

Few explosion victims on pension

Who gets 'surplus' in relief fund?

By STAN FITZNER

The ranks of pensioners from the appalling Halifax Explosion of Dec. 6, 1917, have thinned to 91 from the original 1,028, and the size of their relief fund has dwindled to \$1,496,000 in reserves and assets from an original \$27,165,000 — and uneasiness surrounds the fate of the Halifax Relief Commission and its "surplus" funds.

In recent years, civic and provincial authorities have urged that the commission be transferred from federal to provincial control, since pension recipients were all Nova Scotians — mainly Haligonians — and Halifax felt it had a right to any residual funds whenever the commission was disbanded.

The commission, itself, believes it should be allowed to remain in business as long as there is a substantial number of recipients — perhaps 50.

If a decision is then taken to disband the commission, its chairman Allan M. Butler would prefer to see recipients and pension funds placed under civic responsibility rather than under a federal department such as Veterans Affairs.

His reason: the tradition and historic background are embedded in this city.

Ex-mayor Charles Vaughan agrees with the latter suggestion — but he thinks the time to bring the whole thing under provincial control is NOW.

He fought for this when he was in office — during the Stanfield days of provincial government and the Diefenbaker prime ministership at Ottawa, and came within a whisker of accomplishing it, only to see final negotiations come to a standstill when Mr. Diefenbaker left office.

Technically, says the commission's A. M. Butler, there really is no fund "surplus," . . . and technically, says Mr. Vaughan, he may be right.

But the former mayor quickly adds that the city has a legitimate claim to any residual monies from the fund that should not be denied. And morally, he says, there's no question but that the "surplus" should go to Halifax.

The commission was appointed Jan. 22, 1918, by the

Governor-in-Council, and reports annually to the Governor-General.

It was set up by Order-in-Council and subsequent federal and provincial Acts, and received \$4,815,000 from the United Kingdom, \$350,000 from insurance companies, and \$4,000,000 from other sources — all outright gifts.

The federal government approved an appropriation of \$18,000,000 — not vested in the commission but provided for its use — and not in a lump sum but as the need arose. The last instalment of \$6,000,000 was paid in the early 1920s.

All of the outright grants were spent years ago, says Mr. Butler, and since then the commission has been operating on the funds placed in its hands by Ottawa. Control of the fund, administration and expenses was retained by the federal government.

And "in a sense," says Mr. Vaughan, the commission did turn over some of its surplus funds to the city, in such ways as paying for repaving of streets in the Hydrostone area, repaving of Dartmouth and Devonshire avenues, refurbishing of Fort Needham and contributing \$100,000 toward construction of the North End Memorial Library.

Now, says commission chairman Butler, after enough money has been set aside to look after pensioners in perpetuity there is \$354,544 "left over" — if we wound up tomorrow, that amount would go back to Ottawa.

But, with each passing year, he says, inflation can and undoubtedly will deflate that "left-over" total.

Reserves set aside for explosion pensioners total \$1,033,376, and for staff (of two) pensions, \$108,794. Administration in 1968 totalled \$32,000 — including stipends, salaries, maintenance and operation of its office, plus medical services.

Pension expenditures from the fund totalled \$77,000 in 1967, \$102,000 in 1968, \$97,000 in 1969 and \$81,000 last year.

Besides the 91 pensioners, 52 of whom are more than 64 years old, an undetermined number returns for medical services.

Pensions range from \$50 to a maximum of \$250 a month. The latter would go to a male recipient with total disability.

Over the years, general increases in the explosion pensions — which never matched DVA pensions — included an 87.5 per cent boost in 1950, 15 per cent hike in 1957, a 20 per cent hike in 1958 and a 40 per cent boost in 1968. As well, there was an adjustment in a number of individual cases in 1964, an increase of about 7 per cent to blind recipients in 1967, and changes in the compassionate allowances — assistance given to help tide them over until they were in receipt of Old Age pensions.

There appears enough money in the fund to care for all remaining pensioners in perpetuity, with perhaps a third of a million dollars "left over."

While some might argue that technically the "residual" funds belong to Ottawa, there is strong argument that morally, and legitimately, the money should go to the City of Halifax.

In every sense, says Mr. Vaughan, the federal monies were a contribution to Halifax to help compensate for the death, injury and damage suffered by this city in the explosion.

It was in no way a loan, he says, but rather a contribution specifically earmarked for Halifax and its explosion victims.

Strengthening the city's case, he says, is the fact that for 20 years or so, the city collected no tax revenues from Hydrostone homes because they belonged to the Crown and Ottawa paid no taxes on Crown property.

As well, he says, the city lost out in the early 1920s on claims to the commission for city property damaged in the explosion, in that it was forced to settle for a flat amount far less than the replacement costs of the buildings concerned.

(On their credit side, he says, the federal government has paid the city for the Hydrostone homes to the occupants for less than the market value.)

And, he says, the provincial capital



Allan M. Butler, chairman of the Halifax Relief Commission.

suffered a severe setback in respect of community growth as a result of the explosion, and had to shoulder the subsequent burden of lost assessment and tax revenues.

Transfer of the Halifax Relief Commission work and fund to provincial jurisdiction would strengthen the possibility of the residual funds going to the City of Halifax rather than being channelled back into the general revenues of the federal government.

And the time for that transfer, says Mr. Vaughan, is NOW.

April 2, 1968.

Alderman A. M. Butler
Chairman
Halifax Relief Commission
5555 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Alderman Butler:

I enclose a copy of a letter I received from Mr. J. Forrest Whiteley, of London. He seeks accurate figures on the dead, injured and blinded in the Halifax Explosion.

I would appreciate it if you could provide for him whatever answers may be at your disposal.

I attach a copy of my acknowledgment to him.

Yours very truly,

ALLAN O'BRIEN
M A Y O R

Encl.

April 2, 1968.

Mr. J. Forrest Whiteley
61 Harls Court Road
London, W.8
England.

Dear Mr. Whiteley:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of March 28.

