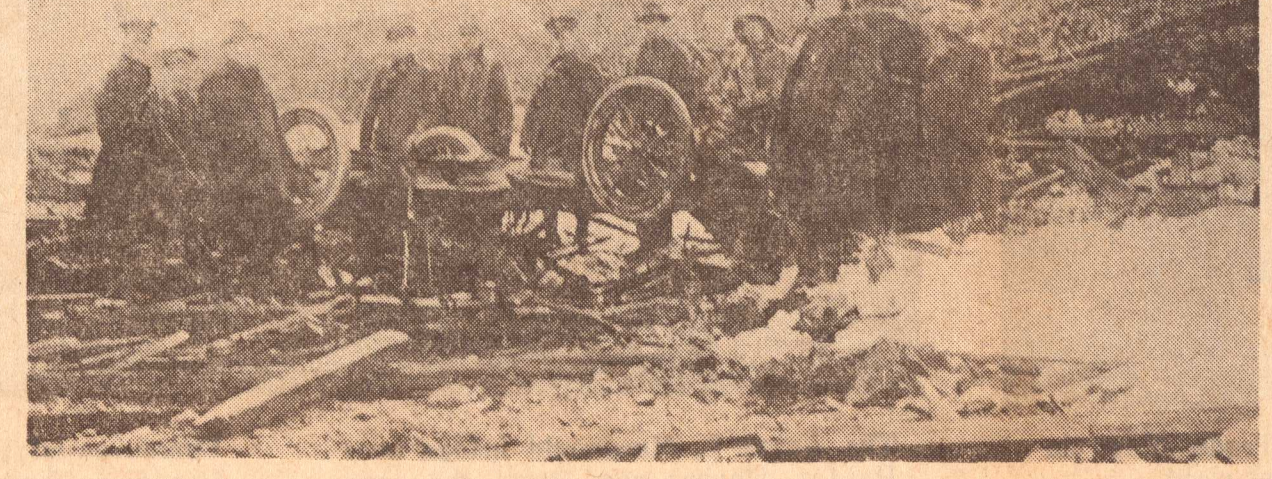
Photomap Shows Areas Heavily Hit In Halifax Explosion Of 1917.



Hardly A Home Was Left Standing In The Richmond Section of Halifax North End After The 1917 Explosion.



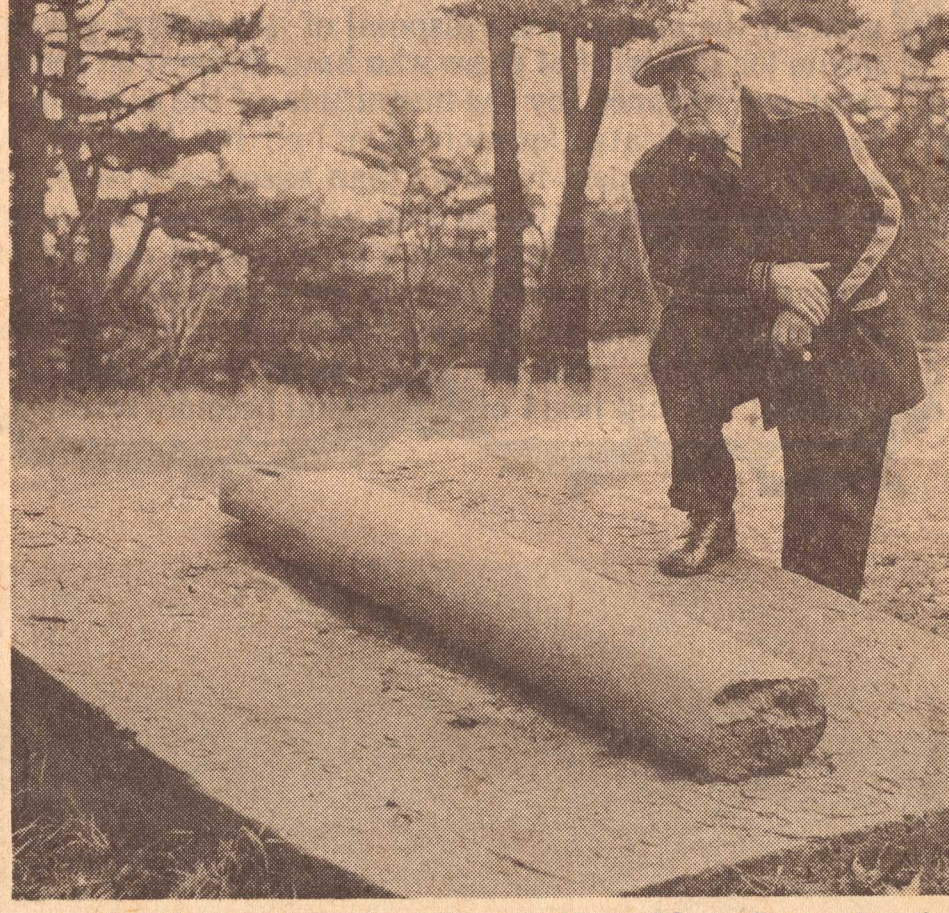
The Belgian Relief Ship Imo, After Collision With The Munitions Ship Mont Blanc, Was Tossed Up On The Dartmouth Shore Where The Naval Armament Depot Stands Today.



Rescuers, Digging In The Rubble, Stand Around The Spot Where Fire Chief Condon Died Responding To The Fire Alarm On The Day Of The Halifax Explosion.



Anchor Shank From The Ill-fated Mont Blanc Rests On A Scarred Concrete Slab In The Edmonds Grounds At Armdale. This Huge Piece Of Metal, Still On Public View, Was Tossed Over The Heart Of Halifax In The Explosion of 1917.

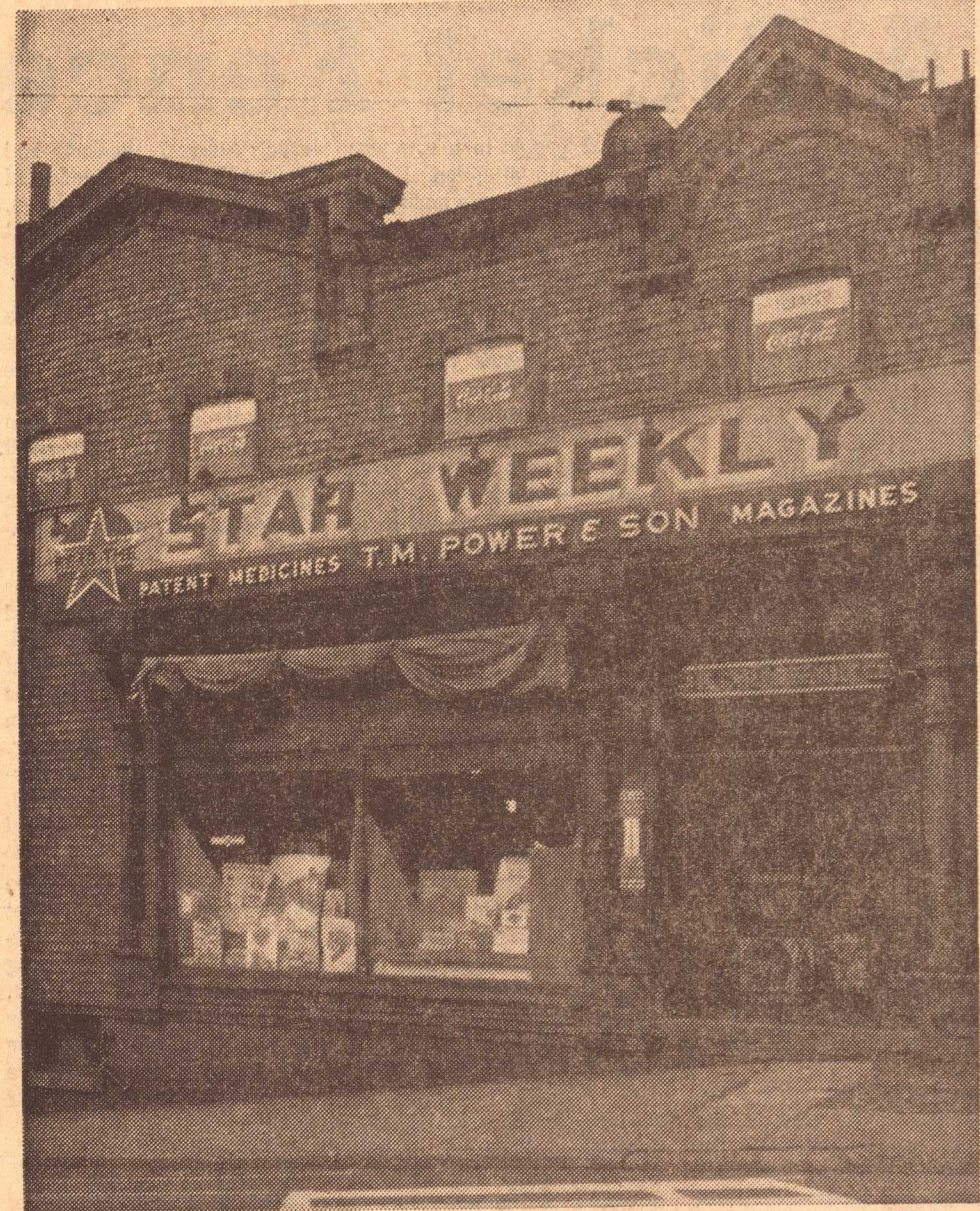


Searching The Ruins For The Bodies Of Victims Was A Grim Task For Worned Rescue Parties.



Searching The Ruins For The Bodies Of Victims Was A Grim Task For Worned Rescue Parties.





T. M. Power's Drug Store on Barrington Street at the corner of North Street survived the 1917 blast which destroyed much of Halifax. Sixty lives were lost in the Union Station almost opposite the Power store. The store, above, now boasts a steel gate that is locked every night.

## Niobe's Deck Ruined Mass 5 Killed In Rescue Boat

Leading Seaman Hansler of the Imperial Service, was on the mess desk of HMC Niobe, depot ship of the Canadian Navy alongside the Dockyard when the Mont Blanc blew up in Halifax Harbor Dec. 6, 1917. Dazed, but unhurt by the mighty blast of the explosion, Hansler told The Halifax Herald he quickly got to the upper deck where he saw a lot of boys covered in blood and some of them carried to the sick bay.

"The upper deck was a mass of ruins. The best order prevailed and the injured were quickly taken care of.

"Five of our men were killed in our boat which had gone alongside Mont Blanc; seven were killed on board Niobe and one on Pier 4.

"Niobe's after cable parted and she went adrift but the men soon had her back at her moorings. The ship's company was told to go ashore and assist fighting the fires. Our deck was covered with wreckage and with pieces of shell and iron that fell upon us. It was a nasty mess to clean up.

When asked what in his opinion was the most miraculous escape on board Niobe, Leading Seaman Hansler said: "It was surely a miracle that Seaman Fred West escaped. He was well forward at the time on the upper deck. He was caught by the full force of the explosion not more than two ship's lengths of where we lay, and he was thrown almost 250 feet. He was picked up from under a pile of wreckage and his only injury was a little cut behind his ear and another small one on his leg."

## Brother's Beard Wouldn't Grow

By ANNE SUKSDORF

Goods were strewn about, the door was immovable, plate glass was blown in every direction, but unlike many similar buildings in the city, the tiny drug store on the corner of Barrington and North Streets retained its original frame.

This was December 6, 1917, the day of the Halifax Explosion. The store belonged to T. M. Power & Son, Druggist.

Today, December 6, 1967, the patent medicine store is still standing in its original structure and location, owned by the late Mr. Power's daughter, Miss Nellie F. Power.

Fifty years have elapsed since that date but Miss Power recall the day vividly.

"My father opened the store around 7 a.m. and about 8 o'clock my brother went up to relieve him for breakfast. A man had come into the store just before he left and said a ship on fire was going up the harbor and there might be an explosion. We heard the fire engine going up; everything had crumpled in on us."

"I ran to the store which was about half a block from our house. My brother was burned around the chin. We managed to get a ladder and my brother threw down some bandages from one of the shelves."

"The navy had come up and ordered us to the Commons. They expected another explosion."

"It was just terrible. People were coming down the street bleeding and crying."

