

Judge gives Moorhead week to resign

Cont'd. from Pg. A-1

Investment Group of Canada. Turning to the July 1978 charge, Judge O'Connell noted that the fingerprints of both Staff Sgt. Moorhead and Mr. Sheldrake had been found on a CPIC document seized from Mr. Sheldrake's office.

The judge said he didn't believe Staff Sgt. Moorhead's story that the printout had mysteriously disappeared from his briefcase either during or after a visit to Mr. Sheldrake's office last July 14.

In his testimony, Staff Sgt. Moorhead implied that Mr. Sheldrake had stolen the document from the briefcase. But when Deputy Chief Robert Hood questioned Staff Sgt. Moorhead about the document last August, he didn't mention the "apparent theft of this material", Judge O'Connell noted.

Staff Sgt. Moorhead also told Deputy Chief Hood he hadn't seen Mr. Sheldrake since the perjury trial of former constable Douglas Murray last July. In fact, Staff Sgt. Moorhead had visited Mr. Sheldrake at his office on his way home from the trial July 14, the judge noted.

Judge O'Connell also said Staff Sgt. Moorhead tried to "mislead" the court when he testified about the Dyno-tape found on Mr. Sheldrake's office telephone. That tape contained Staff Sgt. Moorhead's name and the Richmond Hill division telephone number, along with the acronym "CPIC".

Recalling Staff Sgt. Moorhead's testimony, the judge said he testified that the telephone number was not his own divisional telephone number (Staff Sgt. Moorhead was stationed at the Keswick division

at the time). In fact, the local police number could be used to contact any officer in any division, the judge noted.

Judge O'Connell said he found "with certainty" that Staff Sgt. Moorhead showed the CPIC printout to Mr. Sheldrake.

In his comments before sentencing, Mr. Maloney and Staff Sgt. Moorhead has had a "distinguished and successful career in police work" and enjoys the "support and confidence of his fellow police officers."

The information conveyed to Mr. Sheldrake was "meaningless and harmless" and "didn't cause any harm or embarrassment to anybody", Mr. Maloney argued. He suggested the judge punish Staff Sgt. Moorhead only with a strong reprimand.

But A.G. Hachborn, prosecuting for the Attorney General's department, said the "harm that has been done is to

the force on which he (Staff Sgt. Moorhead) served, and perhaps more broadly to the police forces of this country."

Noting that the Police Act forbids officers from engaging in outside business, Mr. Hachborn said Staff Sgt. Moorhead's "involvement with Mr. Sheldrake indicates that the relationship was incompatible with the proper discharge of his duties as a police officer."

Mr. Maloney countered by noting that Staff Sgt. Moorhead had not been charged with accepting outside employment.

In his summation last Wednesday, Mr. Maloney had argued that Staff Sgt. Moorhead's admitted CPIC checks for Mr. Sheldrake all related to alleged criminal offences, which Staff Sgt. Moorhead was duty-bound as a police officer to investigate.

Previous calls of this type from Mr. Sheldrake had "checked out with certain accuracy", so when Mr. Sheldrake told Staff Sgt.

Moorhead he had information about a major fraud, there was good reason to follow it up, Mr. Maloney said.

Prosecutor Ross Lundy argued that Staff Sgt. Moorhead was in charge of the Keswick division and was not directly involved in criminal investigation. If Staff Sgt. Moorhead had a duty to check the fraud case through CPIC, Mr. Lundy wondered why he waited until 4 a.m. on July 12 when he had received the information the previous month.

Mr. Lundy said two of the prosecutor's key witnesses were credible because they had no personal interest in the proceedings. One was Leonard Dupont, a former Sheldrake employee who testified that he called Mr. Moorhead for CPIC information. The other was Constable Anthony Cooper, the former cadet who testified he had run CPIC checks last March at Staff Sgt. Moorhead's request. Constable Cooper is now with the Ontario Provincial Police.



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How it all got started

The windup of the Moorhead Chapter apparently closes the book on the Sheldrake Allegations, last year's full-scale assault on the York Regional Police force by one of its ex-members.