Since we have as a member of our City Council
Alderman A. M. Butler, the Chairman of the Halifax Relief
Commission, I have referred your letter to him.

The Relief Commission was established as the result
of the Explosion in 1917 and no doubt Alderman Butler will be
able to give you the most accurate information available.

Yours very truly,

ALLAN O'BRIEN
MAYOR

J. FORREST WHITELEY

'MUSAIKE'

61 EARLS COURT ROAD
LONDON . W.8

TEL: 01-937 3207

March 28th.1968

The Right Worshipful,
The Mayor of Halifax.
City Hall.
HALIFAX. N.S.
C A N A D A .



My Dear Mr. Mayor:

Could you please supply me with the most exact figures there are available of the dead, injured, blinded, in the dreadful Disaster fifty years ago, December 6th, last.

In a recent day at the British Broadcasting Corporation's White City Television Centre, I was interviewed by the Author of the Script used on this for some time, in Training the "directors" of T.V. The unseen people who direct the cameras etc., from this to that scene as the Speaker changes his words or thought. For this class of Student directors we sat seventeen times .

This was, as you will understand, not a broadcast, but all on "closed circuit", and the B.B.C. felt that I would add authenticity to the sessions, after they found I had escaped by the St. John, Sleeper Train being 8 minutes late, having been held up that morning with a "hot box" at Stewiacke. I had boarded the Day Coach at Truro, with my three sample cases aboard, expecting to be in at the old Depot at 9 a.m. I do not need to dwell on my marvellous escape. In fact all on the train, but only the Conductor, Gillespie, and a lady and I were passengers on the Day Coach that morning.

If you have a copy of the "Halifax Herald" of Dec. 7th, 1917, as re-issued last December 6th(1967), you will see the first reference I have ever heard of seen to this Train, in the article or interview with Edward McCrossan, on page 6E, and in col. 4, under "Screaming and Crying" and also in col. 5. you will read in the first par. of this gentleman putting the woman aboard the locomotive. The Conductor, brakeman and I, went over to this Locomotive standing on the spur of the Line to the Coast, the H.& S.W., and we carried this Mrs. Little and her three children to the Express car, from which I never got a chance to leave after fighting the Sleeper Porter for sheets for bandages, as when we finally came slowly in to the foot of Richmond Hill, cot cases were pushed in until I had about thirty, on the floor and on the 24 carcasses of lamb, crated, the only food aboard. When we did start I jumped off at Windsor Junction and got 3 nurses and old Dr. DeWitt, father of one, on the train mentioned by Dr. J.P.McGrath, p. 9E. What is correct in

his statement that they were "the first Relief train IN", but we were the first train bringing Relief to over 250, OUT!

Arriving at Truro about sunset, I saw them off in Family groups to the temporary hospitals in the upper floors of Fire Stations and other civic buildings and the "cot cases" all went to the County Court, where I spent the next twelve days and became known to these brave people as "The young surgeon", for in that high building, high roomed, I should say, it was necessary to have a drop-light held over the operations, this I held over fiftytwo. Dr. Kinsman, the eye Doctor was one of three left in the Town and he took out twelve ^{eyes} in that time and so it is surprising to me to hear in the script I worked ^{with}, that only one hundred and ninety nine people lost their eyesight, and because there may be some further occasion to use these figures, I write you and trespass on your time.

Having just had a birthday this month, I recall that I was 23 at the time of this experience, which I have briefly outlined, but which is one on which thousands of words telling of the heroism of the young and old whom I met, and I hope, was able to bring some help to in a small way. My gratitude to God never ends.

If you can assist me in this, shall I call it, search for truth", it would be very much appreciated, and I thank you, Sir, for your time and assistance.

Sending also my best wishes to one of my favourite Cities.

Yours sincerely,

J. G. Whiteley

December 7, 1967.

Alderman A. M. Butler
Chairman, Halifax Relief Commission
5555 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Butler:

I enclose a letter received from Vantoria together with
Five Dollars, which you have agreed to accept on behalf of the
Relief Commission.

Yours very truly,

ALLAN O'BRIEN
MAYOR

Encls. (Letter and \$5.00 cash)

December 7, 1967.

Mrs. A. H. Pouet
905 Vancouver Street
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Mrs. Pouet:

Thank you for your letter of December 3rd with respect to the Explosion of fifty years ago.

Your gift of Five Dollars has been turned over to the Halifax Relief Commission, which was set up following the Explosion and which administers pension arrangements for the victims of the disaster.

We did have a Memorial Service yesterday and I am sending you herewith a copy of the program.

Yours very truly,

ALLAN O'BRIEN
MAYOR

Encl.

March 6, 1964.

Mr. James Rodgers
3203 Robie Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Jim:

I believe that you have been incorrectly informed that the City of Halifax is in partnership with the Federal and Provincial Governments in setting up the Halifax Relief Commission. The Commission was created by Federal Statute and the disposal of any surplus funds is only made after recommendation from the Relief Commission and with the approval of the Federal Minister of Finance.

I would suggest that any effort you might wish to make in an attempt to secure a pension for your twenty-six years of service should more properly be made to Mr. John E. Lloyd, M.P., or Mr. Gerald A. Regan, M.P., c/o The House of Commons, Ottawa.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

3203 Robie St.,
Halifax, N.S.
Dec. 9th, 1963.

Mayor Charles Vaughan,
City Hall,
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Mayor Vaughan:

I am presently on a City pension of \$206.56 per annum based on my services at City field since April 13th, 1954 to the latter part of 1962.

However, prior to my employment at City Field I worked for the Halifax Relief Commission for approximately 26 years and on being laid off due to sale of the properties by the Commission I was not provided with a pension.

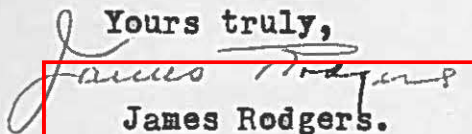
In view of the fact that the City of Halifax is a partner with the Province and the Federal Government in the setting up of the Halifax Relief Commission and since all three levels of government provide pensions to their long service employees I feel that I and several other hourly paid employees of the Halifax Relief Commission have been unjustly dealt with in not being provided with either a grant or pension for 26 years of service.

