

EXCALIBUR

Everything secret degenerates: nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

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There is a case for a new election

Liberal democracy is at best a precarious thing. Its elections are boasted about by politicians as proof of their earned power. As anyone knows, liberal democracy favors those with power and wealth who can buy votes in a rather indirect way.

Council of the York Student Federation operates closer to a socialist democracy. The candidates are given equal coverage in the media and equal support from the council (\$25 each). So from that point onwards the discrepancies begin.

In York's case, there was no money to slant the vote — nobody bought advertisements. Therefore the pressure on the chief returning officer to ensure a mechanically honest election is severe because — except for campaigning a little here and there — it's the only real place where you can effectively add votes in a dishonest way.

Although the pressure was obviously there, the present CYSF failed to take their job seriously. The chief returning officer Bob Williamson was ill-equipped to handle the election. The irregularities began from the day the election began.

First, there was no polling booth for Atkinson so ballots were passed around in class. No identification was required, there was nothing to prevent duplication of voting. A statement was read from the Atkinson Student Association executive urging Atkinson students to vote for Theobald.

Quite correctly, the ballots were later invalidated. But the procedures were allegedly continued despite the chief returning officer's ban of reading the statement supporting Theobald.

At the polling stations, there were no voter lists to check names. A checkmark (or facsimile) was written on each student's paper sessional validation card although some polls accepted plastic identification cards where ink could be easily rubbed off. But none of these cards give proof as to which

college a student belongs. Technically then, non-Stong or non-MacLaughlin students could vote in those elections. College G or Calumet students whose college councils have decided not to be a part of CYSF elections — could vote even though technically they were ineligible. And despite repeated requests

to separate each college's votes, Williamson refused.

But the main crux of the irregularities lie with Atkinson. Because Williamson asked that their ballots not be folded, he was able to estimate that about 380 were cast from there. When these increased ballots were being counted, the vote was heavily in favor of John Theobald. The ballots were interspersed with those which had written comments such as "Yea Atkinson" or by spoiled ones such as "I don't know the candidates." The latter were the more honest.

There are charges that professors — not noted for their conscientious role as returning officers in student elections — simply left ballots lying around to be filled out several times.

But then Atkinson should never have voted. In the constitutional games, president Michael Fletcher gave Atkinson 11,000 students full voting rights without their paying for any of the services. They still only pay 25 cents per course registration or roughly \$1.25 for every five course loads for the \$10 regular York students have to pay. It was an illogical move matched by

Atkinson's student bureaucrats trying to manipulate the Atkinson vote which they most successfully did. (If Atkinson is to vote in CYSF elections, then they should pay an equal amount to CYSF services — \$2 per course registration.)

A great number of problems might have been resolved if the ballots had been kept separated according to college. Then, had there been any question about the Atkinson vote they could have been invalidated without cause for a new election.

There have been charges of individuals ripping down Belfont and Petrelli posters which no doubt Theobald's supporters can counter-charge with the same accusation. Although there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Theobald had any direct dealing with the Atkinson executive or any unscrupulous supporters, there is also no evidence to show that in the interest of fair play he tried to stop them.

With this — and the question of irregular polling hours and of political candidates manning polls in their own constituencies — there appears to be little doubt of a very strong case for a new election.

And the referendums

As the referendum results show, nobody but nobody likes increased fees. Governments — should they ever put taxes up to a referendum — would certainly watch them get soundly defeated.

Ohio is notorious for its bond issues which fail every time when out to the vote — even though the funds are slated towards education they are defeated — because people just don't see the point of increased taxes. It hits too close to home.

