

The Word Is Out

DOORS OPEN AT 1 P.M. THURSDAY, NOV. 4

Natural Gas Is Blamed For Blast

By GERARD ALARIE
QUEBEC (CP)—A 33-page report made public here by Quebec's municipal affairs minister blames natural gas for the apartment-block explosion March 1 in the Montreal suburb of Lasalle which killed 26 persons.

The report released by Pierre Laporte, municipal affairs minister, says natural gas escaped from a leak in the piping system of the building.

The inquiry which turned in the report was set up the day of the blast by the provincial government. It was headed by lawyer Pierre Bolduc.

He found "no premeditation or criminal negligence." However, his report says, "we have the right to ask how it was that this gas leak was not discovered during the several months that preceded the explosion."

Quebec Natural Gas Corp., the company which installed and operated the heating and cooking gas system in the building, "was somewhat negligent under the circumstances," the commission found.

WAS OLD LEAK

The commission said it is convinced that the cause of this explosion was natural gas escaping from a fissure in a pipe, and is sure that this fissure existed in its present state for several months at least.

The leak, the report says, was in a six-inch gas main outside the building.

The Bolduc commission collected evidence at 24 hearings behind closed doors.

The blast, in the words of the report, "practically pulverized building No. 34 of the Lasalle Heights housing scheme."

In addition to the 26 persons who died in the blast, 32 were seriously injured.

Famous Statue Being Returned To Vatican City

NEW YORK (AP)—Michelangelo's Pieta—the statue of Mary holding the limp body of Jesus Christ in her lap — is on its way home to Vatican City.

The marble image loaned to the New York World's Fair by Pope Paul, was seen by some 27,000,000 persons there.

The priceless art work was packed in a special steel container on the boat deck of the Italian line luxury ship Cristoforo Colombo. It is insured for \$2,000,000.

Special precautions were taken in the event of a possible mishap.

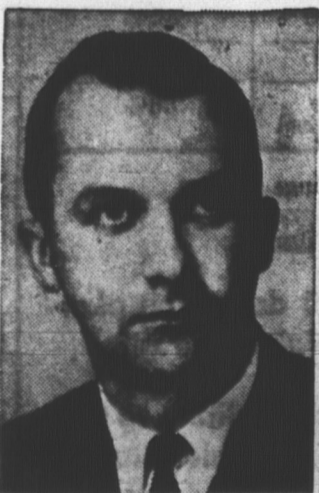
Should the 12,000-pound crate be washed overboard, it would float. Should the 20,000-ton vessel sink, hydrostatic devices would release the crate once it reaches a depth of 14 feet.

While floating, the white box would then emit a light and radio signal to guide searchers.

BRAZILIAN HEAD OAS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ambassador Ilmar Penna Marinho of Brazil was elected chairman of the council of the Organization of American States Wednesday. The vote, on the second ballot, was 14 for Marinho and six for Ambassador Emilio Orbe of Uruguay.

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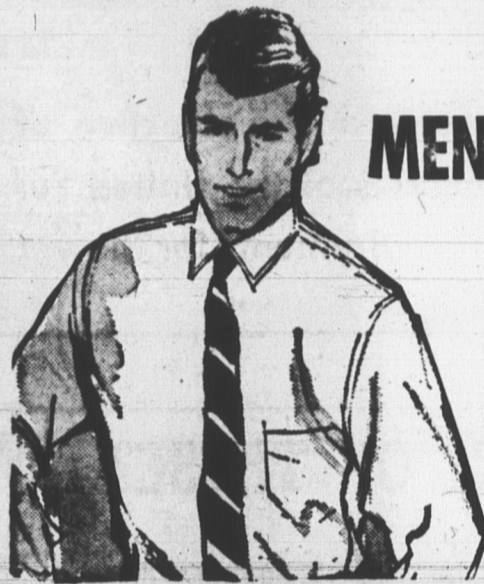
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