

Doyle explores turn-of-the-century NB politics

By J. DAVID MILLER

Last week's issue included a review by Managing Editor Derwin Gowan on Arthur Doyle's new book, *Front Benches and Backrooms*.

The book has just been released and sales are quite good to date. The book certainly is excellent as noted last week. Once you pick it up, it becomes very difficult to stop reading.

History is often described in rather dull terms, but this history relates not just the blatant corruption and self-seeking stupid-

ity practiced by turn-of-the-century politicians, but makes some acute comments on New Brunswickers and politics in general.

People, it seems, just don't care. Politicians are left to their own devices between elections, and when they are in power, every effort is made to cover up mistakes and hide blunders.

It would seem that this was true then, true now, and truer even at the student union level. History has a way of disguising itself which makes it difficult to perceive the truth, if it exists at

all.

Doyle noted, in an interview, that it has essentially taken him about four years to complete the book, from conception to bookstore. His first premise was to write a political history from about 1925 to 1970. As he began to investigate the 1925 election, Doyle "quickly realized that there was a lot of interesting political activity just prior to that" and that he would have to restrict his study to a much smaller period.

One of the things most startling about the book is the lavish campaign spending. Amounts in excess of \$100,000 are freely transferred from company to bagman to political hacks.

"Not till the late 50's did so much money be spent on a political campaign," stated Doyle. Was the government any more corrupt and incompetent than those before or after? "It's too hard to say," Doyle maintained. "The opposition parties had very good and hard hitting detectives," interested in smearing and destroying the other guy.

To write the book, Doyle received a Canada Council grant of \$3,500. Most of this was spent for research assistants and travel.

The money was obtained after Doyle submitted a draft of the first few pages, a plan, and proposed completion dates. "The amounts are advanced to you only upon

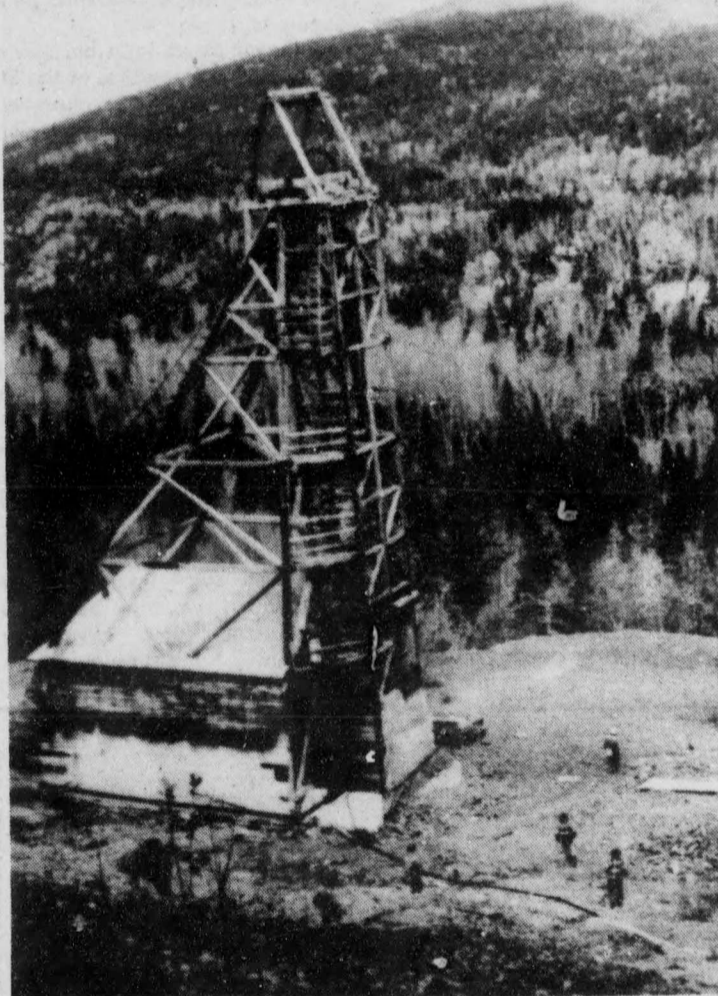
receipt of finished work," according to Doyle, "so that they (the Canada Council) will not get ripped off."

Doyle said he would like to continue his study of the political history of New Brunswick because he "loves politics" and because he was brought up in New Brunswick and has "heard some of the stories from his grandparents and family". Legal complications arise for historians who dare to analyse the recent past and, "if he can't tell the whole truth", he does not really want to write a book delimiting just part of it, Doyle said.

New Brunswickers, and people interested in seeing whether historians are worth having, should read this book. If they do, they will be rewarded with a fairly well-written, truly objective, statement of the realities of the political life in the early years of this century.

My final question centered around "are they still burning papers, and hiding documents "in the government?" "Without so doubt," said Doyle. Perhaps in 2040 or so some diligent historian will be able to piece together the "Bricklin" incident, but certainly never now.

Geologists visit old mine



An underground scramble and investigation of early mining techniques highlighted a geology field trip to the abandoned Burnt Hill Tungsten Mine.

By ALAN HILDEBRAND

After a bumpy two-hour ride twelve geology students arrived at Burnt Hill Tungsten Mine on the South West Miramichi River. This is as remote as anyone really wants to get in New Brunswick.

The field trip was set up during the previous week for the sixteenth and everything went off smoothly with even the north wind cooperating. Although the drive out is only fifty miles the quality of the roads makes a vehicle with a foot of clearance desirable.

Once at the mine the various workings (dating from 1914) were examined. Various mining techniques were examined with considerable variance noted between those of half a century ago and today's.

After a brief lunch the group

went underground after removing debris at the entrance which had dammed water in the mine. The mine proved to be dark and wet but for people new to the world beneath the surface it was quite an experience. The ore was examined *in situ* where extensive stoping had been performed.

After emerging into the daylight the mine dumps were examined for mineral samples. Many good specimens of topaz, beryl, wolframite, molybdenite, and pyrrhotite were found.

Near supper time we pulled out with everyone travelling in Lloyd Alterton's car uttering a silent prayer that Lloyd's luck would hold (several trees jumped in front of Lloyd's car on the way in but he managed to avoid them).

Look out for our next trip.

LUNA PIZZERIA




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from these natural are controlled largely an business interests ever seen by the Dene. t have control in order that our relationship on Dene remains one quals rather than one of y," says the paper. e statement of prin- not advocate complete nce from the federal t, however. The state- on the government to ene communities that ge number of whites, Yellowknife, and to e the Dene for past use nd by whites. ns to be seen if the t will sign the agree- originally proposed by the ore any land claim s take place.

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