

# Auditor-General Uncovers Cases Of Irregularities

OTTAWA (CP) — Auditor-General Watson Sellar in his latest report to Parliament questions why a healthy 30-year-old RCAF officer was granted a \$964 annual life pension when he was compulsorily retired in order to promote economy.

This is one of some 100 cases Parliament's financial watchdog in his audit of the government's 1957-58 accounts. The public accounts were tabled late Friday in the Commons by Finance Minister Fleming.

Mr. Sellar's report says the armed forces pension account now is \$325,000,000 in the red. **ONE WONDER** "One may wonder," he says, "whether Parliament contemplates that section 49 of the (pension) act may be used to grant a life pension of \$964 annually to a 30-year-old man in of irregularities uncovered by good health."

The treasury board had accepted an RCAF certificate that this officer's retirement would "promote economy or efficiency." Among other cases brought out by Mr. Sellar:

1. In some electoral districts in last March's federal election the authority possessed by deputy returning officers to appoint special constables was used "extensively." In one Ontario electoral district constables were appointed at 211 of 247 polling stations. In one case, a constable was listed as an invalid on the electors' list. A number of other constables were women.

2. In the June, 1957, election, ballots printed far exceeded the number of electors in a few ridings. In one constituency with 14,700 electors 23,500 ballots were printed.

3. An expenditure of \$29,140 was incurred to transport by chartered plane 113 members of a Newfoundland militia unit to Camp Petawawa, Ont., and re-

turn. The men were in camp less than a week and the RCAF could have done the job for \$7,000 less.

4. A senior officer who left the armed forces to become lieutenant-governor of a province was awarded a full \$10,900 annual pension although the pension act says an officer who retires voluntarily after 25 years' service must take a 20-per-cent reduction in pension. In this case, the defence department ruled — and treasury board concurred — that the officer was being retired compulsorily, making him eligible for full pension.

"The audit concern is whether it is appropriate to regard appointment to a civil position as cause to invoke 'retired compulsorily' provisions in the Defence Services Pension Act," Mr. Sellar says.

Though Mr. Sellar never identifies persons or firms by name, the only senior armed forces officer who became lieutenant-governor of a province on Jan. 15, 1958, the effective date mentioned by Mr. Sellar, was Maj. Gen. E. C. (Johnny) Plow, former chief of the army's Eastern Command and now lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia.

5. The transport department paid \$3,079,000—excluding \$372,069 in architects' fees—for the car ferry Lord Selkirk, running between Wood Island, P.E.I., and Caribou, N.S., though the original estimate was \$1,066,000 and no firm price was negotiated with the builder.

6. Some war pensions have been continued although the pensioner later obtains full-time employment. In 1945, a widowed mother was refused a pension because she was earning \$12 a week. When employment ceased, she was granted a pension of \$25 a month. This pension has continued though the woman now makes \$180 a month.

## Mines Minister Questioned On Coal Problem

OTTAWA (CP) — Mines Minister Comtois said Friday that even if the federal government provided further aid for Nova Scotia coal marketing it would not apply until the opening of the navigation season next spring.

But no decision has yet been taken on proposals for an in-

crease in the federal freight subvention, Mr. Comtois said in re-

ply to a Commons question by H. J. Robichaud (L.—Gloucester). The minister said that at a Dec. 19 meeting with Premier

Stanfield of Nova Scotia and representatives of the Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation, the govern-

ment was told that even with a subvention increase there still would probably be mine payoffs for 40 days.

Stanfield and Glace Bay have been ordered shut down because of difficulties in marketing an existing coal surplus.

## United Church Minister Dies

GRAND-MERE, Que. (CP) — Funeral services were held here Friday for Rev. William Walter Conrad, retired United Church minister who once worked as a teacher in Labrador with the late Dr. Wilfrid Grenfell. Mr. Conrad died Tuesday.

Born in Halifax County, Nova Scotia, Mr. Conrad was educated at Acadia and Dalhousie Universities and later at Edinburgh University, Scotland. He began his ministry of more than 36 years at Harrington Harbor, Labrador with Dr. Grenfell. Later he held pastorates in Nova Scotia, Quebec and western Ontario.

He is survived by his widow, a son and daughter.

## Plan Projects For Montreal

MONTREAL (CP) — The newly-formed Greater Montreal Development Corporation has announced that foundation work is to begin this week on the first of several building projects, an 11-storey office building at Sherbrooke and Bishop Streets.