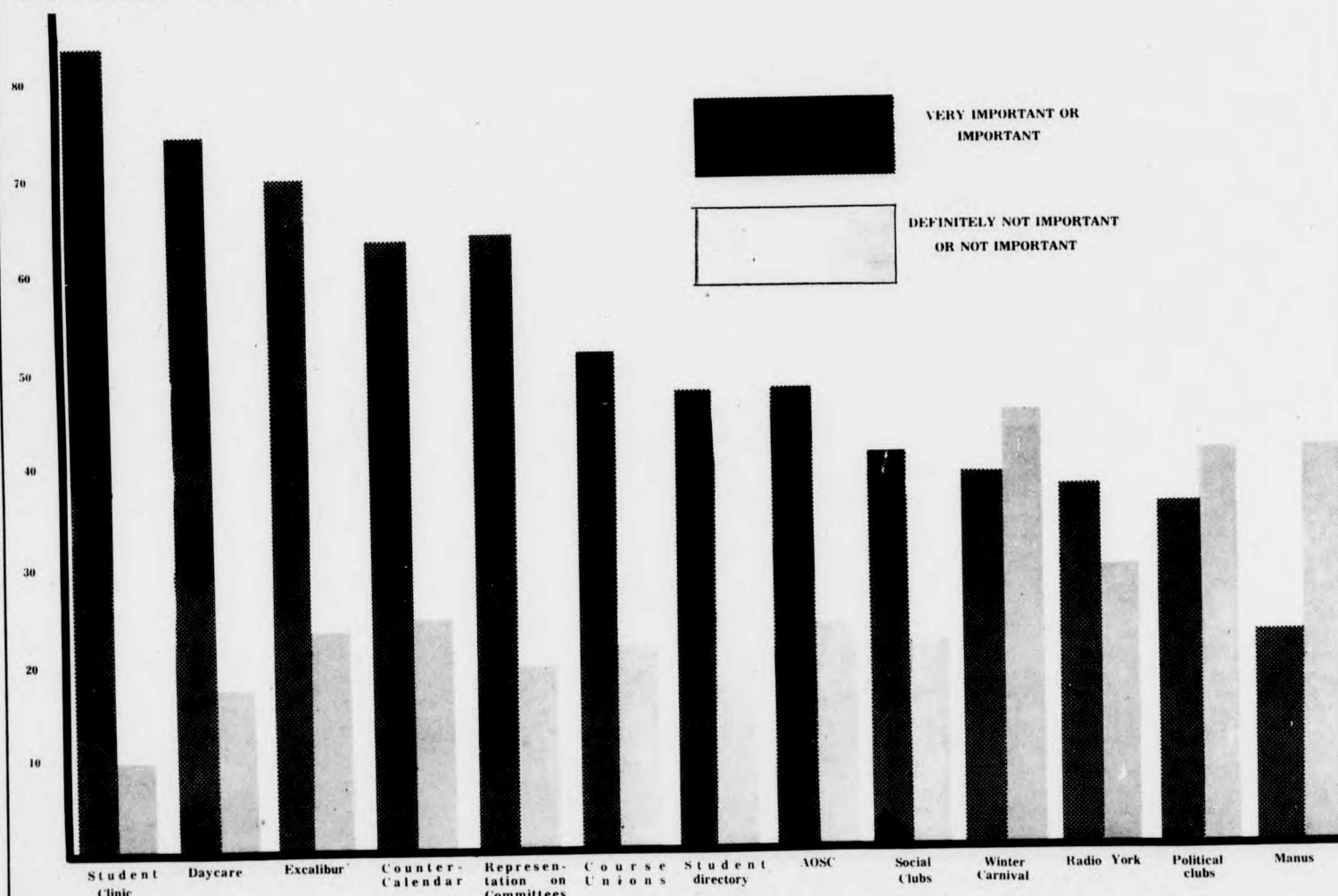
Thus, the York University Newspaper Act and Student Union Building with their \$2 and \$10 were defeated quite decisively. Yet as the opinion chart above points out quite clearly, Excalibur did well coming third (at 70 percent) after the student clinic (84 percent) and daycare in importance (76 percent).

Radio York was dealt another unfair blow when 26 percent quite logically said they didn't know how they felt about the station. As a medium, reaching a limited number of people now this 'don't know' vote wasn't too surprising.

Perhaps another surprising feature of the poll was that 66 percent felt that student representation on York's many committees was important or very important — despite York's inherent lack of community and the high sense of alienation among students.

How you felt about the services

PERCENT (excluding "don't know" figures)



Did you see any?

Did you see any election irregularities during last week's CYSF election? If so, send a signed statement along with your phone number and college affiliation to 'Election' c/o Excalibur, Central Square Ross. We need it by 6 pm today.