

## Food poisoning incident at MUN still unsolved

ST JOHN'S, (CUP) -- A month-long investigation has failed to pin-down responsibility for a food poisoning incident which victimized 230 students at Memorial University's dining Hall in December.

The students became ill after eating cream puffs served by Versafood Services Ltd. which has a monopoly catering contract at the university.

The cream puffs contained salmonella virus, which caused dizziness, weakness and vomiting in afflicted students for several days when end-of-term examinations were critically near.

Investigators from Versafood, the University Health center and the provincial Department of Health were able to narrow the cause to the cream puffs, but what caused the cream puffs to become contaminated is not known. They contained 12 ingredients, any of which could have been somehow contaminated with the virus. Another possibility is that a Versa-

food worker contacted the disease and contaminated the food. Several cooks were suspended briefly after the outbreak, but no evidence of the virus could be found.

Dr. C.A. Boddie, director of the student health services at Memorial, said from now on extra precautions will be taken to prevent future outbreaks. Provincial health inspectors will now visit the university monthly, instead of five times a year as had been the case before the outbreak.

Monthly is about as often as they can come, Dr. Boddie explained, because the provincial government keeps only a bare-bones staff of six inspectors to check every eating establishment in Newfoundland. The shortage of inspectors is so acute that even hospitals are checked only monthly.

Versafood, meanwhile, has promised greater care in the future. Two of its most "efficient experts" will be transferred to Memorial from the mainland, and claims the company, the move

will cut down the possibility of further outbreaks of food poisoning. Although Versafood claims

to be making only "marginal profit" on its Memorial contract, the quality of the food being served at the university dining halls and cafeterias has been deteriorating

steadily since it won the contract in 1970.

Students were so disgusted after the salmonella outbreak that about 60 of them dumped their supper on the table one night and left the dining hall en masse.

It is not yet known whether

any students are considering lawsuits against Versafood because of the outbreak; nor is it known if any students suffered academically because of the illness.

Versafood, an American-based corporation, will have its contract with the university coming up for review soon.

## LA "Whirlypigs" fly at night

By PHILIP WEST

LOS ANGELES (CUPI) Some call them "whirlypigs".

The cops themselves call the noise from their helicopters "the sound of security".

Every night they fly over Los Angeles, armed with spotlights and sometimes machine guns, to ensure the people that 1984 is approaching on schedule.

"Attention...attention..." over the high whine and incessant whop of the rotor blades. "This has been declared an unlawful gathering and you are ordered to disperse immediately and return to your homes."

Not a demonstration, not a riot, but a party that turned a little noisy.

Alone, it visually illustrates the control placed on citizenry in the United States to ensure maintenance of law'n' order. But it is only a small part of the Orwellian reality gathering momentum in America.

Biggest brother of them all is the FBI, with fingerprints of more than 96 million people, or data on more than one-third of the population, with no distinction recorded whether the arrested person was found guilty or innocent.

In addition, federal investigators have access to overlapping information contained in 264 million medical case histories, 279 million psychiatric dossiers, and 100 million credit files. The Justice department is now attempting to pass a law enabling federal law enforcement officers to check identification of "suspects" by "fingerprints, palm prints, foot prints, measurements, blood specimens, urine specimens, saliva samples, photographs and lineups".

And, according to the Washington Post, the FBI maintains an "agitator index" containing the names of at least 10,000 so-called "potential subversives" -- to be used as a basis for "federal arrests in the event of war or an 'internal security emergency.'" A new computer intelligence system, planned for full operation by 1975, will give law enforcement officers the capability to determine instantly the suspect's subversive rating during an "internal security emergency".

American citizens are checked in any case by the utterly necessary social security number, without which the resident is not a proper citizen. No bank account can be opened without one, no employment can be taken, and even infants living off their parents' welfare payments are required to wear one.

Television surveillance systems have been installed in a number of US cities to televise "suspicious persons". In San Jose, California; Hoboken, New Jersey; and Mount Vernon, New York, television cameras located in the cities' business centres can discern a man-sized object in extreme darkness from more than half a mile away.

Illegal telephone tapping is widespread and undertaken by private concerns (such as Bell Telephone itself) as well as government departments (as proven by the many charges dismissed because of illegal wiretaps). Grocery stores fingerprint customers to ensure their cheques won't bounce.

