

A THIRD POLITICAL PARTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

A student, during a college examination for creative thinking, wrote that he preferred that the Third Force start fielding their candidates for "maybe next elections." But if they start now — as they have already done — and they fail, this "would certainly be a good lesson for the coming generation that 'haste is waste'" and teach us that "the big things always begin small."

This answer is part of an analysis made to answer an examination question. The problem allowed a choice of agreement or disagreement with the Third Force's decision to join the presidential race and for the rest of the elective posts. If the student agreed, he was asked to suggest ways to improve winning chances; if he disagreed to suggest what role or activities the Third Force should undertake for better government.

Eighteen students approved of the Third Force's election bid, and thirteen disapproved. Most of the 31 students, however, whether they approved or not of the Third Force's election plans, warned against "campaign dirt" — name-calling, empty words, destructive criticism, unsupported charges, impossible or false promises, and so on, including attacks on either the Nacionalista party or the Liberal party. Three students expressed distaste over publicity and wrote that the Third Force members should avoid being in the limelight.

Those who supported the Third Force bid generally agreed on more publicity and on a program of promoting "economic prosperity, social values, increased food production." For the campaign several suggested listing problems and evaluating what has been done about them, starting projects that will

"impress," and living among the rural folk to attend to farmers' problems. To accomplish these, according to the students, the following must be done:

1. Organize a club among the poor and needy.
2. Introduce ways of earning a living like home industries.
3. Undertake projects like establishing more public libraries, and more toilets; improving the railway system, and providing adequate water supply.
4. Create a committee to "check up on the work of government officials."
5. Become ideal leaders in their own families and communities. Do not tolerate show-off sons. Present a public statement of assets. Participate in anti-smuggling campaign.

Among those who disappointed, the general opinion is that the Third Force has a "very slim chance" of winning, and that "it's a waste of time." They also feel that the Third Force has to prove itself and its motives. This is very significant as it reflects now the thought be-

hind the many quips that the PPP has drawn. We may recall that the PPP convention has been called a U.P.-Ateneo alumni homecoming, an oratorical contest, and a launching pad for the presidential ambitions of Senators Manahan and Manglapus .

So what would our students have the Third Force do? Analyzing its membership, one student wrote that with the Third Force's "brains, financial resources, and social prominence," it can work toward "economic and industrial stability — help by suggesting ways and financing." Another wrote that if its activities are directed toward civic, cultural, and economic projects, "we can imagine how much work they can do." Two students suggested that the Third Force could be the "medium for the voice of the people to be heard." However, someone approved of at least having candidates for the minor posts to start off being "in." Afterward, as another student put it, "they may reap the crop for the next harvest — that is during the next elections."

The civic, cultural, and

economic projects suggested include the following:

1. Promotion of peaceful and orderly elections. Creation of a 12-man committee to assist the Commission on Elections.
2. Charity work.
3. Cleanliness and beautification campaign.
4. Development of patriotism.
5. Exchange of opinions with people.
6. Encouragement for the use of the "mind to invent."

Item "5" could be a warning bell to the Third Force. A party that to speak for the people should avoid indulgence in oratory and sloganeering. The other suggestions reveal much of the temper of the young: they want action — drab and unglamorous and hard but concrete. It may be an anonymous and thankless job, but as one student suggested, the Third Force may join the "party of lesser

evil" and "reform the party from within." That takes some doing, indeed, than running for president.

From both sides we may infer that our young are looking for new leadership which can direct a shift in the practice of political craftsmanship. They are looking for a positive outlook where cooperation takes the place of the current trend to downgrade in order to rise to top government positions. The students do not go with the idea that government can be improved by running for election.

The impression has now probably grown among these students that the Third Force is nothing more than a group out to perpetrate the image of the Outstanding Young Man out to Revolt Against Tradition by becoming president or vice president. What hopes therefore could we hold out for that much-vaunted deviation from the NP and the LP? — *Perla S. Dee.*