I have heard that the Halifax Relief Commission has a sizeable surplus of funds and are concerned how they intend disposing of same. If this is the case it is tragic that no provision is being made to assist the several long-service hourly paid former employees of the Commission.

I respectfully request that since the City of Halifax was jointly responsible for the setting up of the Halifax Relief Commission that an accounting of the finances of the Commission be requested and that the City also consider recommending to the Commission that grants or pensions be made to long-service former employees of the Commission.

I will appreciate any effort on behalf on myself ~~obtaining~~ obtaining a fair deal in this matter.

Yours truly,


James Rodgers.

October 13, 1961.

Mr. A. M. Butler
Chairman
Halifax Relief Commission
139 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Butler:

I have before me your memorandum on the status of the Halifax Relief Commission. It is possible that a committee of Council may wish to discuss this matter with you at some early future date. Pending that decision I will circularize your letter to the Council members.

May I again thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours very truly,

JOHN E. LLOYD
M A Y O R

JEL:EHJ

A. M. BUTLER, CHAIRMAN
F. H. FLINN, COMMISSIONER
W. E. TIBBS, COMMISSIONER
E. W. CROOKS, SECRETARY-MANAGER

THE HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION

139 YOUNG STREET

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

October 5, 1961.

His Worship Mayor John E. Lloyd,
City Hall,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Mayor:

At your request, I have prepared a memorandum on the status of the Halifax Relief Commission for the information of the Halifax City Council.

This Commission, in the year 1918, assumed the task undertaken initially by a local committee. This committee comprised a group of leading citizens and was formed immediately following the explosion in Halifax on December 6, 1917. Its functions were to receive donations and carry out emergency relief measures rendered necessary by the disaster. The Halifax Relief Commission was established by Federal Order in Council on January 22, 1918, and was incorporated by Chapter 61, Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1918, confirmed by Chapter 24 of the Statutes of Canada, 1918. These statutes gave to the Commission the powers to conduct enquiries into losses and damages which had resulted from the explosion and to administer relief funds in the form of pensions and allowances.

Apart from votes of Federal funds, all other donations were outright gifts and were spent completely in the early days of relief. Federal funds were never vested in the Commission, such funds (for aid and restoration) being subject, so far as distribution was concerned, to Federal direction. Hence; any funds or other assets now held by the Commission, as trustee, is the property of the Canadian Government exclusively and absolutely.

Donations (which of course were vested) amounted to \$9,170,000. Advances by the Government of Canada, made under the War Measures Act, amounted to \$18,000,000. These, as noted above, were not vested. It must be clear, then, that any current or final equity is the property of the Crown in the right of Canada.

The Commission have noted public statements made from time to time to the effect that its activities as presently performed should cease, such activities to be performed by some other agency, or its obligations to explosion victims satisfied by the purchase of annuities. It is not clear to the Commission what benefit would come out of such change; certainly none to our pensioned and medical cases, whose positions are frequently reviewed and always in an intimate and personal way. Nor would the proposal to change conform with the assurances given to those maimed and injured at the time of the disaster by the Prime Minister of the day, Right Honourable R. L. Borden.

The recipients of Pensions from the Halifax Relief Commission are not far removed from those who receive them as veterans of World War 1. Many of our pensioners, infants at the time of the explosion, are fifteen to 20 years junior to the military enlistments of this conflict, and this means that in the Commission's group are those who will outlive military pensioners by this indicated period of time.

The Halifax Explosion was an act of war and it is the settled policy of the Government of Canada to provide pensions for those who suffered through the necessities of war, without their own default and even without adequate knowledge of the danger to which they were exposed in the utilization of the facilities of the port of Halifax for the common purpose of the Allied Nations.

The Commission suggest that the termination of its activities is a decision to be taken by the Canadian Government which does not seem unreasonable in view of the ownership of the assets. It may not be recalled and therefore mentioned here, that the City of Halifax, having accepted in 1926 the settlement of its claim against the Commission also agreed to the condition expressed at the time that "there shall be no further claim of any kind whatever hereafter presented by the City to the Commission."

The Commission has presented their view to the Federal authority that there is still need for the continuation of its activities in the form that has been followed for a lengthy period, and we have reason to believe that there is acquiescence in this view.

June 6, 1961

Mr. Russell McInnes, Q.C.,
McInnes & Stanfield,
Barristers & Solicitors,
171 Hollis Street,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. McInnes, Re Halifax Relief Commission property

In reply to your letter of June 1st, 1961,
Mr. C. D. Smith, our Compensation Officer, has employed
two appraisers to evaluate this property. He is at
present out sick, but upon his return, I will have these
appraisals and will be in a position to further discuss
the matter with you.

In reply to your request for a referee, these
Sections of the Charter dealing with appointment of a referee
were amended in 1960 by eliminating the word "referee" and
all compensation claims are now heard by either a County
Court or Supreme Court Judge. I am, therefore, returning
your Order.

Yours truly,



T. C. DOYLE
CITY SOLICITOR

TCD:F

c.c. His Worship, Mayor J. E. Lloyd
P. F. C. Byars, Esq., City Manager.



CM-88-61.

TO:	His Worship Mayor J. E. Lloyd.	1. FOLLOW UP
FROM:	P. F. C. Byars, City Manager.	2. FOLLOW UP
DATE:	May 23, 1961.	3. FOLLOW UP
SUBJECT:	Halifax Relief Commission Property - Industrial Mile.	COMPLETION DATE

You handed to me the other day correspondence received by you from Messrs. McInnes & Stanfield, Barristers & Solicitors, dated November 25, 1960, December 15, 1960 and January 26, 1961 relative to the Halifax Relief Commission Land in the Industrial Mile which was expropriated by the City on June 27, 1957 and in connection with which the City paid into the Supreme Court the sum of \$1.00.

