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CURTIS LECTURE HALL "A"

AGENDA:

Strike Vote Strategy Discussion

IMPORTANT

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Is Toronto ready for John Sewell?

By Kim Llewellyn John Sewell, the arch-reformer of civic politics, both delighted and horrified observers at City Hall when, on June 14, he put forward his candidacy in the city's mayoralty race.

Sewell became hopelessly embroiled in the political scene when he was fresh out of law school in 1966. The Trefann Court Urban Renewal Area, where residents were attempting to stop the City from expropriating their homes, was his first with the powers that be.

Lastman opposes Sewell on several issues, namely TTC policies, the non-extension of the Spadina expressway, and pushing development out to the suburbs.

On the Spadina expressway extension, which Sewell opposes, Lastman says: "North and South driving in rush hour is unbearable. Commuters are using residential streets to get downtown, streets which children play on. There are too many cars on these streets."

In the midst of a busy campaign schedule, Sewell found the time to talk

to Excalibur on some of the topical issues in Toronto. EXCALIBUR: You are perceived in some quarters as being "anti-development" in downtown Toronto. Doesn't curbing development mean curbing jobs?



John Sewell Ward 7 alderman.

business, since the city now has a housing company and we're now the largest house builder in Toronto. So in terms of providing jobs, it's the city that's providing the jobs and building the houses, not the developers.

EXCALIBUR: Shortly after Crombie was first elected, you made your famous "honeymoon is over" speech and you indicated he was not coming through with reforms.

SEWELL: There's a major difference between myself and Crombie. Crombie got into office after three

years as an alderman. When he was an alderman he didn't do very much, so that you could have some experience that you could draw upon to say that Crombie is going to deliver certain things.

EXCALIBUR: Why did you make the "image-change" to a suit and tie, as opposed to your old stand-by leather jacket?

SEWELL: I made that change on June 15 when I said that I was running for mayor for two reasons. One, I wanted to let people know in a physical way that I was running for mayor. I've always thought that it's important in politics to try and explain things in simple, physical ways so people can understand me.

EXCALIBUR: Do you still want to say, now, that you are different? SEWELL: I think that's apparent now in terms of my politics. I've established that now, but in 1969, when I first got elected, it wasn't all that clear.

But I'm not all that different than a lot of members of council. When I was in council first in 69-72 there was hardly anybody in council who agreed with me. But now, in fact, I can win a fair number of votes, so I'm not all that different than a lot of the other politicians.

The second reason I changed to a suit and tie is that I think people assume that anyone who is running for mayor should look responsible and wear the right costume, so I'm not about to embarrass anyone with my clothes. I never have, in fact.

EXCALIBUR: What are your policies regarding the TTC? SEWELL: I'm really worried about the TTC and I think the TTC is going under. The policies they're pursuing are policies that are just going to do the TTC in. They're raising fares, they're cutting back on service and they're building massive commuter lines. First of all we should never raise the fares. There should be no



Alderman Sewell and chairman Godfrey clash again over the budget in this Macpherson-eye view from 1977.

more fare increases for ten years because every time we raise the fares we lose riders. They're having desperate financial problems, so what they're trying to do is cut back on service in order to save money. Again, they lose riders.

You'd have the same problem if you decrease the service in the suburbs. Now I realize the service in the suburbs is a bit crazy, with the buses coming by every 20 minutes. The problem with the suburbs is that they have not designed more transit. The population density is very low, so the bus comes down the street and there are a lot less people to pick up.

EXCALIBUR: Do you think the citizens of North York have any interest in the local politics of the city? SEWELL: Sure. North York is a suburb of Toronto, when it comes right down to it. Nobby says, 'hey, it's Friday night, let's go to the North York Centre'. That's a joke. People come to come of the things that are going on in the city, so that everything that we do here relates to them, just as everything they do out there relates to us.

Jane-Finch is the powerkeg in Metro, which is going to blow up in the next couple of years.

What I would do with Jane-Finch is have more development there. I mean as far as I know there is no place you can go drinking at Jane and Finch. It doesn't operate in the way a downtown area operates where there is lots of amenities and you don't have to go out of your way.

EXCALIBUR: What's your position on extending the Allen expressway? SEWELL: Totally opposed. Travelling in automobiles in the city is not a useful way to travel, particularly if you are doing it in rush hour.

You want to see the worst traffic jams in the world in rush hour? Don't look for them in the city, look for them

in North York. You can't move. What we don't want to do is have the downtown travel patterns upset by having more cars here. Right now 70 per cent of the people who get out of downtown in the afternoon rush hour do it by transit. If we got more cars downtown things are going to just break down. It means that travel is going to be much slower for everyone.



Mel Lastman, mayor of North York. Lastman is an ardent critic of Sewell.

EXCALIBUR: So you think there should be more development in the suburbs then?

SEWELL: Sure. So there's an opportunity of serious work in the suburbs. Because a city that's based on people spending an hour, an hour and a half travelling, that's the most inefficient city in the world. It's not fair to force people to do that and it's too costly. Let me give you an example. Sixty per cent of the people who live in Mississauga and who have jobs work in Toronto. Sixty per cent of the jobs in Mississauga are filled by people who live in Toronto.

EXCALIBUR: What do you think of the proposal of the TTC former strikers who proposed that fares be eliminated as a means to get cars off the road? SEWELL: Well, I don't agree with it. We need the money and I think people are willing to pay a reasonable fare. I think everyone is quite willing to pay 35 or 40 cents to get on the subway. And if they're willing to do it we might as well take the money.

700,000 people a day. The GO transit about half the size of a Dundas streetcar is a mickey mouse operation. The subsidies are amazing. The subsidies are \$3.75 per rider. We can't afford it.

EXCALIBUR: Isn't the principle of living in the open suburbs and going to work in the developed city a good one? SEWELL: What I think you have to ask is are the suburbs a good place to live? It's not the best form. The distances are too great. There aren't corner stores. I believe that corner stores are a real necessity. Secondly, you can't have good transit in the suburbs. You simply can't afford it. It's much too expensive.

And what purpose does the open space serve? I think its safer downtown, there's more people. If somebody yells on the street here, it's not just me who hears it, it is a whole bunch of people who hear it. Nobody has any problem walking the streets of Toronto.

The John White Society is having a mayoralty debate at noon, October 18, in Moot Court. Guest speakers are John Sewell, Tony O'Donohue and David Smith.



Pisworth of the Toronto Star's impression of Metro chairman Paul Godfrey making it to first base in attempt to get \$1.5 million for a proposed baseball stadium in 1975.

Eric A. Havelock Marshall McLuhan "Dialogue on HAROLD INNIS"

Professor Ian Drummond, moderator presented by the Harold Innis Foundation Innis Town Hall, U. of T. 2 Sussex Ave. Toronto 978-7023 Saturday, 14 Oct., 2 p.m.

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YORK UNIVERSITY If you are unable to attend this information meeting, ask your questions by writing to: Student Affairs Office, Faculty of Administrative Studies, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2P6 — or call (416) 667-2532.