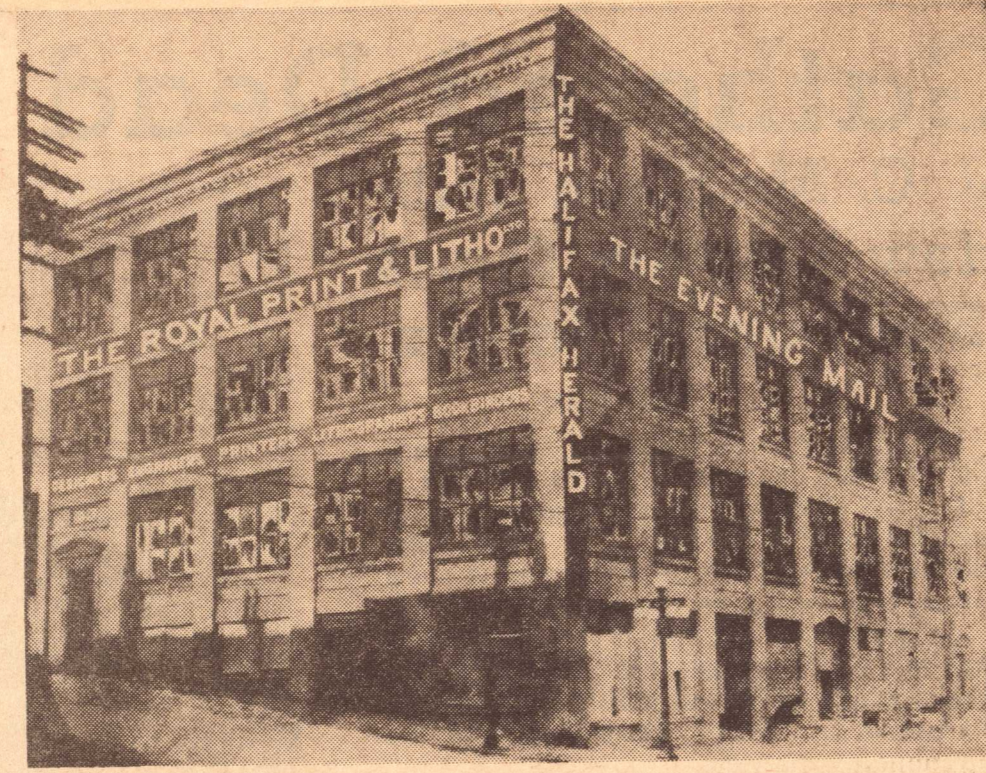
Miss Power's nephew, Thomas Roy Power, 5 years old at the time, and now a druggist, remembers hearing the fire engine, trying to run out the door, only to be caught by his aunt.

"I was standing by my grandfather and the next time I looked up, the place was unbelievable. I can remember going up the street with my aunt hearing someone shout, 'run for your lives, there's going to be another explosion.'"

Miss Power said the store couldn't be used at all. She said it took until Christmas time to get things half-way to normal. "It was quite a loss at the time."

"We were fortunate that none of us were seriously hurt," said Miss Power, "except for my brother's ego, whose beard would not grow for the longest time afterward."

Miss Power said the store was built in 1900. In that time



The Halifax Herald Ltd. building on Argyle Street, as it appeared the day after the 1917 Explosion.

## Publishing The News--Difficult Task

The people of Halifax looked to the daily paper for particulars of the Halifax Explosion. But it was no easy task to publish The Herald and The Mail with the building smashed and the machinery out of commission.

Hundreds of windows were broken, much of the glass being hurled over presses and type machines, requiring a great deal of work to clear them.

Damage to the gas works resulted in the gas being shut off throughout the city. This put out of commission the battery of linotypes by which the type for The Herald and The Mail was set, and the electrotyping plant.

In addition to these problems, the homes of many staff members were wrecked. Members of the families were injured and in some cases, killed.

In one case, the whole family and relatives of one of the employees were wiped out — a total of 27.

The "modern" method of setting type had to be abandoned, and resort made to hand-setting.

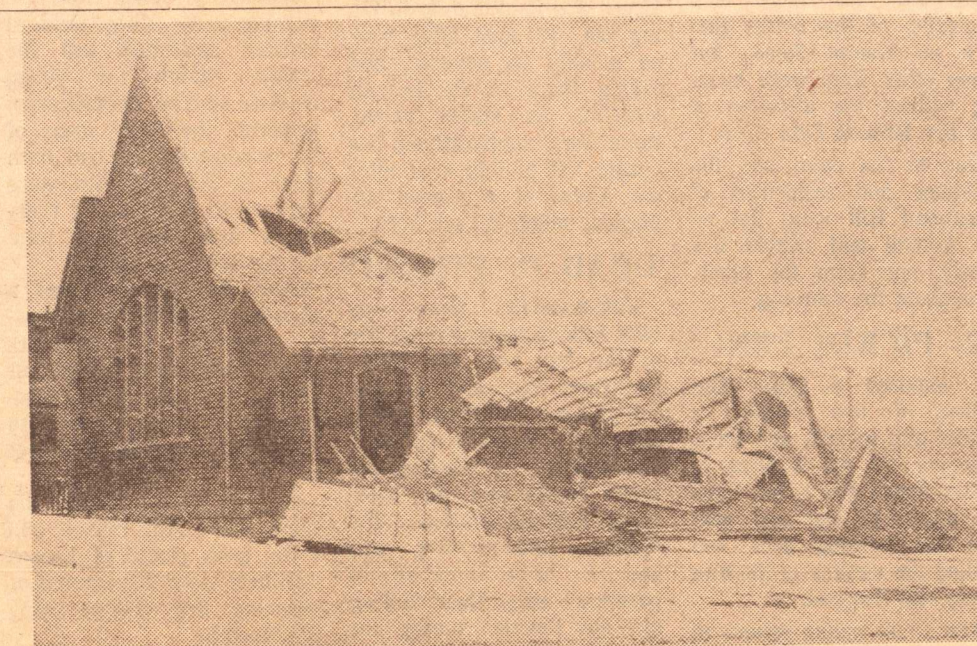
Scarcity of coal, rain storms and blizzards all added to the difficulties of giving the news to the people.

But all these difficulties were, in a measure, overcome, and each day, morning and evening, The Herald and The Mail were published.

### Old Flour Mill Levelled By Explosion

Mrs. Alice Crathorne Anderson, Pleasant Street, Dartmouth, has some vivid memories of the Halifax Explosion of 1917. Her father, the late George Crathorne, operated an old mill at the corner of Jamieson Street and Windmill Road. The buildings were badly damaged in the blast which followed the collision of Ino and Mont Blanc in the harbor on Dec. 6, 1917.

The mill was originally the Dooley flour and feed mill, which was powered from water flowing down Jamieson Street brook from Albro Lake. The Crathorne family lived in the historic Albro House nearby. All the buildings were flattened by the force of the 1917 blast.



EMMANUEL CHURCH, corner of Windmill Road and Dawson Streets, Dartmouth, was completely destroyed on Dec. 6, 1917.

## Former German Ship First In With Aid

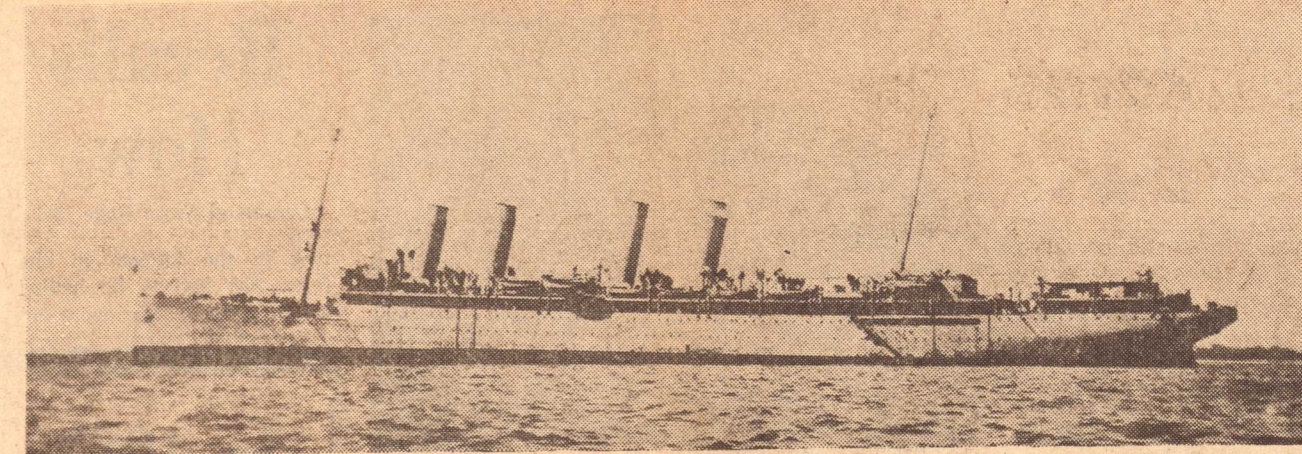
Officers and men aboard a United States troop transport, and not a group of doctors and nurses from Boston, Massachusetts, were among the first to bring aid to the stricken city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, on that day 50 years ago, Dec. 6, when the munitions ship Mont Blanc blew up in the harbor following a collision with the SS Ino.

A letter received by this newspaper from Fred G. Liederlein, 309 Interstate Parkway, Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701, has cleared up some of the misunderstandings about the first few hours after the 1917 blast that ripped Halifax and Dartmouth apart.

Writes Mr. Liederlein: "My ship, the USS Van Steuben, a troop transport that received a badly damaged bow off the coast of France in the late fall of 1917, with water in the hold, listing and nearly out of coal, headed for Halifax. We were nearby when the explosion occurred. "The following is taken from the USS Von Steuben's history book at the close of the war:

"Owing to a shortage of coal, the ship was forced into Halifax, N.S., and was only 30 miles away from the city when the great explosion occurred on the 6th day of December, 1917. It will be remembered that this explosion was one of the worst in the history of the world, and was caused by a Belgian Relief ship colliding with a French munitions ship which had on board 4,000 tons of TNT, the most powerful explosive known to science.

"Upon our arrival at the scene of the terrible disaster, a working party was immediately dispatched ashore and aided materially in caring for the wounded and rendering first aid to the homeless. A heavy snow fell on the night of the explosion, which wrecked the entire city, and the wind rose to a high tension, the flames spread



USS VON STEUBEN, 1917 Thirty Miles Out Of Halifax When The Blast Came. Her Officers And Men Were First To Render Help To The Stricken City.

### German Press On Disaster

Canada Getting Experience At Front and At Halifax.

New York Jan. 14 — A copy just received here of the Kolnische Zeitung, the inspired organ of the German Government, contains the following reference to the Halifax Disaster:

"Not without emotion can one note the news of the devastation of the hard-hit Canadian town. And yet is it not better that these munitions should not have reached

### Blast Put Suspension To Service Act

The Military Service Council in Ottawa issued instructions following the Halifax Explosion of 1917 to suspend operations in localities affected by the catastrophe.

the theatre of war and the trenches, there to be used against our people in its hard struggle for freedom and independence, our people which did not seek war, and also did not produce these munitions which have now struck those who wanted to trouble us with them?"

"Canada is getting war experience at the front and also at Halifax. We hope that its lesson may open the eyes of the warlike section of the

## 90-Year-Old Recalls How Explosion Devastated Tufts Cove

A survivor of the first Halifax explosion in 1917 is a Tufts Cove woman, Mrs. Margaret Brennan who celebrates her 90th birthday on Friday.

Looking more like a woman in her sixties, Mrs. Brennan yesterday told friends how the tragic explosion of the munitions ship Mont Blanc in Halifax harbor (near the Narrows at Tufts Cove) actually tore the whole roof off her new home and sent a large segment of a cannon hurtling into her bed from which she had arisen a short time before.

Mrs. Brennan said she was 40 years old when that explosion occurred. Her husband, who is now dead, took the oil cloth off the kitchen floor, she said, and put it over the roof of the verandah of their home. This served as housing accommodations through the long, cold winter of that year.

Mrs. Brennan said she remembered waking in the icy cold of the morning to find icicles frozen to the bed clothes.

Despite the cold and primitive accommodations, she said, none of her family contracted the flu during the epidemic which ravaged the community the following year.

Mrs. Brennan said she had hung dish cloths on the clothes line shortly before the explosion — "I never saw them again," she chuckled.

She also remembered her son Clyde, who was on his way to school at the time of the blast. He was thrown up into a tree by the force of the blast. A strap on a new leather school bag he was carrying was cut completely in two by the blast. He returned home completely covered in black from the blast, but unhurt.

Another daughter, Marlon, now deceased, had been ill when the explosion occurred.

Mrs. Brennan said she

See RECALLS Page 14E

# Today... 50 YEARS LATER

NOVA SCOTIA LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY LIMITED is still very much interested in local ladies — offering them the finest values and appliances of 1967!

Back in December, 1917 we had a special interest in the ladies of Halifax

**WANTED**  
10 Women to Train for Conductors on the Tram Cars  
APPLY 10 LOWER WATER STREET.  
Nova Scotia Tramways & Power Co., Ltd.

*From The Acadian Recorder, Dec. 1917*

50 YEARS AGO YOU COULDN'T BUY THE FEATURES YOU'LL FIND IN THIS

## Inqlis "Liberator" AUTOMATIC DRYER

Special fabric care at a budget price. Features all fabric drying with special permanent press, wash 'n wear cycle. Infinite heat control. Up top lint screen. Automatic door shut off: tumbling and heat shut off when door is opened, resume when door is closed. Holds up to 24 lbs. of damp clothes.

