

Rosy future for multinationals' growth

by Brenda Nichols and Paul Creelman

Multinationals will look forward to a relaxed atmosphere to operate and grow in the 1980's, according to Professor John H. Dunning, head of the economics department of the University of Reading.

Dunning was speaking at a public lecture sponsored last Thursday by the university's Centre for International Business Studies. Commenting on the outlook for international investment, he cited several reasons for the relaxation of tension against the multinationals, including a slowing rate of economic growth, increased competition amongst corporations, and a

new trend to conservatism in developing countries.

"In the new economic situation," said Dunning, "many developing countries have come to realize that the cost of controls for the multinationals may be almost as much as the cost of letting them operate unhindered. Of course, to be fair to the multinationals, many of them have become more sensitive with regard to the impact they have on the local economies of countries they invest in."

Education of developing nations about both the drawbacks and benefits of multinationals is another important factor, according to Dunning.

"All countries are better educated as to the effects of multinationals on the local economy and what the advantages for the individual country are," says Dunning.

Professor Dunning contrasted this new outlook with the traditional stance of developing countries, which shunned multinational investment in the 1970's.

"Multinationals at that point in time gave themselves a very bad reputation," says Dunning.

"There are a certain number of famous examples in which it was seen that massive corporate investment in a small foreign country didn't actually bring any money or resources into the region. Instead, the surplus value was siphoned off into the parent multinational."

Some other trends for the future decade were also identified by Professor Dunning. These include increased diversification of the interests of multinationals, and also the spreading of nationalities in multinationals. (He pointed out that U.S. based multinationals are now only in a slight majority, while they used to make up almost all of the foreign corporate investment in the world.)

The continued development of international case law is another very important factor in the continued development of the multinational corporation.

The lecture period closed with a brief note of humour from Tom Kent, the Dean of Administrative Studies, who made some concluding remarks:

"Within the business school it is good advice to choose employment not in an American oil company, but in a Japanese computer corporation."



WALSH/DAL PHOTO

Clinic prevents birth defects

By Kelly Enman

Every year in Canada, babies are born with birth defects that could have been prevented.

These children may be afflicted with several congenital malformations including deafness, cataracts, and heart defects. In addition they may be considered mentally retarded.

Medical research conducted in the last thirty years has discovered a positive and hazardous link between many birth defects and a well known childhood infection — rubella (german measles). It was found that when a woman becomes infected with rubella during a pregnancy, she has a high risk of bearing a child with birth defects.

A clinic is to be held in November (Immunization Month) to test for immunity to rubella. The clinic is being planned by a group of health

education students hoping to prevent future birth defects by identifying those susceptible to the infection. They are working in cooperation with Dr. Johnson of Dalhousie Health Services, and the Nova Scotia Department of Health.

The infection itself is relatively mild, beginning with a slight cold, sore throat, and some fever. Enlargement of lymph nodes, notably in the neck and behind the ears, may also occur. A red rash is usually present, but fades after two to three days. Symptoms are sometimes so mild that the infection may be mistaken for flu. Treatment is symptomatic and severe complications are rare.

Rubella can be spread by direct contact or droplet infection. It is less common than either chicken pox or red measles, and as a result many adults have never been infected.

One attack usually gives lifetime immunity, but a second infection can occur if the level of antibodies produced against rubella is low. A simple blood test can be performed to determine antibody levels.

If the antibody level is low, a vaccine may be given to prevent future infections of rubella. This vaccine is given in a single injection, with a warning not to become pregnant for three months following its administration. It is never given to a pregnant woman.

For all those interested in being tested for immunity to rubella, watch for further details on the November clinic. Don't gamble with the health of your future family.

(Kelly Enman, RN, is a Health Education student at Dalhousie)

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