

A politician talks at election time: "York is middle class"

Interview

TIM REID

Tim Reid, a lecturer in economics at York is a Liberal candidate in the October 17 election. He is a U of T graduate and while there he established a football scoring record that lasted eight years. He also played one season with the Hamilton Tiger Cats. EXCALIBUR talked with Professor Reid to discover his opinions on specific issues both within politics and within the university:

EXCALIBUR: Prof. Reid, is York a middle class university?

REID: Yes, definitely so.

EXCALIBUR: Would you then support free tuition to help change this or are you satisfied with POSAP? Robert Nixon, leader of your party said free tuition will come in about ten years. Could a Liberal government shorten this waiting period?

REID: I think free tuition will come, in about seven to ten years. POSAP, however, should be completely overhauled. Mandatory parental contribution is an infringement on personal rights. There should be no means test.

EXCALIBUR: Do you support the idea of student representation on the board of governors; are students responsible and mature enough to have more control over decision making in the university.

REID: Yes, definitely. A university is a community of scholars; students are part of this community and should participate in any decision-making affecting them. The students should be able to elect some (not more than one quarter) of the members of the Senate and of the Board of Governors, but the process must be democratic. Students, I think, are responsible enough to allow a system like this to work.

DRAFT DODGERS

EXCALIBUR: Are you part of the New Left?

REID: No. I think they are more dogmatic than the old socialists. I am a member and support the Company of Young Canadians (CYC).

EXCALIBUR: How do you feel about U.S. draft dodgers in Canada? Would you support an organization helping them get settled in Toronto?

REID: I would support them. I think they can raise the level of academic discussion in our classrooms.

EXCALIBUR: Did your stay in England as a Rhodes Scholar have any influence on your politics?

REID: My two years in England made me even more of a reformer than I was previously. I saw the necessity for equality of opportunity in social mobility. I first became interested in economics when I visited India and saw how poverty stricken the people actually were. I wanted to help in some way.

EXCALIBUR: Do you support Premier Robarts 'Confederation of Tomorrow' conference?

REID: Yes, I do, but I object to the way he is going about it. He has not made his views known.

EXCALIBUR: Is Ontario "the land of opportunity"?

REID: Potentially, yes; in ac-

tuality, no. There is appalling inequality between the 'rich' and the 'poor'. One quarter of the people of Ontario are extremely poor. To most people, and to the Canadian government, however, these people are invisible.

HOUSING REFORMS

EXCALIBUR: Do the Liberals have any housing policies? Was the federal government's hiking of the N.H.A. mortgage rate to 8 1/4 per cent a mistake, or was it sound economics?

REID: The federal government should subsidize a second mortgage between, say, 6 and 8 1/4 per cent to allow people to afford a down payment. From an economist's point of view, Sharp is right about one thing--the higher interest rate will attract more private funds to the industry, but the crucial point is that four-fifths of the people cannot obtain a just mortgage. The one-fifth, the relatively wealthy, can easily get housing now. So there may be more housing constructed but only for the wealthy. We need planning and legislation, or we will be faced with a severe housing crisis, involving those earning under \$8000 a year. The federal government should subsidize at least 3 per cent to put housing within the reach of this four-fifths. We subsidize coal and agriculture, and housing is at least as important. Every Canadian has a right to a place to live.

EXCALIBUR: Would you press for reforms in other components of the social sector, for example, control on air and water pollution?

REID: The Conservative government must clean up its own backyard before it exhorts industry to do so. The Ontario Hydro plant in Toronto is the worst agent of air pollution in the province. Secondly, new industries locating in Ontario have anti-pollution devices figured in their costs of production. When I was in Germany, I travelled down the Rhine. Industries there are allowed to use its water but must put it back

in the same clean condition in which they got it. There are regular checks and stiff fines, starting at around \$5000 for a single infraction.

CAMPAIGN FUNDS

EXCALIBUR: Do the Liberals have a chance of forming the next Ontario provincial government? If they do, what position will you seek?

REID: I think we definitely do

have lost some money. Some people don't want their name on an official list and want to give more than \$300, but there are people donating small sums who never donated anything to a political campaign before. We have had over two hundred contributions--all but twenty gave under \$30. This means grass roots participation.

The only way to win an election--to counter a paper, billboard, and barbecue campaign--is through personal contact, giving the voter positive reasons for voting. In 1963 there was only a 56 per cent vote turnout; this year, I believe 70 per cent will vote.

The people in my riding know me--I've worn out two pairs of shoes calling on the constituents of this riding.

COFFEE PARTIES

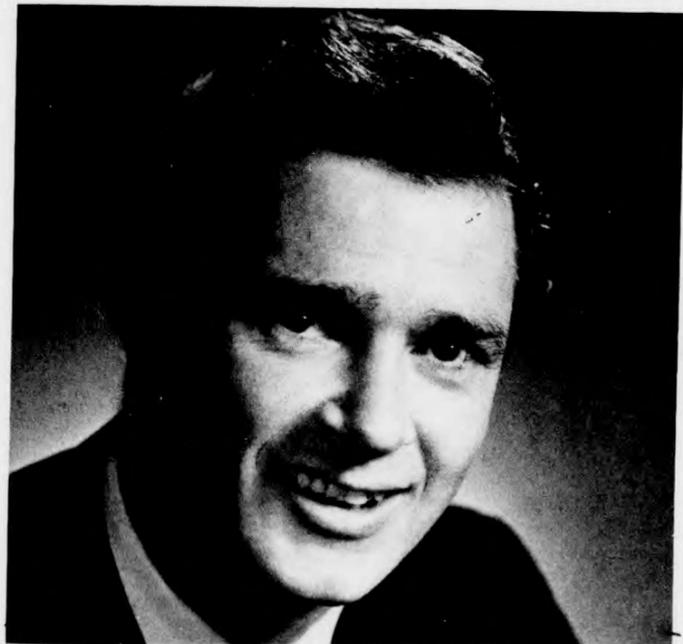
EXCALIBUR: Does the fact that you are an university lecturer have any influence on your constituents?

REID: What the professor is, is what counts--not the 'professor image'. What is needed in an MPP is competence--a high quality of work. He must give at least eight hours a day, five days a week, 52 weeks a year. The problems in society are so complex today, we need men who can understand this complexity, try different solutions. Secondly, there must be a personal link between government and the individual homeowner, between elections as well as at election time. There must be open meetings and coffee parties between elections so that the politicians can find out what the people think and want. He must be continually accountable to his constituents.

EXCALIBUR: What is the 'New Politics' you mentioned before?

REID: The New Politics is openness: openness in society, in government, in the university. The 'backroom' must go from labor unions, government, even from CUS. People want to participate in the decisions affecting their lives. I believe in openness for York University--in a positive sense. It is open now somewhat, and I think President Ross is making a real attempt to involve students in the university.

One of the NICE things about Democracy is that you can come to such an INTERESTING place like York and learn all about how socio-economic forces determine people's lives and how if I had been born in those NASTY slums I would have been a high school drop-out and all that stuff; - but the WONDERFUL thing is that when election time comes round I'm still free to vote Conservative just like Mummy and Daddy!



Tim Reid, Liberal Candidate Scarborough East
"Well, if I lose there's always football"