Except for the latter, none of these practices is more openly chilling than the sight of three or four helicopters in the night sky, their spotlights sweeping the streets. Airborne surveillance has undergone national proliferation since the success of a trial project in Los Angeles in 1966.

Seventeen police departments in the area now use helicopters equipped with spotlights and public address systems, and the latest ones ordered by the nearby San Fernando sheriff will also be armed with submachine guns.

The environment suffers as well as the people. In Huntington Beach, near Los Angeles, where the cops use straight wing aircraft, a long line of palm trees have been chopped on top to permit adequate airborne surveillance.

The helicopters are supported in Los Angeles by ground police armed with machine guns and automatic rifles. And part of their psychology includes what is unassumingly titled the Basic Car Plan.

Simply explained, it alienates one strata of society and uses it as informants against another

lifestyle. Police interpretation: "If someone disturbs you in your neighbourhood, chances are he's disturbing everyone else too, and is therefore breaking the law."

In Indiana, this develops into a plan for a neighbourhood spy network. The proposal calls for hiring "rumour monitors" to report "possible dangerous situations" to "city officials". Said the director of the agency proposing the scheme: "We might not be able to trust our neighbours after a while. But as long as we're not doing anything wrong, we shouldn't have to worry, I don't suppose."

Helicopter use is not confined to cities. In many states, speeding drivers on the nationwide network of defense department interstate freeways, are clocked from the air over marked distances and highway patrol cars are dispatched to ticket the offending drivers.

The cops are happy with the results of helicopter use. Sergeant Danny Shea of the Los Angeles Police Department says the aircraft have allowed elimination of decoy squads (to encourage and then trap victims) while still reducing the number of muggings and rapings.

"If we spot something going on, we just flash the light on and take a look. Some of the guys don't like that much, but the girls always smile and wave so we'll know everything's all right."

A more intellectual colleague extolled airborne surveillance as "a tremendous psychological tool -- a sort of silent persuader."

But the silencer is none too effective and the noise of the choppers is still a problem.

Helicopter manufacturers Bell and Hughes have promised police quieter aircraft within a few months to eliminate protests like the one from more than 1000 residents in Newport Beach, complaining about the noise. (In response, the city council promised to consider use of higher altitudes.)

At the same time, police in Los Angeles and in cities like Washington DC and San Diego, California are issuing propaganda to sell residents on helicopter noise as "the sound of security".

## Needle of truth

Continued from page 10

executives, labor officials, the rich and the poor. The best investigative reporter in the world often fails his mission.

So there remains much to be done. Journalists must upgrade themselves, become more skilled in their profession, try even harder in their goal of informing the public on major issues. They must continue to report the everyday events of their community, one of the prerequisites of the news media.

The major weakness in journalism in New Brunswick -- in fact, in every province in Canada -- is the shortage of skilled journalists. The emphasis here is on "skilled". A person can remain in the business for decades and never achieve the skills required to be a top newsmen. As do other professions, we have our share of square pegs in round holes.

Why is there a shortage of competent journalists? One reason is our education system, at all levels. Would-be writers are not getting proper basic training. Grammar, spelling and punctuation do not in themselves guarantee a person can be a writer, but you'll never find a competent writer who has not mastered the basics.

Graduates of universities and colleges, including journalism majors, come charging out of their

institutions as Sir Galahads on white horses, eager to join a newspaper, radio station or television station, anxious to right the wrongs of society. Too often they reveal themselves as a Don Quixote. They can't write and don't have the patience or the desire to work hard and learn their profession. Too often they believe subjectivity and objectivity are synonymous.

The answers to most of the ills of journalism in New Brunswick -- and Canada -- would be proper training of journalists. This can be done in several ways: apprenticeship programs (now popularly named on-job training); by more practical teaching in our universities and colleges; or by journalism courses (at the university or technical college level) where modern textbooks are used and the instructors know something about their subject other than what they read in books.

New Brunswick is too small to have a journalism school -- but we should have a journalism course offered in one of our universities. And it should be taught by journalists, not English profs.

The state of journalism in New Brunswick today: cloudy with some sunny intervals. Forecast for tomorrow: storm approaching, if we don't get with it.

**DANGER Beware of falling ice**