NEW MACLEANS EDITOR--A RADICAL?

It's a long way up to the seventh floor of what Maclean's own writers would call the posh downtown location of the Maclean-Hunter building.

Up past the offices of Chatelaine, up past the offices of more than fifty trade magazines turned out by Canada's super-publishing house.

The editor of Maclean's gets a corner office, medium size, comfortable, hardly overdone; about what you'd expect a Ford junior vice-president.

I think this is where I can change the world more than anywhere else I could be, "says the new man in the seventh floor office – Peter Gzowski.

"And it's fun – it's where I want to be and it's what I'm good at."

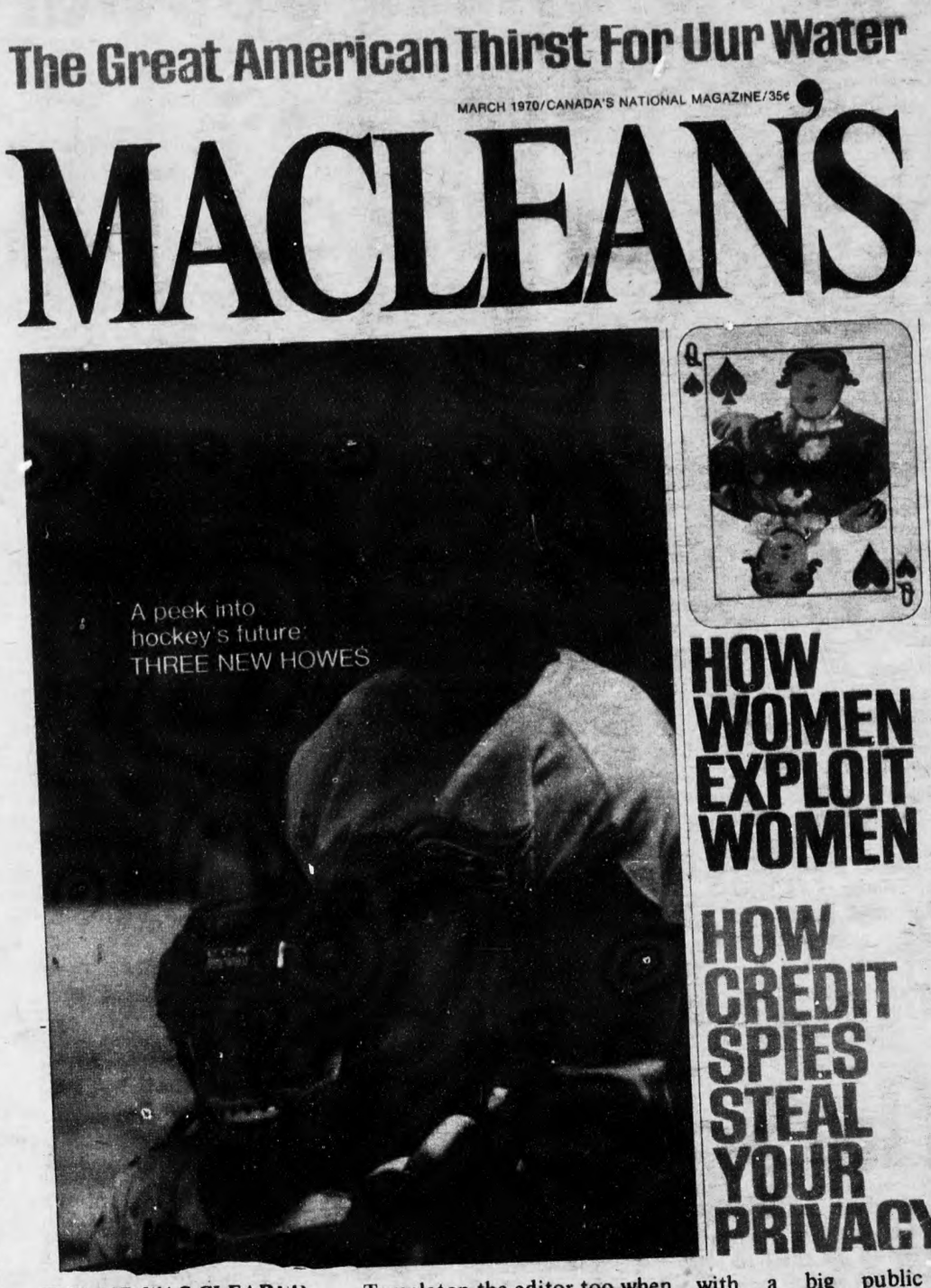
And why, after he and a group of high-ranking personnel walked out in 1965 in protest over editorial interference by the publishers, is Gzowski back with Macleans?