I have discussed this correspondence with the City Solicitor who advises that all properties located in the Industrial Mile have been settled except two, one being the Halifax Relief Commission Land and the other being the estate of William Carbery. In order to expedite this matter I have asked the Compensation Officer to have both properties appraised. The City Solicitor has indicated to me his belief that once appraisals have been obtained the Halifax Relief Commission will settle with the City. In connection with the estate of William Carbery the City Solicitor states that he does not expect any claim although he did indicate that the Carbery estate valued the property at \$11,600.00. I shall keep you advised as this matter proceeds.


P. F. C. BYARS,
CITY MANAGER.

July 27, 1960

Mr. A. M. Butler,
Chairman, The Halifax Relief Commission,
139 Young Street,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Butler:

The City of Halifax has included in its 1960 Capital Budget an amount of \$10,000 for the construction of a chain link fence to be placed around Fort Needham Memorial Park. This fence, to start at the rear of the Hibbitt property, would fall along the Gottingen Street frontage, Union Crescent and Union Street. You may recall a few months ago in discussing this matter with you that it might be possible to build an ornamental iron fence instead of a chain link. The type of ornamental fence I had in mind was similar to that placed around Citadel Hill. Would the Commission be willing to contribute sufficient additional money to that provided by the City so that the ornamental fence may be placed around the park? This iron fence would blend in well with the gates also placed there by the Relief Commission.

Yours very truly,

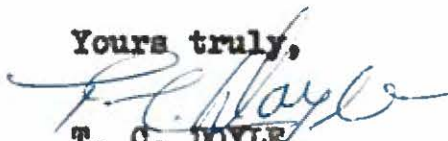


To: J. F. Thomson, City Assessor
L. M. Romkey, Commissioner of Finance
A. A. DeBard, Jr., City Manager
From: His Worship Mayor C. A. Vaughan
T. C. Doyle, City Solicitor
Date: August 19, 1959
Subject: 33-34 Cabot Place

1. Follow Up
2. Follow Up
3. Follow Up
4. Completion Date

This is to advise that the City has today taken a deed to 33-34 Cabot Place, formerly owned by the Halifax Relief Commission. The property has been taken over for the purpose of street improvements.

Yours truly,


T. C. DOYLE
CITY SOLICITOR

Mayor Vaughan

CMD-120-59

Special Finance & Executive
July 30, 1959
Special Council
July 30, 1959

To: His Worship, C. A. Vaughan, and
Members of City Council,

From: Acting City Manager, A. R. Morton, M. D.,

Date: July 27, 1959

Subject: Hydrostone Houses

Following the action of City Council on June 25, I have been negotiating with the Halifax Relief Commission for the purchase of 33-34 Columbus Place, 33-34 Sebastian Place, 33-34 Merkel Place, and 33-34 Cabot Place. The total assessment on these four buildings is \$63,350.00. I have had them inspected by the Plumbing Inspector and by the City Electrician's Office, and find that two of the buildings, namely Cabot Place and Columbus Place will require renewal of some of the water pipes. All four buildings will require some electrical changes with a new circuit to bring them to Minimum Standards. The estimated cost is \$850.00, for electrical repairs.

I have now received a price after negotiation with the Halifax Relief Commission, and I would recommend that the City purchase all four buildings at a cost of \$70,000.00. This is a little less than assessment plus 10%. I feel that this is a fair price for the buildings, and that the City will have a return from rents which will bring an income of approximately \$700.00 per month. These should go on our regular Assessment Rolls and the accounting of the rents received should again be credited to the appropriation from which the funds for this purpose come, and as they are to be used for street improvements finally, I would recommend that the funds come from that Account.

It should be understood that the Relief Commission will try and place the tenants now in these buildings in other vacant premises they have, turning these buildings over to the City at an early date, and that until the City actually takes possession, that the present rents the Halifax Relief Commission is charging should remain unchanged. I have requested Mr. Thomson, the City Assessor, to set what he feels is a proper rent for these flats.

Allen R. Morton, M. D.
Acting City Manager.

*cc for Dr. Morton
delivered to Dr. Morton
on July 8/59*

June 26, 1959.

Mr. Allan M. Butler
Chairman, The Halifax Relief Commission
139 Young Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dear Mr. Butler:

Thank you for your letter of June 25, 1959.

I wish to inform you that Council has given approval for negotiations on this matter with the Halifax Relief Commission, but at the meeting I explained my desire to remain aloof from the actual negotiations as to price. I think you, having occupied this office at one time, would agree that I should not be in on discussions with regard to the price of these properties.

I am most anxious to proceed as quickly as possible because as you say 33-34 Cabot Place is now vacant and should not be allowed to stand idle.

Dr. Morton has been authorized by Council to meet with you to negotiate price. We also have approval to discuss the three other properties. I will ask Dr. Morton to call you to arrange a meeting so that we may move ahead rapidly on this acquisition.

Thank you for your kindness and cooperation in this matter. I think that the sale to the City will work out to the advantage of the Commission, in that it is our hope to secure tenants of a type that would fit in to the area and who would maintain the high standards that have characterized the Commission's operations of this area in the past.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:KHLJ

THE HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION

139 YOUNG STREET

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

June 25, 1959.

His Worship Charles A. Vaughan,
Mayor of Halifax,
Halifax,
N. S.

Dear Mr. Mayor:

On receipt of your letter of June 18th, action was taken to withdraw number 33-34 Cabot Place from public sale. You no doubt saw our advertisement in the press.

Officially, we will have to hold a meeting to authorize negotiations for the sale to the City of the properties now situated on the boulevards, but I regard this as a matter of form.

Since receiving your proposal some thought has been given by us as to the best method for the City to acquire the properties, whether singly, or all at one time, and my conclusion is that we should examine the advantages of the latter way. Perhaps it would be a good plan to obtain from City Council approval to negotiate; this meaning only that the Council would agree in principle to the proposal. After that you and I could arrange a meeting for the purpose of advancing the matter still further.

