

29/3/83

Visions of home and Christmas.....seems much too early for such things yet a few powerful reminders have drawn me to it. We got a comics page from the Buffalo News from Dick & Anne. Dated December 26th most of the comics dealt with post Christmas depression and children wanting it to be Christmas again. Sort of mimicked my thoughts and feelings but the knowledge that it's only 8 & 1/2 months away and that plans will be firmed up in 6 and 1/2 months or so make it a bit more manageable. Still, I wish I could get out of this home obsession until September or October when the time between won't seem so unbelievably long. Things are improving though on all fronts... almost...

Deb and I had made some last minute plans to go to the Tobago Keys over Easter. It would cost \$600 EC which is steep but would be worth it for a four-day excursion. We would have sailed which would have been the best part of all. Unfortunately the doctor over-booked the thing and we got bumped. Debbie was really looking forward to it. I was a bit more ambivalent but I still would have liked to go. We need a break badly. 4 days away would have been ideal for us. As it is, we'll have to wait maybe until June when Dr Harvey's (orthopaedic surgeon from UK) girlfriend is coming down to visit. We hope it doesn't conflict with our conference in St Lucia which we are also looking forward to. So our mini vacation is sacked. Mom and Dad's trip down is rather dubious too. At least in the near future. Dad didn't sound overly optimistic about his coming down. Money is tight and it sounds like his business needs careful tending. I'm disappointed (and a bit relieved to be honest with you). Disappointed in that I'm really looking forward to seeing them. Seeing them and giving them both tremendous and wrapping hugs is one of my frequent fantasies. I really miss those people! I am relieved, in a sense, that I am getting so defensive of St V that I think I would spend lots of time trying to explain away some of the discomforts of living here. Beggars, snide comments, mosquitoes heat and humidity etc. I want them to love St V as much as I do, yet I know that won't happen in a week's time. So I'm relieved that I won't be put in that bind. Still they haven't said they were not coming, just that no one has said when. More ambiguity....

My job is becoming less ambiguous which seems almost miraculous considering my frustrations over the past 3 months. But the result of that reduction in ambiguity has been mixed. Both encouraging and discouraging (seems I deal with a lot of black/white good/bad issues). It's been encouraging that my workload has perceptibly increased, my idle time decreased so my days go faster. I'm even finding some difficulty in completing some odds and ends that I began or want to follow up on. Anyway things are picking up. The discouraging item on this encouragement horizon is that I'm becoming less confident in the system. If I had some reservations about some inconsistencies within the saint V P.S., those reservations are now full-blown skepticisms. My questions arise out of conversations I've had with two P.S. employees (one an expatriate like me) and the comment the Archbishop of the Anglican Church made. The employees talked about corruption. Pure and simple. Lots of political favors paid to politically powerful men. Taxes unpaid knowingly, property not valued properly, money taken out of the country (secretly). In all I was stunned by the depth and breadth of the "malpractice" in the civil service. I still need to verify the info, but the expatriate, who I would guess to be about as apolitical as you can get, was in a position to know. Perhaps it's the beginning of understanding why top mgt is so resistant to change. They don't want to stop the payola going on. And what they've done to thwart the system is very clever. They continue to have outside agencies (USAID P.C. CAID VSO's) come and do research and publish reports. In this way it looks like much is being done without doing anything. They can give lip service to change without committing any resources to do it. No implementation or follow up means a perpetual cycle. Outside agencies only make the problem worse through uncoordinated and short-term projects. Peace Corps is the only program I know of that stresses the ongoing nature of their programs. But two years isn't enough. 5 years might be and 10 would be

optimal. Peace Corps failing is that it supplies too much segmented programs which fails to generate long-term counterpart integration. Perhaps the system is unchangeable. If people continue to expect help they will do little to help themselves (welfare syndrome). To provide no strings help is to perpetuate dependence. LDC's need to hang on to their HR and implement long-term projects for change. And by the way, that's easy for me to say... but back to corruption, the Archbishop basically capped my conclusions in that he said (during a sermon) a very reliable source told him "the corruption in the St Vincent P.S goes all the way to the top". Perhaps there is something to these allegations after all.



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