# \$179<sup>95</sup>

AND TODAY YOU CAN HAVE THIS INQLIS WASHDAY PAIR WITH NO DOWN PAYMENT

Free Delivery, of course.

MANY YEARS OF ENGINEERING AT ITS BEST — in the new

## Inqlis "Liberator" AUTOMATIC WASHER

Three washing cycles: Normal, Gentle and Super Wash. Top loading door features safety shut off spin switch. Fully automatic: fills, washes, drains, rinses, damp dries, shuts off, all automatically. Water level control. 5 automatic Wash and Rinse Temperature selections. Free flow draining, plus many other top features.

# \$279<sup>95</sup>

MAKE THIS AN ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL IN YOUR LIFE.

Also Stores at YARMOUTH and WINDSOR Nova Scotia

**Nova Scotia LIGHT and POWER COMPANY LIMITED**

Capital Building, Halifax—423-5311  
Bayers Road Shopping Centre—454-0662  
Portland St., Dartmouth—403-2405

1917

Argyle and Sackville Streets  
HALIFAX, N. S.

... THEN ... AND NOW!

1967

Publishers of  
**THE CHRONICLE-HERALD and THE MAIL STAR**  
TWO OF CANADA'S GREAT NEWSPAPERS

## The HALIFAX HERALD Limited



# 90 Per Cent Of Injured Cared For On First Day

In the excitement and terror of the Halifax explosion, even those with the slightest wounds rushed to the nearest hospital or doctor, fearing the worst.

Almost immediately the cogs of the huge wheel that saved the injured portion of Halifax were put into working order by the Canadian Army Medical Corps of the city.

Col. McKelvey Bell, ADMIS, as chairman of the relief committee, was the guiding hand, with his staff of some eight or 10 large hospital centres with several smaller ones as clearing stations.

The Americans arrived with doctors, nurses and supplies, just in time to relieve the worn out helpers of Halifax, who had been working night and day since the disaster. Smaller units also arrived from Moncton, Saint John and various towns of Nova Scotia.

Ninety per cent of the injured victims' wounds were dressed the day the explosion occurred, which is a splendid record when one considers that between 30,000 and 35,000 received injuries.

The work was well in hand when the relief parties arrived and hospitals partly well organized.

Camp Hill alone cared for some 1,500 cases the first day without calling for outside help and the Victoria General, the Infirmary and the YMCA, with smaller depots, were flooded.

The No. 5 Red Cross Base Hospital Unit from Boston took complete charge of the YMCA, Barrington Street, and turned the building into an up-to-date maternity hospital.

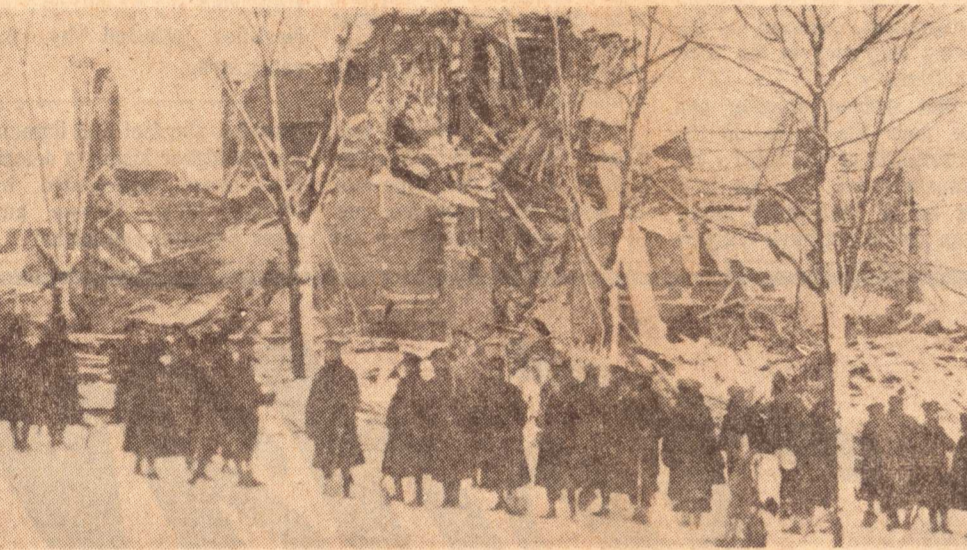
The YMCA treated the first day more than 400 cases and opened the first soup kitchen in the city.

Only two deaths occurred during the week following the explosion. One of the chief patients was a man who not only was buried by the explosion, but went through the fire which broke out in his mill and later was flooded with water from a bursting hose.

Camp Hill Hospital had received a large consignment of stores a day previous to the explosion, consisting of some 5,000 mattresses, more than a thousand blankets,



Clayton's Factory, stripped clean of glass by the 1917 Explosion. Site is now part of Scotia Square.



Sights like these were common after the 1917 Explosion, as soldiers kept guard over the devastated areas.

hundreds of bedsteads as well as many other necessary articles, all of which had been sent by the government for Camp Hill.

Bellevue was taken over by the first American Relief Unit from Boston.

Halifax Ladies' College and St. Mary's College were also taken over by the Americans and were turned into up-to-date hospitals by the Military Medical Corps.

Cogswell Street Military Hospital, under command of Col. King Smith, was almost entirely under military supervision with a few outside doctors caring for surgical cases.

Pine Hill was almost entirely military.

All hospitals received excellent assistance from the St. John Ambulance nurses.

The Halifax Infirmary operated under their own staffs with outside help from doctors and nurses.

Work at Victoria General was solely surgical, chiefly eye cases, fractures and burns.

## 63rd Guard

Continued From Page 8E

force recruited for home service provided it.

This guard was on duty on shore and a naval patrol ship stood from the Pictou to prevent the approach of vessels. During the night the shore guard noticed flames in the deck cargo. Commandeering a boat they proceeded to the ship, climbed aboard and threw over the side first the cordite that was burning then all other deck cargo that might be likely to catch fire.

The naval authorities later took charge of the vessel and towed her away. She was taken out to sea, her coxswain, and allowed to sink.

The rumor that the Pictou was fired got over to Halifax and caused the military authorities to fear a panic. Now that the Pictou had been disposed of there is absolutely no danger of another explosion from any vessel in port. The authorities state that the public has no further cause for fear on this shore.

## Barbie Heads For Vietnam

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbie is off for Vietnam, along with Batman, Little Snoopy and a host of other toys North American children will find under the Christmas tree.

A toy salesman on a one-man campaign, individual toy companies, charity organizations and U.S. troops in Vietnam already have helped get toys to thousands of Vietnamese youngsters for New Year. More are on the way.

"Last year we donated a few toys to two orphanages in Vietnam, and from the letters of gratitude and pictures of the children receiving the toys, we know how much good it can do," said H. H. Coords, president of Fisher-Price Toys, Inc., a pre-school toy manufacturer in East Aurora, N.Y.

This fall, 100,000 wagons and balls, wheelbarrows and balloons, dolls and games have been donated to be distributed by the U.S. Marines as part of their civic action program.

"I'm not a crusader or anything, but I thought it was right," said Jay Krotman, 31, the New York toy salesman who organized the drive. "I sent out 325 letters, and 60 per cent responded. They were great. One manufacturer in New Jersey sent 98 cartons."

Kretman asked for and got art supplies, baby toys, gym sets, plastic toys, puzzles, models and other animals.

"Please don't send any guns and war toys," he asked. He said marines suggested no guns.

Some toy guns have been

## Recalls How

Continued From Page 13E

ting in the kitchen at the time. She had to be hauled out from under four doors but

suffered only minor cuts. Despite it all, Mrs. Brennan was happy to have a large family of sons including Gerald, Cyril, Harold, Roy, Clyde and two daughters, Marion (now deceased) and Ethel. Most of her family and many friends expect to be with Mrs. Brennan to help her celebrate her 90th birthday during the weekend.

She is in perfect health, maintains her own apartment and does all her own cooking, being an artist in such culinary specialties as plum pudding and Christmas cake which her family are all looking forward to again this December, as they have for more than half a century.

## In 1917, we made this change . . .

1894 **Announcement** 1917

The firm of Webster, Smith & Co., Wholesale & Retail Dealers in China, Glass & Pottery, 175 to 178 Granville St., (Corner Buckingham St.) announce that their business in future will be conducted under the name of

**WEBSTER, SMITH CO., Limited**

The New Company will be composed of the following:

Wm. M. P. Webster—PRESIDENT.  
Edmund A. Smith—VICE-PRESIDENT & TREASURER.  
Wm. G. Ryan—SECRETARY.

The new firm solicits the continued patronage of old friends and trusts to be favored with the addition of many new ones.

From The Halifax Herald, December 6, 1917

It was to be about 50 years before we were to change again — Now We Are Three —

### WEBSTER, SMITH CO. LTD.

1894 Granville Street, Halifax

### WEBSTER'S HOTEL & RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT

1880 Granville Street, Halifax

### WEBSTER'S CHINA & GIFTS LTD.

Halifax Shopping Centre

Branches in Moncton, N.B. and St. John's, Nfld.  
Webster's . . . Famous In Halifax Since 1894

# Gathered Dead Bodies On A Picket Fence

## J. C. MacKeen Tells How Tragedy Struck Blow Upon Halifax

By J. C. MacKEEN

December 6th, 1917 dawned with a completely dead calm, bright sunshine and a slight fall of snow from the previous evening still on the ground. The writer was nineteen years of age, at which period one's memory is apt to be clear and, therefore, I am giving my account of the disastrous day as I saw it — and the succeeding few weeks which took their toll in tragedy and disruption in Halifax, Dartmouth and the surrounding districts.

If the readers of these notes find that they are more or less of a personal nature I crave their forgiveness as it is only my own recollection.

### STAGE IS SET

Halifax was, at the time, engaged in heavy naval and military duties. There was also a federal election brewing within the next two weeks. Things, generally, were not comparable to today in that communications were of a primitive nature, medical services were of a comparatively minor order, the utilities were confined mainly to the centre of the city, with subsidiaries in Dartmouth, and our fire department consisted of only one motorized pumper, the rest being horse-drawn, steam-fired engines, ladder trucks, etc.



get along Gottingen Street as far as Wellington Barracks (now Stadacona), but beyond that it was impossible to go due to the debris of telephone poles, fallen buildings and fire. Amongst my recollections was the huge conflagration of the cotton factory on Kempt Road, but many other fires were burning without the attention of any fire force to fight them.

Due to the calm air, the buildings and residences of Richmond Hill were flat on the ground and caught fire slowly, one from the other, throughout the morning.

The small public square at the head of Young Street and Gottingen Street was being filled up by the dead and



Houses and business establishments collapsed in a pile of debris in the wake of the 1917 Halifax Explosion. Dead and dying were pulled from the rubble.

wounded, brought up as could be managed from the wrecked and burning buildings. There was no difficulty in filling the car, load after load, as quickly as possible, and taking them to the nearest hospital. As stated above, there were comparatively few people left in this area after the alarm of a second explosion, which did not occur.

### DEAD IN STREETS

Unfortunately, there was very little organized relief due to the fact that the Naval Dockyard was more or less completely wrecked, with dead and wounded lying about everywhere — as were the old North Street and the Richmond railroad stations. The Military Headquarters, who had a large number of personnel under their control, did not function during the first hours of the disaster.

As the morning wore on, with another man, I spent my time searching for wounded on Richmond Hill, but unfortunately the people found in the ruins had succumbed through the night.

I had had a course in first aid and, therefore, decided to go to Camp Hill Hospital where I volunteered my services to Major (Doctor) A. C. Hawkins, subsequently Mayor of Halifax, for work in the wards. In the ward in which I worked there were 50 beds and some 240 seriously wounded people. Doctor Hawkins told me that there

about 2:00 o'clock when I left the scene of the disaster and despite any assertions to the contrary I may say that there was, as yet, no sign of snow, although the moon was very heavy with the foretaste of a coming storm.

### BLIZZARD STRIKES

Next morning I was up at daybreak to drive my brother-in-law to the outfalls and the snow of blizzard proportion was only just beginning. As the morning wore on, with another man, I spent my time searching for wounded on Richmond Hill, but unfortunately the people found in the ruins had succumbed through the night.

I worked with my brother-in-law till very late that night, without much result. It was

large surgical bucket had become filled with nucleated eyes and had to be replaced, but this course of treatment undoubtedly saved many eyes and possibly fatalities.

A crisis arrived at the various hospitals in the following days before the relief trains from Boston, Montreal, etc., arrived, when anaesthetic became in short supply and could only be administered to the suffering victims in very minute quantities.

I have mentioned Doctor Cox with whom I worked and achieved the highest admiration for, because he went on hour after hour for 60 hours of continuous strain before more-or-less collapsing. At this time a new relief doctor, Dr. Tooke of Montreal, had arrived and we carried on our team.

