What Gordon Tullock Really Said

TO THE EDITOR:

Now that there is a citation index for the social sciences, every footnote citation can be depended upon to increase the real wealth of a scholar. Under the circumstances, I am happy to be cited in the Arcelus and Meltzer article.1 Unfortunately, what Arcelus and Meltzer say I said is almost the exact opposite of what I really did say.2

I suspect that Arcelus and Meltzer in fact depended on Riker and Ordeshook,3 Riker and Ordeshook were working not from the final text of my book, but from a very early draft. Further, so far as I can see, they had somewhat imperfect memories of what was in even this early draft. However, because of the wide circulation their joint textbook has achieved, this particular misinterpretation of my views is becoming a widely cited part of my "works."

I should not like to close this comment without saying that this particular slip on the part of Arcelus, Meltzer, Riker, and Ordeshook does not, in my view, detract from the general excellence of their work. Indeed, I have used An Introduction to Positive Political Theory in teaching and intend to continue using it. But even Homer nods.

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1 "Tullock, p. 110-114, argues that in a typical election, there are many voters so P is small and R is negative. He concludes that voting is irrational. Riker and Ordeshook, p. 28-34 respond that P depends on the closeness of the election, not just the number of voters and also add D to the equation." Francisco Arcelus and Allan H. Meltzer, "The Effect of Aggregate Economic Variables on Congressional Elections," APSR, 69 (December, 1975), fn. 11, p. 1233.

2 "The equation, if it is thought to be in any way descriptive of the real world, would imply that people would be more likely to vote in close elections, . . . since D would be larger . . . . The . . . hypothesis was tested by Riker and Ordeshook and found to be correct." Gordon Tullock, Toward a Mathematics of Politics (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), pp. 110-11.


Whom Did Wallace Hurt in 1968?

TO THE EDITOR:

The possibility of a Wallace-As-Independent candidacy in 1976 raises anew the question of the effect of his candidacy on the 1968 election.

A great deal has been written about the roots of the Wallace vote and about the Wallace sympathizers who nevertheless voted for a major party candidate (see: Lipset and Raab, The Politics of Unreason [New York: Harper and Row, 1970], 338-427). But Wallacites who remained hidden cannot have figured in Wallace's effect on the outcome in 1968. Wallace's impact must be measured by discussing actual Wallace voters and by figuring out how much the outcome would have differed if he had not run against Humphrey and Nixon.

If Wallace voters had strictly followed their ordinary party preferences, it would have been unambiguous that Humphrey paid the heavier price for the Wallace candidacy. Consider the data in Table 1.

But of course voters do not strictly follow partisanship, and knowledge of party identification will not help us predict the votes of "independents." According to Brody and Page ("Indifference,Alienation and Rational Decision," Public Choice, 15 [1973], 1-17) and Kelley and Mirer ("The Simple Act of Voting," American Political Science Review, 68 [June 1974], 572-591), voters appear to follow relatively simple decision rules. By using these rules we can examine the distribution of expected votes of those who voted for Wallace in 1968 under the counterfactual condition of no Wallace candidacy.

These decision rules are: (1)—Voters who say they favor1 one candidate more than another are very likely—on the order of 95 per cent—to vote for their favored candidate. This rule holds regardless of how much they favor their favorite or even whether their most favored candidate is rated unfavorably. Americans appear to distinguish the lesser of two evils or the greater of two goods and vote accordingly. (2) Voters who are neutral or indifferent toward the candidates, i.e., those voters who give the candidates the same favorability rating, tend to vote for the candidate of their party.

Applying these rules to Wallace voters in 1968 we find that Humphrey was hurt more by Wallace's candidacy than Nixon was. But the disadvantage is not nearly as marked as the distribution of Wallace voters' partisanship would lead us to expect. Combining the two samples, the joint distribution on the two decision rules is shown in Table 2.

These data lead us to conclude that absent the Wallace candidacy, 55 per cent of the Wallace voters would have voted for Humphrey, 42 per

1 Favorability is measured here by candidate "thermometer" ratings in the SRC sample and by a Likert scale in the ORC sample. Previous studies have shown that the two formats yield identical results as far as the decision rules are concerned.