

The Munsinger Case

The testimony of a former RCMP commissioner before the Spence commission that there was no evidence of any breach of national security as a result of the relationship between Gerda Munsinger and any member of the former Diefenbaker government would seem to dispose of the allegations of Justice Minister Cardin which prompted the demand for a judicial inquiry in the first place. Nevertheless, the investigation is being continued and the method of procedure will doubtless form the theme of some hot debate in the months ahead. We shall endeavor to outline its highlights here as objectively as possible, from press reports which are the only source available to the public at this time.

The hearings hit the headlines on Monday when the commission counsel, Mr. O'Brien, summarized contents of RCMP reports which had already been submitted in secret on April 6 at the opening of the inquiry. The revelations came after Supreme Court Justice Spence had reversed an earlier decision to hold his hearings in camera as a general rule. As the April 25 session opened the judge noted several "unwarranted" newspaper articles criticising the secret aspects of the inquiry. Had he the power to cite for contempt of court, he said, at least one journalist would be appearing before him. But lacking that power, he therefore resolved to follow his own inclination, and hold public hearings whenever possible. "The result may be damaging to the personal character of some of the principals," he said, "but that factor I think I am going to ignore."

DUBIN'S MOTION—The judge rejected a motion by Conservative counsel Charles Dubin, who challenged the competence of the inquiry. There were, counsel maintained, no specific charges of misconduct against Mr. Diefenbaker or Mr. Fulton, and the judge could therefore not carry out the terms of the mandate given him by the present government. In the absence of such allegations, there were no provisions in law which permitted an inquiry to be directed at the conduct of a Prime Minister or a minister of the Crown.

Justice Minister Cardin had charged Mr. Diefenbaker with "misconduct" the affair; but this did not constitute a charge of misconduct and the judge, Mr. Dubin argued, could not carry out his terms of reference without violating the Inquiries Act, which provided that no report can be made against a person unless such charges have been made. If there were charges of misconduct, Mr. Dubin demanded that they be made known, and those against whom the charges were made be given full opportunity to reply. It was the responsibility of the accuser, Mr. Cardin, to make such charges.

OVERRULED—It was during reply to this motion that Mr. O'Brien unloaded the contents of the secret RCMP report on Munsinger's activities, over the protest of Mr. Dubin which was overruled by the judge. On Mr. Dubin's complaint that no specific charges had been laid, Mr. O'Brien said that no one could make any charges until all the evidence had been heard and until the inquiry had been completed. The judge agreed with Mr. O'Brien. Earlier he had told Mr. Dubin he could not agree that an improper use of discretionary power by a minister could not be described as misconduct. He said the government was not charging anyone by setting up the commission. It was simply directing an investigation into a series of statements. He was of opinion that he was carrying out "in full the provisions of the Inquiries Act."

A chief bone of contention with regard to the RCMP testimony from which Mr. O'Brien quoted was that it had been given at a secret hearing at which no Conservative counsel were present and of which, indeed, they had not been advised in advance. Mr. Carson, counsel for Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Fulton, complained in this connection: "For the first time in my experience I'm being asked to cross-examine witnesses I've not seen in examination-in-chief." He had not been able to see the witnesses' reaction on the stand and their demeanor while testifying. Yet it was this testimony which was being treated as of cardinal importance.

Controversy over this matter, we imagine, will be a long-drawn out affair. Certainly it involves a principle in which every Canadian citizen has a right to be concerned.

Worth Considering

The high cost of school construction is a problem which faces us both on the provincial and municipal level, and which for all Canada adds up to something like \$600 million a year. Of general interest, therefore, is a study which is to begin in Metropolitan Toronto in July to determine ways of reducing school construction costs. The news follows a report in the Financial Post that already, in Quebec, some schools are being built for half the 1959-65 costs, although comparisons may be difficult in Quebec because, as one official tactfully put it: "We don't know what happened in 1959. That was the Duplessis era, you know."