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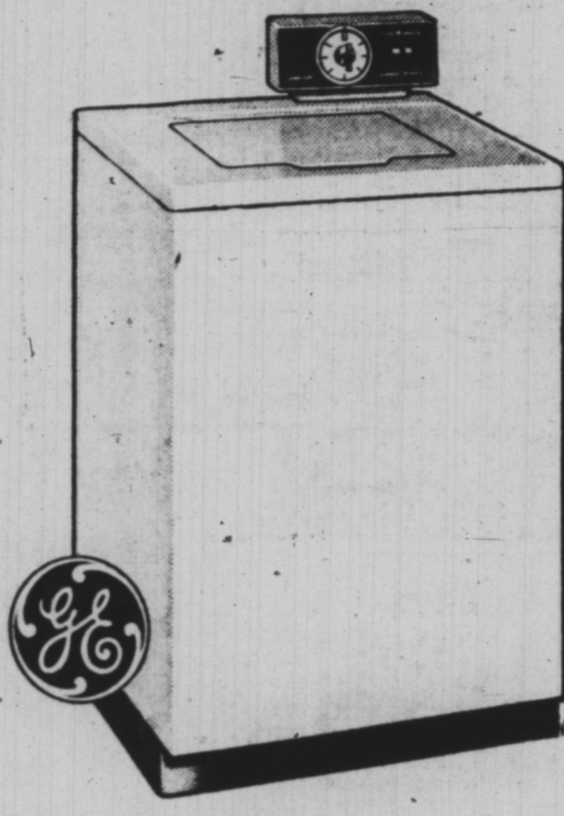


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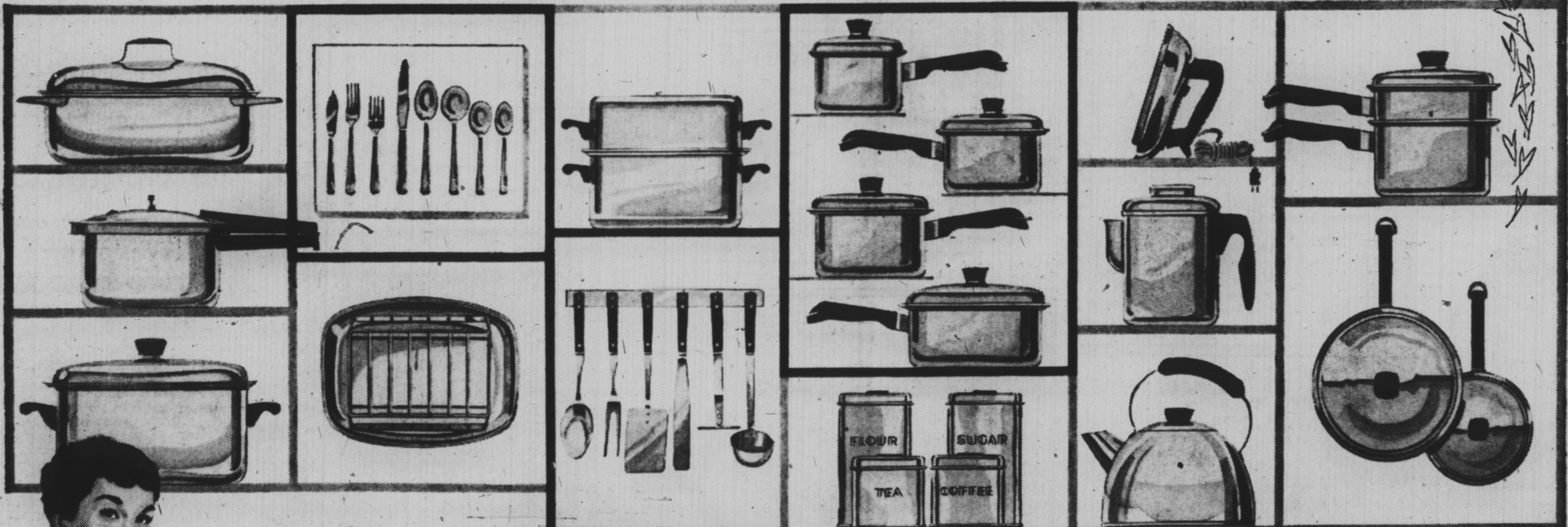
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