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Col. J. L. Ralston

SOLDIER, lawyer and public servant, the late James Layton Ralston made his way to the top of all three professions by hard work and meticulous attention to detail. He was one of Canada's most respected and courageous statesmen.

His record generated such confidence in his capabilities that even his political opponents recognized them and, during the 1940 war session of parliament, urged his promotion to the post of prime minister.

A popular choice for the finance ministry when Hon. Charles Dunning resigned in July, 1939, because of ill-health, Colonel Ralston refused the post to remain at his legal practice, standing by his 1935 decision to abandon politics.

The outbreak of war on Sept. 3, 1939, changed that. He offered his services in any capacity, preferably on active service such as he had experienced in the First Great War, when he rose from a captaincy to command his battalion as lieutenant-colonel and was wounded and decorated.

Instead, Prime Minister Mackenzie King appointed him finance minister on Sept. 7, 1939.

When Hon. Norman Rogers, minister of national defence, was killed in an airplane accident on June 10, 1940, Mr. King chose Mr. Ralston as his successor.

Col. Ralston was given general supervision over all branches of the services with particular responsibility for the army. Major C. G. Power, his old colleague in the House of Commons, became minister for air and associate minister for defence and Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, former premier of Nova Scotia, became navy minister, giving Canada a defence ministry trio of First Great War veterans.

The months following saw the Canadian force in the United Kingdom grow from one division plus to an army corps and then to two-corps army projected in the 1942 program.

Soon after taking office Col. Ralston made a number of staff changes in the department and pursued aggressively a policy of exchanging senior officers as between national defence headquarters and the forces overseas.

He himself made more than one trip across the Atlantic by air to visit the forces in Britain, confer with British army leaders and learn of overseas conditions and requirements at first hand.

On one trip he suffered a painful attack of sciatica but that did not stop him from going about his job. He moved in a wheel chair, limped about on crutches and later with the use of a stick kept moving, visited the troops and even took a bumpy ride in a Bren gun carrier.

The increasing danger of direct attack on Canada which followed the entry of Japan into the war in December, 1941, led the minister to speed preparations for home defence but he decided home defence should not result in any less men going overseas, and that the overseas army program, projected before that development, should be carried out.

The measures taken included additional defence forces on the two coasts, formation of two additional home defence divisions to provide defence in depth, and intensive development of the reserve army to provide a second-string force for local defence in all parts of Canada.

In the spring of 1942, Col. Ralston made a personal visit to the west coast including Prince Rupert and conducted a detailed inspection of defences in order to see for himself that the best possible dispositions were made of the larger forces and armament being provided for the area. Formation of groups of militia rangers to guard outlying districts of Alberta and British Columbia was an outcome of his trip.

It was typical of the integrity of the man and courageousness of his convictions that he parted company with the government in 1944 on the issue of conscription for overseas service and resigned from the government.

POLITICS ACTIVE

SASKATCHEWAN will vote next month announced Premier Douglas last week. The voice of the C.C.F. will mingle with the prairie breezes. Ontario and Alberta will make their provincial appeals. Here and there, over Canada, will be a few by-elections. Soon, in the spuds and herring belt, New Brunswick's ballots will be cast. And right now, Newfoundland is in the throes of discovering how the electors are feeling. Meanwhile, where federal fates are concerned, all that can be done is wait and see. All in all, the immediate political future should be anything but dull.

STOCKHOLM — For every house or apartment offered for rent in Stockholm last year there were, on an average, 13 prospective tenants. In January of this year 22,733 persons were looking for homes.

LUTON, Eng. — A Toronto man has offered weekly food parcels and £10 (\$40) reward to anyone giving news of his brother, Frank Titterton, formerly of this town.

THIS AND THAT



"Come into my private office!"

Reminiscences and Reflections

By W.J.

Yes, getting back to work is a dreary sort of nuisance and you would not mind another few days of leisure, perhaps. For there is a "perhaps" and it does not take long to develop. Lounging, dreaming and dollars growing fewer and weaker become a melancholy bore.

