

Correspondence

Referendum

The Bethune Referendum held on February 7 and 8 demonstrated two significant points about the relationships that exist between several facets of a multifaceted University like York. In retrospect, the referendum reflected a rather odd relationship between faculty and students; it also reinforced the will to maintain a strong collegial existence at York. In the former sense, it was a failure; in the latter, the referendum was a "tentative" success.

The question: "Should Bethune College Be Politically Affiliated with CYSF?" was one concerning the more efficient administering of student funds and the opportunity for students to work collectively on central student concerns. Given that the present Bethune Constitution invites fellows, faculty, staff and students to vote in elections and referenda, the faculty of the college, in this case, not only voted but some came to play a determining role in the anti-CYSF movement and the Committee for a Strong and Independent Bethune. One could accurately compare a faculty member working within YUFA for common faculty concerns with a student working within CYSF, OFS and NUS for common student concerns. What is good for a professor at York — that is, a 20% salary increase — because YUFA was willing to take tough action is similarly good for York students when confronted with a 17% fee increase; that is: a central student union. The referendum question was clearly framed in terms of concrete needs for students; the Bethune College Council supported it on the premise that it would allow

for participation in a central student decision making process that addresses issues of a nature which colleges, in light of their autonomous natures, do not deal with. The fact that the Bethune referendum question was circumvented to ask an entirely different question and the fact that 34 faculty members of the college voted and some of these worked towards defeating a student issue demonstrates a most distressing point and a significant failure for the students of Bethune College.

On the other hand, I would maintain that the Bethune referendum resembles a "tentative" success. The question: "Should Bethune College Be Politically Affiliated with CYSF?" was in fact begging the question that was in desperate need of asking, that is: "Is Bethune College Going to Be Like All the Rest?" The referendum was a success in so far as Bethuners began to think about Bethune College and what it is all about. In the light of the present discussions at York concerning the future destiny of the Colleges, the fervour of collegial consciousness produced by the referendum debate was, indeed, a positive thing. In the last analysis, both sides of the debate agreed on the need to re-evaluate the role of Bethune College at York. The problem now lies in actualizing this emotion. If those who worked to defeat the referendum are content to crawl back into the woodwork, the referendum was nothing more than a brief disruption in a relatively calm collegial existence. A "NO" in the referendum and the determination on the part of 153 people to defeat the question demonstrates that these are

people who would like to work at establishing a stronger Bethune College. A "NO" deemed the referendum question a wrong one. I await the wise men and women of Bethune College to collectively formulate what is right. The ultimate outcome and the "real" success of the referendum can only be measured in these terms.

Andrea Doucet



Mockery to democracy

Is our system of justice (sic) becoming too lenient? The sentence and the fine (one year and \$5000), maximums for a conviction, were wiped off the slate on condition that John Ross Taylor and his tribe of Western Guard misfits respect a second Federal Court of Canada order forbidding them to use the telephone to disseminate recorded anti-Semitic propaganda. Indeed, it is appalling to discover that, in Canada, a country recognized throughout the world for its statesmanship on human rights, a federal judge merely slaps the hand of such virulently anti-Semitic fascist

groups. It is quite obvious that the recordings will once again become operative, as always, spewing forth further racist perversions. And, of course, with the apparent leniency of other federal judges like Mr. Justice Jean Dube, subversive gangs such as the Western Guard will doubtless proliferate. These occurrences only belie that purposes of Canadian governmental institutions such as the federal Human Rights Commission.

It is outright mockery to democracy everywhere when fanatics like the Western Guard receive suspended sentences consistently for deliberately ignoring the orders given by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Furthermore, it is preposterous that the costs of the trial were awarded to the federal Human Rights Commission and not to the Western Guard. It brings me to a stupor just to imagine how much judicial absurdity must be recorded in Canada's history before someone takes serious notice and, at least, attempts to put an end to this type of alarming exoneration. Certainly, and without any reluctance, a resolution must be formed—before it's forgotten.

Howard Halpern

Rep by prop

Another federal election has come and gone, but what still remains is the same old problem of under representation.

Once again, the Tories were all but shut out in Quebec, and ditto for the Liberals west of Ontario. Now, when you look a little more closely at the popular vote in Quebec and the West,

you will see how misleading the number of Tory and Liberal seats really is.

As an example, take the Tories in Quebec. The data show that they managed to attract 12.7 per cent of the votes but ended up with only 1 per cent of the seats (one out of a possible 75)!

And the Liberals out west! We all know they managed only two out of a possible 77 seats (2.6 per cent)—yet the party managed to poll close to 24 per cent of the votes.

What Canada needs—and it's nice to hear Trudeau is contemplating this—is a form of proportional representation.

With Rep. by Prop. newly elected governments won't have to resort to the Senate to achieve regional representation in their cabinets.

Bruce Gates

Happy women

We were happy to read your account of the Second Conference for Mature Women Students held so successfully on Saturday, February 9. You gave a good idea of the excitement, and of the helpfulness of the occasion. However, I wish to point out that the conference was not co-sponsored by the Women's Centre but by the Office of the Adviser on the Status of Women and the Office of the Master, Atkinson College.

Anne Moore

All letters should be addressed to the editor, *Excalibur*, Room 111 Central Square. Letters must be typed, triple-spaced, on a 66 stroke line. Letters are limited to 300 words (seven column inches). Name, address, or phone number must be included or the letter will not be published. *Excalibur* reserves the right to edit for grammar and length. Deadline Monday 5 pm.

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