

25/5/83

I always like to begin the week with a surprise. This morning I found out that my boss has been transferred to the Min. of Comm & Works and that the MCW PS is now the DFS. Sounds like musical ministries to me. One problem is that Henry (the old boss) was the 'prime mover' behind this job description exercise and with him gone the project may be prematurely finished. The other hassle is just in getting used to a new supervisor or even determining whether or not he should be my supervisor since I'm doing little which impacts directly on the DFS anyway. It was a 'relationship of convenience' before. I would rather work with Mrs Soso the Chief Personnel Officer (more logical & similarity in task). I do want to do more training, so attachment to Establishment/Services Commission/Personnel would be a logical choice. But logic is rarely a justification of a decision here. Mostly I'm going to kick back, do this CIDA project and then tackle the new situation. The exciting vagarities of PS life.

Deb and I went to Mustique yesterday.



enough sun

peaked through to give us some color.

Actually I

liked the long (2 ½ hr) boat ride though I could have done without the brain jelling, super amplified music and the crowd of people. But I did enjoy the trip. There is a freedom on the sea which brings a deep inner peace. A peace of just being there. So I really like the ocean and look forward to our sailing excursion on June 15th (or so). As for the island of Mustique, well it's unbelievable. The houses are big and beautiful. Meticulously maintained and well looked after. The whole environment there is so much more pristine and clean. Even the public toilets were a marvel. It was the perfect resort island just like you see on postcards or travel brochures. But Deb and I wonder what the local people do to survive. What work is there on Mustique besides domestic stuff? We didn't see a store or a shop. No car rental agencies, gas stations etc. They could have been and probably were well hidden but we wonder about the oppression or poverty which may exist there. Are there opportunities for the local people to improve themselves and their island?



Deb and I have given this oppression thing a lot of thought. We wonder about the perpetuation of that oppression here in Saint V. The poverty, the unemployment, it seems to stem from efforts of outside agencies to correct problems here. There is a "learned helplessness" that began with the British and is now perpetuated by the current government in power. Our assistance, rather than liberating, only builds dependence. And the government is a partner in that by poorly utilizing donated resources so that more resources need to be donated. It is a structural problem too. Governments work with governments where it should be people working with people. The bureaucratic deals with the bureaucrat and the poor continue to suffer. Peace corps, and other agencies (even development agencies with the St. V gov't structure) should begin their needs assessment at the level of the people. Generate issues with the people. Develop strategies for implementing with the people. Provide the necessary skills plus training to do the job. Squeeze money locally where existing human and material resources can't make it then, and only then, fund externally. A loan most preferable in projects which generate income and a 'grant with a promise' in those circumstances where future income is too uncertain to guarantee repayment. The promise being a repayment 'in kind'. That is, that one town, village etc, must assist the neighboring village in a similar project in order to repay the 'loan'. This seems the most oft overlooked area: a specific time limit must be established Beyond which no further assistance will be given except in extreme cases of drought, hurricane, natural disasters. Finally, someone, sometime has to begin to coordinate the development activities of outside organizations. In country staffing may be a bit of a financial strain so a multinational body may want to sponsor overseeing the development process though a local should be an integral part of the staff. In this way common goals, approaches and time frames can be established and monitored so that the current practice of going from 'door to door' as funding is exhausted can be stopped. Now all of

that is pretty dry stuff in terms of “setting the world on fire” type of development work but what we, we as Peace Corps volunteers, VSOs or whatever's need to do is to break out of continued perpetuation of the problems by us providing continued ‘interim’ help. We must begin the practice of understanding through communication with the people we are supposed to be helping. and set limits on that help (e.g. time)

On our trip to Mustique, there was a colony of bizarre looking houses on Bequia. It looked as though they had been abandoned for several years but architecturally, structurally they were beautiful. Yet they stood abandoned and overgrown. Dreams lost? And why? Near Mustique there is an enormous cruise ship driven on the rocks perhaps a mile from shore. You could imagine her grandeur at her prime. People gaily strolling the decks in the Caribbean sunshine. Perhaps kissing and under a huge West Indian moon hung high above. Yet there she lay now. Rusted, split, with a gaping hole in her side. Dreams again lost. Was it planning that went astray? Good direction gone bad? My fear is that our attempts at development here in St. V. will be found, in ruins years later. Forgotten, rusted hulks. The last quivering outlines of our dreams.



Revision #2

Created 3 July 2023 21:55:28 by Admin

Updated 20 December 2023 22:22:32 by Admin