Please note that we should proceed forthwith for the reason that 33-34 Cabot Place is presently vacant and we could arrange for another vacancy very quickly. We want to avoid loss of rents.

I should like to express appreciation to you for the kind observations you made in respect of the Commission's efforts towards town planning.

Yours faithfully,

Allan M. Butler

CHAIRMAN.

Mayor Vaughan

CMD-108-59

Item #20
Council
June 25, 1959

To: His Worship, C. A. Vaughan, and
Members of City Council,
From: Acting City Manager, A. R. Morton, M. D.,
Date: June 22, 1959
Subject: Purchase of Boulevard Houses - Hydrostone District

At the Works Committee Meeting on June 16, the question of the purchase by the City of four duplex buildings situated on the boulevards at Cabot, Merkel, Columbus and Sebastian Places was brought to the attention of the Committee.

It was decided that whereas these buildings caused a traffic hazard at the entrance to Isleville Street, that there was no off-street parking for them except to use the boulevard which destroyed this by winter parking, and that the City should purchase these buildings from the Halifax Relief Commission, with the idea that they will eventually be removed when the housing situation becomes easier.

His Worship the Mayor was requested to contact the Halifax Relief Commission and they have now withdrawn the advertisement of sale, and one building already unoccupied can be purchased by the City. The sale price being asked is not known, and the Works Committee has recommended the purchase of this particular building. The other buildings are to be purchased when they become vacant and the City is notified by the Relief Commission that they are up for sale.

Permission to negotiate a price on this building and the principal of purchase of all four is requested.

Alan R Morton

Acting City Manager.

ARM/ew

June 18, 1959.

Mr. A. M. Butler
Chairman, The Halifax Relief Commission
139 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Butler:

The recent advertisement in the Halifax press calling for tenders for Nos. 33-34 Cabot Place prompted the members of the Committee on Works to request me to ask the Relief Commission if they would withdraw this building from public sale and permit the City of Halifax to negotiate with the Relief Commission for the acquisition of this building and other similar buildings on the boulevards in this district.

It will be our intention to rent these accommodations to suitable tenants for some years to come, and when conditions permit to remove these buildings so that these ~~four~~ boulevards would be free of any buildings from Hennessey Place to Sebastian Place. It would also improve visibility at these corners near Isleville Street.

The building No. 33-34 Cabot Place is assessed at \$17,350.00. I am not at liberty, of course, to discuss prices with you but I am sure that if your Commission would agree to cancel the tender call and permit us to negotiate the purchase of these properties that the Commission's funds would not suffer adversely by this new approach to the disposition of the properties.

It is my own personal fear that the sale of these multiple properties by tender would result in a degree of maintenance that would not be as high as the Commission's care of these buildings has been for many years and would not match the present conditions in the Hydrostone District where people have shown great initiative in improving their properties. Your maintaining of this District is one of

the principal examples of public housing in North America.

I know that you have been most careful in disposing of your properties over the last few years to suitable persons but in the interests of better town planning and the future development of the surrounding area we are hopeful that you will agree to this request.

I would be happy to discuss this matter with you if you feel that discussions might be of some help in arriving at a decision.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

33-34	Robert Place	\$17,350
33-34	Columbus "	\$15,600
33-34	Laurel "	\$16,600
33-34	Abertown "	\$13,800
		<hr/> \$63,350

174 Park St

April 29, 1959.

Mr. A. M. Butler
Chairman, The Halifax Relief Commission
139 Young Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dear Mr. Butler:

Thank you for your letter of April 27, 1959, in which you discuss my request for a trust fund for the purpose of maintaining the Fort Needham Park.

Please be assured that I fully recognize the general purpose for which the Commission was created - that being primarily to provide pensions to those persons who suffered loss in the Halifax Explosion. Further may I reaffirm my position insofar as I am personally concerned that I would not do anything that would in any way jeopardise the future pension payments to your present pensioners. However, if the Commission, after examination of its funds and its anticipated future payments for pensions, should find that there is an amount that could be considered as a surplus, then it is suggested that some provision be made out of this fund to provide for maintenance of the Park, as requested in my letter of April 21, 1959.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

THE HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION

139 YOUNG STREET

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

April 27, 1959.

Mayor Charles A. Vaughan,
City Hall,
Halifax,
N. S.

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I acknowledge your letter of April 21st in which you make application for the creation of a trust fund out of the surplus monies of the Commission.

As I will be absent from the city for about ten days, we will be unable to hold a meeting to consider your request until after my return. According to the press, this matter took form in January and further delay should not be an inconvenience.

I should like to point out that it is desirable that the Commission hold sufficient surplus to adjust pensions to the cost of living and to provide medical services to those in need of same. This is the paramount reason for all our funds. Last year the Commission granted a general increase of 20% to its pensioners at a cost of \$200,000 which amount had the immediate effect of depleting the surplus. With any further increase in the cost of living, it is reasonable to suppose that larger pensions will be necessary.

When the City entered into an agreement with the Commission to accept responsibility for maintaining the park after development was completed, the Commission anticipated spending \$100,000 on this development. Expenditures, including value of the land, have amounted to about double this sum.

Yours truly,

Allan M. Bricker

CHAIRMAN.

AIB/Y.

April 21, 1959.

A. M. Butler, Esq.,
171 Hollis Street,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Butler:

Sometime ago the City Council charged me with the responsibility of approaching your Commission with a view to securing a Trust Fund to be set up by the Commission to be used to defray part of the cost of maintaining Fort Needham Memorial Park.

When this park was first suggested in 1949 it was not anticipated that the Commission would have the large surplus it now possesses. I think it most proper that we now apply for the creation of a Trust Fund out of the surplus monies of the Commission to insure that Fort Needham Park will be maintained at a standard likely to reflect credit upon the builders of this memorial.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN,
M A Y O R.

CAV/hw.