"I wish reporters asking me that question would do a little speculation on their own. What can I really say?"

He's probably pointing out one thing he's adamant about, "I haven't compromised myself in the least.

"Before I took the job I talked to the publishers particularly Ron McEachern (MacLean-Hunter's vice-president in charge of consumer publications) – I'm not saying anything about those discussions – I'm editor now.

"It's really a question of whether you're editor of Maclean's or not – I am the editor.



THE AIR WAS CLEARED

But wasn't Charles Templeton the editor too when he quit only a few months ago with a big public flurry protesting the same kind of interference as that prompting Gzowski's resignation four years ago?

"The air was cleared by the Templeton affair – I'm a different kind of editor – you have to know what your job is and what's really important."

Gzowski is vague about what his leadership will mean for the magazine. It will be six months, perhaps a year, before he feels he has really affected Maclean's.

"It's a long slow process", he says of his reform. "It's evolution, not revolution."

"It will mean more shit-disturbing, more muck-raking. I believe in muck-raking journalism."

"And I hope it take the world more seriously and itself less seriously," he says of the coming change.

"Muck-raking" to Gzowski is one of the ways a journalist brings about social change.

"I think anyone who isn't in favour of social change in this country is stupid," he says, "but the problem is often that they don't know the facts."

That's the journalist's role, he feels – the "exposition of truth."

"Rolling back the curtains, breaking down the barricades" is how a writer goes about social change. You keep laying the truth on them."

"When the Luce organization turns on Vietnam it does more to change U.S. Vietnam policy than all the protest marches."

U.S. MISGUIDED, AND MISINFORMED

Gzowski feels that the U.S. is in Vietnam because it was misguided, misinformed and misled. He admits, though, that he can see economic reasons why they're there as well. The war does benefit certain economic interests."

And, "the type of person who owns periodicals in the U.S. is generally part of this group."

But Gzowski feels "there are honest publishers in this country whose dedication is to the common weal."

"Publishers are villians, but not as villainous as people think them to be."

Much of the problem is news and information control, Gzowski says, comes from what he calls "anticipatory censorship."

Writers have a tendency to decide with little basis that they should avoid certain topics. Often this stems from old rumors and mistaken remarks around the office.

Gzowski would like to see everyone write openly and freely – he believes they'd really encounter very little difficulty doing so.

And he adds, "there is no built-in contradiction between a tough magazine and a successful advertising income."

Advertising control is usually useless anticipatory censorship too, he feels.

All of which may be quite important for a magazine whose books only very recently returned to the black ink. It was only a year ago Maclean's changed size to conform to Time magazine and hence be able to carry ads originally designed for Time.

And the French addition, still in the red, is to continue too, Gzowski says.

RADICAL IN A TIE

All together it's going to be quite a task for a man who is just getting used to wearing a tie and who calls himself a radical. Radical in the sense that he's always asking "why" – always seeking the root of the question.

It should be worthwhile to see if the next year of Maclean's will produce the changes Gzowski's leadership would seem to indicate are coming.

And it will be interesting to see if Gzowski can escape from a comment he himself made in 1965:

"The elite," he said, "by and large protect their own, and their underlings know it."

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