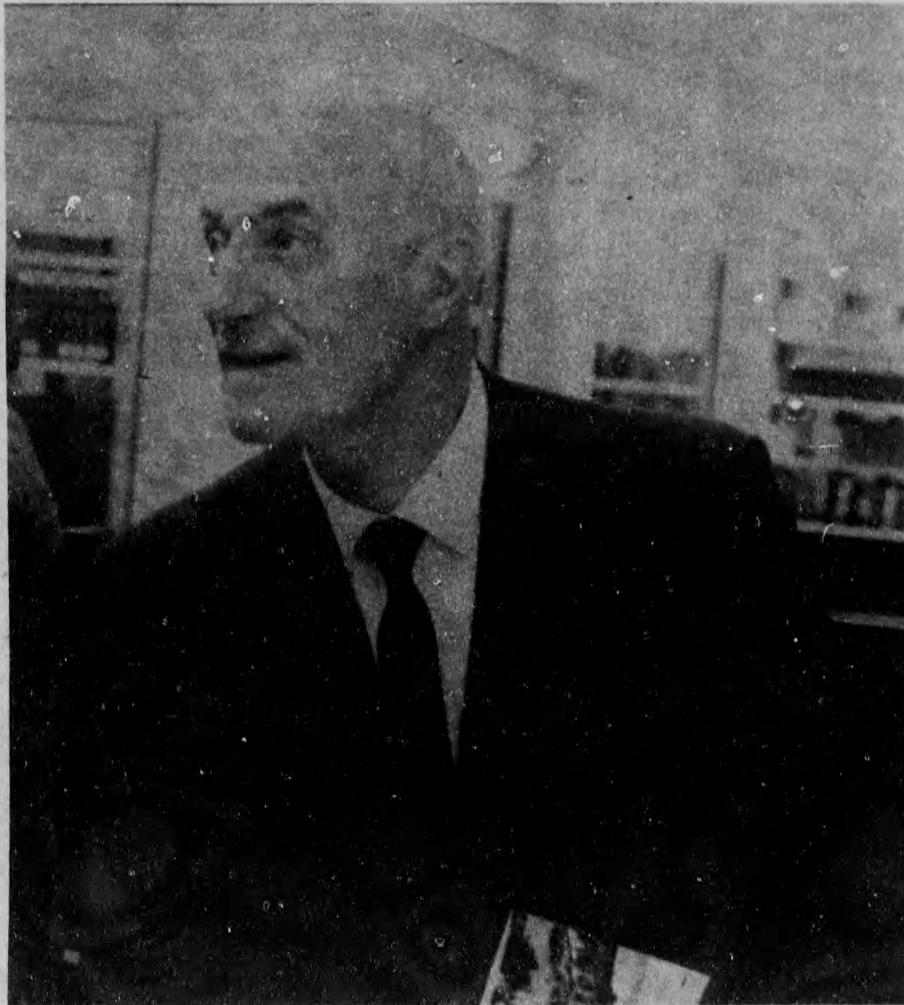


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because the owners of papers elsewhere expect to be handled gently by their employees.
 But the Irving papers are a special case. If newspaper readers elsewhere think their news is being distorted or suppressed out of deference to an owner, then they can buy another paper, one not owned by that man. But the English speaking people of New Brunswick cannot do that. They must buy an Irving paper. And because Irving owns so much else in New Brunswick, it is fair to ask whether the people get a really free and honest press.
 The biggest no to this question comes from the Liberal members of the provincial government who feel the lash of generally consistent criticism from the Irving press. They are certain it is instigated by their program of tax reform which favors the people over the privileged and which Irving bitterly opposes. Their most vocal advocate is Senator McElman.
 McElman began his career as a bank clerk, went on to become a political appointee as secretary of the New Brunswick Control Board, then private secretary to the late Liberal Premier John B. MacNair. But it was not until 1954 that he began the job that would eventually make him the most influential politician in New Brunswick, next to Louis Robichaud. He became the first full time organizer of the Liberal Party when the Liberals were out of office and their funds so depleted it is said that McElman's salary was sometimes irregular.
 "I'm not critical at this point," says McElman, "of Irving's industrial interests. But there is a dreadful conflict in his holdings in the media field. Let's accept his contention that he never interferes. He doesn't have to. For his presence is there. His publishers and managers are aware of his involvement. That's all that's necessary."
 McElman believes there have been glaring examples of that presence actually converting publishers and editorial writers from views they've already printed on editorial pages in Saint John. "A prime example was at the time of the decision on whether Saint John would have a harbour throughway for vehicles or a bypass. In the beginning the press seemed to favor a harbour throughway. Then suddenly, in the fall of 1965, Irving came out for a bypass and immediately the two papers, the radio station and the television station converted to that view."
 Another obvious issue is water pollution. Irving owns two businesses in Saint John, an oil refinery and a pulp mill, alleged to be serious sources of pollution in Saint John harbor. Fishermen who use the harbor told me that tankers carrying Irving oil often flush their lines in the harbor or spill diesel oil, injecting highly toxic sulphide into the water. Worse is the emission from the pulp mill, hundreds of thousands of gallons a week of total waste, turning the famous Reversing Falls into a mess of churning discharge.
 It is not just the harbor that has problems. The Saint John River itself, the province's magnificent inland waterway, is a sewer. Partly it is polluted by industrial waste dumped in its northern streams, but also millions of logs from Irving's log drives jam the confluence of the Saint John and the Nashwaak every spring near Fredericton. Over the years, according to McElman, logs and bark that have dropped to the river bed have killed great numbers of fish and prevented many from making their way to the spawning grounds.
 I went through the files looking for the Telegraph-Journal's policy on water pollution in the Saint John River and harbor, but could find nothing. There were four editorials of recent years showing the paper is against water pollution, but none mentioned the harbor. The strongest one took aim at local sports fishermen who left their shacks on the ice of the Kennebecasis River, so that when the ice melted the debris cluttered the water.
 It referred to the fishermen as slobs, called them men with "no consideration of the people who would like to enjoy the river," said there was "no sense appealing to their decency" and