*Commissioned file
attach to copy.*

To: His Worship, C. A. Vaughan,
From: City Manager, A. A. De Bard, Jr.,
Date: April 20, 1959
Subject: Fort Needham Park

1. Follow Up
 2. Follow Up
 3. Follow Up
 4. Completion Date
-

The matter of acceptance of Fort Needham Park has never been settled.
Was the idea of a Trust Fund ever discussed with the Commission?

Judging by their attitude on land sales where they have told me they
are trustees and therefore must secure the best price possible, I
don't think we have much chance of getting a trust fund.

Should we accept the Park and proceed to secure their assets as discussed
with the Province?

City Manager.

/em

September 28, 1958.

Mr. Robert E. Lauder
2 Hennessey Place
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Lauder:

Thank you for your letter of September 15, 1958. I have been out of the City for a week and therefore have been unable to reply until this time.

I discussed this matter with the Premier of the Province and the two Federal Members for the Halifax Constituency. I have been advised by them that this matter is being discussed with the Halifax Relief Commission and we hope to have an adjustment of this made in the near future.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

2 Hennessey Place

Halifax, Nova Scotia

September 15, 1958

His Worship the Mayor

Charles A. Vaughan

Halifax, N.S.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of a notice from the Halifax Relief Commission to the effect that they are contemplating the sale of their Hydrostone flats and the basic price suggested for the set of flats which I occupy is \$17,000.00.

As a tenant of the commission since returning from overseas service in 1920, and a person who may soon be retired on pension, I am somewhat surprised and disappointed at the prospect of the burden which is indicated (please see attached estimate).

I feel that the basic price is unduly high compared with the price at which they sold their houses and I submit that the people who maintained and improved these homes might have been given some form of credit especially in view of the fact that the commission is a non profit entity, and these units certainly did not cost that much to build in 1920.

Acting on advice that these places would not be for

sale in the foreseeable future we have recently invested in an oil furnace, automatic hot water heater, 220 wiring, aluminum windows and tiled floors, and so you can imagine the difficulty we are now facing.

I would respectfully suggest that you might please give this matter your attention with a view to influencing the commission to reconsider the suggested basic price in the light of these circumstances, in the hope that they might arrive at a more just and equitable figure.

Thanking you for any attention and assistance you may care to offer in this matter, I am

Yours truly



Robert E. Lauder

Monthly Instalment	\$ 57.39
Monthly interest on 181st instalment (deferred mortgage)	42.50
Provision for 181st instalment	42.50
Monthly interest on improvements bought - when known	?
Provision for maintainance	25.00
Approximate monthly taxes and fire insurance	<u>25.00</u>
Estimated monthly outlay	<u>\$192.39</u>

His Worship

CMD-118-58

Item #9
Finance & Executive Comm.
October 9, 1958
Item #9
Council
October 16, 1958

To: His Worship, C. A. Vaughan, and
Members of City Council,
From: City Manager, A. A. De Bard, Jr.,
Date: September 23, 1958
Subject: Assessments for Improvements - Halifax Relief Comm.

There are quite a few assessments for improvements which have been outstanding against properties owned at the time of assessment by the Halifax Relief Commission. I was prepared to recommend that most of them be written off because the assessments were for improvements abutting open spaces which have now been deeded to the City. The following are in this category -

<u>Account</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of Assessment</u>	<u>Amount</u>
63204A	Barrington St. - West side (Russell & Devonshire)	1941 Pavement	\$ 129.20
63204A	W.S.Barrington & Duffus at Roome	1948 "	323.82
63204A	W.S.Barrington near Duffus	1948 "	168.26
63204A	S.S.Duffus near Barrington	1948 "	484.95
63204A	S.S.Roome St.between Acadia & Devonshire	1949 Sidewalk, Curb & Gutter	687.57
61108	Gottingen St. north of Dartmouth Ave.	1949 Pavement	38.08
61108	Gottingen St. north of Dartmouth Ave.	1951 Sidewalk & Sod	81.87
	E. S. Albert St. at Duffus	1951 Curb & Gutter	187.41
60286	Albert St. at Devonshire	1952 Trees	30.11

On some others I wrote to the Relief Commission on March 19, 1958 as follows:

"Mr. A. M. Butler, Chairman,
Halifax Relief Commission,
139 Young Street,
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Sir:-

We have reexamined the assessments for improvements charged to the Halifax Relief Commission. At the time the charges were filed, the abutting lands were your property. Since you have subsequently deeded them to the City for open spaces, we are prepared to recommend to City Council that these amounts be written off.

However, there are several assessments which we feel you should pay.

"Account

63204A	W. S.Barrington between Young & Hanover	-1951 Pavement	\$237.00
		Int.6 Yrs.@ 6%	<u>85.32</u>
			<u>\$ 322.32</u>
63204A	W. S.Barrington at Richmond	- 1941 Pavement	134.00
		Int.6 Yrs.@ 6%	<u>48.24</u>
			<u>\$ 182.24</u>

At the time the charges were filed (December 16, 1941), you were the registered owners of these two properties.

The amount for oiling the lanes we feel is a proper charge. The lanes were not ours at the time the oiling was done and although the amount is small (\$48.58 including interest), we would appreciate payment.

There are two items involving 1948 Pavement which abut on properties which are not ours at present. They are:

63204 S. S. Duffus at Albert	- \$23.09
63204 E. S. Gottingen at Duffus	- 18.00

These descriptions differ from those in our previous letter. I would consider recommending write off if these properties were deeded to the City.

Will you advise me how you feel about these properties."

The Relief Commission's reply reads:

"Dear Sir:

We have had an opportunity of discussing with Mr. W. E. Tibbs, one of the Commissioners who is wholly familiar with the situation, the matter of certain outstanding betterment charges referred to most recently in your letter of March 19, 1958.

The information we were able to gather is this: the improvements adjacent to the various lanes we think not to be our obligation, for the reason that when this Commission and the City finalized various matters in the form of the Award of December 30, 1926 it was considered that the lanes being public thoroughfares became City property under Section 18, Chapter 61 of the Acts of 1918. This view does not wholly lack support in the letter of the City Solicitor, the late Mr. Bethune, approved by the City Council November 12, 1942.