The press of Prince Rupert—and, by Jove, there were three daily papers—proclaimed on May 25, 1911, that the city had basked in sunshine, that all the Indians in Skeena had come to town, and that these included no less than seven brass bands garbed in brilliant uniforms. Something recalls to us a pleasant time was had by all.

Prince Rupert real estate boosters, years ago, had never been trained to think of big money—that is, real big money. They would have run completely out of copy could they have heard there was a prospect of four hundred million dollars being spent a few hundred miles away. None could have thought up the right words. Here was something too overwhelming. Plainly, they were all outclassed—just mere pikers.

With a thousand of them in town, Canadian Legion convention delegates will just about own Saskatoon this week. They come from all over Canada. Saskatoon has travelled a long way since 1907, when it was just another prairie town with lots of ambition and dust. There was no university, nor was there a lordly Bessborough hotel. Jimmy Langan, however, had a hotel. One day, a travelling man, sitting down to dinner, inquired what kind of soup he was serving. "Good soup," said Jimmy.

Some of Prince Rupert's earliest football matches were staged on Second Avenue, a favorite location being west of seventh street. There were all sorts of people in town, then. Those interested in football knew all about the sport. The indifferent knew nothing. Which led a spectator, seeing the ball land smartly on a hatless player's head, to give a

start and inquire if he had, by any chance, suffered an injury.

Ball games, when Prince Rupert had no ball ground and certainly no grandstand were played on the GTP dock, and this took a bit of doing. With a harbor on one side and a concentrated, primitive looking place called a city, on the other, hurling a sphere and swinging a bat, did not allow much latitude. Nevertheless, it was no trick to work up considerable excitement.

Sailing aboard the Princess May, to go to work in Prince Rupert, the writer back in the spring of '09, chanced to chat with a middle aged stranger who had a few questions. Getting off at Prince Rupert, eh? What was my line? Oh, newspapers! He knew Mr. Houston! Yes, knew him quite well. A lot of folks knew John. He was getting off at Prince Rupert, too, and intended to stay. Big town, some day! Name of fellow passenger was Hart—Frank Hart.

Prince Rupert, prior to and after incorporation, was given unwanted and distorted renown. Nearly anything concerning Prince Rupert suffered exaggeration and the wrong slant. It was not to be expected the terminus would be a model of discretion. The community was rough. It could not be anything else. Whoever saw a railway camp, in the middle of construction, different? Who looked for delicate distinctions? But anyone—male or female—who minded their own business and played the game was safe—perhaps safer than where more culture could be found.

GREAT YARMOUTH, Eng. — Scheduled for demolition, the 350-year-old house on South Quay where Cromwell's officers plotted the death of King Charles I has been revived.

Personalities Of Early Days

HAMILTON DOUGLAS

Hamilton ("I Might State") Douglas, who flourished in Prince Rupert when the city was new, liked people and this was one of several reasons why he was frequently elected to the city council.

Everyone called him "Ham" for short, and that was logical, for he happened to be of short and sturdy build. He might, on occasion, have shown a temper but it is questionable if, during the time he lived and labored in Prince Rupert, it was ever revealed. He was always the same—calm, good natured, believing the best instead of the worst, possessing a strain of optimism and enjoying a chat.

"Ham" was along in years but he had the rebound and cheer of youth. If he had a hobby it must have been the city council.

Always, he had his weather eye in that direction. Again and again he ran for alderman and it pleased him mightily to sit in at committee meetings or deliberate at regular sittings. One occasion he was chairman of the finance committee and they called him "minister of finance." There was once he ran for mayor—not that he was sure he would fill that august chair but just to see what would happen anyway. He captured thirteen votes, and how he would go off into peals of laughter trying to describe how it made him feel and confessing he never thought there were so many people with such bad judgment left in town—not so many "liars."

He took great pride in his son, who had developed a dancing academy in Seattle and worked it up to such a degree of success that it was, of its kind, about the foremost establishment

Police Officers Are Transferred

Transfers involving officers of the British Columbia Police in this division are announced. They include the following: Constable G. W. Anderson from Burns Lake to Massett. Constable Robert Hadden, Victoria to Burns Lake. Constable R. T. Haron, Ocean Falls to Prince Rupert City.

