

THE CITY

Secretary tells how she sold herself for the man she loved

By RENE LAURENT
of The Gazette

A 21-year-old secretary told yesterday how love drove her to prostitution and fear kept her there.

Shirley F. said her downfall began with a casual meeting at a St. Catherine St. disco bar. Sweet talk led to an affair that ended with a four-month stint selling her charms to hold onto her newfound lover.

The woman was testifying at the trial of Joe Remy Mercier, a

part-time nightclub disc jockey, charged with pimping and living off illicit sex earnings.

Identifying Mercier as the man who was responsible for her escapade into vice, the woman said her sordid existence started innocently enough.

"He sent a dozen red roses to my office," said the woman, recalling the happy days following her meeting and an outing at La Ronde with Mercier last August.

Before long, said the woman, Mercier, 28, had moved into her

South Shore apartment and had literally taken over.

Later, she said, Mercier began to test her in various ways. At one point he asked her to sleep with one of his friends, which she refused to do.

More persistent urging came later, she added, along with glowing accounts of how sex could help pay off mounting debts Mercier had run up.

"In the end I gave in," said Shirley, an attractive brunette, speaking candidly during four

hours in the witness box.

Although she averaged between \$200 and \$300 a night hustling on St. Catherine St. E., near the Main, the woman said she was left with a mere \$2 by her protector who insisted on keeping the rest.

"He would give me enough for coffee, that's all," said the witness, who related that she broke out of her tangle when Mercier started beating her.

Asked by Paul-Emile Lejour, the Crown attorney, why she had

endured nearly five months of streetwalking, she replied:

"It was fear. At one point he told me he would chop me into pieces if I left," said the woman, who has returned to live with her family in Longueuil.

The witness said she went to police last March with her story after consulting a friend, after one particularly bad beating at the hands of Mercier, described as a karate instructor.

The trial, under Judge Patrick Falardeau, resumes May 31.



NICK
AUF DER MAUR

PQ ministers act like twits on Stop

Every now and then, the thought occurs to me that perhaps I'm too critical of the Parti Quebecois government. That perhaps it is not as bad as all that.

And it seems every time I step back and try to see things in perspective, the Quebec government comes out with some inanity, some petty stupidity which seems to confirm that the collective brains of the cabinet are in a dangerous fevered state.

It may be a bit early to say flecks and froth are starting to appear at the corners of their mouths, but their behavior lately is troubling to say the least. They do appear to have lost their minds.

While the people of Quebec are becoming increasingly anxious about the economic crisis, the cabinet dwells on questions which ignore the immediate concerns of ordinary working people.

The latest government decision of course that illustrates that perhaps they are losing their grip on reality is the Stop/Arret business.

This is hardly a burning issue of the day, the question uppermost in the minds of all right-thinking Quebecers.

No doubt there's many an influential PQ leader who got a start in political life by running around in the '60s vandalizing Stop signs with spray paint.

Yet it is still hard to fathom the entire Quebec cabinet sitting down on Jan. 13, two days before the bus and Metro strike, while faced with the grim realities of a looming budget disaster, record unemployment and the like, contemplating Transport Minister Michel Clair's recommendation that the word Stop be eliminated.

Lessard backed off

His predecessor, Lucien (Lulu) Lessard, had proposed the same thing in late 1978, but he backed off when he was greeted with hoots of derision and ridicule.

Premier Levesque himself saw the possibility it would make Quebec a laughing stock.

He told Washington's National Press Club that "not only is it a useless expenditure, but also a ridiculous aspect of francization since the word Stop is acceptable in French."

On the home front, linguists at *Le Devoir*, *La Presse* and the French language office all declared for Stop since not only is it correct French and internationally accepted, the word Arret was incorrect as it is a noun, and not an imperative of a verb.

Obviously, language fanatics nevertheless ignorantly persisted in viewing Stop as an anglicism to be eradicated.

Michel Clair's lame statement Wednesday claimed that both terms were "linguistically and politically acceptable." Well, that's false.

Clair also claimed that he was merely following the lead of "150 municipalities which over the years have decided to use the word Arret."

He didn't mention there are 1,602 municipalities in Quebec.

That means less than 10 per cent of Quebec towns, none that I know of in the Montreal area where half the population lives, decided the issue.

Not only do they act like twits, they treat the population like twits too.

Auf der Chest (one)

Sometimes it's those little things that give you the slow burn.

I was reading a story about the Ontario food-price war in *Canadian Business*, an excellent magazine by the way, when something struck me and made my blood boil.

The article stated that although Steinberg's Miracle Mart stores had started the price war, "they underestimated the competition and antagonized shoppers with one thing in particular — a four-cent per (shopping) bag charge."

Toronto shoppers were so riled and complained so bitterly that Miracle Mart food stores had to drop the charge in early December, and give the bags away free like the other grocery stores.

That's one thing that has always rankled me, the practice of charging customers 25 cents for those plastic shopping bags here in town.

When you find yourself buying \$28 worth of groceries (and hardly getting a bag full), and then they slap on that 25-cent extra charge for the convenience of a plastic handle, you feel unappreciated. Next time you pay, remember that those poor folk in Ontario, already benefiting from cheaper food prices, get their bags free.