Douglas Sheldrake, at the time a Thornhill businessman, had been fired from the York force in 1976 because of his poor performance record. Less than two years later, he had established a credit-tracing agency and a builders' association in Thornhill.

That's where he was last Aug. 14 when he issued a rambling series of misconduct allegations against the York force. The same day, in the presence of the press, he telephoned a York constable, persuaded him to run a confidential data check, and tape-recorded the conversation.

That constable subsequently was convicted of a disciplinary violation and docked two days' leave.

Mr. Sheldrake became front-page news for several weeks, attracting calls from other citizens who felt they had been abused by police. The York police commission asked the Ontario Police Commission to investigate the Sheldrake charges. And Mr. Sheldrake announced he would run for regional council in Richmond Hill in the Nov. 13 election.

A week before the election, the OPC announced its findings: it was unable to substantiate a single Sheldrake allegation. Mr. Sheldrake proceeded to lose the election, and shortly thereafter, left the country.

He reportedly is in Florida. The Moorhead case, and Sheldrake's other allegations relating to the improper release of information, were investigated by the York police force.

Ironically, the only

charge that has been substantiated has been the allegation that Staff Sgt. John Moorhead provided Mr. Sheldrake with confidential police information. On Friday, a county court judge found Staff Sgt. Moorhead guilty of that charge and ordered him to quit the force or be fired.

The three days of testimony were completed without the presence of Douglas Sheldrake, labelled "a very bizarre individual" by defence counsel Arthur Maloney. The renowned lawyer attacked Sheldrake's credibility, noting that all the charges probed by the OPC proved to be "totally devoid of merit." Mr. Maloney also noted that Mr. Sheldrake had "evaded service (of a subpoena) and cannot be located."

But at another point in his summary, Mr. Maloney used the reliability of Mr. Sheldrake to try to shore

up his defence of Staff Sgt. Moorhead. The lawyer noted that Mr. Sheldrake had given Staff Sgt. Moorhead previous information about alleged criminal matters that "checked out" when processed through the CPIC computer.

Therefore, he said, it was logical for Staff Sgt. Moorhead to run a check last July on an alleged fraud caper turned up by Mr. Sheldrake, Mr. Maloney argued.

The printout from that CPIC check turned up in Mr. Sheldrake's files with both his and Staff Sgt. Moorhead's fingerprints on it, and was a key piece of evidence against Staff Sgt. Moorhead.

Several lawsuits arising from last year's allegations and from his business dealings are pending against Mr. Sheldrake. So his unusual story may continue in court — if his accusers can find him first.

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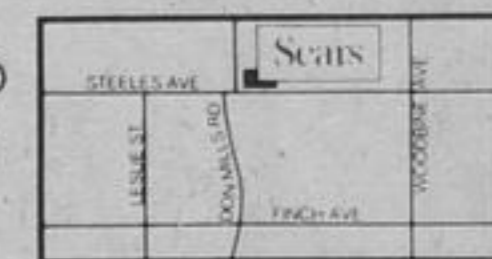
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To all other wonderful volunteers.

Ken Robbins and the members of Richmond Hill Masonic Lodge, the Knights of Columbus & the Richmond Hill Lions for barbecuing.

To Jean Moss for her time spent distributing candy to the children.

Richmond Hill Kinsmen Club for the three bike draws.

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Royal Canadian Legion Branch 375 for entertaining Snow Princesses at dinner.

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Doug Allen, Fran Wachna & Dave McVie, John Lawlor

Richmond Hill Transit for the Free bus Service on Sunday Drivers: Joe Moss, Jim VanGrootel, Bill Fleming, Bob Jordan, Kathy Hicks & Jim Flett for arranging the Sleigh Ride & Dance on Saturday night & Cathy Carmichael for cooking & carving the beef.

Dorothy & Celby O'Brien for assisting Ev with the food.

Dwight Powell & John Rumble for organizing the Log Cutting & Log Throwing Contests & for barbecuing the beef.

Grace Newland for phoning & arranging schedule for food tent.

The people who donated snowmobiles & those who drove them.

The people who worked in the ticket booth & those who served food & hot chocolate & those who refereed the games on the pond.

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