The situation of other betterments charged against land which, at the approximate time the charges were filed, had been sold to the Crown was simply that we had agreed with the buyer to sell at the assessed value and after the agreement was made and the price fixed these charges came into the picture.

We think that (subject of course to the Crown's right of exemption) the lien should follow this land for twenty years, and if the lien is not effective, because the land is exempt, then we think the Crown has a moral obligation to pay, based on the fact that they received the full benefit of the improvements in question.

The position taken here is consistent with the attitude adopted by the Commission in the past, and the Commission do not feel that it is proper now to interfere with the decision then taken.

Referring to the matter of giving the City a deed for the open space at the corner of Gottingen and Duffus, we are agreeable to do this. We no longer own the land at the corner of Duffus and Albert Street, this having been sold to Wartime Housing in 1943.

Yours truly,
(Sgd.) E. W. Crooks,
Secretary-Manager."

This letter disavows all responsibility and unless there is other direction, it is recommended the accounts be written off.

A. A. HeBard Jr.
City Manager.

/em



THE PREMIER
HALIFAX

September 15, 1958

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I have received this morning a note from the Minister of Finance advising me that following the Commonwealth Trade and Economic Conference which is expected to terminate about September 26th, the Minister has to go to India to attend the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He does not expect to be back in Canada until mid-November.

I have written to Mr. Flemming expressing the hope that we will be able to get together about the matter of the Halifax Relief Commission shortly after his return.

Yours sincerely,



R. L. Stanfield

His Worship
Mayor Charles Vaughan
City Hall
Halifax, N. S.



CITY COUNCIL

OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
CITY HALL

Halifax, N. S.,.....September 30,.....1958..

Extracts from Minutes of a Meeting of the City Council of the City of Halifax

held on the.....11th.....day of.....September.....1958.....

HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION - PROPOSAL TO SELL DUPLEXES

His Worship the Mayor referred to the proposal of the Halifax Relief Commission to sell the duplex houses and informed the meeting that he had received a letter from a resident of 1 Kane Place representing a number of the tenants living in the duplex houses in the Hydrostone Area, owned by the Halifax Relief Commission. Most of whom are pensioners whose incomes are not large enough to enable them to accumulate sufficient money to meet the down payment and mortgage payments, many of them having been moved from the single units to the flats for that reason. The letter requested the Mayor to do what he can to assist the tenants who do not wish to be disturbed as they cannot afford to buy the houses or pay the high rents being asked for alternate accommodation.

"It is my own thought, in order to maintain the area at a fairly high standard, that if the Commission is desirous of selling the houses, the City might buy them and rent them out as City property. We have the set-up to collect rents and maintain the buildings," he said.

Alderman Dunlop: "I think the man must be rather an elderly man. His letter makes a great deal of sense and he has been there for forty years, and to be forced out now would be going contrary to what the buildings were built for. There can't be too many victims of the explosion still living in the houses."

His Worship the Mayor said that one of the parties concerned is a war widow and another is definitely an explosion victim; and he added the thought that there are no City appointees on the Halifax Relief Commission.

MOVED by Alderman Dunlop, seconded by Alderman Lloyd, that His Worship the Mayor be authorized to make representations to the Halifax Relief Commission on behalf of the tenants effected to obviate further hardship for them.



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His Worship the Mayor said that one of the parties concerned is a war widow and another is definitely an explosion victim; and he added the thought that there are no City appointees on the Halifax Relief Commission.

MOVED by Alderman Dunlop, seconded by Alderman Lloyd, that His Worship the Mayor be authorized to make representations to the Halifax Relief Commission on behalf of the tenants affected to obviate further hardship for them.

September 10, 1958.

Mr. G. R. Isnor
1 Kane Place
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Isnor:

Thank you for your letter of September 4, 1958, regarding possible sale of remaining flats in the Hydrostone area. I am only sorry that this information was not conveyed to me earlier in the year when discussions took place with representatives of the Provincial Government on this matter of the continued existence of the Halifax Relief Commission.

I can share with you your dismay and understand the feeling you have with respect to the possible purchase of these houses. I, of course, cannot speak for the City, but if the Relief Commission does want to sell the remaining flats I would think the City of Halifax would consider buying these and continue to rent them to the present tenants. We have the administrative set-up and would be able to maintain these buildings, by our own Works staff, in a fairly good manner.

I intend to bring this matter before the Council on Thursday, September 11, 1958, and ask for some direction from the City Council. In addition I plan to discuss this matter with the Premier of the Province to see what can be done to assist you in your present position.

I would ask that you advise all those who signed your petition of this letter.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

September 2, 1958.

Mr. E. W. Crooks
Secretary-Manager
The Halifax Relief Commission
139 Young Street
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Mr. Crooks:

If the City of Halifax is to expend civic monies on the maintenance of Fort Needham Memorial Park the City should be formally so informed.

I recall, at the meeting held at the Commission office in May 1949, when this matter was discussed, that the Commission undertook to develop a park at Fort Needham.

Before I can advise the City Manager that he should include an amount in the 1959 budget for expenditure on the Park, we should have a formal conveyance of the improvements to the Park to the City of Halifax.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

THE HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION

139 YOUNG STREET

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

August 29, 1958.

Mayor Charles A. Vaughan,
City Hall,
Halifax,
N. S.

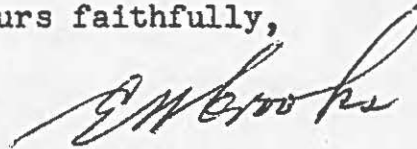
Dear Mr. Mayor:

At a meeting of the Commission held on August 26th your letter addressed to our chairman was read and considered.

I am directed to advise you that the appropriation established for the development of Fort Needham Memorial Park is exhausted and an expenditure running to the cost of the type of fence suggested could not be undertaken. Last year when the Commission wished to be appointed custodian of the Park, so as to control the actions of teenagers this permission was refused. The responsibility was thereby taken away from us.

