

Growing up in New Minas

A sort of analysis of non-voting among 14-year-olds in rural Nova Scotia *

The literature on growing up is by now voluminous. ¹ So is the literature on non-voting. So is the Oxford Standard Dictionary.

Our aim here is precise. We hope to fill a lacuna in the literature, one that has existed for some time and probably would have continued to do so. We feel that our discipline, distinguished as it is, must ever proceed by putting into place small bits of data. Only thus will it gradually evolve into, as Aristotle so succinctly put it, the Master Science.

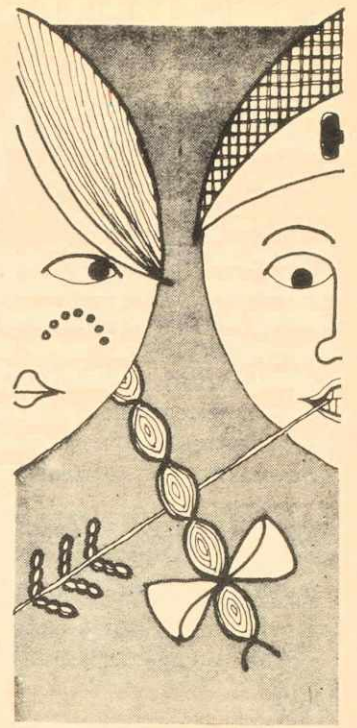
The present article is solidly grounded firmly in very hard data. We conducted a series of interviews (attached) during August 14-23, 1969 in and around the picturesque town of New Minas, Nova Scotia. This town is not really untypical of the average Nova Scotia usual small town, as can readily be perceived and replicated by a perusal of the 1969 Nova Scotia Small Town Statistical Abstract.

The findings of the interviews were quite revealing. About 50 per cent of the randomly chosen ³ interviewees were males, the remainder being for the most part female. ⁴ A number of reasons were advanced by the fourteen year olds interviewed for their not voting in either of the last Federal or provincial elections. 6 percent indicated that they felt their votes would have been wasted, as most party leaders appeared to favor retaining the Don Messer Show. 7.128 percent (of which only 40.7 percent were females) of those interviewed stated that they had detentions on voting day and then had chores to take care of when they got home. 9.4 percent were unaware that elections were taking place; one of these was the son of a Conservative cabinet minister in Nova Scotia who sported long hair and lice. 0.6 percent had been involved in voter registration drives in the Springhill area and were thus absent from their domicile. Surprisingly a full 94.8 percent

gave vague responses implying that they somehow felt that the right to exercise the franchise was not theirs; only 5.89 percent indicated that they actually did vote in one of the two electoral outings we were studying. ⁵ Of this group, most stated they voted for one of the major party leaders, although one said he voted for someone named D. Duck and a young lady named her favourite candidate as being independent (?) E. Presley. Of the interviewees who were Negro, 94.8 percent stated that they did not know there was a government in the province. 88.7 percent did not know what an election was (several thought the term had sexual overtones), while only 37.3 percent of the non-Negro (which includes two Indians) group were similarly uninformed. Affection for the political system seemed fairly high. ⁶ Of the respondents who had never been out of the province (98.6 percent), 95.8 percent felt that Nova Scotia government was either: groovy (67.8 percent); out back (43.7 percent); plastic (45.8 percent); progressive and well-meaning (1.7 percent). ⁷

We conclude that on balance, ceteris parabis, and with due regard to factors not allowed for in our brief analysis, that on the whole the average type of Nova Scotia fourteen year old exhibits norms in this regard that would correlate nicely (to perhaps .97) with findings of

similar studies utilizing similarly sophisticated techniques and data obtained from other similarly-stratified populations from analogous provinces in Canada. More than this we cannot go as our data does not allow us. With this addition to the literature ⁸ we bring to a close our scholarly analysis of this subject. In future we hope to be able to subject a cross-section of fifteen year olds to similar analysis, but that will have to wait further grants and more pressure upon us to add our vita.



NOTES

¹ See *Growing Up in New Guinea and Coming of Age in Samoa* both by M. Mead. Also of use is *Attaining of Puberty in Prince Edward Island*, author ashamed. Best source is P. Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd*.

² For instance *Non-Voting in Canadian Federal Elections by Roman Emperors: Absentee Non-Voting: A Case Study* by Yuss Less, occasional effort published by the Center for Copping Out, Queen's University. See also Laura Secord and the 1878 Election: *A Case of Missing Person?* probably publishable M. A. thesis by I. M. Rigorous, Harddata University. Of use as well is "Alger Hiss and the 1953 Election: Some Factors Affecting Non-Voting", *Journal of Publish or Perish*. We anxiously await the forthcoming signal addition to the literature *Non-Voting and Taxidermy: The Stuffing of Ballot Boxes in Canadian Elections and at other times*.

³ The Chance Luck Random Number Tables, prepared under the auspices of I.D.S. Pool, H. Last Very Well and S. Agnew, were utilized throughout. We recommend these highly.

⁴ All of the findings noted are from our hard data. Various techniques were utilized, including Method of Fewest Triangles, Cube, Lineal Descendency, Retrogarde Analysis, Value-Free Thinking and Cheating. Replication would be, probably be, impossible and from our point of view undesirable. All's Well that End's Well, as someone said.

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⁵ One respondent indicated that he voted seventeen times in the last provincial election but we were unable to correlate, substantiate or establish authenticity of his assertion. None of the fourteen year olds interviewed said they voted in earlier elections, which might lead one to hypothesize an increase in citizen participation. See the literature which is voluminous.

⁶ See the literature on affection for the political system, esp. *How We can Learn to Love Nova Scotia and Drink Heavy Water* (Conservative Party Headquarters Think-Sink).

⁷ The numbers add to more than 100 percent due to computer error.

⁸ C.F. The Random House Dictionary. College Edition: Literature: writing regarded as having permanent worth through its intrinsic excellence.

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