**Leaps At The Idea**—Helen Hatfield, aquamaid, attractively demonstrates a feature of 1948 that a lot of gals are thinking about—it's Leap Year!

## Tractor Drivers Face Many Perils In Frozen North

Under the flickering northern lights, the caravan of the snows moves steadily forward on its path across the frozen lakes twisting along forest trails. The gleaming headlights of a red or yellow tractor search out the way around the bends of the portage roads, seeming something more than mere machines, Lyn Harrington writes in The Chrisian Science Monitor.

Behind them in serried ranks come the sleighs, their runners squeaking over the frosty snow, or slipping along noiselessly over "sugar-snow." A series of tractors, each pulling its own group of sleighs, lurches and pitches through the night and all the long day. They carry tons of provisions, oil, kerosene, plaid windbreakers, and dressed lumber into the distant posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, to the northern missions, to free-traders and to the Department of Indian Affairs.

### Leave Barrels

Throughout the north of Canada tractors have taken over the freighting job, formerly done by horsepower. In those days freight swings carried as much food for the horses as pay load. Today they carry fuel oil, leaving caches of steel barrels here and there along the route. The massive tractors transport infinitely more than horses could. And though the costs of such transportation are high, they are still considerably less than freighting by air.

Tractor trains are one of the most important features of the pioneer life still being led in many parts of the country. Many tractor swings launch out into the wilderness, breaking their own trails as they go. Steadily they plow their way out across the fields of ice and snow and slush which are the numerous lakes of the north. They may carry in food and goods, or may travel in light, returning with loads of mining concentrates, furs, pulpwood or frozen fish for the markets of the world.

### December to April

The season is brief, usually from mid-December until breakup in April, when the lakes are unsafe for traveling. But during that time of severe weather the life is perilous and hard. At any moment the ice may give way without warning, and the tractor drop straight down through the surface, hauling the sleighs after it. The northern lakes are not to be trifled with.

Perhaps the most dangerous job is that of the driver of the snowplow. He must be able to recognize danger signals, a threadlike crack in the snow which means an opening in the ice five feet below. He must recognize an air hole long before he approaches it, and give it a wide berth, not only for himself but for his companions who come later. He must keep his directions firmly in mind, so that in a blizzard he does not find himself driving toward the open mouth of a river where the ice is thin.

### Lakes Best Roads

The lakes provide the best roads in the north country, since they are flat. At the right season of the year they are strongly enough frozen to bear tremendous weights of machines and heavily laden sleighs. Large lakes are by all odds the safest. There the strong wind blows the snow away and the ice forms thick. Muskeg lakes are most dangerous for the brackish water does not freeze properly, but makes slush ice.

Often a road has to be cut around some of these lakes. And sometimes the lakes must be risked, since a road can be even more risky. Roads cannot be made over rocky country or over muskeg, for the muskeg road which rises and falls with the passing weight of a tractor can swallow that tractor with almost as little warning as the ice itself.

Tractor freighting has little fun attached to it. It is a life of eight hours' driving, then eight hours of sleeping, and back to the job again.

Day and night the tractors rumble on their broad treads through unsettled wilderness. From the beginning of the season until spring breakup silences them, the machines are never shut off. The beat of their powerful engines throbs through the air, a new song of the north.

## OUT OUR WAY — By J. R. Williams

## Three Minutes of Fiction Fun

SHORT SHORTS — SHORT STORY

### A Perfect Alibi

By ANN HARRIS

"BUT, sergeant," Gilson insisted, last night at midnight I was home in bed. He—" pointing to a pompous individual sitting near, "he didn't see me at that hour. He couldn't, unless he was up in my room."

The other sneered, "Yeah," he said, "you were home in bed. Your ghost, I suppose, was walking about at midnight."

The sergeant raised his hand for silence. He had known Frank Gilson, who he was questioning with regard to a burglary of the night before, as a quiet family man, employed as a mill accountant for a number of years, and always honest and trustworthy. He was loath to believe that Gilson had now turned to burglary, breaking into a hardware store, cracking the safe and robbing it of $2,000.

*The mills, however, had been closed for nearly six month, and Gilson may have been driven to theft through need. He had a family to provide for.*

Although Howard Crossley, the pompous one who claimed to have seen Gilson fleeing from the vicinity of the store at midnight, was a newcomer to the town, yet he was respected by all who know him.

The sergeant knitted his brows. It was a case of mistaken identity he felt sure.

'Maybe," Gilson spoke up, "Maybe he robbed the safe himself."

"What!" Crossley shouted. "How dare you intimate that I would do such a thing?"

"Why did you say that?" the sergeant asked Gilson.

"Well," Gilson replied slowly, "one day last week I saw him examining the back windows of the store. He noticed, too, that I was watching him. That is why he is now accusing me. It was through the back windows you say the burglars got in."

Crossley sprang to his feet. "You lie," he cried hoarsley, "you never saw me near the windows."

THE sergeant told him to be quiet.

Crossley apologized.

"Now the man you saw near the store," the sergeant asked Crossley, "you are sure was Gilson? Perhaps you made a mistake."

"I made no mistakes," Crossley replied firmly. "It was he."

"Tell us again just how you came to be there at the time, and saw Gilson coming away."

"As I said before," he began, "I had been at my office all evening. It was nearly midnight when I left. I walked down Main street, intending to go to the restaurant.

"At the corner of Main and Pine streets, where the store is, I turned into Pine. The restaurant where I usually lunch at the other end. When about in the middle of the block I noticed a man slinking close to the building, occasionally looking backwards over his shoulder. When he caught sight of me he jerked his arm up and pulled his hat down over the side of his face, the side closest to me — the right side. I had already recognized him, though. It was Gilson."

