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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Interview with Mr. Hamilton Southam

for the DEA History Project

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DL (2), 1957-1959

Southam does not recall a significant difference in attitude towards plans for the Intelligence Policy Committee between Léger and Robertson. The latter, however, was more influential in Ottawa because of his long experience in the Department, although Léger was also respected. Southam does not recall dealing with Smith on security and intelligence matters, but he does remember one meeting with Diefenbaker on a subject having to do with security. His [REDACTED] was that Diefenbaker [REDACTED] in handling such questions than Pearson would have done. He also noticed that the other persons present [REDACTED] in Diefenbaker's presence, including Fulton [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] throughout the meeting. Southam felt that [REDACTED]

Southam does not remember that there was a marked increase in cases of personnel security involving character weakness while he was head of DL 2, or that many (if any) of them involved homosexuality. He agrees, however, that homosexuality was taken very seriously by the Department at this time, and that security regulations allowed very little flexibility in dealing with it: homosexuals were wanted out of classified work and, if possible, out of the Department. He insists, however, that lack of flexibility should not be interpreted to mean that people were dealt with inhumanely, or on

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the basis of scanty evidence. He never heard of the "fruit machine" while he was head of DL 2 and, in fact, learned of it for the first time only recently. He does not remember marked differences in the way Robertson and Léger handled these matters, although there were fuller discussions with Léger.

While he does not remember homosexuality to have been a major problem while he was head of DL 2, Southam [REDACTED] [REDACTED] involving [REDACTED] homosexuals, after he left the division. He suggests interviewing Wall and Clyne.

Contrary to what is said in one of the Glassco Commission files, the JIC was not created in this period, but had come into existence, along with the JIS, earlier.

WARSAW - 1959-1962

Southam [REDACTED] the Polish Art Treasures [REDACTED] before his posting to Warsaw. After he was asked to go there, he was visited by some Polish representatives who expressed their concern that the return of the treasures be regarded as something for the people of Poland, rather than for a particular government, and he supported this argument. He does not remember that the Canadian government's political priorities had any impact on these negotiations or on other aspects of Canadian policy towards Poland. In Warsaw, he tried to explain the problem of federal-provincial relations as a factor affecting return of the treasures from Québec, but felt that the Poles never understood this. Once all the treasures were returned, however, his relations with the Poles improved greatly. This was a great boon to his work because he wanted

to develop cultural relations, since there was little that could be done effectively on the political or economic side. The good relations with the artistic community created by the return of the treasures greatly aided these efforts. It was in Poland, in fact, that Southam became persuaded of the importance of cultural activities in the conduct of foreign policy. The return of the treasures had other benefits as well, for example in securing the best site in Warsaw for the new Canadian Embassy -- comparable, in terms of Ottawa, with being permitted to build right in front of the Parliament Buildings.

Southam does not remember that the Poles ever suggested going to the International Court in The Hague to get the treasures from Québec. If they had raised the question, he of course would have reported it to Ottawa. The matter, however, may have come up at the UN, and he suggests consulting UN Division files. Legal Division files would be another possibility.

INFORMATION DIVISION - 1962-1964

Southam did not know where he would be assigned when he came back to Ottawa. When he got to his office in Information Division, he found that someone had left on his desk a copy of the Glassco Commission report dealing with the Information Division, and had underlined the passage stating that FSO's regarded postings there without favour.

Southam felt that Information Division was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the Department. He agrees that Robertson [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in this side of the work and thinks that Léger, [REDACTED]

to Information Division [REDACTED] Cadieux was the only member of

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the under-secretarial suite who promoted information and cultural work. Southam thinks [REDACTED] over [REDACTED]

One of Cadieux's projects was a scheme for the exchange of scholarships between Canada and France, Belgium and Switzerland. This was intended to be a counterpart of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Soon after he arrived in the Division, Southam was sent on a tour of the European countries involved as part of the process of making arrangements.

Southam thought the information side of the Division was pretty well in hand and was more interested in developing the cultural field. On the basis of his experience in Poland, he realized that culture could be a powerful force in foreign policy. He wanted to develop the capacity of the Canada Council to be active in the promotion of cultural relations, along the lines of the British Council. This was provided for in the legislation establishing the Canada Council but no action had ever been taken. He had Cadieux's support on this. The change of government made progress much easier because Pearson put the Secretary of State in charge of cultural matters for the first time, and Lamontagne was interested in developing cultural contacts outside Canada.

Southam does not think that the National Commission for UNESCO was very powerful as a pressure group. The government never took much interest in it, and there was always the feeling that the Canadian delegation did not have adequate instructions for UNESCO meetings.

After he became head of Information Division, Southam became involved in two extra-curricular activities. One was chairmanship of a committee to organize a UNESCO seminar on films on art, which he was asked to undertake by Guy Roberge of the NFB. The other was the National Capital Arts Alliance. He was asked to become chairman by Fay Loeb. He declined, but said he would take the job if he could not find someone else. The people he approached declined, so he agreed to take the job and the Alliance was formed on April 1, 1963, replacing another group trying to promote an arts centre, which had fallen apart. The change of government was a great help to their plans. Diefenbaker's project for the Centennial was the "mile of history" but the new government had no plans, so the Alliance suggested an arts centre. There were a number of very high-powered people on the executive of the Alliance, and Pearson and Lamontagne were both interested in the project so it went ahead, with government support whenever it ran over budget. Bryce suggested Southam as director of the project and he agreed, so he was seconded to the Department of the Secretary of State. Cadieux and Martin were very upset that he was leaving the Department and tried to get him to change his mind, but he pointed out that the Arts Centre could make an important contribution to the cultural side of foreign policy. He regards the concern shown by Cadieux as an example of his devotion to the Department -- he always hated to see people leave, and regarded External Affairs as a vocation of a very high order.

Southam remembers considerable activity involving the Bureau on Government Organization in responding to the information

sections of the Glassco Commission report. Harry Hindley took an interest in this aspect of the report and would be a good person to interview.

Southam considered that more resources were essential for Information Division to do an effective job. He was particularly concerned by the high turnover of heads of division, and thought that External Affairs did not send people from the "inner circle" of the Department there. This was an indication of the low priority the Division had.

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