(Major Ontario food stores have completely done away with paper bags. It's all plastic there.)

Not only do we pay, but then we get to lug their free advertising around.

Auf der Chest (two)

A gentleman from the advertising industry, who doesn't want his name used because one of his clients is a bank, called up to complain about the banks.

"I went into my bank the other day to get a new cheque book," he said. "I didn't want a personalized cheque book, with my name on it or one with those fancy pictures and designs."

"Just a plain, straightforward, ordinary, blank cheque book if you please. Just the name of the bank and I'll fill in the rest if you don't mind."

"Of course the woman at the counter persisted in trying to sell me something I didn't need, pulling out samples of the array available."

"As usual in these bank cases, I insisted on seeing somebody higher up."

"The other woman gave me what I wanted but she said: 'It doesn't much matter, because eventually you'll have to get your own, personalized cheque book, because we need the magnetic codes with your account printed on all cheques.'

"All the banks have decided to jointly go that route. Maybe not next month, but next year, you'll be required to have your own personalized cheque book."

"There they go again, the banks in collusion. And they're right now investigating their profits. I said 'Fine. When you phase that in, I'll just phase my money into a caisse pep account.'"

Few 'illegals' opt for French schools

The vast majority of children enrolled illegally in English schools, in defiance of Quebec's French Language Charter, are refusing to budge — despite the provincial government's \$49,000 sales pitch to lure them into French schools.

Fewer than 25 of the estimated 1,200 to 1,600 children have registered in French schools for the 1982-83 school year at the Montreal Catholic School Commission, said Robert Attar, the MCSC director of welcoming and admissions office.

Although every school board in Montreal has children enrolled illegally under Quebec's language law, most attend English schools in the MCSC.

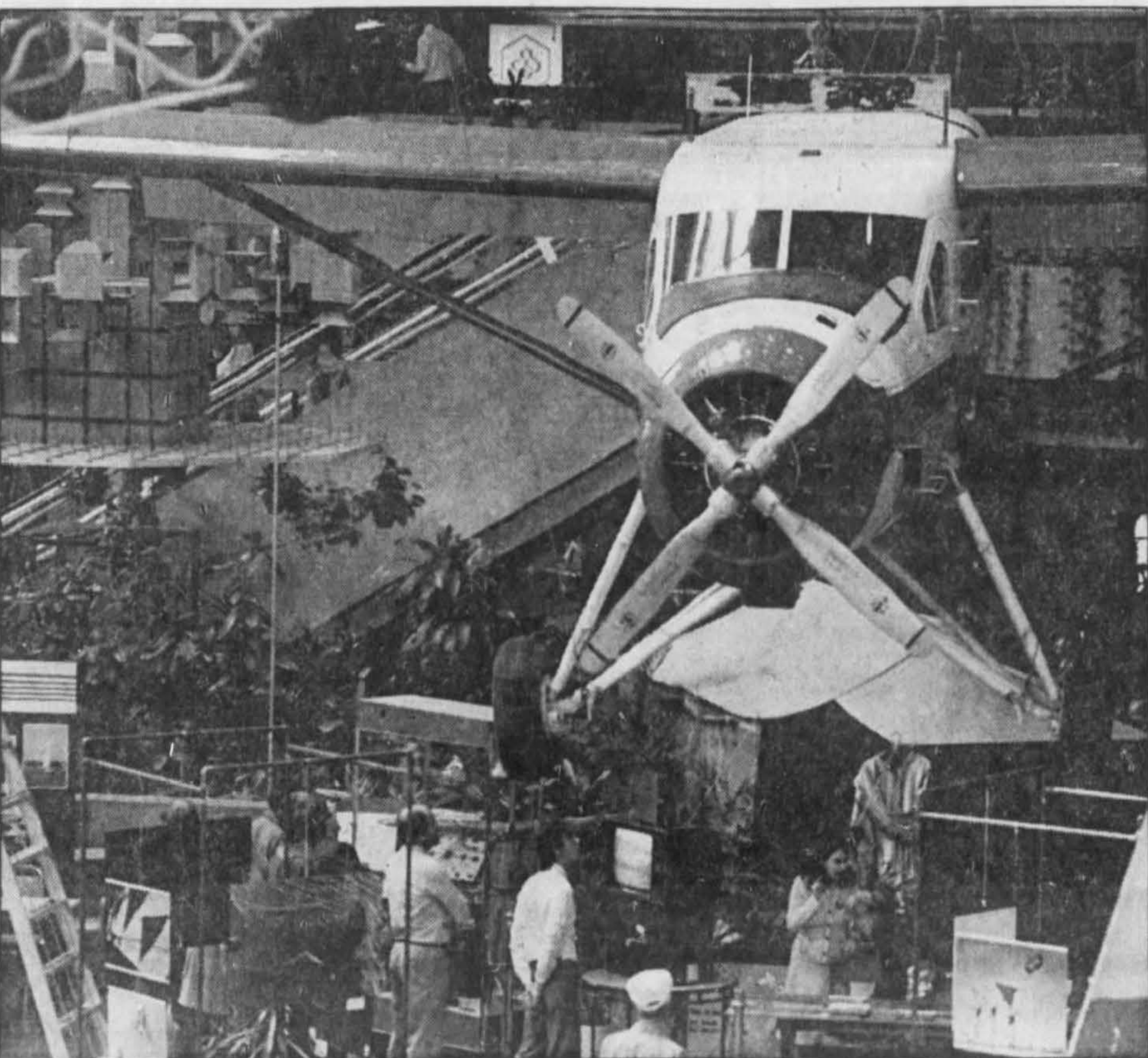
The advertising blitz was conducted in January to inform parents that the school commission is prepared to accept children into French schools during this school year.

