

OREGON *Daily* EMERALD

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Politics Again

It may prove to be a good thing that the ASUO executive council Tuesday rejected the motion to substitute plurality vote for the present clumsy and artificial preferential voting system. Now the only method remaining to place this proposed amendment to the ASUO constitution on a ballot for student ratification will be a petition to that effect signed by 100 students. This petition, as well as the exec council's action, will only prove that the whole movement against preferential voting was initiated by selfish political motives, regardless of the high-sounding phrases with which the plurality vote has been blessed by its proponents.

The preferential system of voting was adopted in 1936 by the executive council. Its chief virtue was that it insured an equal number of representatives from each political party, Greek and Independent, on the executive council, regardless of the actual student vote numerically. The complex working of this system were explained in a recent issue of the Emerald after a survey showed that most students had no comprehension of the meaning of the preferential method.

For a long time the preferential system was hailed by the Independents because it assured them, a minority group, of a voice in student government.

Now that the Independents are numerically far superior to the Greeks and are generally considered as sure winners of the coming elections, the Independents as a party, with Ted Hallock as their chief spokesman on the executive council, are opposing preferential voting and supporting the proposed plurality vote.

The Greeks, with the exception of one, were evidently solidly against the plurality measure at the executive council meeting Tuesday. ASUO President Tom Kay expressed his objection to the proposed amendment.

Oddly enough, some time ago Mr. Kay told Hallock and the Emerald editor that he personally believed the preferential system was clumsy and inefficient, pointing out that certain student body officers who were put into position by the system (not by actual count of student vote) really were not interested in their government.

Now it must be evident that President Kay changed his mind about this rather important matter for some good reason. It must be because he believes the Greeks are now the minority party and their chances of winning elective student government positions would be lessened if the plurality system were put into effect. Kay feels that it would be more fair to have members of both political parties in governmental positions.

The only conclusion that can reasonably be drawn from these facts is that the question of preferential voting versus plurality voting is being used as a political tool by both parties, regardless of good government or the wishes of the voters. It must also be noted that while the Independents were the underdogs they complained of "dirty Greek politics" and unfair treatment, and damned TNE, secret Greek organization of the political elite, to hell. Now that the Independents believe they may come to power they are on the road to using the same methods Greeks were accused of. And the Greeks, fearing the twilight of their Golden Age, are wary of anything which might benefit the other side and are suspicious of every Independent move.

We have long lost our naivete in believing in the value or the importance of student government except in that it trains students to recognize their responsibility as citizens. Matters decided by the ASUO rarely affect the University significantly, just as the "powerful" influence of the Emerald is actually more like the proverbial voice crying in the wilderness.

However, where matters of principle are at stake, we must still make our comments and attempt to explain the situation. In this matter of voting systems, regardless of party pressures from both sides, it must be understood by the students that the plurality system means that the candidate voted for by the numerical majority of students receives the position, and his opponent loses. The Emerald believes this system, used by our state government, is the better of the two because it expresses the idea of majority rule intrinsic in a democratic system of government.

Regardless of opposition from either party, the Emerald will support this proposed amendment.

Telling the Editor...

About the American Legion

Recently a representative of the American Legion had dinner at my living organization and afterwards was introduced and given time to tell our veterans about veterans' organizations, the American Legion in particular, attempting to find out how much interest lay in joining the Legion and forming a University Post. He listed other veterans' groups which were "recommended": Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, etc.; also included one which was "not recommended": The American Veterans' Committee (AVC). Later when asked specifically why the AVC was not recommended he stated it was "Communist-dominated" and also named contributors to the AVC to prove his point. (This list included Eleanor Roosevelt which seemed intended to dispel any doubt.) He also cited the case of Life magazine which he said had had an article, apparently when the Legion wasn't looking, which had as its theme: "Citizens first—veterans second."

Citizens First

When asked specifically about the citizens first—veterans second issue he then said the Legion was not against it specifically, but his earlier remarks certainly suggested that no veteran was a citizen first when his interests were involved. I asked him about the bonus question (he had earlier implied that a bonus might be a thing to expect in the future). He told me that the Legion had at their San Francisco convention this year come out against the granting of a bonus. But now he added that the Legion was waiting to see "what you boys want."

When the discussion switched to the AVC he turned again to the communism theme. I suggested that

their stand on domestic issues, as well as their organizational motto, was "Citizens first—Veterans second." He in turn said they had "advocated giving up the atom bomb and disarmament." The Legion, it seems, has not recognized that there is no bomb secret to hide, that armaments offer somewhat feeble reassurances in the face of destructive power from which there is no protection.

