

Andrew McNaughton

Northern Spies for the Security Council

■ A book written about the Security Council by Andrew Boyd in 1971 was called *Fifteen Men on a Powder Keg*, which gives a vivid image of the pressures under which those ambassadors live who represent the 15 states on the Council at any time. But there are some humorous moments, even for these men. Sidney Freifeld, who served at the Canadian Mission to the UN for two periods (from 1947 to 1952 and from 1964 to 1969) and later became ambassador to Colombia and Ecuador, has recalled an early incident whose central figure is General Andrew "Andy" McNaughton, Canada's first ambassador to the UN. We reprint Freifeld's memoir from *The Globe and Mail* here:

"Nominations for a Canadian Man for All Seasons of the past half-century would surely have to include General Andrew McNaughton, not only for his lofty achievements as soldier, scientist, administrator and engineer, but also because there was a curious chink in his armour, providing an insight into a side of his personality unsuspected by the general public.

"I had the chance to observe this while serving at the Canadian Mission to the United Nations soon after World War II, when the General was appointed Canada's first ambassador and permanent representative to the UN.

"When he came down to New York he already bore an awesome list of credentials. He had organized and trained the First Canadian Army during the war, headed the National Research Council in Ottawa, represented Canada on the UN Atomic Energy Commission and, for a time, had been minister of National Defence in the Mackenzie King Cabinet. And much more.

"As those of us at the Canadian Mission were soon to find out, the General was a man of boundless energy, who tackled his new career of diplomacy with a high sense of dedication and enthusiasm.

"His capacity for work (and for homework) was prodigious and his resilience extraordinary. After Canada was elected to a two-year term on the Security Council—from 1948 to 1949—his pace became gruelling. He was deeply involved in the disputes between India and Pakistan, between the Netherlands and Indonesia, between the Arabs and Israel, and between East and West, with the Cold War enveloping all of them.

"However, nothing in the General's curriculum vitae had prepared us for a peculiar quality he began to display at the United Nations: a propensity for mispronunciations ... and plain slips of the tongue.

"As soon as the General began speaking at UN meetings, he revealed a gift for mispronouncing or garbling names which, perhaps in some obscure Freudian fashion, were associated in his mind with someone or something disagreeable.

"He had no trouble at all with the name of his British colleague, Sir Alexander Cadogan, or with that of Sir Zafrullah Khan of Pakistan, whom he greatly admired. But he found Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky politically antagonistic and personally disagreeable, and the name came out of the General's mouth as 'Viskinsky' or 'Visnisky.'

"He smoothly pronounced such tongue-twisters as the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* or the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, if they supported some