FOR SMELTING TESTS

AUCKLAND, N.Z. — A. H. Nordmeyer, minister of industries and commerce, announced that an electric furnace will be imported from Britain. The furnace will be located at Onekaka on the North Island and will carry out smelting tests on iron sands and ores.

there. Mr. Douglas himself could dance. Sometimes, in the heat of a local election campaign, he would trip the light fantastic on the stage, and it was never known to lose him any votes. He was a man of comfortable girth, yet a neat stepper.

Ham's alert interest in Prince Rupert did not lessen, after he moved away. Had he not moved south, he might have been alive today. In Seattle he was struck by a car and, after a lingering illness, passed out. He will long be remembered as one of Prince Rupert's useful citizens and colorful pioneers.

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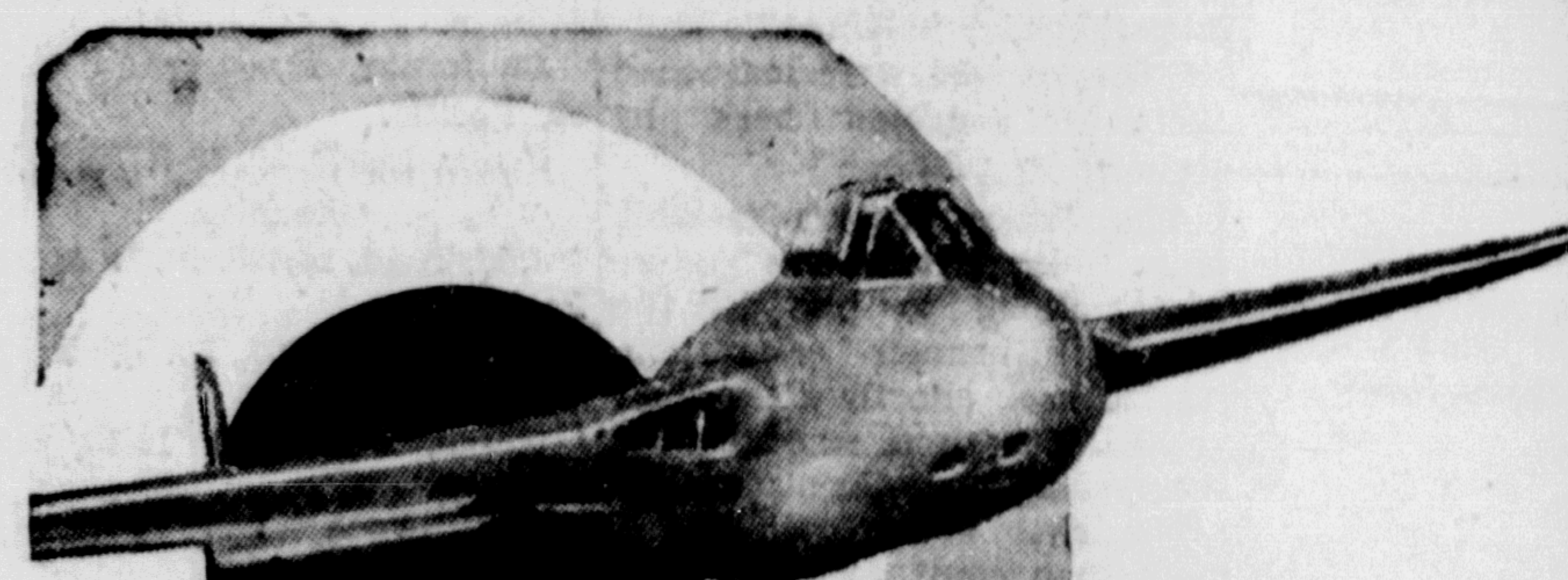
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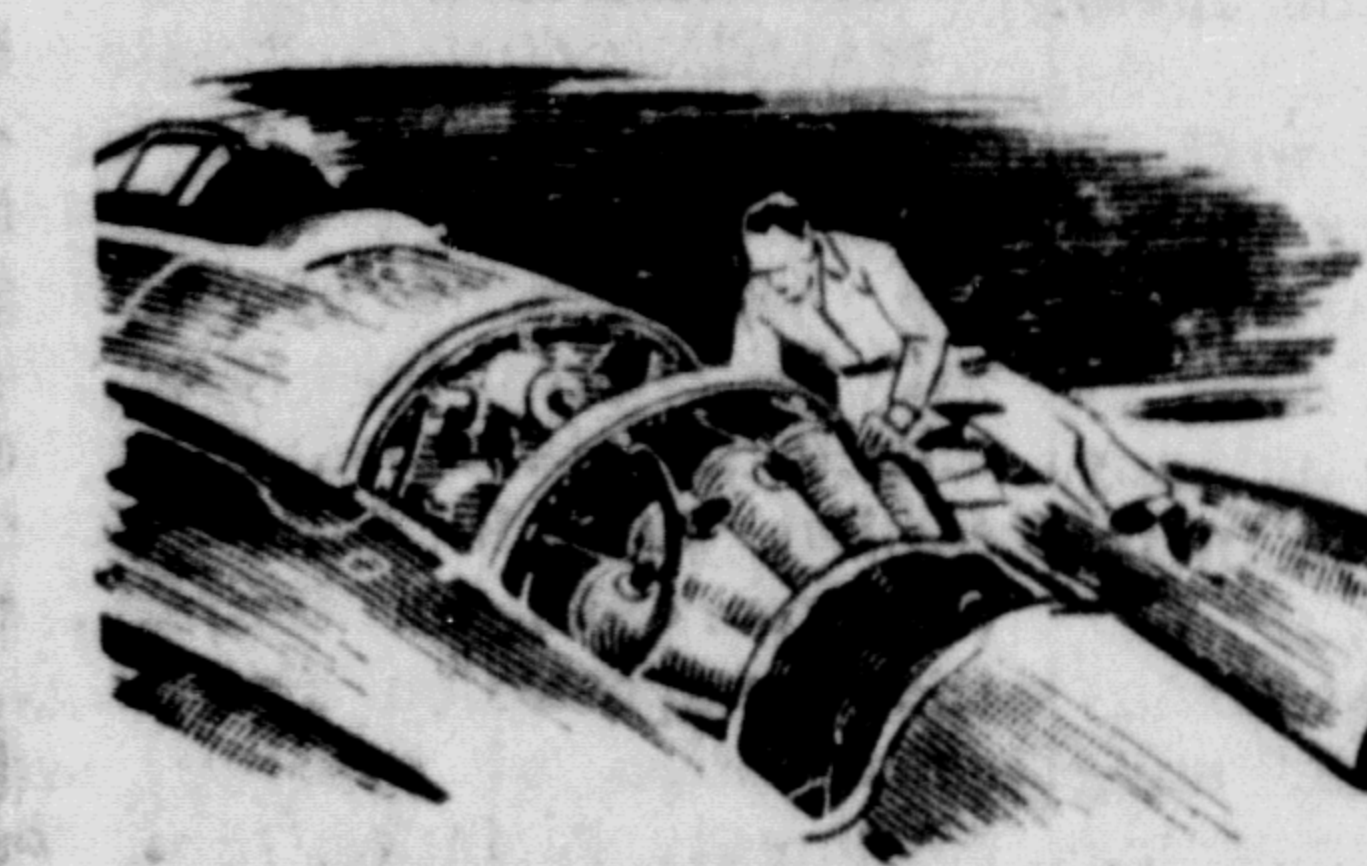
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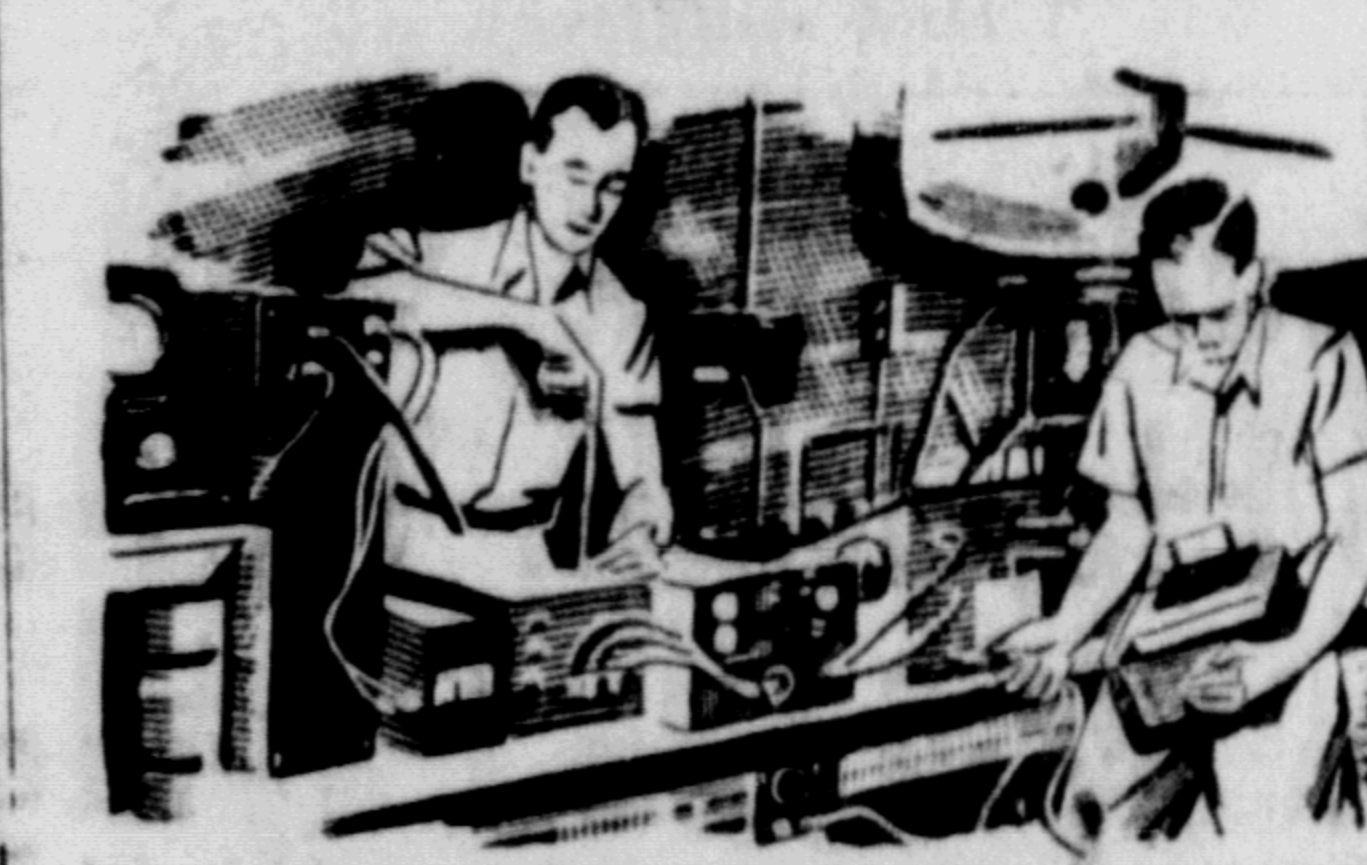
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