

To praise or not to praise party campaigns

The second federal election in less than a year is now over and the Liberal party has won a majority government. There are any number of factors that may have brought about the defeat of the Conservative party including Clark's image, the 18 cents excise tax on gasoline, Petro-Can's future the embassy fiasco and the arrogant attempt to ram through an unpopular budget. While all of these things are of concern to Canadians it is quite possible that we should be more concerned about the manner in which the party campaigns were conducted.

The election itself resulted from the defeat of the Conservative budget on Dec. 13, 1979. Popular reaction to the budget had been negative yet the Conservatives with a minority of seats in the House of Commons tried to ram it through. They had counted on the Liberal leadership situation and a reluctance on the part of MP's to face the nation so soon after the previous election to enable them to push the budget through. They refused to make any kind of deal with the Social Credit members to obtain votes they needed. The budget was defeated and an election was called.

The election campaign itself was not conducted in a very idealistic fashion and strategies for gaining office were emphasized at the expense of a full discussion of the issues. The Liberal party won power without making it perfectly clear how they stood on the major issues of the election, the pricing of gasoline, now and in the future. For most of the campaign the Liberal seemed to be without a well defined election platform. Full publication of the platform occurred on

in the week preceding the elections. A muzzle was placed on Trudeau throughout most of the election. The Liberal plan was to allow the Conservatives to continue as the target of public dissatisfaction. They did not want to say anything that would allow them to become a target as well.

The Liberals chose instead to capitalize on a public perception of Clark as an incompetent bungler or a "wimp". To do this they used the advertising techniques available. There was no doubt as to the identity of the funbling card dealer in the Liberal ads. As for the Conservatives they

received as they had given. In the previous election they had used slow motion pictures of Trudeau together with quotes presented out of context to capitalize on the perception of Trudeau as calloused and arrogant. The only major

party to concentrate on discussing the issues thoroughly was the NDP. It is encouraging to note that the NDP received 5 more seats in this campaign than in 1979.

The praise or condemnation of particular parties will vary from person to person, however, every-

one should. It is to question the functions of elections in a world democracy such as Canada is supposed to be. The recent campaign certainly fulfilled the function of selecting our national leaders. It can be argued however, that it did not provide a thorough discussion of the issues confronting Canada in the years ahead. Many will no doubt remember the election in terms of the 18 cents-a-gallon-excise tax on gasoline or Petro-Can. Many others will remember it in terms of caricatured images of party leaders, countless polls, slick advertising and cynical campaign strategies.



'THE AUDITION'

Goodbye Doug; good luck Vaughn

If you read this week's paper at all, you're probably aware that Doug Varty has finished his term as station director of CHSR and will be replaced by Vaughn Fulford.

Over this past year, The Brunswickan has become involved with CHSR to a great extent. In fact, veterans of both organizations have said they can never remember a time when the two campus media got along so well.

A great deal of credit for this has to go to Doug Varty. As director of an organization which controls one of the largest chunks of your student activity fee, and is now in the process of changing over to an FM station which would serve an audience of about 52,000, Varty has displayed an incredible amount of common sense, coolheadedness, good taste, and quiet leadership, bounded by a razor-sharp wit and a keen sense of humor.

In dealing with five other executives at CHSR and a constantly-changing membership of about 75, Varty has displayed one quality of leadership which is perhaps the most important in

dealing with a volunteer organization: he has mastered the fine art of getting people to do things without being overly authoritarian or didactic. If tact is really giving someone a shot in the arm without letting them feel the needle, then Varty has truly mastered this craft as well.

But involvement with people does not stop at the organization itself. Many times this year The Brunswickan has featured headlines about clashes between Doug and various SRC-type individuals. The patience exhibited by Doug when trying to explain to people who didn't really know anything about the more technical side of a radio station (and who weren't too willing to learn) why more money was needed for upgrading this or that is remarkable.

Certainly, Doug is not a god; he has made his share of mistakes and has admitted to them. But he served CHSR at a crucial time and the months ahead will be even more crucial.

Good luck Vaughn.