Communism

Finally I inquired whether the Legion had, at the San Francisco convention, withdrawn the distinguished service medal for Americanism that it had awarded earlier to William Randolph Hearst. Some of the Legion Posts have been protesting this award. This he did not know. He said, though, that Hearst had always fought communism, and of course the Legion was against communism too, that it was no better than fascism and nazism (which it has been proven Hearst has actively supported).

Americanism

I am a veteran but not a member of any veterans' organization. My interest is that of a citizen. And as a citizen I think we need to be particularly wary of the type of "Americanism" that is being distributed by the Legion and their concern for the veterans' best interests as they define them. I recognize that a minor official of an organization does not necessarily know or reflect the motives of that organization. But his and the Legion's attitudes we dare not ignore. Democracy has not been designed as the tool of any narrowly defined pressure block, be it for the interests of veterans or the National Association of Manufacturers. The Legion's representative told us that now all veterans' organizations

(with the implied exception of the AVC) were working together, and that the policy of "you back our bill and we'll back your's" was coordinating smoothly. Such statements showing the potential power of an interest group in national affairs cannot be entirely based on bad judgment in the use of phrases.

Democracy

As citizens and veterans our real self interest is with having Democracy work in a changing world. Demanding bonuses ("if that's what you boys want") is not the answer. Nor is Hearst's and the Legion's "Americanism." Are they to define Americanism and national self-interest as beginning here and ending there and beyond that you're a communist? That too easily forms the ranks for an army to defend the nation from "radicals;" we saw the pattern in Europe after the first World War and its later development.

The nation during these transitional days from war to a new peace with itself and the world must exercise concern for its best interests, but with vision we may see beyond all too apparent and confusing immediate issues to national and world order in which self interests and Americanism will perhaps have different definitions than have been known in the past. The same kind of thinking, too, must have been the concern of the recreated citizen, the veteran, when he defines his own self-interests and chooses the organization that will be the best medium through which those interests may find expression.

Norman J. Johnston.

Editor's Note: Further discussion of this subject by our readers is invited.

Editor's Note:

Nyah, Nyah and Nyah

By SELBY FRAME
and KAY LESLIE

Dear Editor:

Why couldn't the vigil of All Hallows have been kept with the merrymaking and jollity of old times? The conduct of the students participating in their obscenities was abominable.

Signed,

DISTURBED.

Editor's note:

It's against our policy to print unsigned letters but for a letter of such import we make an exception. What's the matter, were you scared by a jack o'lantern in your youth? Nyah, nyah, nyah.

Dear Editor:

The other morning I received my Emerald in which only the headlines appeared. Must the student be content with such incomplete coverage?

Signed,

NONPLUSED

Editor's Note:

It's against our policy to print unsigned letters but for a letter of such magnitude we make an exception.

Well, do you have time to read more than headlines in the morning anyway? Take your troubles elsewhere. Nyah, nyah, nyah.

Dear Editor:

I'm a vet. I've seen the blood and guts of war. I grew a beard in every foxhole in the South Pacific and I'm not going to let it happen again. No traditionalist is going to put my head in the barrel.

Signed,

PEACHFUZZ

Editor's Note:

It's against our policy to print unsigned letters but for a letter

of such purport we make an exception.

Come on, get in the spirit, we can all be kids again. Nyah, nyah, nyah.

Dear Editor:

A paper without a gossip column is like a campus without a student union building. What would someone like poor ol' Jud Bermain think

if he looked in the paper now?

Signed,

TWO OLD GOATS

Editor's Note:

It's against our policy to print unsigned letters but for a letter of signification we make an exception.

Where are your intestines?

Humpf, kid stuff. Nyah, nyah, nyah.

Dear Editor:

The other morning I spent thirty desperate minutes trying to get to the pencil sharpener in the Co-op. I (Please turn to page seven)

SOAP BOX DERBY



By ROY FRANCIS

Every media of exchanging opinions openly proclaim this to be the time for decision; the need for change is expressed in every manner and means. Not only does this apply to such fantastic ideas as new political parties, one world, and all the stuff like that there, but it is equally apropos to the field of education. If ever there has been a classic example of a cultural lag it is in the field of American education.

At best it stems from a woeful lack of modern ideas and needs; at worst a patent hypocrisy. Why should the educators worry over psychological theories when they

have obviously workable techniques in the world of business?

Educators

Something should be done, and done immediately, to create a new interest in things academic. It is apparent to the most casual on-looker that lack of purpose in college student bodies is a truism rapidly becoming trite. Not that it is due to the stupidity of the student; nor is it due to the cupidity of the educators; they seem scarce to know just where their butter substitute is coming from.

But an application of advertising techniques would do a great deal towards stimulating class room

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