

RCN REDUCTIONS

In order to reduce operation and maintenance costs in the Royal Canadian Navy it was recently decided to take out of service three destroyers of Second World War vintage and certain other ships. Canada's commitment, in an emergency, to the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT) will remain at one carrier and 29 escorts. The reductions are an essential first step toward providing a more effective contribution to collective security from the available resources.

DETAILS

The reductions that will be effected in the RCN, in consultation with Canada's allies, are as follows:

- (1) Three destroyers of the "Tribal" class now in service in the Atlantic Command - the "Nootka", "Cayuga" and "Micmac" - will be paid off and declared surplus. There will continue to be qualitative improvement in anti-submarine escorts, resulting from modifications to post-war ships; and two ships of the new "Mackenzie" class will come into service in 1964.
- (2) The escort-maintenance ship "Cape Breton" will be paid off and placed in reserve at Esquimalt, British Columbia. This vessel was originally constructed during the Second World War for the Royal Navy and saw service in the Pacific. After the war, she was paid off and placed in reserve. She was turned over to the RCN in 1951, and reactivated as a training ship for technical apprentices in 1953. In 1958 she was converted to maintenance.
- (3) The minesweeping squadrons on the East and West Coasts, ten ships in all, will be paid off and the minesweepers placed in reserve at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Esquimalt, B.C.. Without extensive modification, these sweepers are not effective against modern mines. In addition, for a country in Canada's geographic location, minesweeping is not considered to be a high-priority task in relation to anti-submarine warfare.

It is planned that the ships concerned shall be paid off before March 31, the end of the current fiscal year.

ADVANTAGES

The foregoing changes have been agreed on as part of the total objective of enabling the armed forces to carry out their primary roles effectively, while, from the savings achieved, both providing a greater proportion of funds for new equipment and holding defence expenditures at an acceptable level.

The resultant reduction in personnel strength will be achieved through normal attrition and a temporary slow-down in recruiting.

In the Royal Canadian Navy, one important effect of the economies described above, and of those announced last December, will be a better balance between manpower and commitments. Of particular benefit will be a pool of trained men, especially in the technical trades, to meet the existing requirements of the Navy's modern destroyer escorts.

FAMOUS STAMPS TO DISAPPEAR

Canada's famous "G" stamps, specially overprinted postal issues designed for official mail of the Federal Government, will gradually disappear from use during the next few years, it was recently announced by the Post Office Department.

The "G" stamps, regular postage stamps perforated and overprinted with the letters "OHMS" and "G", have been in use in various forms since 1939. In addition to their normal use on official mail, they have become popular with many philatelists. The Philatelic Section of the Post Office Department will continue to stock these stamps for some time after they cease to be used officially, for sale to collectors by mail order.

The use of "G" stamps is being discontinued as a result of a recommendation of the Glassco Royal Commission suggesting that federal departments and agencies pre-pay their postage by means of a bulk payment to the Post Office based on the volume of their mail. This recommendation is being adopted and introduced early this year.

ANGLERS PLUMB GREAT BEAR

Bigger lake trout have been caught, but none at the float-popping depth at which a specimen was taken in Great Bear Lake last summer. The 5-pounder, caught just inside the Arctic Circle in a fisheries scientist's test net, was hauled out of 1,350 feet of water, straight up.

The angling scientists were sure the net had fished at the bottom of the lake because of the large amount of mud still clinging to it when it was brought to the surface. Plastic floats on the net were broken by the pressure; the type used apparently flew apart at about 600 feet.

Only Great Slave Lake, also in Canada's Northwest Territories, has depths rivalling the more northerly Great Bear, on the shores of which, at Port Radium, there was until recently a thriving uranium-mining industry. The mine has closed down, but outdoorsmen have struck a new, ever-popular "lode" in the sport fishing Great Bear provides.

The work of depth-probing and surveying the fish stock of Great Bear Lake was described recently in Montreal at the annual meeting of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada by scientists of the Board's Arctic Unit.

SIZE RECORDS

Whether caught below or above float-popping levels, Great Bear trout run to eye popping sizes. One angler, using light spinning tackle, caught four in one afternoon, the largest tipping 30 pounds. The largest netted by fisheries scientists scaled 40 pounds, and there are reports of 60-pounders having been taken.

Prospects for a commercial fishery on Great Bear Lake are dim, but the native population at Fort Franklin looks to the vast body of water for a major part of its food supply and, of course, it is an angler's paradise, boasting several lodges.