advocated "hitting them where it hurts, in the pocketbook." I reread the editorial and wondered if it would apply to Irving's log drives. For they too keep others from using the river, they too foul the water and they have been doing so not for one springtime but for 20.
 There was, however, one sentence which caught my eye. It appeared in the news and quoted the president of the Miramichi Salmon Fishing Association as complaining that indeed there is a serious pollution problem in the Saint John harbor, but no one would admit it exists. "I won't mention any names," the man said, "but..."
 The man I most wanted to see was Ralph Costello, who began as a reporter making less than \$50 a week and is now publisher Telegraph-Journal, Times Globe and whose office has panelling and chairs of leather and a thick carpet on the floor.
 Costello told me he really did not have much to say, but when the time came and Senator Keith Davey who is heading that inquiry on the press asked him, he would say some things then.
 "Senator McElman is entitled to his opinion of us," said Costello, "but we recognize the dangers that the Senator speaks of. We have a major responsibility

lot to say on these matters, but now was not the time.
 "I think," he said, "we'll leave it right there for now."
 In the village of Florenceville, New Brunswick, Frank Withers, a 46 year old former school teacher, toils as editor, reporter and salesman for a small weekly. Withers was once city editor of the Saint John Telegraph Journal.
 People who have worked with Withers say he is honest. Maybe a bit too idealistic for his own good, but honest.
 "When I first joined the Telegraph-Journal," Withers recalled, "reporting of union activities all through the mid-fifties was out. In fact we couldn't even mention the fog in Saint John because it might hurt the tourist business."
 Then in the late fifties, Costello became publisher and immediately, said Withers, the quality of the paper improved. No longer was there blatant covering up for advertisers and friends of the paper's executives. It also became a better looking paper and is still among the more eye appealing small dailies in the country. "But it has one god and one god only," said Withers, "and that is K.C. Irving."
 Withers is not the only former editor who grew cynical of the Saint John Telegraph-Journal. There are two others who not only confirm his judgements, but go farther in denouncing the paper as an organ of protection for Irving.
 One is Willard Richardson, a former Telegraph-Journal news editor who left to freelance, roam the world and eventually return to journalism at the Spectator in Hamilton. The other is John Jones, now chief copy editor of the Spectator and a former provincial editor of the Telegraph-Journal.
 "I would say," says Richardson, "that the Saint John Telegraph-Journal is one of the greatest examples of duplicity in the communications media anywhere. Not always because of what was said, but because of what was unsaid."
 Jones agrees emphatically. He says that while he was there the paper could not report the cause of fire in cases where houses burned down from oil furnace explosions. K.C. Irving sells fuel oil. At times, he said, the paper would deliberately hold back critical news if it was unsure how it would affect Irving.
 "Let's say it was half an hour before the paper's deadline," says Jones, "and you got word from a correspondent in the country somewhere that an Irving oil truck hit a car. You could not print the story unless you were able to get to the managing editor and he was able to get to



to report things fairly and thoroughly and responsibly. We know that. My only claim is that we know who the owner is as well as Senator McElman does. If anything this influences us to do a more responsible job."
 That was a reasonable answer, I thought, containing all the words beloved by journalism... fairly... thoroughly... responsibly. So I asked about pollution in the Saint John harbor from industries including those of K.C. Irving. Costello added: "if someone dams the Reversing Falls, we'll cover it."
 But, since Costello had talked of thoroughness and responsibility, I thought it fair to ask why the paper didn't find out on its own whether the harbor is or isn't polluted. "Why don't you have some scientific samples taken and tell the public so they'll know one way or the other? Don't you think a good newspaper should go to the trouble of getting out and doing some research to let the people know?"
 Costello didn't answer right away. He just looked at me. In fact he looked so long that he was staring and I began to count slowly and got up to 15 and still Costello was staring. Finally when I could stand it no more, I coughed and twisted and Costello said: "What was the question?"
 "Don't you think you should get out and find out about pollution in the harbor?"
 At that point, Costello reminded me of what he had said earlier, that he had a