

WHAT IS WHITE ON THE OUTSIDE AND GREEN ON THE INSIDE? A FROG SANDWICH!

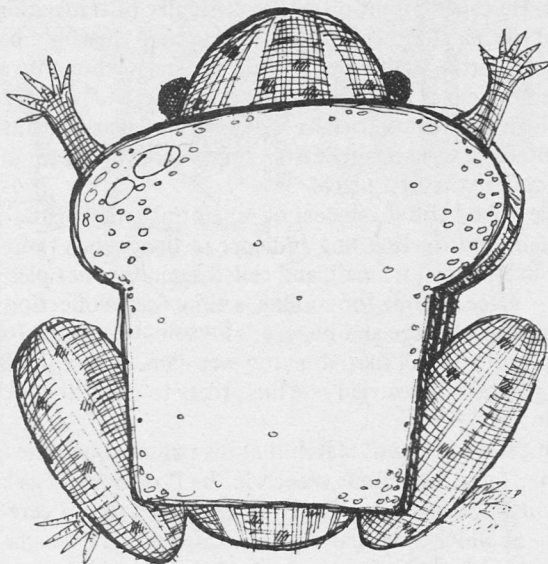
BACK IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, before anyone realized just how serious the situation was, one of the most popular spectator sports in the United States — and Canada too — was watching the legion of red-necked law enforcement officers and politicians in the Southern United States — Lester Maddox, Bull Connor, even George Wallace — who had been catapulted into the public arena by the new militance of Southern blacks.

Standing in the doorways of schools, passing out axe handles in their restaurants, waving their fire hoses and turning loose their dogs, commanding the black tide to halt, they seemed vaguely anachronistic figures, we all thought, fighting desperately to save the nineteenth century from demolition. At that time almost no one recognized that they *were* the future, that as the sixties marched on they would stop being comic and become common, appearing no longer only in isolated and vaguely romantic-sounding Southern cities like Atlanta, Jackson, Birmingham, Little Rock, but would come to dominate American politics from Los Angeles to Boston, from Miami to Chicago, from San Francisco to Detroit.

Canadians watching that process may not actually have felt smug, but, as Swift pointed out a long time ago, when our friends have trouble we can at least comfort ourselves with reflecting that things are not yet so bad with us.

It's only over the last few years, and our experience of the Québec separatist movement, the Laporte-Cross kidnapping, the long-drawn out agony of attempting to accommodate the French fact as America has had to accommodate the black fact, that that smugness has turned a little bitter in our mouths. And now that we're beginning to develop our own Bull Connors and Lester Maddoxes it's a bit harder to be amused at them than it was in 1962.

AND YET THEY DO MAKE IT DIFFICULT to take them seriously. Consider the most recent prominent candidate to replace Wacky Bennet as the nation's foremost bigot, our own Leonard C. Jones, Mayor of Moncton. Looking at the history of his political



career is a little like discovering that Lester Maddox once said that Jesus' name is the most powerful business force in the Yellow Pages — too good to be true.

Proponents of Jones as a contender for a position among the nation's top comic politicians have pointed out for years his anti-pornography campaigns, his vendettas against the hiring of long-haired youths. They saw as a clincher his comment, when Mel Hurtig passed through Moncton some time ago, that he didn't trust anyone whose ears he couldn't see. (What made it especially nice, they said, was that judging by the kind of administration Moncton has had under Jones, he seems to trust anyone whose ears he CAN see).

It was over the past winter, however, that Mayor Jones' case for some sort of award was finally made incontrovertible. Beginning with the furor over the film *L'Acadie*, *L'Acadie*, which, among other things, shows Jones treating Acadian students the way Bull Connor used to treat the "nigras", and continuing through a series of actions which led even an establishment figure like New Brunswick Finance Minister Jean-Maurice Simard to call Jones "very close" to a "bigot", Jones established himself as a national symbol of dogged anti-French sentiment.

On February 15, for instance, Jones cast the deciding vote when the city of Moncton, 35 per cent Acadian, decided to "shelve" the question of providing bilingual services at City Hall. This led even l'Oncle Thomas Adelard Savoie, the president of the Université de Moncton who refused to press for a French-language trial in the case of Paul Blanchard, to say he was "shocked". Others were less restrained; 1500 demonstrators buried a coffin in front of City Hall a couple of nights later.

Jones then said that bilingual service would be too expensive for the city, that 40 per cent of the city hall staff was already bilingual (Whitman once said "Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. I am large; I contain multitudes." Mr. Jones is large, too, and probably contains multitudes). He proposed a plebiscite at the next civic election — probably sometime in the spring of 1974.

Then he went on the radio and among other things, in-

timated that the pressure for bilingual services was coming from the "unilingual" Université de Moncton and hinted at sinister outside forces, obscure threats and obscene phone calls. He called attention to the difficulty of translating from one language to another, saying that "it would be most unfortunate if a person's intentions or thoughts were misconstrued as a result of a poor translation." Clearly, he implied, a better alternative would be no translation at all — you can't have misunderstanding where there's no understanding in the first place.

He talked about the cost of repainting street signs, of the fact that the listening audience of the French radio station in Moncton is small, and called again for that plebiscite — after "a time for cooling, a time for recollection of your great heritage and history." Presumably Mayor Jones wishes us to recall that Moncton was named after the British general who carried out the orders to expel the Acadians in 1755?

But it wasn't until March that his paranoia became apparent. In an innocuous speech in the Provincial Legislature, Arthur Buck (PC — Moncton) mentioned a recent ceremony in which a delegation from Lafayette, Louisiana had arrived in Moncton for an equally innocuous civic ritual called 'twinning' the two cities, and had made Jones as well as the rest of Moncton City Council honorary (Louisiana)

Acadians. Astonishingly, when he heard of Buck's speech, Mayor Jones erupted, claiming that he had been placed in "an awkward position" by the speech, that Buck was "interfering in municipal business", that the Provincial government "had no right to force bilingualism on the province's cities". He fired his Honorary Acadian certificate right back to Louisiana, explaining that he really didn't know who gave it to him because "The certificate wasn't written in my mother tongue". (The suggestion that it wasn't until Buck's speech that he realized it wasn't an honorary membership in the Louisiana Ku Klux Klan was quashed as the work of outside agitators).

Then a few weeks later, Jones announced that the Federal and Provincial Official Languages Acts were unconstitutional — in contravention of the BNA Act — and that he intended to challenge them in the courts.

Now, we don't know how long it'll take Mayor Jones to attain the national reknown due him, but we have a local kind of reknown to which dozens of *The Mysterious East* readers have nominated the Honorable Mr. Jones: our Rubber Duck Award, given periodically to the public figure who has most distinguished himself for folly and/or knavery. We can't remember a more deserving recipient than Mayor Jones.

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