



the brunswickan

VOL 112 ISSUE 16

JANUARY 27, 1978

24 PAGES FREE

Hughes shows accusations unwarranted

Allegations that the Justice Department attempted to thwart an RCMP investigation into alleged kickbacks to the Progressive Conservative party were considered unfounded according to a judicial inquiry into the matter. John Baxter, Minister of Justice in 1973, did indeed discourage an RCMP investigation into PC party financing, but only because the minister believed such an investigation would not uncover any criminality.

The 117 page report, released Wednesday morning said that the Minister of Justice imposed or concurred in the imposition of a restriction on an investigation into political contributions made to the Progressive Conservative party of New Brunswick. The reports says that Baxter was not aware of any possible illegal activities in connection with party fund raising, when he was at a meeting with senior RCMP and other justice officials on Oct. 4, 1973, and therefore his conduct was not improper.

B.J. Giroux assistant commissioner of the RCMP who was in charge of the investigation ordered investigating officers not to look into any and all party contributions before the meeting with Baxter.

The inquiry by Chief Justice J.A. Hughes also examined other related allegations made by Higgins at the opening of the legislature in March 1977. The investigation was conducted in May and June of 1977.

According to the report the RCMP did consult and advise the Justice Department before obtaining search warrants and laying information against Ideal Hydraulics and Bearing Ltd. and J.K. Matchett Ltd. in 1975, contrary to Higgins charge.

Higgins had suggested if the

information and search warrants were laid and obtained without such consultation, it might have been related to the alleged Justice Department interference in 1973.

The inquiry showed that the RCMP obtained search warrant and laid information in connection with other matters in 1977 without consulting the Justice Department, but that the lack of consultation arose from special system of kickbacks and said he would resign if such an inquiry did not substantiate his charges. The opposed Hatfield subse-

quently called for a government appointed judicial inquiry to investigate only the interference allegations.

The matter of the alleged kickbacks to the PC party was handed over to the RCMP. The force has completed what it calls an extensive investigation and its findings have been submitted to the Justice Department.

Last March, Higgins called for a Royal Commission inquiry into all of his allegations of Justice Department interference and precautions necessary to insure that the persons being investigat-

ed would not become aware of the intended searches.

Higgins said that the Justice Department entered a stay of proceedings on April 14, 1975 of information laid by the RCMP against Ideal Bearing and Hydraulics Ltd and subsequently amended the information by reducing the total amount by which it was charged the province had been defrauded. This was confirmed by the report which said the reasons for doing so were not improper as the original information was "badly timed and ill conceived."

Liberal leader resigns—and why

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

Former Liberal leader Robert Higgins resigned Tuesday night as a result of the findings of Chief Justice Minister Hughes report which was released to the public last Wednesday.

Last March, Higgins made allegations that respecting the manner in which the progressive Conservative party was raising election funds. They indicated that money was finding its way into Progressive Conservative election funds as a consideration in the letting of contracts, among other things.

In March, Higgins asked for an inquiry into the situation. The inquiry was not called but the government commissioned Chief Justice Minister Hughes to examine some of the matters raised by the party leader.

The results of their findings were released in the report last Wednesday, and most of Higgins

allegations were considered "unwarranted".

Higgins said that "from the clear answers to the questions submitted and the absence of recommendations into any aspect of the matters raised by the men and the documents referred to, that the commissioner, who is the Chief Justice of this province, must consider my actions to be unwarranted."

He said his views of what constitutes proper conduct have been and still are at variance with that of the government, and more seriously with those of the Chief Justice of the province.

Higgins said that "as an individual" he could not accept, and does not believe that thirteen years of public life and his own personal perceptions should be that wrong. He said that that part of the system was "wrong" and needed reforming.

Higgins said while he has a profound respect for the system, he had to resign his position as

Liberal leader would be meaningless.

He felt that the inquiry was not as "embracing" as it should be and he feels it has been abused. Higgins said he has considered what his resignation would mean to the Liberal party, but said while the Liberal caucus is not happy about the decision will accept it.

Higgins said that when he presented the allegations he was willing to place his thirteen years of public life "on the line in order that the government take his charges "seriously".

He feels they did not treat it that way.

Norbert Theriault, interim leader was also present at the conference and said that the Liberal caucus accepted Higgins resignation with "great regret". But added that Higgins has the unanimous respect of the caucus.

He said the Liberal party recognized the "great contribution" Higgins has made to the party.

He said that he will not be a candidate for leadership and that the leader will be chosen shortly.

He feels while the Liberal party will regret the departure of Higgins but they are strong enough to "bounce back."

Hatfield comments

"It is now clear beyond any question that there is no such interference by the justice officials or by the ministers of justice, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Craggan" said Premier Richard Hatfield at a news conference Wednesday.

Hatfield was referring to Liberal opposition leader Robert Higgins' accusation last March that the Department of Justice attempted to thwart an RCMP investigation into alleged kickbacks to the party.

An inquiry by Chief Justice Minister Hughes into the matter showed Higgins' allegations to be unwarranted.

Last March Higgins called for a royal commission inquiry into all of his allegations of justice department interference and system of kickbacks and said he would resign if such an inquiry did not substantiate his charges.

Hatfield said it is proper and reasonable that the investigation continue without being further prejudiced by the opposition and its leader whose "irresponsible and reckless conduct over the past year" was an "affront to the judicial system and the established principles of fair comment and political responsibility."

Here it is folks!

This Saturday, January 28, Fredericton cable viewers will be able to see a Maritime and perhaps even a Canadian first!

College Hill Video Workshop (the student television club on the U.N.B. campus) will begin its weekly programming over the Channel 10 frequency made available by City Cablevision. From 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. Saturday afternoons, C.H.V.W. will be presenting News, Sports, Music and Feature specials. All programming will be produced and aired by students and will be aimed at promoting better communication between the University and the community that surrounds it.

This Saturday the program will begin at 12:00 with a short expose on CHVW. At 12:30 there will be CHVW news, then at 1:00 the Worksong Review. 2:00 will see the UNB Red Devils vs UPEI Panthers and CHVW signs off at 4:00.

For information concerning specific programming each Saturday, please consult the "Gleaner" entertainment section and the "Brunswickan".

It all starts this Saturday at noon, don't miss it!

For those in need

SUBJECT: Faculty Advising and Student Orientation

The Senate Student Services Committee has struck a sub-committee with the following objectives:

1. to examine the present nature of faculty advising and student orientation;

2. to suggest improvements with the goal of structuring an on-going program to help students adjust to academic and social life at university.

Early in its deliberations, the committee recognized the need to spend some time researching the situation. Consequently, an open meeting is being organized, with broad representation from the University community being invited.

When: 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, Jan 31 1978

Where: Tartan Room, Memorial Alumni Building

Agenda: 7:00 p.m. Introductory remarks

7:15 Identification of areas of concern

7:30 Small group discussion (led by members of sub-committee)

8:15 Reports from groups

8:45 Open discussion

9:00 Recommendations to sub-committee and adjournment

Besides representatives from the faculty and student bodies, certain other people, like yourself, have been invited. Therefore, I particularly hope you can attend. If you are unable to attend, please invite another member of your department who is involved in counselling to attend. RSVP to Shirley Hetherington at 4527/4528 before Friday, January 27.

On behalf of the sub-committee, I look forward to seeing you on the 31st.

Sincerely,
Dwight G. Scott, P. Eng.
Associate Professor
Chairman, Sub-committee on
Advising and Orientation