But elsewhere there is evidence that an effort is being made to tackle the problem in a practical manner. An interesting experiment is reported from Edmonton, where the school board has built three "compact" schools which incorporate a number of common features such as movable partitions, folding walls, minimum number of windows and classrooms that can be enlarged or reduced. And Dr. A. M. Neville, dean of engineering and graduate studies at the University of Alberta, suggests that a good deal of money could be saved by adopting uniform construction methods.

Dr. Neville toured Russia last fall and noted that the Russians pre-cast entire buildings on an assembly-line basis. Uniformity and mass production thus account for considerable saving. The dean says it is eye-wash to suggest that every school must be subject to local needs. Children are the same, the size of classes is the same, and the courses throughout a province are the same, he points out.

This may raise objections from an aesthetic point of view, but there is no doubt that many taxpayers will warmly endorse Dr. Neville's contention. At a time when school boards are caught by rising costs and the demands of rapidly growing enrolments, they too might find it worth giving consideration to ways of reducing the bill before the burden on municipalities becomes intolerable.

900 Years Too Late

Viscount Montgomery likes to remind the world that he's still Britain's top soldier. He has been stirring up a mare's nest of late with some sharp suggestions about cutting defense expenditures by eliminating married men in the service forces. Now he's off on a different tangent. The man who outwitted the Germans in Africa and put allied forces ashore in Europe in 1944 suggests that history would have been different if he had fought the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Had Harold, the English commander, deployed his troops according to Montgomery's plan, he would have defeated William the Conqueror and driven his invading Normans into the sea. Monty says in an article in the Sunday Times. Harold's first big blunder was to skip off north with his troops to defeat an army under his brother, Tostig, and Harold Hadrada, King of Norway, on Sept. 25, while William's Normans were boarding ships in France to cross into Britain.

"Against the background of my own practical experience when in command of the Kent and Sussex coast in 1941, an invasion by Hitler's forces being then considered likely," says Monty, "it is my opinion that Harold then committed the first of his many errors which were to coet him his crown—and his life."

On the whole, he concedes, William was a good general and had a lot to offer England—including Robert Montgomery, ancestor of the field marshal, fighting on the Norman right flank. But if Monty hadn't been 900 years late in getting there, we doubt whether that would have made any difference in his fighting plans. He'd have given them the thrashing of their lives, that he would!

Our Yesterdays

(From The Guardian Files)

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(April 29, 1941)

Massed formations of German warplanes struck again at bomb-ravaged and virtually deserted Plymouth, showering high explosives in an intense four-hour assault.

Artillery which the Germans had assembled on the French invasion coast re-entered the battle of the English Channel with a seven-hour shelling of the British coast—the heaviest and most protracted of the war.

TEN YEARS AGO

(April 29, 1956)

The final meeting for the year of the Newman Club was held at the Knights of Columbus Home, and was called to order by the president, Richard St. John. The financial report was read by the secretary, treasurer, Barbara Cronin and adopted as read.

Earl Smith of Summerside won the P.E.I. Badminton championship at Summerside Airport by defeating Johnny Byrne in straight games in the best-two-of-three finals. Jennie Bombhower of Charlottetown won the ladies title in straight games over Wanda MacMillan and teamed with her long singles opponent to win the ladies doubles and matched up with Walter Cullen to win the mixed doubles.

'Labor Party' Misnomer

Windsor Star

The "Labor Party" in Britain which had such a fine win in the recent elections there, is a misnomer if one thinks of it as representing the workers only. This is proved by the composition of the new House of Commons.

No fewer than 184 Labor members have had university education (or about 50 per cent of those elected), compared in 1958 Conservatives with such education. And 90 Labor members attended either Oxford or Cambridge (147 Conservatives did so), which represent the elite. These men certainly aren't of the pick and shovel, or assembly line, type.