The Commission wish me to take this opportunity to advise you that sometime next month it will not be making further expenditures on the Park and that, therefore, provision for its maintenance should be included in 1959 civic estimates.

Yours faithfully,



E. W. CROOKS.
SECRETARY-MANAGER.

EWG/Y.

August 27, 1958.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Mr. Edmund Morris, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Ed:

You will recall our discussions re the Halifax Relief Commission over the past year that led us to believe that it might be possible for the Province to assume control over these funds by the creation of a Provincial commission to manage the assets of this Federal body.

Recent developments which were quoted in the press, wherein the Relief Commission announced an increase in pensions of approximately twenty per cent, have led some people to believe that this transfer of authority will not now take place.

It is my view that merely because the Relief Commission raised its pension payments this is not a sufficient reason for our abandoning attempts to have the control of these funds returned to local hands.

If it is possible I hope that you will be able to discuss this matter with Mr. Bell and let me know what he thinks of this matter in view of recent action taken by the Halifax Relief Commission.

Yours very sincerely,

CHARLES A. VAUGHAN
M A Y O R

CAV:EHJ

13, Geo. Dauphine Ave.,
Halifax, N.S.
18th Aug 1958.

Dear Charlie:-

As per our telephone conversation, I am enclosing the notice received by all Halifax Relief Pensioners.

I'm not sure on what amount the 20% increase will be applied, as basic pensions for males with total disability was always regarded as \$50.00 a month. During the past 13 years the pension in my case was increased from the basic \$50.00 to \$107.75 last year, increases always being referred to as a bonus. Eric Davison and I also receive an additional \$10 per month as a so

THE HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION

139 YOUNG STREET
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

August 13, 1958.

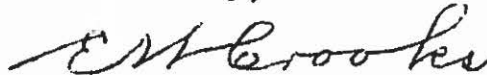
Dear Sir or Madam:

The Halifax Relief Commission has been giving consideration to an increase in permanent pensions, and in May made a recommendation to the Canadian Government that pensions be increased by 20% over current payments.

This increase, now approved, will be added to the bonus portion of your allowance effective from September 1, 1958, and it is expected that it will be of assistance to you in meeting the increased cost of living.

The Commission is glad to make this announcement and is able to authorize the adjustment because of its administration of the substantial sum voted for aid and restoration by the Canadian Government following the Halifax Explosion.

Yours truly,



E. V. CROOKS.
SECRETARY-MANAGER.

EWG/Y.

July 11/58

Halifax Relief Commission Surplus

FOLLOWING the disastrous explosion of 1917, when more than fifteen hundred Haligonians lost their lives, and the north end of the city was laid waste, the work of restoration was entrusted to the Halifax-Massachusetts Relief Commission. At the time, the commission operated under the guidance of the provincial government. But in 1918 it came under federal control and has been in that state ever since.

Over the years, the Halifax Relief Commission, as it later became known, built up a surplus, over and above pension requirements. That surplus is now more than \$600,000 and the City of Halifax proposes to do something about it. At the request of the city, Premier Stanfield will act on its behalf in seeking to restore the operations of the commission to the Province of Nova Scotia. Were this accomplished, it would then be possible to make use of the fund for the benefit of the city. As it is now, federal government legislation makes no provision for allocation of this unexpended money.

In the months after the holocaust of December, 1917, thousands of Haligonians lived in temporary houses set up on the

Commons, the Exhibition Grounds and the Garrison Grounds. Eventually, however, most of them secured accommodation in the commission-operated Hydrostone Development in Halifax North. By 1919 many of the outstanding claims had been settled by the Halifax Relief Commission and in 1920 a pension scheme for widows, orphans and the disabled set up. By 1925, under the guidance of the commission, the devastated area had begun to assume a new community life, with churches and schools rebuilt, and the attractively-designed stone houses replacing the hundreds of wooden structures which had been smashed into kindling wood by the explosion of two thousand tons of TNT.

Few of the scars of 1917 are apparent in Halifax North today. But the Halifax Relief Commission still functions and such has been the competence of those who have guided it over four decades, it has produced a splendid surplus. To free this dormant fund, and make it available to the City of Halifax, may prove to be a task of no mean magnitude. However, in Premier Stanfield, the city has a spokesman who has been uniformly successful in negotiations with Ottawa in the past.

Warns Against Misuse Of Funds

Use of the \$600,000 surplus of the Halifax Relief Commission by the city or province for any purpose other than for the use of residents of Halifax North would be a "betrayal of trust"—it should not be used for purposes in other sections of the city—Halifax North MLA J. E. "Gee" Ahern said this morning.

Negotiations are currently underway to transfer the funds from federal to provincial control.

Surplus amounts from the Halifax Relief Commission fund should not be used for purposes in sections of the city other than Halifax North, J. E. "Gee" Ahern, MLA for Halifax North said this morning.

The monies, he said, were set aside for rehabilitation of Halifax North and to aid victims of the Halifax Explosion in 1917. The original fund was established as the Massachusetts Relief Commission set up from funds which poured in within 24 hours of the explosion.

"Donors of the fund," Mr. Ahern said, "would be unhappy if the city and province took the surplus for general government purposes."

He said he wouldn't like to see the surplus used for building sidewalks in other sections of the city or for chosen provincial purposes.

Mr. Ahern praised the Commission for the management of the fund and building up the surplus.



THE PREMIER
HALIFAX

1644

July 22, 1958.

Mayor C.H. Vaughan,
City Hall,
Halifax, N.S.

Re: Halifax Relief Commission

Dear Mayor Vaughan:

Following receipt of your letter of July 4th I wrote to the Minister of Finance, outlining some of the vast history and the present situation in respect of the Halifax Relief Commission.

I suggested to him that I would be prepared to name an individual or a committee to discuss this matter with his Department.

On July 16th I received a reply from the Minister of Finance advising that he would be prepared to discuss this matter.

I have since received a further communication from the Minister advising that he had an interview with the members of the Commission.

Yours very truly,



Robert L. Stanfield