

It's no longer debatable

by Andrew MacPherson

We now have another opportunity to celebrate a UPEI victory: a victory not from the basketball court or the hockey rink but from a more academic field, debating. On the evening of Wednesday, January 27 an audience of about twenty, including both President Eliot of UPEI and President Bryant of Holland College, braved the stormy conditions to witness the eighth annual Holland College/UPEI debate in the MacKinnon Lecture Theatre at Holland College. The debate and the trophy were founded by the St. Dunstan's University class of 1954 in recognition of graduates of that year, Allan MacDonald and Walter Reid, Canada's Intercollegiate Debating Champions of 1952. This was the year that UPEI would redeem itself and tie up the series.

Edward Lank, president of the UPEI debating society, and Janice Enman represented UPEI and were opposed by Shannon Grinton and Kent Villard from the host institution. The resolution in question was: "Be it resolved that cross-border shopping by Canadians should be severely penalized." Holland College was assigned the affirmative side of the debate from a coin flip held several weeks perviously. Both teams had been getting the lowdown on this aspect of international trade ever since.

For those of you not familiar with parliamentary style debating I will give a brief run-down on its components. In this type of debating there are two teams of two. The speakers alternate with the affirmative going first. All four debaters have a maximum speaking time of ten minutes with five minutes of rebuttal for each team at the end of the debate. Other official participants include a moderator, two timers and three judges. Following the debate the three judges leave the room to make their decisions and the moderator opens the floor to the audience for an informal continuation of the debate. For this year's debate, the moderator was Donald Deacon, former Ontario MLA, and the judges were Douglas Bowlan, Clerk and Protocol officer for the provincial government; James Wyatt, Executive Director of the P.E.I. Human Rights Commission; and Walter MacIntyre, Managing editor of the Guardian/Patriot.

The first speaker from Holland College was Kent Villard. He introduced the affirmative case and defined several terms. A cross-border shopper was defined as anyone who crosses the border periodically and buys goods and services while there, excluding mail order shoppers, and severe penalty was defined as the taxes now in place. He gave the figures of how much

money was being lost through cross-border shopping and said that people who shop in the United States are very unpatriotic and were stealing from the government. Mr. Villard also pointed out the difference between social and economic structures in the United States as opposed to those in Canada.

Janice Enman spoke first for the opposition and went through a rebuttal of Holland College's case. She pointed out that the government was only trying to stop smugglers and not shoppers. Ms. Enman also questioned the prudence in excluding mail order shoppers from the cross-border shopper definition. In her prepared speech she brought forth three examples of people who have other reasons than simple shopping to travel the United States. A businessman, a retiree, and a tourist are all in the U.S. for different reasons but may also have reasons to make small purchases. Is it then fair to penalize them along with everyone else? She inquired how they could be separated from other travellers and pointed out that border police are already heavily overworked.

The second Holland College debater, Shannon Grinton, expanded on the reasons that protectionism was necessary, citing the historical reasons that Canada has been opposed to free trade with our southern neighbors. He spoke of John A. MacDonald's "National Policy" and how it was responsible for helping to build this country into what it is today. Mr. Grinton also expounded upon the idea that shopping in the U.S. was wholly unpatriotic and an avoidance of your duty to pay your taxes.

The final, and by far the most convincing, speech came from Edward Lank. He pointed out a contradiction between the two Holland College speakers in the well-being of Canada. While the first speaker had argued that Canada was in great economic trouble the second spoke of the success of the nation. He also pointed out the ludicrousness in a statement made by Holland College to the effect that all Canadians were stealers and cheaters. Other points that Mr.

Lank brought up included the problem of monitoring services purchased in the U.S., the idea that imposing penalties was unconstitutional, and finally that fluctuations in the Canadian dollar was already enough of a deterrent to prevent cross-border shopping from becoming a long- problem.

The final two speeches ensued with Kent Villard and Edward Lank speaking on behalf of their respective sides. Mr. Villard basically denied making any statements that the UPEI team had rebutted from his speech, including calling Canadians liars and cheaters. Mr. Lank questioned the ten million dollar figure that Holland College had proposed as the amount of money being lost through cross-border shopping, quoting a professor from Memorial University that the actual number was only two million. He also pointed out that present penalties in place could not really be considered to be severe. These two speeches concluded the official proceedings and the judges went off to deliberate.

In their absence a lively, informal debate ensued. The first member of the audience to speak was Mike Woodman, a member of the UPEI team that won the debate last year. He gave a speech which much of the audience either did not understand, thought bombastic, or both. There were several other questions from the audience and the discussion degenerated into small groups discussing the debate.

After a short wait the judges reappeared and announced that UPEI was indeed victorious. Both Edward and Janice deserve a great deal of credit for ignoring the rather annoying remarks made almost continually by one of the members of the Holland College team. While a degree of heckling is fine, it should all be done with good taste and some class. In addition, the debaters and their faculty adviser, Dr. David Sims, should be congratulated for the hours spent going over the arguments and getting help from several resource people on campus. It was a good showing on behalf of the university. ●

Senior class news

Hi! I have a deal to let you in on! As usual, the Convocation Ball will be held on Thursday, May 6th at the C.P. Hotel. There is a special room rate for graduates at the C.P. for this dance. The rate is \$85.00 -but there is a catch- you must call and reserve your room before April 6th, 1993 to get this reduced rate. So you should call soon, as there are limited rooms available.

In other news, Tom Spaxman, a junior Education major, won \$30.00 in the Senior Class 50/50 draw at the Movie Pub on Friday, January 22.

A reminder to graduates who are getting grad pictures taken-the yearbook must have your picture by April 26th.

There will be a Grad Ring Day at the bookstore next week. Watch for the posters!.

Sincerely, Melanie Johnston Senior Class President