The Labor Party, of course, always had within it an element of the intelligentsia. That dates back to the old Fabian group which had such eminents in it as George Bernard Shaw, the Webbs, etc. But, with the decline of the Liberal Party, more and more of the "thinkers" have been going into the Labor Party. This perhaps is in rebellion against the "establishment" as represented by the Conservative Party.

BATHE FAR BELOW SEA The lowest natural spot on the earth is the Dead Sea, in Palestine, 1,300 feet below sea level.

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So it must be Mexico City's sky-high altitude that's to blame for their embarrassment. And such being the case, many well-trained athletes from low-altitude places are going to find it very difficult indeed to live up to their pre-olympic whiffs when they perform their specialties at the 1968 Olympics. Many people will be saying, "I told you so."

Animal lovers have protested that the actual damage done by wombats bears no relation to this slaughter. They have insisted that farmers themselves could get rid of the wombats who do stray from their mountain homes and cause trouble.

Now the government has eliminated the bounty. But the animal stays on the list of "vermin animals," which means he can still be killed indiscriminately.

We merely mention all this to show that despite government crises and serious situations involving humans, a lowly animal can often set off a hue and cry which temporarily puts everything else on the sidelines.

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Like the wolf, he has a price on his head, and like the wolf, he has been the subject of much controversy. Recently in the North Bay district a prolonged argument raged over whether the \$25 bounty on wolf pelts was high enough, and whether wolves should be slaughtered in greater numbers in order to maintain and increase the deer population.

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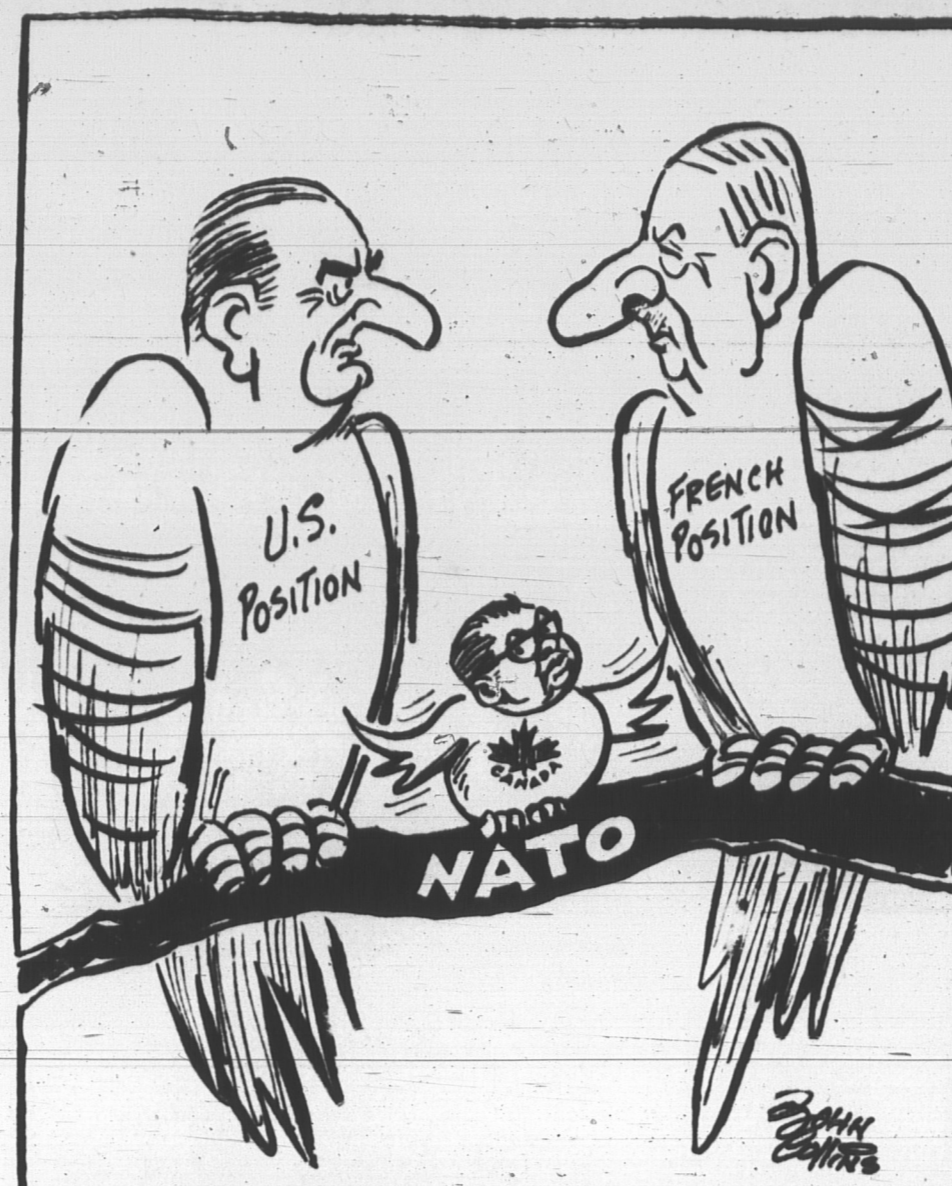
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A DOVE BETWEEN TWO HAWKS