### DOCTORS BUSY

As stated before, many people were looking out of their windows at the tremendous fire in the harbor and with the explosion the glass was flung into their eyes and the percentage of eye cases in the hospital was completely abnormal.

All available doctors from the nearby towns — Bridgewater, Lunenburg, Kentville, Truro, New Glasgow, etc. — had come to assist in the afternoon of the explosion and all of them, as far as possible, set up dressing stations and operating rooms in any place available.

During the course of the second day in our extremely busy eye operating room run by Doctor Cox of New Glasgow, the young medical student assisting him passed out from sheer exhaustion after 40 hours of work. Doctor Cox sent for someone to replace him and I was selected. This was quite largely without operating room experience, but particulars of the patient had to be entered, the type of operation performed, etc. And, finally, after some hours when the nurse administering anaesthetic could carry on no longer, the job of giving the anaesthetic fell to me.

It is horrible to relate, but with one patient waiting to go on the table, one on the table and one being taken out, a

SAVED BILLY WELLS I should perhaps mention that one of my patients was Billy Wells, the driver of our sole motor fire engine, who had reached the scene of the explosion only to be blown off the engine, catching his chest on a hook on the vehicle and tearing himself so badly that there seemed little hope for him. Mr. Wells was submerged by the tidal wave which came over the Dockyard and saved himself from being dragged into the sea by grasping the end of a telegraph pole. His life was probably saved by the use of a then new development, "Dakin's Solution," which had been perfected for burns and gangrene overseas. Mr. Wells and I sometimes reminisce about these happenings.

The explosion happened on Thursday and by Tuesday of the following week sufficient outside assistance had come.

See GATHERED Page 14E

# A GOOD AD BEARS REPEATING...

**A Book Christmas**

THIS should be to an even greater extent than ever before "A Book Christmas," because of the exceptionally good books that are offered. There are novels by the most popular authors, volumes of poems, and really suitable for holiday gifts, and the outstanding gift of the year is the important new volume of new titles published this season.

WHETHER man, woman, boy or girl, including the little tots three or four years old, there are books here which will please them as would no other gift.

**CONNOLLY'S**  
487 BARRINGTON STREET.

## Gathered Bodies

Continued From Page 3E

to Halifax to alleviate the intensity of the emergency. City hall had begun to function and a number of important committees had been set up. These included transport, information, building and patching, the morgue, etc.

An emergency of this nature demonstrated how resilient a population can become and it was not many days before some return to the semblance of the city organization began to function.

The weather was very much against us in that not only was there a blizzard but subsequent heavy rains, followed by severe frosts, made it next to impossible to get about.

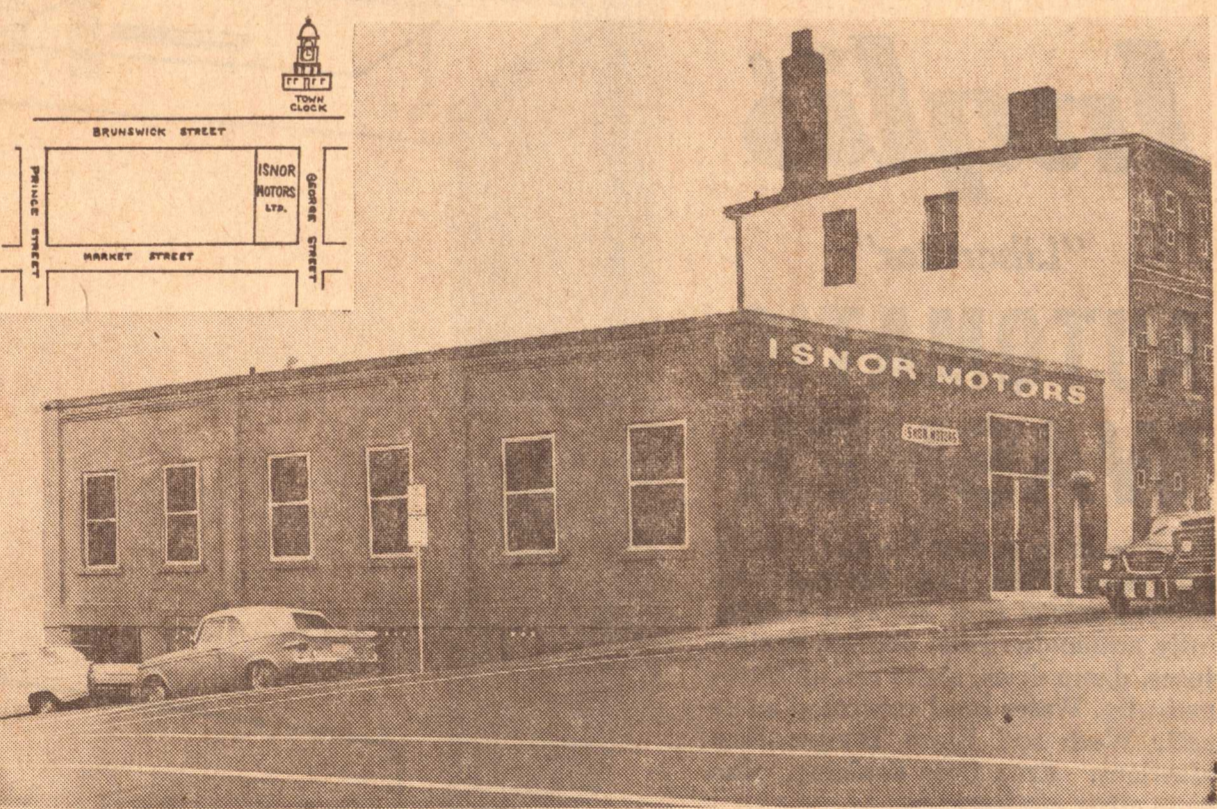
In the north end of the city, in the houses that remained standing, there were, of course, no windows or doors, and I regret to say that some looting took place. Before this had become serious, however, the military took the situation in hand and established a mounted patrol covering Barrington Street, Gottingen Street, Agricola Street and Kempt Road, from North Street to the Basin. There was a detachment of equipped cavalrymen, with their horses, available for this duty, awaiting transport overseas. It so happened that they had no officer in charge and I was selected to command this detachment.

It was, I found, a most arduous job as it entailed some 30 to 40 miles riding per day, through all weather, and at the end of two weeks of this duty I succumbed to pneumonia which effectively prevented further hope of overseas service for me.

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In our new location across from the Old Town Clock on Brunswick Street, we offer new car showroom displaying the handsome Mercedes for 1968, our general offices, service centre, and, of course, new and used car sales. (Used car lot located directly behind our sales room). PLUS, we also offer you additional service . . . Studebaker parts and servicing!

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NOW ON DISPLAY IN OUR NEW SHOWROOMS!

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# Synonymous with Quality— UNSHRINKABLE UNDERWEAR

**STANFIELD'S**

Unshrinkable UNDERWEAR

Owes its Popularity to the Very Best of Wool

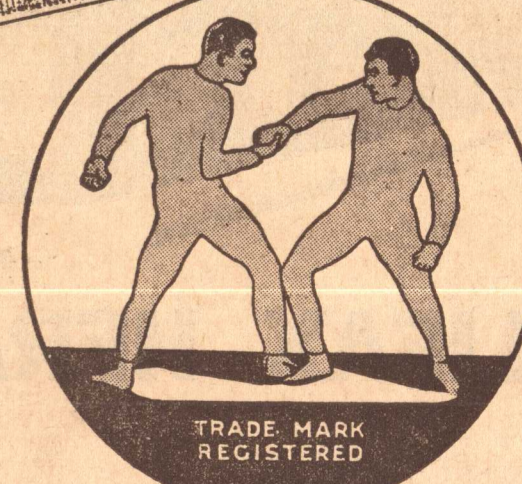
Of the kinds of wool needed for the favorite lines of Stanfield's Underwear, this gives the largest percentage in Canada. This gives the most of the wool, so that we are able to secure just what we want in weight and length of fibre—in fact, we get the pick of the kind of wool best suited to the various different requirements. This gives plenty of time to grade it accurately and clean it thoroughly. During the cleaning, a special Stanfield's process takes the "shrink" out of the wool.

Made up into garments, this wool is delightfully soft, strong and durable that it can be worn for years and years less per cent of wear than the cheapest, less comfortable kinds.

For the growing child, Stanfield's new Adjustable Combination and Adjustable Sleepers (with feet) are simply perfect. By moving the waist buttons and combination or sleeper can be kept at the right length till it is worn out, and the lower part of the garment can be quickly renewed.

**STANFIELD'S LIMITED, TRURO, N.S.**

# STANFIELD'S TRURO



# LIMITED NOVA SCOTIA

### For more than 110 Years!

From The Acadian Recorder, December, 1917

Many old timers will remember when STANFIELD'S LIMITED ran ads on its famous Unshrinkable Underwear in the early part of this century.

Today the name STANFIELD'S . . . is still famous for its famous Unshrinkable Underwear . . . as well as an exciting new line of products.

Look for the STANFIELD'S label when you shop for quality . . . and follow the steps of smart buyers who have been selecting Stanfield's for more than 110 years!







# Day Of Explosion Admiral Missed His Exams — Landed In Flower Bed

By BARRIE CONROD

Moments before exploding TNT from Mont Blanc wrecked Halifax, cadet officer Roger E. S. Bidwell was tidying his uniform in preparation for morning divisions at Stadacona Naval College.

"I was about to take part in a great war experience which I would remember to the end of my days," Rear Admiral R. E. S. Bidwell, (ret'd) writes in his memoirs.

"Much has been written of that eventful disaster and I would only like to record my personal experiences, and that of my fellow cadets.

"On that very morning of early December 1917, when we were about to commence our passing out exams, a rumor was rife that a large ship was on fire in the harbor.

"In fact many of us, in our spare moments from brushing each other's uniforms and generally tidying up for divisions, were observing what we could of this interesting conflagration through the windows of the college.

"Suddenly it happened. I only have a most confused memory of the ensuing minutes, though I realized at once that it was something to do with that burning ship.

"I was on the second floor of the building, and the building itself appeared to be collapsing. My one instinct



Admiral R. E. S. Bidwell, RCN (ret'd)  
Never Got To Write Final Examinations

was to get outside, and I struggled through a collapsed window frame and fell to the lawn outside, luckily landing in a flower bed.

"It had been a beautiful spring-like day and yet it had become as dark as night. As I appeared on the scene, the first huge cloud of debris was commencing to rain down. I crawled clear of the tottering building and lay on the grass with my coat over my head.

"The ship, the Mont Blanc, had exploded only about half a mile from where we were. Our very proximity, added to the protection afforded by the stout dockyard wall was all that saved our building from being demolished.

"After a while the lethal rain from aloft seemed to subside a trifle and I could make out flames spreading through the whole north end of Halifax.

"At this time I noticed a hurt. In fact, his face and head were so badly cut that I could not recognize him. He obviously needed attention so I grabbed him by the arm and started to guide him up out of the Dockyard which seemed to be in a pretty good mess, and up towards Admiralty House, which at that time had been converted into a hospital and clinic for war veterans.

"I caught a glimpse of the old Niobe as I passed by. She seemed to have broken adrift from alongside her billet and was drifting up the harbor towards the Shipyards, minus about three of her four funnels.

"On arrival at Admiralty House I found it to be on fire. Luckily an ambulance came by and I was able to stop it and persuade it to take my friend to the nearest hospital still standing.

"No writing of mine could hope to convey the scene of



that of the first atomic bomb.

"The uninjured cadets were mustered and told to seek accommodations wherever they could. Most of us were taken in by Halifax friends in the south end, most of whose homes had broken windows and other damage but escaped the devastation in the north part of the city.

"About 10 days later transportation to elsewhere in Canada had once more been

established and most of us were able to go home.

"We never wrote our passing out examinations! So it's an ill wind . . ."

## Salvation Army Offered Service

No sooner had the disaster overtaken Halifax when officers of the Salvation Army

## Silhouette Resembles One Of First Ministers Of Historic Church

Halifax today still has many scars and other reminders of the Halifax explosion of 1917.

Among these is the "Explosion Window" in historic St. Paul's Church, in which the silhouette of a man's head and shoulders shaped by broken glass is seen.

The silhouette is said to bear a likeness to one of the early ministers of the church.

### EVERY WINDOW SHATTERED

St. Paul's Church suffered from the explosion as every other church. Every window was shattered, and a large crack was made across the roof.

However, St. Paul's was the only church in which divine worship could be held on the following Sunday. It was also from St. Paul's that the bodies of the dead were buried.

The clergymen of the different denominations conducted services in turn.

The parish hall became a temporary hospital where many of the injured were brought for treatment.

helpers soon scoured the city with a view to finding out the needs of the suffering ones.

Every street affected was visited and the different departments were thus brought in touch with the needs. This included food,

clothing, shelter, medical aid, and bedding.

