

Acclamations plaguing nomination conventions

Our features pages this week include an opinion item examining nominating conventions and the upcoming provincial election. We urge our readers to consider it.

Our focus is on the session held Oct. 21 at the St. Mary's Indian Band Hall when Progressive Conservative health minister Lawrence Garvie was nominated as that party's choice to contest the Fredericton North riding.

No one opposed him which comes as little surprise since Garvie holds a cabinet post. The Brunswickan does not wish to question the health minister's ability. He has done much towards the development of health service and hospital construction in the province in both urban centres and less populated areas.

The tendency towards acclamation is not exclusive to the one riding or to the Tories. The Liberals Oct. 29 acclaimed businessman Carl Howe to represent them in Fredericton North and University of New Brunswick law professor Dan Hurley to run in the South.

We find it disappointing nomination conventions have appeared to lose their valuable democratic function. Rather than striving to screen a number of worthy individuals—and surely 300 delegates can find more than one individual in the entire riding—and select the best, only one man seemed seriously encouraged to pursue the nomination.

The conventions impressed our reporter as little more than a chance for Premier Richard Hatfield and Liberal leader Robert Higgins to rouse their respective supporters and engage in petty mud-slinging and crass tech-

niques of campaigning where the image is as important as the qualifications of the candidate.

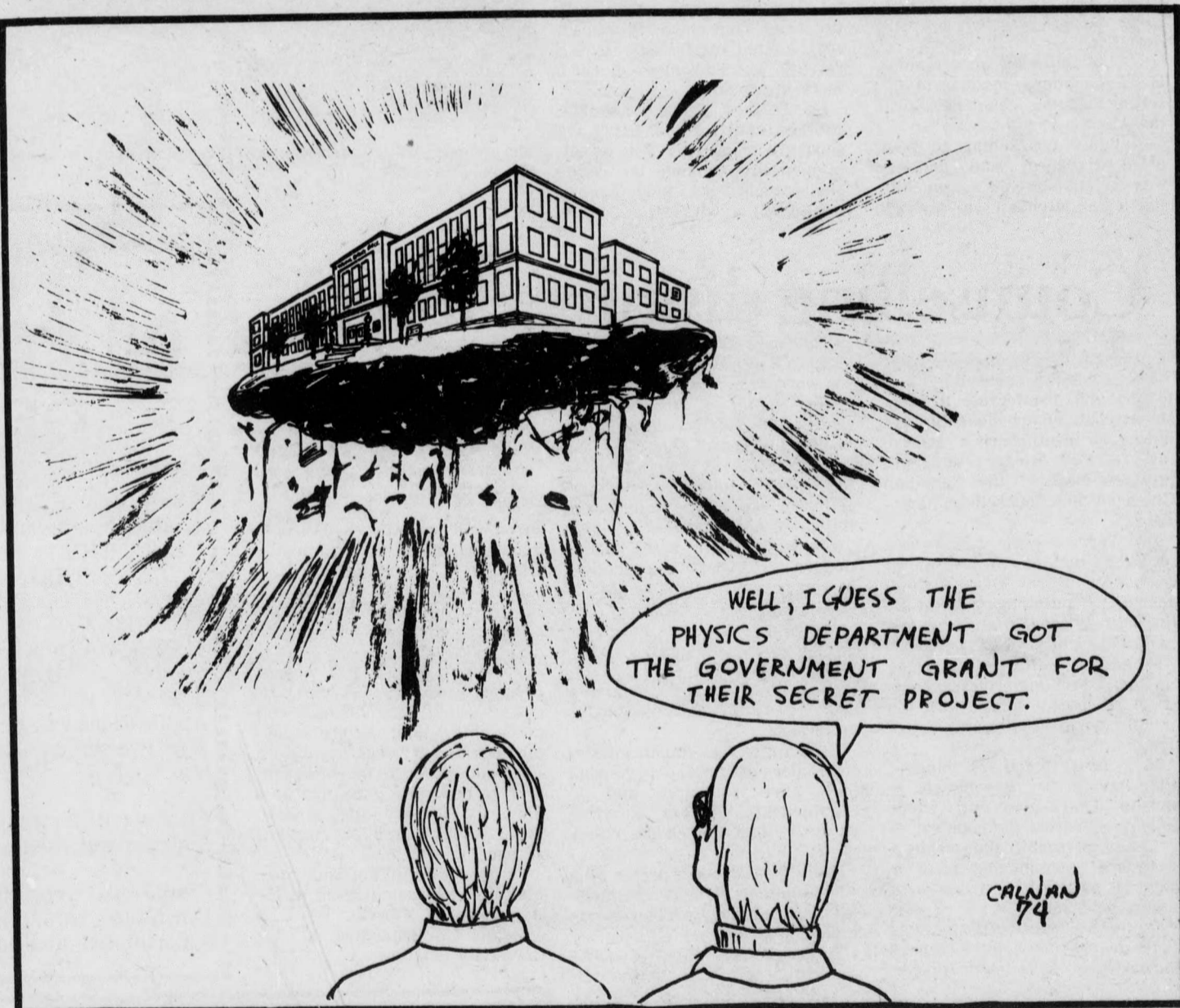
Following the nomination, former parliament member York-Sunbury Chester MacRae spoke and noted both the nomination mover (David Neill) and the seconder (Ron Rae) were young. The input of the young was valuable, he told his audience, whose estimated average age

would have been 40 or more.

Hopefully the young in this province who engage in politics at the university level or as one of the established youth federations will attempt to change this complacent tendency. If not, it is hoped electors will either force changes in the existing parties or lend their support to a new party by publicly stating their disapproval of such a narrow,

undemocratic selection.

Antagonists to this view will say it is naive to expect anything different in the political forum, to expect parties to do anything but protect their own best interests. If these interests, however, should become too narrow a loss of popular support will develop. Thus the parties jeopardize the very system upon which they depend.



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