

The Buck Stops Where in The Mulroney Settlement?

BY MATTHEW BURNS

Both Brian Mulroney and the Federal government must be breathing sighs of relief over the settlement of the former PM's civil suit. Mulroney receives a public apology and the assumption of his legal fees by the government. The suit is now history and both parties can now go about their business. Or can they?

Will Mulroney's reputation ever be restored? Publicly we know that our former PM did not have much room to redeem himself in the eyes of many Canadians. Professionally, however,

Mulroney may have lost considerable clout. Was this necessary?

It appears so as Allan Rock and his colleagues in the Justice Department have completely skirted the issue of Mulroney's reputation in this case. The allegations brought to Justice Department lawyer Kimberly Prost and subsequently drafted in a letter by the department were slanderous in nature. The fact that this letter was leaked by the media serves to expose the truly unfortunate indictment of a man who has yet to be found guilty but whose reputation has been unfairly tainted.

Politically, who is going to accept the blame for such a bungling? Justice Minister Rock and Solicitor General Gray contend that it is not the job of the RCMP to inform cabinet ministers when investigating a politician. However, who allowed the investigation to proceed as far as it did?

Certainly what was sent in the letter to Swiss authorities was beyond the scope of a routine investigation because of its accusatory nature. It specifically

indicts Mulroney and his two colleagues Frank Moores and Karlheinz Schreiber as participants in an "ongoing scheme...to defraud the Canadian government." Our legal system espouses the concept of innocence until guilt is proven. Still, there has been no word of an apology regarding the way the investigation was handled from either the Justice department or the Department of the Solicitor-General, even though the former PM and his colleagues were presumed guilty in the letter.

Interestingly, this whole affair may have served more to damage the reputation of the Federal Liberals than to vindicate Mulroney. The mishandling of this trial and the subsequent media attention given the RCMP and Mr. Rock may stall further investigation into the affair.

The government that has been involved in a number of public relations fiascos over the past several months. The most notable was Prime Minister Chretien's reaction during a "town hall" meeting televised

on CBC to a question from a member of the audience over his promise to scrap the GST. The credibility of the government is slipping with its refusal to admit to broken promises or its ultimate responsibility over issues such as the Mulroney investigation and the affairs of the RCMP. One must wonder how many more issues this government can sidestep before it is backed into a corner by the Canadian public and growlingly critical media?

For Brian Mulroney and his alleged co-conspirators, justice has been

served. However, the handling of this investigation is an all too fond reminder of the accountability problems that plagued the military during the Somalia inquiry. Allan Rock ought to learn from the cowardly mistakes of former Defence Chief of Staff General Jean Boyle and assume

responsibility for the investigation since no one else in the RCMP or the Liberal government seems willing. If he continues in his refusal to take that responsibility, the integrity of Mr. Rock and the government — as well as the electability of the Liberals — will be questioned.

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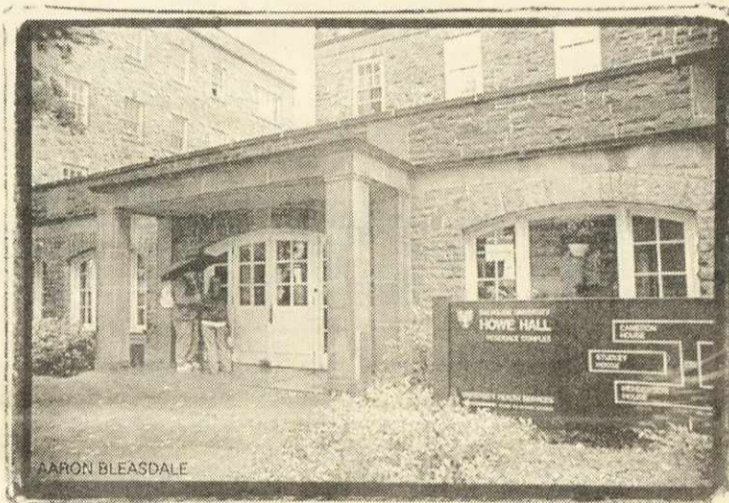
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Residence Lock Out



BY HADY KHAYRAT

Residence students returning to Dalhousie last weekend may have had to face more than the snowstorms of Vancouver and the ice of Halifax.

As with every other school break and vacation, the doors of the residence halls remained closed to students over Christmas. However, this year residence officials decided to let the students back in less than twenty-four hours before the official start of the semester.

Being tied up with plane, bus and train schedules, combined with the unpredictable nature of the maritime weather, some students could not make it back in ample time to prepare for the new term. The result: many missed first classes and a lot of aggravated students.

Why, unlike preceding years, did residence halls open less than a day before school?

"Residence opened late because school started late this year," said Terry Gallivan, associate director of residence life. He added: "We [residence administration] did have the option for students to return on Saturday, if they had a justifiable reason and had informed us earlier." Gallivan said the return date is reviewed each year.

Despite the fact that students weren't made aware of the possibility of an earlier return, nor were there any announcements or postings, Gallivan argued that it is the job of students in residence to be aware of developments.



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