In addition to this, at No. 1 Citadel Adjutant Hargrave and a band of workers supplied free meals and sleeping accommodations in the dispensary across from their hall, and in various other ways filled in the need of the hour.

SOLDIERS stand guard over rubble after the Halifax explosion of 1917, to protect against looters.



This photo, taken in 1912, shows the original Spring Garden Road Hopgood's, at the corner of Birmingham Street. Note the 3-horsepower delivery fleet.

## Hopgood's

. . . Nova Scotia's oldest grocery firm— dating back beyond the birth of the Nation



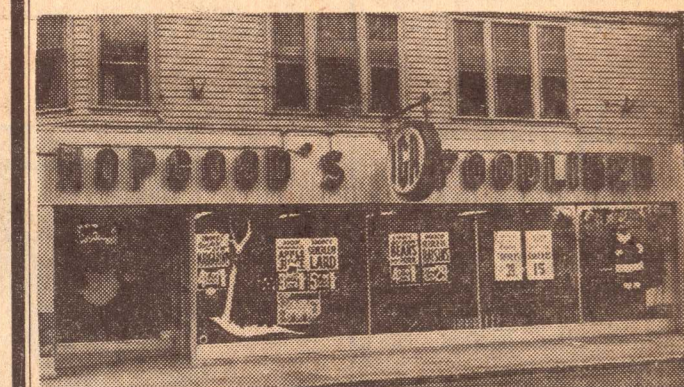
W. B. HOPGOOD



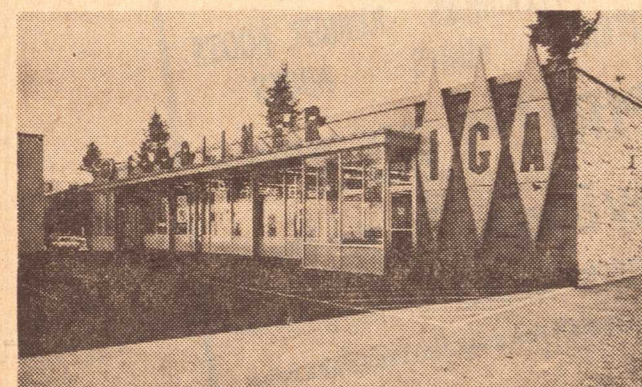
W. J. "BILL" HOPGOOD



F. B. "PHIL" HOPGOOD



Present Spring Garden Road Hopgood's



Lakefront IGA Foodliner in Dartmouth



Hopgood's IGA, Dutch Village Road

now 3 HOPGOOD'S IGA FOODLINERS to serve you:

- HOPGOOD'S IGA FOODLINER, 5504 Spring Garden Road
- LAKEFRONT IGA FOODLINER, 382 Portland, Dartmouth
- HOPGOOD'S IGA FOODLINER, 3531 Dutch Village Road



## Chappell & SON LTD.

has put a lot of miles behind it since 1912

. . . and earned a Trusted

reputation as the Tune-up Service, Bearing, Battery and Radial Tire Specialists in the metropolitan area!

Today, Chappell & Son offers metro motorists much more in the way of auto care: specialized ignition sales, service and installation; battery and bearings service, plus, of course, tires from the world's finest manufacturers—

### MICHELIN, PIRELLI AND B. F. GOODRICH!

Do as so many thousands of motorists have done over the past 55 years — "trust your car to Chappell's care!"

## CHAPPELL & SON LTD.

Established 1912

1658 Grafton Street, Halifax

## Only Surviving Fire-Fighter Saved Wheel Of "Patricia"

Billy Wells doesn't need to be reminded of the day the earth shook and the bed of the Halifax harbor was split open.

He was about as near as one could possibly get to the huge powder keg "when she blew." "We didn't know the ship was carrying munitions," he said.

Mr. Wells, now 87, is a resident of Halifax, and at the time of the explosion was employed by the fire department. He is the only survivor of the fire engine crew that answered the call to put the fire out.

"It was about twenty minutes to nine when we received a telephone call at the West Street Fire Station saying there was a ship on fire at pier number 8 (now pier 9)."

"Our fire engine, the Patricia, had a crew of eight men," recalled Billy. "I was the driver and we immediately rushed down to the pier. The ship was almost along side the dock and the multi-colored flames shooting from her decks to the sky presented a beautiful sight."

Thinking the crew were still on board, the firemen started to unroll the hose, he said. "That's when it happened."

When the Mont Blanc exploded, Billy was thrown clear of the fire truck and somehow managed to keep on land during the tidal wave that followed. Later he was taken to Camp Hill Hospital where it took him five months to recover from the blast which took the lives of more than 2,000 people.

"The first thing I remember after the explosion was standing quite a distance from the fire engine," he related. "The force of the explosion



BILLY WELLS is now 87, retired from the Fire Department, but still with fresh memories of the day he also survived among fire-fighters who were called to the ship fire which resulted in the Halifax Explosion of 1917. He holds piece of wheel of fire truck Patricia, blown off with him at the docksite that tragic day.

blown off all my clothes as well as the muscles from my right arm."

Remembering vividly, Billy said he was standing "quite conscious" when the tidal wave came right over him.

"After the wave had receded I didn't see anything of the other firemen so made my way to the old magazine on Campbell Road (now Barrington Street)."

"The sight was awful" he said, "with people hanging out of windows dead. Some with their heads off, and some

impact from a man made destructive force, unequalled in power till the first atomic bomb, had sent Billy sailing through the air still clutching the wheel.

### 1917 Blast Put An End To Old Mill

Disappearance of a number of early Dartmouth industries was hastened by the December 1917 explosion in Halifax Harbor of the munitions ship Mont Blanc after its collision with the Belgian relief ship Imo.

A descendant of the late George Crathorne has discovered photos of her grandfather's old water-powered flour and feed mill which once stood at the south east corner of Windmill Road and Jamieson street. Few living Dartmouthers can recall the structure which was acquired by John Dooley in the mid 1800's, and was left a tangled mass of wreckage by the harbor blast.

Dr. John P. Martin's Story of Dartmouth recalls how miller Dooley acquired the mill property and lived in the mill like a hermit on frugal fare until his death in 1883.

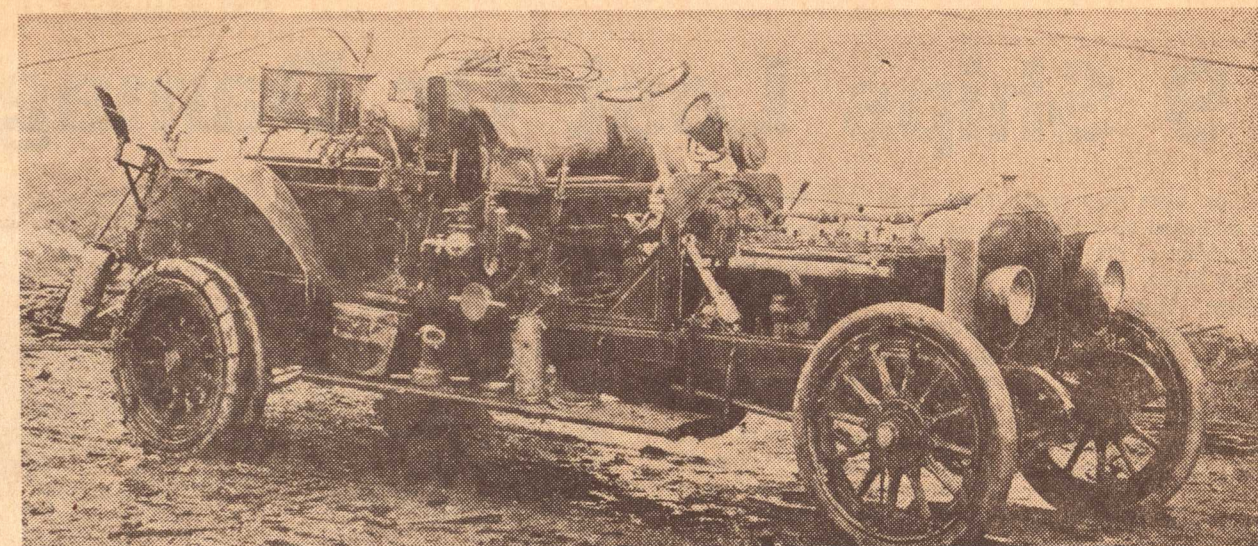
The photos made public by Miss Ethel Crathorne, a member of Dartmouth's Museum Society were taken after her grandfather acquired the property.

Water to power the mill came pouring down a mill-race and ground the corn and wheat into the flour and meal in strong demand in that area.

The Crathorne family at the time lived in the old Albion Estate, an impressive structure which faced away from Windmill Road, overlooking the Harbor. It took the full force of the explosion in 1917 and was totally demolished.

### Only 1 Death

Only one person belonging to Africville, James Allison, perished in the Halifax Explosion of 1917, notwithstanding the fact that the tiny settlement near the entrance to Bedford Basin was near the scene of the great explosion. All the houses in the area were shattered, but there were not fatal casualties. Mr. Allison was on his way into the city when he saw the Mont Blanc on fire and stopped to look at the scene. It was his last.



## Relief Commission Still Exists

The Halifax Relief Commission, formed after the Halifax Explosion to provide financial assistance for those who were injured or lost property in the great disaster, still exists today.

The commission's assets today include about \$1,000,000 for pensions, a reserve fund for medical services, and a reserve for increases. All for relief of victims and pensions are paid to the victims for life.

The Halifax Relief Commission was incorporated by the statutes of the province in January of 1918 with F. W. Fowke of Oshawa, and T. S. Rogers, K.C. and Judge W. B. Wallace of Halifax as commissioners.

Their job was to take over and receive all money and undistributed goods available for relief of victims and distribute them to the needy through pensions, medical

assistance and to restore property.

Most of the money came from grants. The federal government provided \$18 million; insurance funds, \$348,000 and \$4 million from other sources.

In the first year of the commission's operation more than \$4 million was distributed for emergency relief and \$20 million went for claims and reconstruction.

WRECK OF THE "PATRICIA", pride of the Halifax Fire Department, destroyed in the Explosion of 1917. Note the torn steering wheel.

Since that time, some \$6 million has been paid out in pensions and medical services to those injured.

Today, the commission's office is located at 5555 Young Street in Halifax. E. W. Crooks is secretary. Commissioners are A. M. Ratler, F. H. Flynn and W. E. Tibbs.

**HAMILTON'S**  
-famous for quality since 1840  
From The Halifax Herald, 1917

Most sodas are good. Hamilton's are the original creams.

There's a Grocer in your town who sells them.

The successful rise of Hamilton's famous products all across Canada can be readily traced to the secure foundation upon which G. J. Hamilton & Sons Limited was founded.

Adhering to a strict policy of quality control, improved techniques, efficient distribution and progressive packaging, Hamilton's products have gained widespread repute for quality on grocer's shelves all across this country.

Test this reputation for yourself. Pick up several packages of Hamilton's fine products where you shop and see how quickly you agree that Hamilton's are better!

**G. J. Hamilton & Sons Limited**  
PICTOU, NOVA SCOTIA  
HALIFAX OFFICE: 2469 Clifton Street

## A great idea in 1917...

The One Gift the Whole Family Will Enjoy

There is no other Christmas gift that the whole family can so thoroughly enjoy as a motor car—especially if it is a Ford, because the Ford is so simple and so easily operated that mother can use it as well as father, sister as well as brother, and there is always room for the kiddies.

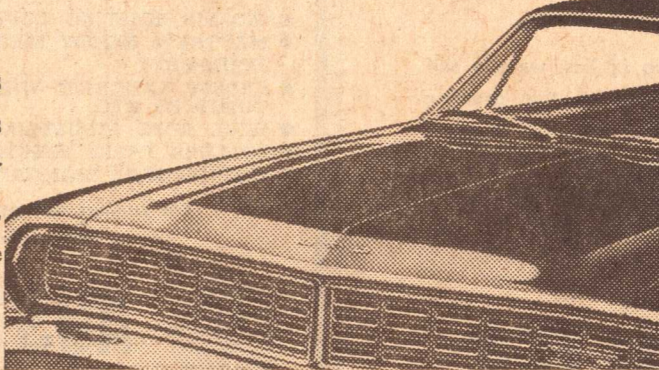
The Ford Sedan is your most appropriate family Christmas gift. It is a handsome vehicle with excellent complete protection against rain, snow and wind. It is a cool summer car, too. Its handsome appearance makes it a great favorite with the ladies for shopping, dining and calling on.

Speak for your Ford now and we can arrange for delivery on Christmas morning.

See your FORD Dealer Today!

an even "Better idea for 1968"

Let Wood Motors (N.S.) Ltd. be the Santa Claus in your 1967 Christmas story! See George Riley about your new Ford, and "really live the life of Riley!"



## WOOD MOTORS (N.S.) LTD.

Fenwick and South Streets, Halifax  
Phone 422-8421

DISCO INDUSTRIES LIMITED  
**HALIFAX SHIPYARDS DIVISION**

is, and has been, as much a part of Halifax as its famed Citadel Hill.

