

External Affairs  
Supplementary Paper

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Speech delivered by George Ferguson - Montreal Star,  
to the Canadian Club of Toronto, January 18, 1954.

An editor is, among other things, a person who is supposed to know something about his fellow citizens and the way their minds work. I'm not sure if it's true, for I know that, after about 30 years in the business, I am always meeting with surprises; and what I want to talk to you about today is one of the most recent of these, the instantaneous and all-- but unanimous reaction of Canadians to the proposal made late last year by a sub-committee of the United States Senate, that Igor Gouzenko should be made available to it as a witness. We Canadians don't very often do something all together. On this occasion we all got angry together, and we stayed angry for some time, which, so it seems to me, to be a significant thing to have happened, and I thought it might perhaps be interesting to discuss its significance, and to place this really rather unimportant incident into the wider context which it seems to deserve.

I call the incident unimportant because, in itself, it was just that. Senate sub-committees are interested in a very wide range of subjects, and call a very large range of witnesses. On occasion, too, Canadians appear before them and there is nothing very startling about it. George McIvor of the Canadian Wheat Board has often gone to Washington and has given evidence, and so have many business men, as part of the normal routine of business activity. You or I, for instance, could go and give evidence on any subject if we were able to persuade the committee we had something useful to say. We would have to ask no one's permission. We would just get on board a train or a plane, and make our appearance.

The only thing that made the invitation to Gouzenko something a little out of the ordinary was that the sub-committee in question, the Jenner sub-committee, did not know where Gouzenko was, and also, I think, seemed to have no idea whether or not we, as Canadians, didn't have to ask the Queen's permission before we could leave the country. There remains a great deal of ignorance about Canada's status in various circles of the United States. You will remember Mike Pearson remarking that it might not be a bad idea to stage a sham battle between some Canadians and another group dressed up as red-coats, to convince such Americans that we had in actual fact fought our way to freedom.