"What did you do after that?" the sergeant asked.

Crossley continued, "From the man's action I suspected that something was wrong and started to hunt for the constable."

"You positively identify Gilson as the person you saw?"

"I do. I saw his face clearly before he pulled his hat down."

*All the while Crossley was speaking, Gilson was listening attentively. "You say," he asked finally, "that I pulled my hat down over my face and ran back? How could I see where to run with my face covered?"*

"I didn't say you covered your whole face," Crossley snapped. "I said the right side. Your left eye was open and I guess you could see with that."

"What are you laughting at, Gilson?" the sergeant broke in. "Unless you can prove where you were last night, it may go hard with you."

Gilson made no reply but took off his spectacles and wiped them carefully. Suddenly he pulled his left eye out of its socket and handed it to the sergenat.

The eye was glass.

**"He was slinking close to the building."**

## Deanna Sings In Seven Languages

Although she doesn't speak any foreign language, Deanna Durbin has sung in seven languages while making multi-lingual versions of her pictures during her ten-year screen career. In her recent film, "I'll Be Yours," in which she returns to singing parts, Deanna had to sing in English, Spanish and German. Her method of learning a foreign language song is to have the lyrics spelled out phonetically. Then, with the aid of music, she learns the correct pronunciations very quickly. "But," she says, "if it weren't for the English version. I shouldn't have the faintest idea what I was singing about."

Listed in the order of difficulty she exeperienced in learning them, the languages in which she has sung to date are Chinese, Russian, German, French, Latin, Italian and Spanish. "English is not a good singing language because it has so many hard sounds." Deanna declares. I always have trouble learning to sing "English lyrics correctly."

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### Not a Marked Copy

The newlyweds were giving their first turkey dinner. Since her husband was a novice at carving Mrs. Newlywed insisted on his learning to carve from her new cook book, lest he display his ignorance before the guests.

The turkey was later placed before the inexperienced host, who was plainly at a loss to know how to begin.

"Go on, dear, carve it. You know exactly how to do it," whispered the loyal young wife.

"Of course I do, but I can't find any of the dotted lines," came back the troubled answer.

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## Drivers Warned Fall and Winter "Danger" Periods

Of the 688 persons killed in traffic accidents in Ontario in 1946, more than one-third lost their lives in the last three months of the year, according to a survey made by the Ontario Department of Highways.

Urban accidents in Ontario start upward in autumn and rise until after the year-end. The last quarter of the year is the worst period for traffic accidents in the cities and towns. Motorists and pedestrians are urged to use every precaution to meet the extra traffic hazards imposed by the fall and winter months. Though there is less travel in the last quarter of the year than in the summer months, this condition is offset by bad weather and poor visibility. Darkness comes sooner and the rush hour finds thousands of employees homeward bound in the twilight. Slippery streets caused by frost, ice, rain or fog are additional hazards, and the first freeze-up in Ontario each year always results in a sharp increase in accid nts.

Training of homing pigeons starts when they are about four weeks old.


# THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

## General Statement, 29th November, 1947

### ASSETS

| | |
|---|---|
| Notes of and deposits with Bank of Canada | $ 162,276,927.93 |
| Other cash and bank balances | 169,001,082.93 |
| Notes of and cheques on other banks | 70,779,865.93 |
| Government and other public securities | 875,847,469.18 |
| Other bonds, debentures and stocks | 116,509,788.71 |
| Call and short loans fully secured | 42,512,791.49 |
| | $1,436,927,926.17 |
| Commercial loans in Canada | 435,872,162.46 |
| Loans to provincial governments | 4,331,251.20 |
| Loans to cities, towns, municipalities and school districts | 8,117,482.00 |
| Commercial loans—foreign | 118,717,442.19 |
| Bank premises | 10,631,002.53 |
| Liabilities of customers under acceptances and letters of credit | 72,190,306.81 |
| Other assets | 6,853,645.25 |
| Total Assets | $2,093,641,218.61 |

### LIABILITIES

| | |
|---|---|
| Notes in circulation | $ 4,760,709.72 |
| Dominion and provincial government deposits | 88,980,316.16 |
| Other deposits | 1,845,205,532.97 |
| Acceptances and letters of credit outstanding | 72,190,306.81 |
| Other liabilities | 3,095,547.02 |
| Capital | 35,000,000.00 |
| Reserve fund | 40,000,000.00 |
| Unpaid dividends | 934,559.38 |
| Balance of Profit and Loss Account | 3,474,246.55 |
| Total Liabilities | $2,093,641,218.61 |

### PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Profits for the year ended 29th November, 1947, before Dominion and Provincial Government taxes, but after contributions to Staff Pension Fund, and after appropriations to Contingency Reserves, out of which Reserves provision for all bad and doubtful debts has been made | | $8,724,519.48 |
| Less provision for Dominion and Provincial Government taxes | $2,850,000.00 | |
| Less provision for depreciation of Bank Premises | 892,687.01 | |
| | | 3,742,687.01 |
| | | $4,981,832.47 |
| Dividends: No. 238 at 8% per annum | $700,000.00 | |
| No. 239 at 8% per annum | 700,000.00 | |
| No. 240 at 8% per annum | 700,000.00 | |
| No. 241 at 10% per annum | 875,000.00 | |
| | | 2,975,000.00 |
| Amount carried forward | | $2,006,832.47 |
| Balance of Profit and Loss Account, 30th November, 1946 | | 1,467,414.08 |
| Balance of Profit and Loss Account, 29th November, 1947 | | $3,474,246.55 |

SYDNEY G. DOBSON, President

JAMES MUIR, General Manager


## LITTLE REGGIE — By Margarita