

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

by George Barry

Isn't it amazing? I mean, I thought that functional illiteracy in Canada was pretty well wiped out. But all you have to do is to read the Letters to the Editor column in this paper to see some examples. I guess if there were any around, good ol' U.P.E.I. would dredge them up. But here I am criticizing these people when I believe wholeheartedly in the right to free speech. Yessir, I will completely support a persons right to express his or her opinions no matter how ridiculous, half-assed or totally unimportant they may be.

But let's leave it at that, shall we? As I stated at the begining of this grand experiment I am determined not to let the incredible stupidity of people aggravate me, no matter how hard it gets. But, anyway, let's get on to more important things, like my opinions on the state of this university. With this in mind let me state that a university, like any institution in which a cross-section of humanity is found, reflects man at both his best and his worst. Here at U.P.E.I., it is my personal view that we have it pretty good. Sure, our teaching and recreational facilities leave much to be desired, as far as faculty and students go, we are well off. We are a small institution and therefore there is ample opportunity for personal contacts to develop between professor and student. Sure, your always going to get the occaisional jerk who thinks that teaching is simply a matter of reading from the same notes that he's had for umpteen years and that's it. And sure there are always going to be students who would sooner have their bowels removed then make an effort to learn something.

But, generally, we do have it good so what, you may ask, is the problem? Well, as I see it, there is an insidious blight at U.P.E.I. which, as it has in so many other areas of society, seems to have taken root and begun to spread. This, friends and fellow victims, is that faceless, mindless, emotionless structure known as bureaucracy. I'm sure that most of you are familiar with this term. You may have heard Knowlton Nash mention it or you may have heard where some politician was going to slay it in its tracks or you may even have paused in your contemplation of the girl sitting across from you and her incredible set of mammalian watermelons to listen to what a Poli. Sci. prof had to say about it. Whatever the case, you have heard the word and you do have some vague idea as to its meaning. Well Mr. Webster defines it thus: 1- a body of appointive government officials 2- administration characterized by specialization of functions under fixed rules and a hierarchy of authority, also: an unweildly administrative system deficient in initiative and flexibility. For my purposes I think you can guess which of the above definitions I would apply. Yes, Mr. Webster's "also" is what my idea of what bureaucracies inevitably turn into and how, in a university situation, that can propagate a kind of academic stagnation.

Here at U.P.E.I. we are a relatively small, close-knit group. It's not hard to get to know people and to feel yourself a part of things. But since we are small we are virtually at the mercy of the powers that be. Therefore, bureaucracy is pretty well able to call the shots in most aspects of university life. I'm not simply making some kind of blanket condemnation of all the people involved with the administration of this university. But it is the nature of bureaucracy to shape the people in its structure and, in many cases it forces people to mold themselves into the proper

bureaucratic image. The people who make up the system actually become as impersonal as the system itself. When a person outside the system comes in conflict with it, that person often finds himself buried under the perverse what's good for the system is good for everybody kind of logic.

The time has come for people to say "Enough!" Instead of the reams of paper under which human values are so often buried, the university must keep the human channels open. To my mind one of the the most menacing and potentially destructive forces in this world is a high-level bureaucrat with a new memo pad and a fresh supply of ink. U.P.E.I. has not yet reached the point of no return, indeed, because we are small, it still may be a long way off, but that depends on just how willing people are to be pushed around by the pen and pad people. And as far as that goes, it might help the bureaucrats themselves to remember that people do not always lay down and play dead when they are stabbed by the poison pen or knocked for a loop by the bureaucratic shuffle, So watch out guys! No matter how secure you might feel sitting in your office with your wall-to-wall carpet and your padded chairs, remember that we're all out there waiting and watching, and someday we just might come and get you.

This is



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