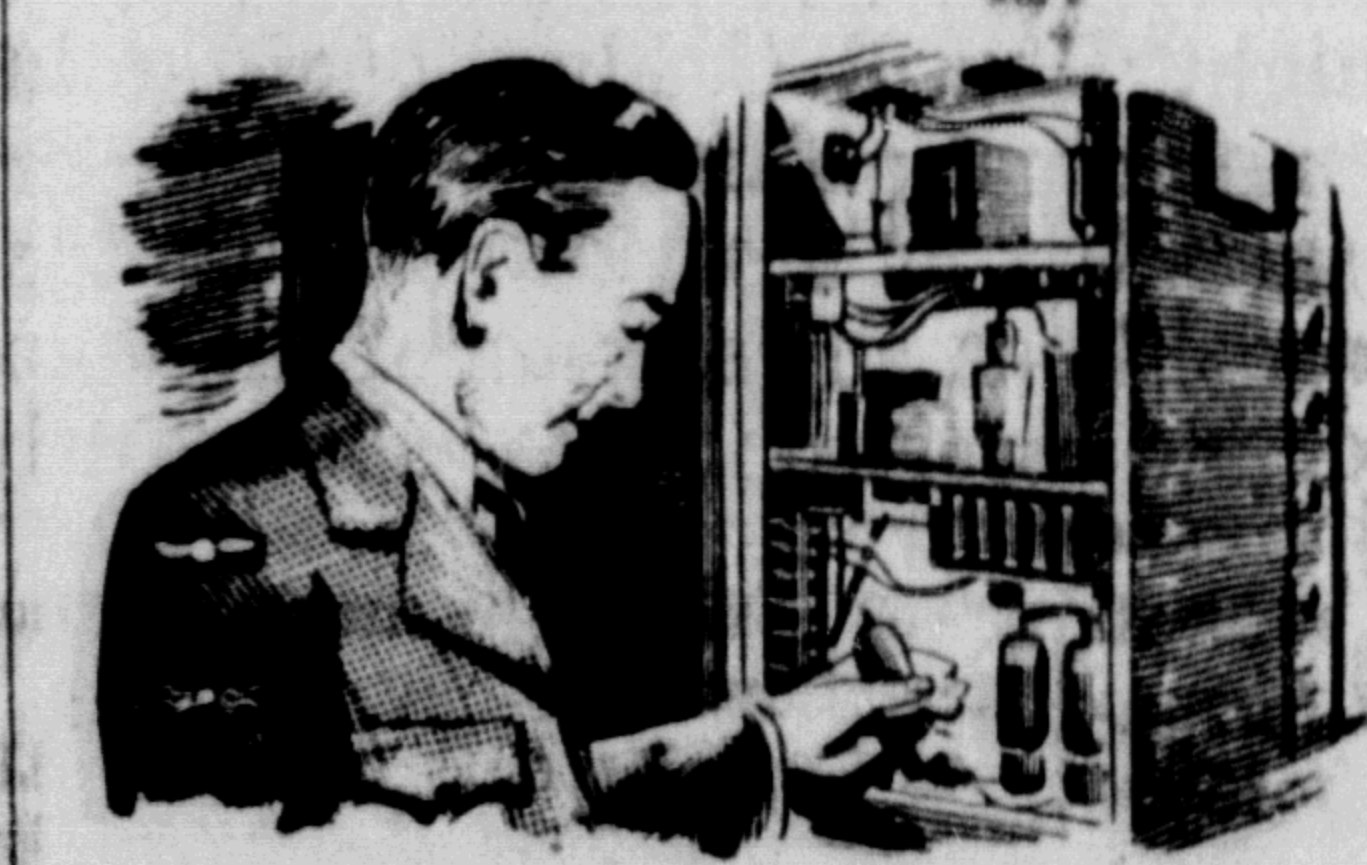
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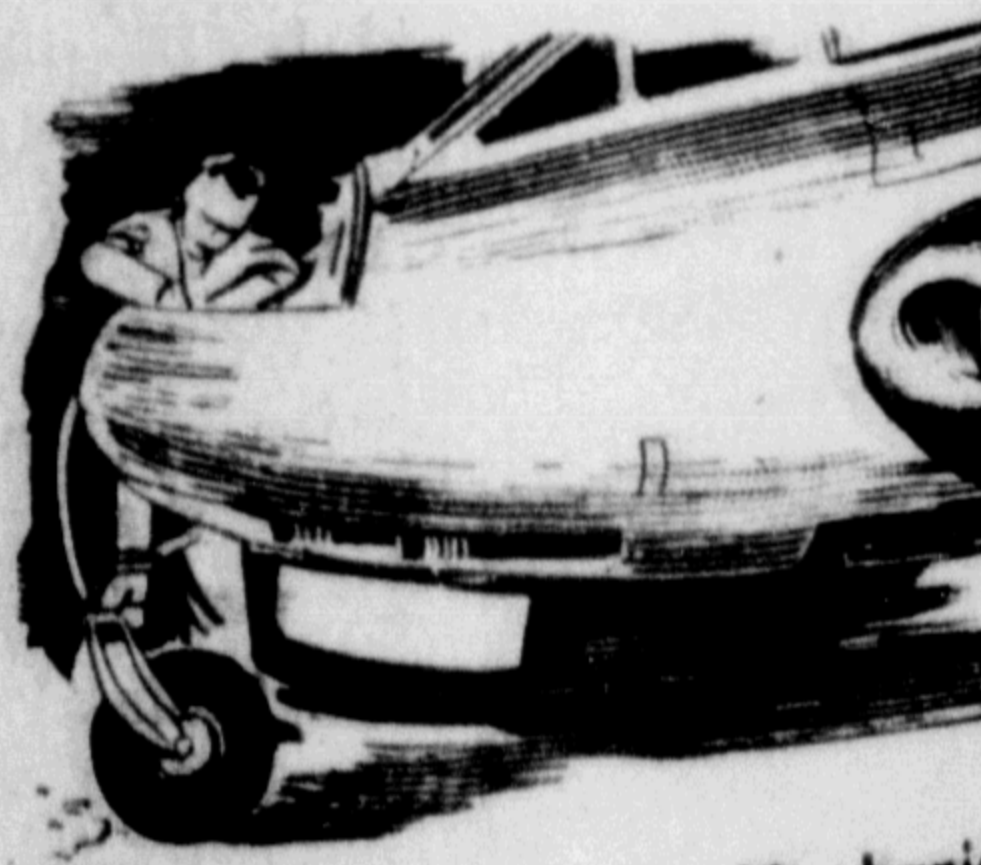
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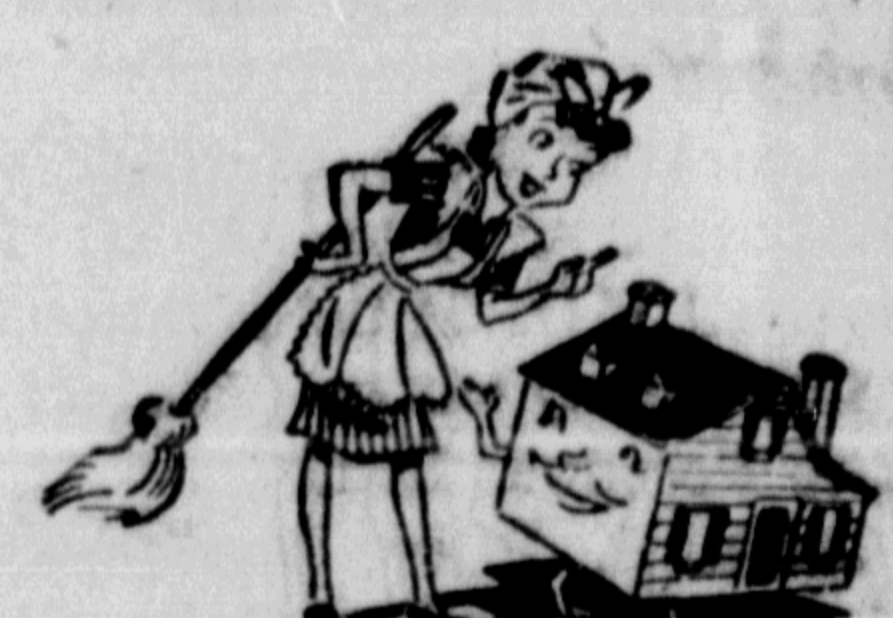
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