In actuality, Citadel Hill is older. The Halifax Shipyards has only been operational since May of 1889 when, after two years of bustling solid granite, it opened its famous drydock. HMS "Canada" was the first warship to pass through these gates into what was heralded for many years as the largest drydock on the Atlantic seaboard of North America.

Since that time, through the eras of sail and steam, the Halifax Shipyards complex has gained worldwide reputation and respect. Serving as ship builders and repairers to vessels of every flag, this major Halifax industrial and marine centre has gained in skill and experience, effecting a specialized marine service second to none. During World War II alone, the Halifax Shipyards carried out repair to more than 7,000 allied vessels—a notable achievement considering the pressures and conditions of that great conflict.

It also built the famous "tribal" class destroyers, and in post war years participated in all the RCN destroyer building programme. In more recent years the yards have been busy in commercial construction programs, and repair and servicing of ships of all kinds, thus maintaining its historic reputation.

**HALIFAX SHIPYARDS**  
Serving Shipping Interests Since 1860 (DOSCO)



# 9 Ships Lost Or Damaged... Survivor Told Story

Nine ships were destroyed or badly damaged as a result of the explosion of the cargo on the Mont Blanc. They were Mont Blanc, Imco, Curaca, Colomes, Middleton Castle, Ragus, Stella Maris, Hilford and Picon.

A fragment of the side of the Mont Blanc was found on the shore near the Richmond pier.

The Imo was beached on the Dartmouth side of the stern. The Curaca, which was at Richmond pier, drifted across the Narrows after the explosion, was beached inside Bedford Basin, her foremast gone.

The Colomes, which was also at Richmond pier, was a torn and twisted hulk.

The funnels of the Middleton Castle were gone and her superstructure was badly battered.

The Picon was anchored in the Eastern Passage after suffering from three fires in her deck cargo.

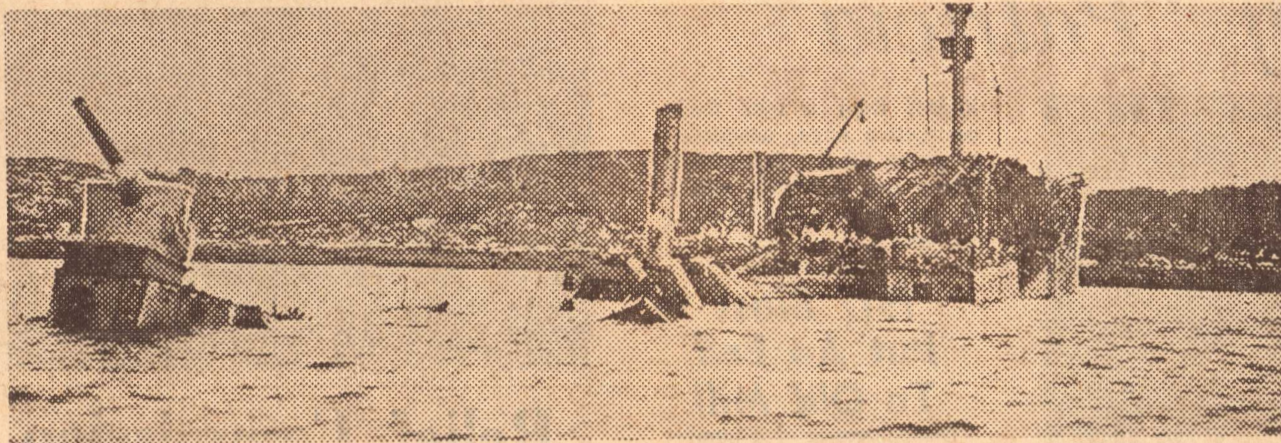
The Ragus was a new steamer and was moored at the Acadia Sugar Refinery pier. She received the full force of the explosion, and there were only a few remnants of her left.

The Stella Maris, a tug boat, appeared to have been lifted out of the water, ripped to pieces, and blown some distance, because parts of the vessel were found mixed up with those of the Ragus.

The Hilford was on top of one of the piers, having been partly blown and partly carried along by the tidal wave.

**TELLS OF EXPERIENCE**

Edward McCrossan, a member of the Curaca's crew, gave a report of his experiences to 'The Evening Mail' following the explosion. "I was in the forecastle with eight of my mates," said the able seaman, "and we



Wreck of the S.S. Curaca of New York in Halifax harbor after the 1917 explosion. Note stern cannon.

water edge to see if I could see anyone but couldn't. When I got back the train had gone.

"I then started to see if I could find a ship that wasn't damaged so that I could go aboard and get a bit of clean up. I had on a suit of fleecy underwear, gurnsey, waistcoat and cardigan jacket with a blue pair of trousers and dungaree overalls, and I was soaked through and covered in mud and dirt and blood.

**BOTH LEGS SMASHED**

There was no ship in sight that wasn't damaged. A naval doctor saw me and beckoned to me to come and help. We got a man out that was jammed between a tipped over box car and some steel plates. Both his legs were smashed. I helped with some soldiers to get other wounded men on stretchers. After a while an old man came along and help save her children. I asked him how he got into the town to the Sailors' Home. He said: 'Come with me and I will take you there.' We came down the track with fire on both sides of us and as we came out on the road a man with a taxi asked me to jump in and he would take me to the hospital. I told him I wasn't a case for the hospital and could go to the Sailors' Home. When I got to the Sailors' Home the first two men I saw were off our own ship. First Donkeyman Bennett and Donald Matheson, able seaman. Bennett had his head bandaged and Matheson said all that was the matter with him was a splinter in his foot. They had been taken off the ship by a tugboat.

"After the fireman and I had climbed up on the wrecked pier we saw at least two men standing on the boardwalk of the ship. Bennett

120 Men Out 235 Workers Were Killed

Out of 235 employed at the Halifax Dry Dock on the day of the Halifax Explosion of 1917, 120 men were killed and many others were seriously injured, a number of them incapacitated for life.

The Dry Dock itself weathered the great blast of the explosion of the Mont Blanc, but the machine shops and all the rest of the plant with the exception of the Basin and Gates were destroyed.

Sailors' Home and let my clothes dry on me. They were filled up with another ship's crew so they gave me something to eat and that night I found a place to sleep on the floor of the dressing room at the Academy of Music. The people that had charge gave me all I wanted to eat. It was a fine class of people that had charge there. They were all the time urging everyone in there to have some more soup or tea or sandwiches and it was better grub than a sailor usually gets. The man in charge had my lip washed up and took me to a doctor in the YMCA who put in a few stitches.

"On Saturday Captain Peck found us and took us to the shipping office where we were given some pocket money and an order to get an outfit of clothes. We are to be sent back to Glasgow for the first chance."

# Wagons Laden With Injured Children

By BERTHA O. ARCHIBALD

Dec. 6—what a beautiful morning—so clear, with just a nip in the air to remind us that this was December. People were hurrying to work, among them the pharmacist of Victoria General Hospital.

She quickened her step as she hurried along Carlton Street, and took the short cut across the field to the north driveway of the hospital. It was quite an open field, as neither the Grace Maternity Hospital, the Medical and Dental Library nor the Dalhousie Public Health Clinic were in evidence then.

Shortly after entering the dispensary Miss Lottie Flick, so attractive in her nurse's uniform (she was one of the nurses whom they lost during the great flu epidemic of 1918) appeared in the dispensary.

The pharmacist followed her to the door, and while standing there they heard a terrific blast, first one and then another, which made the floor tremble beneath their feet.

Then they noticed the windows crashing in, three of them—and the glass showering down in all directions around them. They had just time to crouch behind the counter, which was between them and the windows. The pharmacist received a slight gash in her hand, but she straightened up she noticed just above her head an arrow-shaped spear of glass about nine inches long, driving well into the hardwood moulding. She broke it off with difficulty. The nurse was unharmed.

Rushing to the front of the building they looked for the plane they thought had bombed them. Everybody was out on the grounds—among them was Dr. G. H. Murphy in his operating gown, gloves and all as he had been waiting for his patient to be anaesthetized when the sky-light fell with a crash.

The doctor was cut. Dr. Fred Lesell, who had his blast came, told the nurse to duck, and leaning over his patient whom he was about to anaesthetize protected her from the flying glass. When he stood up he was encased in the anaesthetic room window-frames, and glass was strewn in all directions, but—miraculously, his patient was not hurt.

As the people gazed upward, instead of a plane, they saw an awesome sight. It was a tremendous cloud, of a grayish whiteness, floating over the north end of the city. They looked in astonishment.

**CAME IN DROVES**

Soon patients came in droves, some on foot and others brought in various conveyances. The whole building was filled, every bed, every cot, every stretcher, when no more were available, the wounded and dying were laid gently on the floors of the wards, the halls, the offices and the basement—not the basement as it is today, but a dark dirty cellar.

But at least they were under shelter.

Archdeacon W. J. Armitage was one of the first who came to give courage to the injured and the dying. He entered Ward 17 and, kneeling on one knee he stepped down and took the hand of each of those poor souls lying on the floor, and prayed, and spoke so kindly to each of them.

The pharmacist thought—that is just what the Master would do if He were here.

Dr. Armitage truly represented his calling that day, and for many days to come.

Wagons laden with little children were brought to the hospital and everyone who could lend a hand to get them into the building. Most of them were taken to Ward 45.

Their little faces and hands were black from the powder fumes, and their clothes littered and torn.

One little fair-haired boy was handed to the pharmacist, who rushed with him to the ward. He was sobbing bitterly for his mother. She deposited him and went back for another child. He too was sobbing. Two children had to be placed in each bed. The little fellows put their arms around each other and their sobs grew less and less as they comforted each other.

The pharmacist found it difficult to keep her own eyes dry. She went back to her dispensary, which was open to the elements, and next day a terrible snowstorm was beating in. She noticed someone walking slowly up the front walk, leaning heavily on his cane, resting every few steps.

It was Dr. Murdoch Chisholm. He could not find Mr. Kenney, the superintendent, who was in the United States attending a convention, nor

In 1917 when Haligonians thought of fine furniture, they shopped at S. P. ZIVE & CO. ON GOTTINGEN STREET...

**Open for Business**

We wish to notify our friends and customers that, although our windows are boarded up, the store is open and we are doing business on the inside as usual. Our entire stock of Christmas Furniture, which is in good condition, will be sold at Cost Prices.

THIS IS A CHANCE TO SAVE MONEY ON PRACTICAL AND APPROPRIATE CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

**S. P. Zive & Co.**  
Furniture Dealers  
117 Gottingen Street. Phone Lorne 870-J.

*From The Acadian Recorder, December, 1917*

**This is our record-**

75 years of growth and progress to a role today as the largest independent wholesaler and retail paint, glass and wallpaper outlet in the Maritimes!

... and we're proud of it!

**JAMES F. LAHEY LTD.**

- specializing in:
- Commercial, Residential and Industrial
  - Painting, Paperhanging and Glazing
  - Supply and Installation of Plaster and Sheet Mirrors
  - Supply and Installation of Glass and Plexiglass
  - Canalux Sealed Units

**FREE ESTIMATES**  
Phone 466-2348 — 466-7523  
68 Ochterloney Street, Dartmouth

**CUT FLOWERS**  
Roses, Carnations, Narcissus, and Lilies of the Valley.

**Plants**  
Cyclamus, Primulas, Palms, Ferns, Holly and Mistletoe.  
Send for Price List.

**SUCKLING & CHASE, Ltd.**  
Truro Nurseries, Truro, N. S.  
Office Phone 127. Night Phone 201.

**nice things have been blooming at Suckling & Chase Limited in Truro since 'way back in 1880**

From The Acadian Recorder, December 1917  
Back in December of 1917, we were advertising Cut Flowers and Potted Plants, with an eye to Christmas giving—much the same as we're doing this season. Like then, people who prefer the finest flowers will specify Suckling & Chase Limited first. And we'll be sending them just that—the finest flowers—the same as we've been doing for years!

**Suckling & Chase Limited**  
Truro, Nova Scotia

**A "bigger and better Halifax", that was our promise in 1917—**

**Our Wood Working Factory**  
is again in full operation, and with our large stocks of Building Supplies, we offer our facilities for the reconstruction of a Bigger and Better Halifax

**The Piercey Supply Company Ltd.**  
Phones connecting all depts.

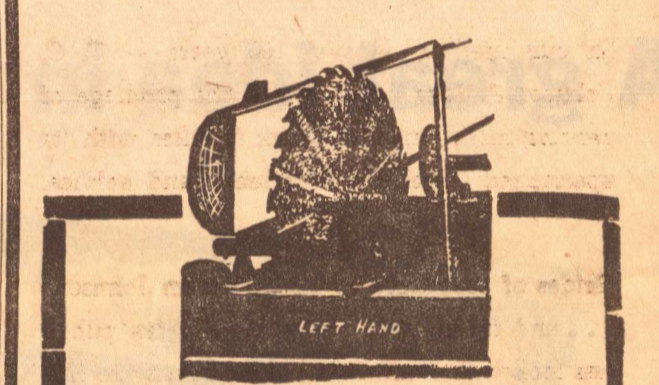
From The Acadian Recorder, December, 1917

NOTE: OUR WOODWORKING PLANT NO LONGER EXISTS.

