

Policy Esprit de Corps

BY HUGH JOHNSTON

"Policy" is a word well known to fourth year Business students. The project has been in existence since the first day of U.P.E.I. and is in its eleventh year. The brainchild of J.J. Revell, the project attempts to bring together all aspects of business in a practical, and experimental way.

The project consists of a five year feasibility study of a new venture (if not, of a sufficiently new nature). The venture must be applicable to P.E.I., or at least to the Maritimes. A written report must be submitted, and each project must be presented publically. Each venture must have a risk factor, and it is the job of the students to assess this risk. Awards are given to the top three projects, but it is stressed that the project may be NON-FEASIBLE (it doesn't matter).

The project is done in groups of four. The people in each group must be balanced so that they can work together. They must be compatible, able to pull their weight, and able to do the various functions needed in the operation of a business. The ability to organize and manage a group becomes almost as important as the choice of project. (If you don't pull your weight, you are "fired").

New ideas for projects have always been difficult to come up with. An extra difficulty arises with the disadvantageous region in which the venture must be done. However, these added challenges are no different than those encountered by anyone setting up a business in the Maritimes.

In the long run the best students do best in policy, but there is a definite advantage for the mature student who is able to pattern his work habits.

There are many benefits received from doing this project. The students learn how to deal with pressure and a deadline. He learns the competitive nature of the business world and the ability to be successful at doing large volumes of work. The true nature of some students surfaces, as virtually sedate people become aggressive beasts.

The projects undertaken from the "sublime to the ridiculous", from massively capitalized corporations to a student barber shop. Many are based on Island resource industries such as fishery and agriculture.

Examples of projects undertaken are, casket manufacturing, a helicopter service, pre-peeled potatoes and cablevision. One group did a project on a health spa long before the participation kick came into vogue; Roger Wright and Gordon Bond put into operation a furnace manufacturing project and are doing well.

The Business Department's own Debbie Good was involved in a project called "The Hands of Avon Lee" in which high quality hand-crafts were marketed under one marketing thrust. Chairman J.J. Revell said, "The judges thought that it was just a little too slick." Good contends that it was a good project (there is no doubt about that) and that the judges disliked it because it was not capital intensive, complex or very risky. But honestly Debbie, isn't that just another way of saying "it was too slick."

An excellent example of the students conquering adversity is the MacDonald's Buns Project. The students went to Augusta, Maine to get information but they were denied access to the factory. Consequently they went across the street to a local bar and gave some of the workers a camera. The result was two rolls of slides and a good project.

Policy projects have become a goal for business students and a fourth year rallying point. Even though there is competition, "esprit-de-corps" develops between the students, according to Revell. Policy has become the climax of the business program.

Have a good week and smile a lot, "You'll need it."

Political Viewpoint

N.D.P. Outgrowth

by Jim Revell

This week I am shunning the do-nothing Tory government of P.E.I. and the national debates on energy, the economy, and the constitution, to focus on a topic which has some support here on campus. I speak of the New Democratic Party which has never achieved much success on P.E.I. and only mixed results in other parts of Canada.

The New Democratic Party is, by and large, an outgrowth of the old C.C.F. party. The C.C.F. represented largely the rural population of the Prairies, which has helped formulate the party's socialistic tendencies of today. The N.D.P., while never in power federally, has brought about the passage, or at least bills later to be copied and introduced by Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments which have been beneficial to all Canadians. The most obvious instance of this is Medicare. Why then has it not achieved success? Why am I so firmly against their growth?

There are many reasons why the public has largely ignored this group of politicians at election time. The most commonly held reason is that the N.D.P. is in bed with the unions. While party supporters will denounce this, legislation brought forward by the federal N.D.P., especially their economic policies, makes it easily recognizable that they are working in the interests of the lower class, blue collar union workers, than the white collar, middle-class Canadians who make up the largest segment of the Canadian electorate.

This being true, it is wondered why the N.D.P. has not attained more success

in Eastern Canada, especially the Atlantic Region. I feel that the electorate in this part of Canada is intelligent enough to realize that either of the two major parties will form the national government, and that the two old-line parties still offer distinct political philosophies. A vivid example is Saskatchewan, where the N.D.P. formed the Provincial government. Their legislation and programmes fit the Liberal Party mold so nicely that their premier, Alan Blakeny, has been rumoured to be National Liberal Leadership material.

Why do I feel so strongly against the N.D.P.? First and foremost, I feel they're primarily a protest party which realized some success in the previous decade primarily because of the downturn in the economy. Secondly, I am fundamentally opposed to most of their economic programmes because they are usually patch work, short-term in nature and lacking a clear outlook for the future. Thirdly, I believe they offer no more in the way of social, educational, individual, or environmental programs than either of the two main line parties. Finally, I cherish a two party system for its stability, which has been shown to introduce much more beneficial legislation than minority governments. The majority of the time these minority governments produce short term politically popular legislation, and they fall prey to opportunistic political power plays and public opinion polls.

It is important for all of us to realize that change comes about slowly and that while it is nice to be idealistic, the N.D.P. is primarily that and not a suitable alternative.



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