

# McCallum: "he left and I arrived" Morrison

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self with the accurate prediction of a PC win. McCallum went to Kent county before the elections - he had to find his own way, the Gleaner apparently felt that the Kent County by-election didn't warrant the coverage.

He notes that everyone else at the time felt that was convinced the Liberals would win. "The situation was simply this," said McCallum, "the province was about to witness the political upset of the century. Moreover, it was the first test of a new government. There were issues involved. The Irving press had a responsibility to visit the riding and tell the people about the issues in this important by-election..."

He adds that the Telegraph Journal of Saint John only sent reporters in after the election. The Moncton papers, says McCallum, never had any one there at all - either before or after the elections - yet they were only 30 miles away and had collected a good deal of the advertising springing from the election.

He also suggested in the interview that the Irving papers improve their coverage of the region from Ottawa. Of the five Irving dailies, only the Telegraph-Journal has a part-time reporter there. The Daily Gleaner uses the reports of three columnists, notes McCallum, but they report on the national level and their stories are not specifically concerned with the New Brunswick region.

McCallum also goes back to last fall in describing the ripples he caused within the Gleaner

with the publication of the Welfare department's secret Tracadie welfare report. It had been offered to a Moncton paper, said McCallum, but they turned it down and it was given to the Gleaner. He and then-editor Reg Wumboldt made

the decision to publish the story at 4 a.m. one morning, said McCallum, even though they knew that certain people wouldn't like it.

"In my estimation, they (the Irving papers) seem to be more prone to operating a quiet press, one which doesn't create any controversial situations, or cause ripples in the mosaic of New Brunswick life.

He added that "Staff members in the Saint John newsroom make no secret of the fact that almost all stories which could possibly involve Mr. Irving, which are doubtful in any way, almost automatically are referred to someone who tells those on duty how to use it. The night news editor will often check with his superiors who are at home, before using anything concerning Mr. Irving..."

One of the more disturbing things in what McCallum had to say is that he alleges that his being fired was a direct result of politics. Premier Hatfield "is not that kind of man," (for political pressure) he said, adding that Unipress, which owns the Gleaner, gets a number of government printing contracts. "Would it not therefore be in the interest of a certain few to use whatever is at their disposal to shore up a greying image?" (of Hatfield,

"Why settle for four years of contracts when the prospect of eight looms?" he questioned. He was also critical of Irving's employment discrim-

ination. Once you've lost a job at one of Irving's papers, he said, you've been barred from all of the dailies in the province. McCallum is presently in

Fredericton, but could not be contacted before press time. The above information was taken from the CBC program Spectroscope of December 7.

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