OTTAWA REPORT By Patrick Nicholson

Modern Pace Brings Own Family Problems

Should Ontario be renamed "Peyton Province"? Without a vestige of pride, this comment arose when two Ontario MPs were recently discussing the break-down in morals, ethics and discipline so evident among today's juveniles. One MP cited a high school of his knowledge where all but two students in a group of 14-year-olds regularly smoke cigarettes; the other MP matched this by describing a high school where some students were dismissed for drunkenness. The first MP capped that by citing twenty pregnancies in a year at another school. Then the phony sociological enquiries on a certain deplorable TV program were discussed, and the roof blew off. Is there a crisis among our kids now? Are their sundry sins just youthful exuberance? Is it merely a sub-conscious reaction against authority? Or is there a complete break-down in our community, at all levels, with juvenile delinquency showing as the most prominent tip of the larger iceberg? These two MPs agreed that the young of today have opportunities completely unmatched by what they had known in their youth. They have opportunities to receive education and training, they have material advantages, they have protection, such as earlier generations never knew. But, I interjected, do they have the affection and the family-togetherness which their fathers and grandfathers enjoyed? Is today's youth too feather-bedded in material ways, and yet starved of important elements of the heart and character? Yes, agreed one MP, the family car certainly tends to break-up rather than unify the family; and TV, while it may create physical togetherness of a family huddled in front of it, smother's family discussion. Never before, it was agreed, did Canada's youth have such wonderful opportunities for acquiring education and marketable skills. But never before did schools and colleges have so many drop-outs. Seldom before have high schools numbered wives among their classes of teenagers, but never before have schools and colleges had so many unwed mothers or mothers-in-imminent in their student body.

The Wombat Controversy

North Bay Nugget

There are probably no two members of the animal kingdom which differ more than the wolf and the wombat. The wombat is a marsupial (a member of the animal group which carries the young in an external pouch) with the build of a baby bear, and inhabits Australia. Like the wolf, he has a price on his head, and like the wolf, he has been the subject of much controversy. Recently in the North Bay district a prolonged argument raged over whether the \$25 bounty on wolf pelts was high enough, and whether wolves should be slaughtered in greater numbers in order to maintain and increase the deer population. Animal lovers in Australia are happy just now, because the wombat is going to get a reprieve. The price on the wombat's head (or pelt) has been about \$1.20 in Canadian funds. The bounty is going to be lifted for three years. The friendly-looking wombat, a vegetarian, has the constitution of a tank and can wreck farmers' fences. He sometimes weighs as much as 100 pounds.

Not Surprising

Hamilton Spectator

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