

28/2/83

I will return to Sufriere later. It's been nearly (actually exactly) 2 weeks since I last managed to write in this journal. The reason such a long time has lapsed since I last wrote has been mainly due to my participation in a training workshop with the OECS over the past two weeks. The first week was spent in a top mgt information seminar to inform the top managers of what their middle managers were going to be receiving in their training. The four half day sessions were informative to me and gave me the first inklings that there might just be a way to enlist support in using my skills and abilities. The group talked about its problems in the St Vincent public service. Most of them were HR related. In fact, I was amazed at how their contributions pointed strongly to a need for a coordinated human resource development function. One of the "Permanent Secretaries" even said "What all this is telling me is that we need a better human resource department" . Gads, I almost dropped dead! A bit later, the bubble was burst by Jeff Venner (labor commissioner) who mentioned that this particular group was very good at identifying problems but very slow in finding and implementing solutions. It was at that time I remembered that in 1970 and again in 1978 it was recommended that an O&M section be formed to assist in assessing and implementing HR functions. These folks appeared to be keenly aware of the problems facing the effective use of Human Resources because the problem had been around for 13 years or more. I began to get depressed again. I am amazed at the recalcitrance of this society. I'm still surprised that they managed to decide upon, and Implement their own independence. They must have begun their separation back at the turn of the century.

My depression was short-lived because of the mid-mgt group which came on the scene the following Monday. These folks are a bit more down to earth and perhaps a bit too pessimistic about their ability to change anything. The slightest pessimism from them almost totally demoralizes me for if they can't make a difference in the system, how am I to? Anyway, the realism was worth the added burden of pessimism. During the week we had a chance to check each other out. I had a chance to be visible, willing and able to help them and they had a chance to establish my credibility. That credibility and visibility was greatly enhanced by the OECS folks soliciting my opinion and participation in the training. For that I will be forever grateful. Jack and Ermine (the trainers) were wonderful. Anyway. I have now established contacts and credibility within the SVGPS. I plan to forge ahead with the job descriptions but also assist in problem solving on a one-to-one basis. No doubt I'll be doing some training too. Now my fear is in my own competence as a trainer and HR advisor. I still feel a bit too academic and would like some more experience in training hands on. God willing, I get I'll get that. but I also know that even an inexperienced attempt to coordinate and facilitate the HR development function will be better than what is available now. Outside consultants and advisors that remain in St Vincent only a short time are virtually worthless because of the transference of skills is not ongoing. Even this OECS thing would fail without having me to follow up and participate in the growth process now started. Perhaps I'm overselling myself again. But this MDA position would be a great stepping stone to establishing a coordinated and effective HR program.

Enough of business. I nearly died of an excruciating headache and ultra high fever last week but I got better. Deb's at home with the same symptoms today. Funny how I hope that it will be serious enough to be shipped home (not in a pine box). You see, even though my job situation has improved immensely I'm still running scared at being here. I wonder if I'll ever be comfortable with living here.

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