

Thornhilia—for political justice

Shifting in and out of the public eye in Nova Scotia right now is a situation of keen concern to anyone with a strong sense for political justice. The difficulty of obtaining facts regarding the Rollie Thornhill controversy, as well as inaccuracies reported by the media and distortions perpetrated by Thornhill's enemies, make the case singularly difficult to understand, let alone crack. The issues, phantasmagoric and elusive as they may at times be, however, instill in the whole investigation a significance to match any other.

The seeds of the controversy were sown when Thornhill took out a six figure loan (the exact amount is unknown) from six local banks. Personal financial difficulties encountered by the former financial critic for the Conservative opposition made Thornhill unable to repay the loans in full. In November, 1979, however, he arranged with the banks to settle his debt by repaying one quarter of the total amount (25 cents on the dollar).

The deal aroused concern that Thornhill was receiving a special privilege for being a government official and that it placed him in a conflict of interest situation when participating in government transaction with the banks. The RCMP began looking into the case about this time.

EDITORIAL

Attorney General Harry How recently announced that, upon recommendation of the deputy Attorney General, it had been decided there was not sufficient evidence against Thornhill to warrant pressing charges. While in most cases such a decision emanating from the Attorney General's department would be accepted, a few aspects of this case have laid it open to challenge.

First, and most important, the objectivity of the Attorney General is in question here. Harry How, after all, is also a Progressive Conservative MP with a stake in maintaining the public image of his party and protecting it from scandal. Thornhill, further, is How's friend (as well, Thornhill's next door neighbour is Deputy Attorney General Gordon Coles who recommended to How that charges not be laid).

Second, the legal grounds on which Coles based his decision (too involved to bring up here) are being questioned. It has been suggested that his legal definition of bribery is far narrower than that of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Of course, many of the public's speculations about Thornhill's misdoings would be put to rest if the RCMP's report on him would be publicly released. Thornhill's right to privacy, together with the possibility that this privacy is just the guarded secrecy of the guilty, prohibit this.

Newly elected NDP leader Alexa McDonough has suggested a special prosecutor, who can achieve the objectivity the Attorney General's department cannot, be brought in to take the case. Mike Marshall, an NDP member who ran against Thornhill in the 1978 provincial election, advocates calling a Grand Jury to look into the matter. Marshall argues there is a precedent for using a Grand Jury in Nova Scotia—Joe Howe called one, for example—and Harry How himself in the past has supported the concept in other circumstances.

Either route would protect Thornhill's privacy, while ensuring an honest, fair examination into the propriety of the dealings of the Buchanan government. Failure to follow one of these or a similar course will be tantamount to an admission of guilt in the eyes of the people of Nova Scotia.

IT'S HERE
HAIRY STEAL

Presents

ROLLIE-GATE



STARRING: ROLLIE THORNSWILL
AS THE 'LEECH' WHO WANTONLY DID AS HE PLEASD



HARRY WHY: AS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WHO PULLED THE STRINGS



GORDON COLD AS THE 'LEECH'S' NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR



JEREMY AKERPERSON: AS THE 'LEECH'S' DRINKING BUDDY WHO HUNGRED FOR A GOV'T JOB AND KEPT QUIET



TERRY DONA: WHO AS THE OPPURTUNIST WHIPPER-SNAPPER



WITH SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCES:
JOHN BUCHANAN AS THE ELEPHANT MAN
HUEY, DUEY AND LUEY AS THE BANK MANAGERS THAT MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE
SGT. RENFREW AS THE CROWN PROSECUTOR TAKEN OFF THE CASE
MAVIS - AS HERSELF



THEME SONG: "BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME"
THE CRITICS: "A DIGGUSTING ABUSE OF POWER" R. NIXON
"I WAS APPALLED BY THE MOST FLAGRANT DISPLAY OF CORRUPTION ANYWHERE" AL CAPONE
"WHOLESOME AND INSPIRING" THE HALIFAX HERALD



the Dalhousie Gazette

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The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64-character line and double spaced.

Local Advertising is handled by DAL-ADS—the advertising department of Dalhousie Student Union: Tel: 424-6532. Ad copy must be submitted by the Friday preceding publication.

Our office is located on the third floor of the Dalhousie Student Union Building. Our mailing address is the Dalhousie Gazette, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. You can reach us by telephone at (902) 424-2507.

The subscription rate is \$10 per year (26 issues) and our ISSN number is 0011-5819.

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