Many changes have taken place in Halifax during the past 50 years. Halifax has, indeed, grown bigger and better, emerging as one of Canada's truly great cities.

And we have played our part. Piercey's has been totally involved in many of this city's 'landmarks'. We have catered not only to industrial and commercial construction, but also to thousands of individual home

**PIERCEY SUPPLIES LTD.**  
Phone 454-6411 2854 Robie Street, Halifax



**Hoe Inserted Tooth Saws**  
Have No Equal For Frozen Timber

It will pay you to invest now in a genuine Hoe Inserted Tooth Saw fitted with Special Flanged Shank and Sharp Bevel Bits which are guaranteed to do perfect work in frozen timber.

Genuine Hoe Bits, with drop-forged groove, are assured an absolute central bearing in the plate give uniform clearance and consequent longer wear, and are of even temper and uniform finish. They do not split when inserted, nor break when used.

WE STOCK 46 inch and 48 inch SAWS, BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT HAND, AND CARRY A LARGE STOCK OF BITS AND SHANKS.

**AUSTEN BROS., Ltd.**  
The Banner Machinery and Supply House of the Maritime Provinces.  
Hollis Street : HALIFAX

From The Acadian Recorder, December, 1917

**FIFTY YEARS AGO WE MIGHT HAVE SERVED YOUR GRANDFATHER...**

today, we'd like to serve YOU!

- HERE'S HOW:**  
Austen Bros. Ltd. has available for immediate delivery . . .
- MORRIS HOISTING EQUIPMENT
  - MATTHEW MOODY MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT
  - CROSBY LAUCHLIN WIRE ROPE CLIPS, SHACKLES, THIMBLES, ETC.
  - WIRE ROPE INDUSTRIES, WIRE ROPE
  - MILLERS FALLS ELECTRIC TOOLS
  - CANADA SAND DIAMOND GRIT ABRASIVES
- For further information and literature, write, phone or visit

**AUSTEN BROS. LIMITED**  
"Machinery and Supplies for all Industries"  
1566-72 HOLLIS STREET, HALIFAX  
1877 90th Anniversary 1967

**ISNOR BROS., TWO STORES**

are again at your service with a complete range of Men's and Boys' SUITS, OVERCOATS and REEFERS, Shirts, Underwear, Socks, Gloves, etc.

Also a Big Showing of House Coats, Sweater Coats, Combination Sets, Fancy Braces, Mufflers, Fur Lined Gloves, Hats, Warm Caps, and everything useful for man or boy.

**ISNOR BROS.,**  
69 Gottingen St., 531 Barrington St.

**50 YEARS AGO**  
at **Wallace Bros. SLIPPERS**  
were a big Christmas Gift item!

From The Acadian Recorder, December, 1917

**THEY STILL ARE TODAY!**

And what we said in our December, 1917, advertisement still stands in December 1967 . . .

"GIFT SLIPPERS FOR ALL THE FAMILY"

Again, as in 1917, Wallace Bros. also features a new and varied stock of OVERSHOES — BOOTS — SHOES FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Let us put our established shoe experience at your disposal today!

**Wallace BROS. LIMITED**  
BETTER GRADE FOOTWEAR  
1589 Barrington Street • Phone 423-6241  
FREE TWO-HOUR PARKING in the Tax-Park Garage or the Downtown Merchants' Parking Lot!  
FREE METER PARKING SATURDAY

In 50 Years We Have Changed . . .

Our styles, selection of merchandise and one of our addresses have changed.

**Howeever—We still have 2 large stores where you can select the finest quality clothing for men.**

**Gordon B. Isnor's**  
2169 Gottingen Street and Halifax Shopping Centre

**Make This A Footwear Xmas**  
A GIFT SUGGESTION OF REAL QUALITY.  
RUBBERS OVERSHOES RUBBER BOOTS  
GAITERS PUMPS BOOTS  
SLIPPERS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY  
Hockey Boots For the Boys and Girls

Give Warm Footwear to every member of the family—much better than 'downy' slippers!

WE ARE WELL STOCKED FOR XMAS AND PRICES ARE RIGHT.

**Wallace Bros. Footwear**  
523 Barrington Street

**Appealed To Readers**

Following is an appeal for aid which appeared in the New York Evening Post following the Halifax Explosion.

"We trust that our readers will respond promptly and generously to the appeal that we are making for the sufferers in Halifax."

It is no ordinary need that must be met.

The elementary necessities of shelter, clothing and food are suddenly required for a multitude of men, women and children.

Our particular responsibility toward them is not that of an associate in arms; it rests simply upon our abounding geographical nearness and our abounding resources. We are in a position to be of great assistance to people who must have it or they perish.

Now, during the height of the 1967 Christmas shopping season, we once again re-iterate our ad message of 50 years ago, and invite you to shop at Zive's for the most practical and appropriate gifts!

In its spacious store on Barrington Street, Zive's, through members of the original family, continues to cater to the flawless tastes of its discriminating clientele. People, like you, have come to expect a great deal from Zive's, and invariably come away totally impressed with our desire to serve and satisfy.

Now, during the height of the 1967 Christmas shopping season, we once again re-iterate our ad message of 50 years ago, and invite you to shop at Zive's for the most practical and appropriate gifts!

**Zive's**  
"Furnishers of happy homes"

**S. P. Zive & Son Ltd.**  
"Furnishers of Happy Homes"  
1670 Barrington Street.  
IN DOWNTOWN HALIFAX



# Tossed Half Mile Through Air

Third Officer Mayers of the S.S. Middleton Castle, which lay about two hundred yards from the ammunition ship Mont Blanc when it blew up in Halifax harbor Dec. 6, 1917, had a miraculous escape from death.

After some time in hospital he recuperated from his experience at the Halifax residence of W. A. Hart.

In relating the details of the incident after the explosion, Mr. Mayers says he had just come on the deck of the Middleton Castle, fully dressed to take a boat to go ashore on business, when he noticed flames on the deck of the other steamer (Mont Blanc). In quick time there followed the explosion.

Mayers was lifted into the air by the shock of the blast and at some height driven through the air at such terrific speed that

he tried, in vain, to check it. He says he remembers being in the air all right, though while there thought at first he was going through water, and hence his efforts to check his speed.

Though fully dressed when lifted from the deck, Mr. Mayers says he was stark naked when he landed well up on Fort Needham Hill, and he was convinced he was carried the distance of half a mile or more through the air by the force of the explosion.

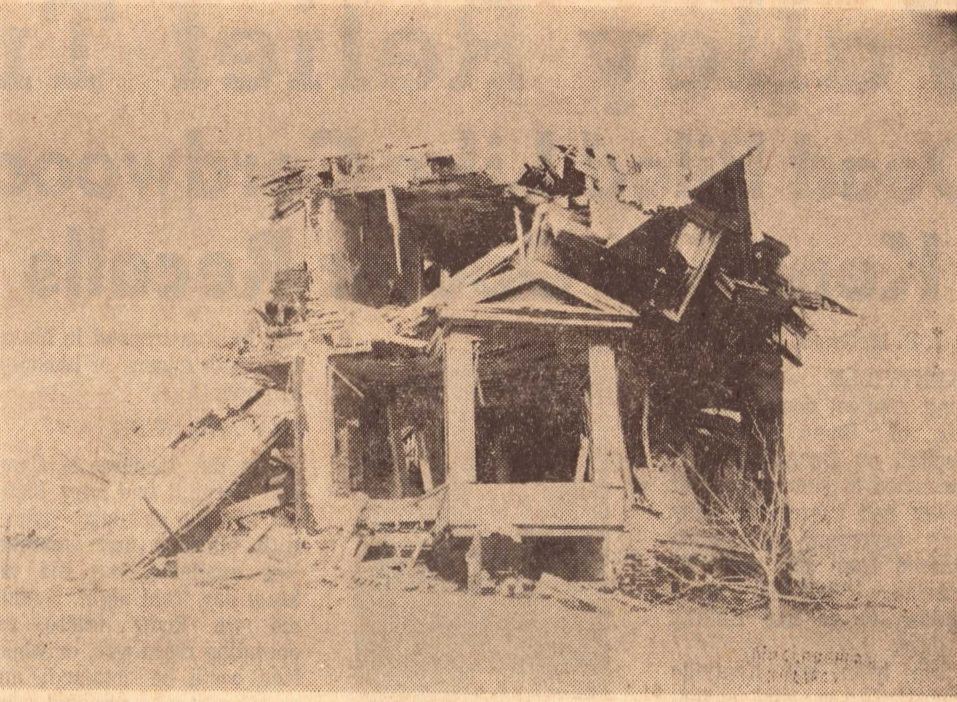
A scrapbook of the Explosion, kept by the late C. L. Torey, says: Mayers "tells of his experiences on the hill before aid came to remove him and others to hospital, and is thoroughly convinced in his own mind of his great flight through the air, and regards his flight as a miracle".

# Survived To Become Pilot

Mr. Mayers survived his harrowing experience of the Halifax Explosion to become a pilot in the harbor of Liverpool, England, during World War II. While maintaining a close friendship with his rescuer, the late W. T. Hart of Halifax, Mr. Mayers never returned to the scene of the explosion, but he was visited in England during World War II by Major J. Victor Hart, son of his benefactor.

**TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS**  
In response to an appeal from Halifax for something for the Christmas of the little sufferers in the stricken city, the Massachusetts-Halifax relief committee sent by express 300 boxes of toys.

The committee secured the playthings from a consignment made by allied prisoners interned in Switzerland.



Only the fine doorway on this Halifax residence appears to have survived the 1917 Explosion.

# The Halifax Disaster

(Editor's note: This poem was written by a survivor of the explosion, and was given to Wilfred Chipman of Truro by his father William J. Chipman of Toronto who also resided in Halifax at the time of the great disaster. The author's description of that day's events are vividly recalled. As a virtual postscript, the author recalls the magnitude of generosity which arose from citizens of the United States who, together with Canadians from coast to coast as well as individuals and organizations of other countries, answered the call of need from their fellow man.)

It was on the sixth of December  
Nineteen hundred and seven-  
teen,  
Halifax suffered disaster  
The worst she had ever seen.  
The morning was bright with  
sunshine  
A typical winter day,  
None had thought of danger  
As they wandered their busy  
way.  
The children had gone to their  
lessons  
Their mothers were busy at  
home,  
While fathers worked in factor-  
ies  
Little dreaming they'd soon  
be alone.  
There comes creeping up the  
harbor  
A ship loaded down to the  
rail,  
With the most horrible death

dealing cargo  
That was ever allowed to sail.  
She carried a deck load of  
benzol  
And shells for overseas,  
In her hold a new explosive  
They called it T.N.T.

Now why should this death  
dealing monster  
Be allowed to come creeping  
up here,  
To bathe our beautiful city  
In widow and orphan's tears.

The relief ship rammed the  
monster  
Tearing a hole in her side,  
Then eased out in the stream  
again  
And drifted along with the  
tide.

There came a cry from a  
merchant  
"There's a steamer on fire  
out there!"  
But few paid any attention  
As that is the fireman's care.

It was five minutes after nine  
As those still alive can tell,  
The beautiful city of Halifax  
Was given a taste of Hell.

The earthquake hath its rumble  
The cannon hath its roar,  
But this was worst than even  
those  
Yes, multiplied by four.

And when the crash was over  
Those still alive struck dumb,  
Turned into living statues  
And wondered what next  
would come.

For no one knew what had  
happened  
Some thought it the end of the  
world,  
And others thought 'twas Ger-  
mans  
Marching in with banners  
unfurled.

They rushing forth into the  
streets  
From their tumbling and  
shattered homes,  
Some with cuts and bruises  
And others with broken bones.

They were met by a sight more  
horrible  
Than any there had been,  
For there lay the dead and  
dying  
'Twas worse than a battle  
scene.

Houses were crushed like paper  
The people were killed like  
flies,  
And the coroner's record tells  
us  
The toll was a thousand lives.  
From north to Rockhead Hos-  
pital  
And west to the exhibition  
ground,  
There wasn't anything living  
And not a single sound.

The streets were filled with  
debris  
With dying and with dead,  
There lies a little baby's hand  
And there's an old man's  
head.

There out upon the Common  
That cold December morn,  
Tender little innocent souls  
Into this world were born.  
Women hugged their children  
Their hearts were filled with  
fear,  
While husbands lay beneath the  
homes  
They all had loved so dear,  
And on the falling morning  
As if to hurt them twice,  
There came a storm from the  
ocean  
A blizzard of snow and ice,  
Freezing the poor unfortunates  
Who had no place to go,  
And many a poor soul  
Drifted to heaven from out of  
the snow.