But no children have transferred since the program began in January, Attar said.

The advertisements, mainly in ethnic newspapers and on radio, told parents that the Quebec government is prepared to spend \$3.6 million this year on counseling and language tutoring.

The integration program began after Education Minister Camille Laurin announced that the province will enforce the language law, Bill 101, when school resumes next September.

Only six of 1,347 children surveyed last month intend to transfer to French schools next September, according to the Congres National des Italo-Canadiens and the Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers.



Gazette, Tedd Church

In flight at Complexe Desjardins

A single-engine Otter soars over the exhibition area of Complexe Desjardins during a 10-day display of wind

sports. The plane belongs the non-profit Wings of Hope (Quebec) Inc. which runs mercy flights to 60 isolated

villages in the jungles of Peru. Wings hopes to raise \$50,000 during the show to keeps its five aircraft aloft.

CITY BRIEFS

Tax rebels organizing

Taxe \$ Action, a five-month-old tax revolt group, plans two meetings next week to establish local municipal chapters.

The first is at 8 p.m. Monday at 4695 de Maisonneuve Blvd. in Westmount, the second at 8 p.m. Tuesday at 85 Hemingway St. in Dollard.

West Island organizer Brian Cadoret said Taxe \$ Action organizers plan to set up local groups in 55 Montreal-area municipalities before a major meeting of the organization in July.

Fireman injured

An Outremont fireman was slightly injured and one family left homeless yesterday by a fire at 425 Edouard Charles St.

Six neighboring municipalities helped Outremont firemen put out the three-hour blaze.

Montrealers show little interest in grants for home renovations

A new federal home renovation plan has attracted scant attention in Montreal, while offices in Toronto have been flooded with applications for the aid.

The \$30-million plan was advertised in newspapers across the country on April 24 by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Under the plan, tax-free grants of up to \$3,000 are available for renovations to the home itself, such as for a new roof, but not for exterior repairs involving garages, walks or landscaping.

As of this week, there have

been only 850 applications for the \$3.7 million in grants available to Montreal-area homeowners, while 5,000 homeowners have applied for the \$893,000 available in the Toronto area, CMHC senior vice-president Ray Boivin said yesterday.

"After our announcement, the Ontario newspapers seemed to give more news coverage to the aid plan than Quebec newspapers did," Boivin said.

The government hopes to create an estimated 10,000 jobs in the Canadian construction indus-

try, especially in areas of high unemployment.

The plan is open to homeowners with a total household income of \$48,000 or less. At least one-third of the cost of the renovations must be for labor.

Grants to a maximum of \$3,000 or 30 per cent of the cost of the work are available to those with incomes of \$30,000 or less. Homeowners with incomes of \$30,000 to \$48,000 are eligible for grants that are reduced by five per cent for every \$1,000 of income over \$30,000.

Courts to get ombudsman

People who get the runaround in the Montreal courthouse now have a place to turn for help.

Starting Monday, an ombudsman's office will open to hear complaints from anyone having trouble resolving their dealings with various departments in the 17-floor building.

Information desks at the entrances of the courthouse at 1 Notre Dame St. E. and 10 St. Antoine St. will still be there to guide visitors and direct anyone to the right location.

Yvon Lavoie, an information official, said the new service is located in Room 1.100.

Dates set to pick MCM runners

The Montreal Citizens Movement (MCM) expects to nominate about half its candidates by June 24 for the November municipal elections.

Jean Roy, MCM president, said at a press conference yesterday that local MCM groups have nominated one candidate and plan nominating conventions for at least 13 others between now and late June.

But Gaspard Fauteux, president of the Municipal Action Group (MAG), which is forming an election alliance with

the MCM said that new snags have developed in negotiations on the partnership and he is worried about their slow pace.

The two parties have reached a tentative agreement on splitting the city's 54 electoral districts and are discussing a common platform and a common candidate for mayor. Fauteux said MCM negotiators recently questioned matters the MAG team thought settled.

The MCM Snowdon-Cote

des Neiges organization plans to nominate candidates in Districts 50 and 53 May 19, leaving 51, 52 and 54 for the MAG, while the Notre Dame de Grace organization will nominate candidates in Districts 46, 48 and 49, leaving 47 for the MAG.

Roy also announced plans for a fund-raising campaign with a goal of \$35,000 by June 15. The party also hopes to add more than 500 members to its current membership total of 1,500.

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