The States weep with you,  
Halifax  
In this your hour of sorrow,  
They offer you their help and  
gold  
So don't wait till tomorrow.  
But step right up and help  
yourself  
And we the bill will pay,  
For that's the way they do  
things  
In the good old U. S. A.

ROYAL INSURANCE GROUP  
PROPERTY - AUTOMOBILE - CASUALTY  
MARINE - BOILER & MACHINERY - LIFE  
ROYAL INSURANCE GROUP  
1646 Barrington Street, Halifax - 422-1601

VE OLDE FIRME  
Buy Hyacinths to Feed the Soul  
If thou of fortune be bereft,  
And in thy store there be but left  
Two loaves—sell one, and with the dole  
Buy hyacinths to feed the soul.  
Music is the hyacinth of the soul—and  
the soul is hungry for it at Christmas time  
above all others. Carols—Cantatas—  
Oratorios—Masses—Hymns—these are  
available in whole or in part to those who  
own an instrument like the Heintzman or  
the New Edison, to mention but two out of  
the many at our store.  
N. H. Phinney & Co., Ltd.  
454 Barrington Street.  
Open For Business  
(REPRINT FROM THE ACADIAN RECORDER,  
DECEMBER 1917)

Those great songs of 1917 never sounded better than on a Heintzman Piano from Phinneys—  
See what a Heintzman Piano can do for your 1967 repertoire!  
Come in to Phinneys today and ask for a convincing demonstration of the great sounds that have made Heintzman Piano a world-wide name in the field of pianos.  
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# Helmsman Of Imo Arrested As Hun Suspect In Halifax

Did the helmsman of the ill-fated Norwegian Relief Ship Imo, John Johansen, have some sinister connection with the collision with Mont Blanc in Halifax harbor on Dec. 6, 1917?

Canadian Press stories fifty years apart, one dated Dec. 14, 1917 and the other dated Nov. 30, 1967 suggest just this.

**FLASHBACK**  
Under the by-line of Jack Tracey, Halifax-born CP staff writer, last week's flashback to the Halifax Explosion said that the late Dr. S. H. Prince, author of Catastrophe and Social Change told the Nova Scotia Historical Society in 1952 of his theory of an engineered crime in connection with the Explosion and than somehow the German Kaiser was behind it. This he said was "given a passing semblance of life when in June 1922, one Johnson or Johanson confessed at Seattle, to having caused the Halifax disaster before

he suicided." Authorities at the time had given little credence to the confession.

The name of the Imo's helmsman was John Johansen. And this item, under a Canadian Press by-line, dated Dec. 14, 1917 from the scrapbook of the late C. L. Torey, Halifax: "Helmsman of Imo Arrested as A Hun Suspect In Halifax".

By CANADIAN PRESS  
HALIFAX, N.S. Dec. 14—John Johansen, helmsman of the Norwegian steamer Imo, the Belgian Relief Ship whose collision with the munition

steamer Mont Blanc led to the disaster of last Thursday, was detained as a German spy suspect yesterday. He was turned over to the military authorities by officials of the Massachusetts Relief Hospital where he had been under treatment.

One of the nurses at the hospital, a young woman from New York whose name was not revealed, is said to have called attention of the hospital staff to Johansen yesterday. She had noticed that the patient was acting queerly and that he did not seem to be wounded. Her report on the case led to a second examination of the patient by physicians and the conclusion was reached that the man was shamming illness.

A watch was set over him and later it was said that Johansen was in a king's desperate efforts to leave the institution. Surgeons reported that he had offered a nurse \$50 if she would go out and buy him a newspaper, the assumption being that he had in mind an attempt to escape in her absence.

After that incident, a military guard was placed on duty by his bed, and later, when the incident was called to the attention of Captain Henry G. Lapham of the Massachusetts State Guard unit, the provost guard was sent for and Johansen was locked up.

Rumors are plentiful in connection with the arrest, the liveliest of spy rumors heard here since the war began was spread broadcast. The case culminated in a report that eight Germans had been shot at sunrise. Military authorities, while

acknowledging that the Johansen case was being thoroughly investigated, declared that the shooting story was absurd.

Another persistent story was that a secret code in German had been found on Johansen, and that a wireless station had been unearthed in the district destroyed by fire after the explosion.

C. J. Burchell, counsel for the Imo in the Admiralty hearing on the collision, said that the secret code story as far as it concerned Johansen, was absolutely without foundation. Johansen, Mr. Burchell said, had been living in the U.S. for 10 years and as he was anxious to return to his old home in Norway, had shipped on the Imo. It is Mr. Burchell's theory that Johansen was still dazed from the effects of the explosion and was making efforts to escape from the hospital fearing that he might be put in jail because of the collision which caused the loss of so many lives.

Military authorities also announced last night that Louis Vosburg alias Henry French, arrested here yesterday after the arrival of a relief steamer, was not a German spy, in their opinion. Vosburg, who carried a railroad ticket from Boston, \$29 in cash, a map of Halifax and an assortment of papers, boarded the steamer in Boston without being observed and failed to give satisfactory account of himself after the ship got to sea. He first said his home was Brooklyn, N.Y., but when questioned he lived at Concord, N.Y. A physician said he was normally eccentric and temporarily unbalanced.

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In our lifetime — over 100 years — T. C. Johnson & Sons Ltd. has had the privilege of serving many, many Halifax families with its specialized jewellery experience and service.

Brides of 1860 were given gifts from Johnsons . . . and through the years the Halifax public has looked to Johnsons for first quality in fine jewellery, diamonds, china and gifts. To have served so many Halifaxians in the past — and to be maintaining this same service today is our distinct pleasure and privilege.

THOS. C. JOHNSON & SONS LTD.  
1663 Barrington Street  
Halifax, N.S.

# Engineer Tells Of Relief Train

By ARTHUR BURKE

There was a large cloud of black and white smoke, recalled W. W. McPherson, Indian Point, Lunenburg County. But the railroad man had no idea the skyward scene indicated death, torture and destruction in a city just 20 miles away.

Mr. McPherson was engineer on the old Intercolonial Railroad's "mixed train" out of Bridgewater bound for Halifax that December 6 morning, half a century ago.

"I thought there must be a very big fire in the city to cause such a picture," he said.

However, it was not till they reached French Village that they learned of the explosion in Halifax Harbor. The train was ordered to proceed with

extreme caution from Bowser's Station (now Timberlea) to South Western Junction.

Crew members, he said, were able to smell the fumes from the explosion about a mile east of Bowser's Station at the north end of Governor's Lake, opposite the Seven Mile House.

But the train had to stop within three miles of the junction when word was received of another probable explosion at any moment the magazine at Wellington Barracks was afire.

Over an hour had passed before conditions were pronounced safe to head on to South Western Junction.

Mr. McPherson remembered one passenger on the train, a lawyer from Lunenburg, was annoyed when the train remained where it was, and his suggestion to proceed without further investigation was overruled.

Beyond South Western Junction, Mr. McPherson said the train was able to get only 100 yards south of Willow Park Junction as the tracks were littered with wreckage. He said the ground was wet from harbor waters blown into the air by the blast. Small pieces of ship's plates could be picked up almost anywhere, he added.

As the train could get no closer to the city, it was prepared for the return trip. Engineer McPherson said they were ordered to wait till 6 p.m. and to take with them any refugees, fare free, who might wish to make the trip to any point along the line.



This was Richmond School on Roome Street, showing how the 1917 Explosion tore the building apart, killing many of the school children.

# All Aboard Harbor Craft Lost Lives

Acadia Sugar Refinery Company's harbor craft Ragus (Sugar spelled backwards) was lost in the Halifax Explosion of 1917. Every man on board of the lighter at the refinery pier on that fatal day lost his life. The only body recovered was that of R. Buchanan, a fireman, found on the boat. Lost were Captain John Blakener, one of the most popular men operating on the waters of the harbor and with him, A. Myers, mate; John Murphy, deckhand; W. Dooks, engineer.

# Disaster Comes in Places Least Expected BUT NO NEED TO WORRY

No occasion to discontinue business. No need to go without a home of your own. See to it that you are insured and that your policy is large enough. Write us and we will tell you exactly what to do.  
Thompson, Adams & Co., Ltd.  
166 HOLLIS STREET  
HALIFAX.

# HOW TRUE THESE WORDS OF FIFTY YEARS AGO!

The meaningful message expressed in this advertisement of yesterday is still as accurate today as at that time. And so, too, are the protective programs offered you by Thompson Adams & Co. Ltd., a family business which has grown within the City of Halifax since 1899 — and which is still operated by the family of W. E. Thompson, its founder!  
Why not follow the advice we offered in 1917 and contact us for your 1967 insurance needs? We're still at your service!

# THOMPSON ADAMS & CO. LTD.

1668 Hollis Street, Halifax

We've watched the CITY OF DARTMOUTH grow and expand over the past 50 years  
YOUR GOODRICH DEALER  
TOWN TIRE SERVICES LIMITED  
— and for the past 11 years we've been a part of this expansion!  
This year, in particular, has been a special one for Town Tire Services Limited. In May we relocated our entire operation in Burnside where expanded facilities allow us to sell, service, repair and retread tires of all sizes! Too, our 5-unit mobile fleet allows us to carry this same tire repair service anywhere in Nova Scotia in order to accommodate anything on wheels, from passenger cars to the largest industrial equipment.  
Put your tire problems in good hands! Contact us today! We have a large stock of SNOW TIRES to fit all makes of cars.  
Burnside, Dartmouth 3637 Kempt Road, Halifax  
Ph. 466-2167 Ph. 454-5861  
OPEN DAILY TO 6 p.m. — Sat. to 12:30 p.m.

We have been busy serving Canadians since 1850  
From \$1868.80 to \$25,595.00 in 47 Years  
On December 6, 1869, one of the Institutions of Halifax placed its Paid Up Shares in the NOVA SCOTIA BUILDING SOCIETY, the sum of \$1868.80 in Nova Scotia currency. This money was allowed to remain, nothing being added to it except the interest accruing under the Building Society System. On November 14, 1916, a cheque was handed to the Trustees of the Fund for \$25,595.11.  
1917 ASSETS \$1,700,000.00 RESERVE FUND \$141,000.00  
1967 ASSETS \$1,868,800.00 RESERVE FUNDS \$2,600,000.00  
Original Investment \$1,868.80  
Gain in Interest 23,726.31  
The Nova Scotia Building Society  
Issues Shares on the same system today. Facts speak louder than words.  
OFFICES, 95 HOLLIS STREET, HALIFAX.  
The above advertisement is from The Acadian Recorder, 1917

Excerpts from Directors' Report, Annual Meeting — March 17, 1918  
"Your Directors have pursued a policy of leniency toward all the borrowers in the City of Halifax and Dartmouth who have suffered by the disaster on December 6, 1917, and in view of the severe weather and the necessity of using money for repairs, etc., have granted them extensions in all cases when asked for."  
"The Explosion and Fire which occurred on December 6, 1917, caused great damage in a considerable section of Ward Six, and lesser damage in other parts of the City and Dartmouth. Our Securities in the devastated portion were greatly reduced from the original amounts advanced and, in the majority of cases the land would probably realize more than the balances due on the mortgages."  
"As, however, the Federal Government seems to have accepted the Principle of Compensation to the sufferers, we do not anticipate that any loss will fall on the Society."  
Today, as the Nova Scotia Savings & Loan Company, we are still deeply involved in the interests and well being of many important people — notably our customers!  
With 117 years of knowledge and experience as our guide, we are in an ideal position to serve your best interests in the same successful manner that has made our company a household word in Atlantic Canada since 1850.  
NOVA SCOTIA SAVINGS & LOAN COMPANY  
1645 Granville Street, Halifax, N.S.—Phone 422-6591  
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Executor and Trustee  
— And Still —  
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THE ROYAL TRUST COMPANY  
Centennial Building, Halifax — Holiday Inn, Dartmouth

Great Britain Declares War on Germany  
150,000 PEOPLE READ THE HERALD, THE MAIL, AND THE WEEKLY MAIL  
THE HALIFAX HERALD  
King George's Thrilling Message to His Fleet  
Germany Violated the Law of Nations And Infuriated the Populace of London  
The Kaiser's Fleet in the North Sea. Before any Declaration of War, Attacked Scattered Units of the British Fleet and Wounded War-Landed on the Scottish Coast, and War Was Declared Before the Expiration of the Time Limit Set by Great Britain.  
Parliament Called For August 18  
The Declaration of War  
Canada's Defence Well Mapped Out  
Better get a few extra pounds of MORSE'S TEA today. Enough said.  
Headlines change constantly through the years . . . but never the consistent full bodied flavor and goodness of MORSE'S SELECTED ORANGE PEKOE TEA!  
MORSE'S — satisfying Maritime Tea Tastes for Almost 100 Years!