The Election Of Okuda

MUCH CRITICISM of the recent election of Kenji Okuda has come to our ears. In general, what these criticisms have amounted to is an assertion that the election of Okuda was an irrational act motivated by reasons of sentiment rather than reasoned judgment. We are glad to say that at least no criticism has been levelled at Okuda himself, because at all events, regardless of what our motivations were in electing him, he now deserves our unanimous support. But his election has been so misinterpreted in some quarters that we feel called upon to throw light on some unfortunate misapprehensions.

We believe that the students who elected Kenji Okuda to the presidency of the Student Council did so for two main reasons. He was elected primarily on the basis of merit, emphasis being placed on his platform which he capably presented in chapel and in the *Review*, and also on his chapel address on the relocation problem. A lesser point in Okuda's favor, but by no means one to be minimized, was the fact that he was a man. But those who voted for Okuda for the sake of a "gag", or an exhibition of cheap liberalism were an insignificant minority. However poor our criteria for the selection of a candidate were, certainly the large majority of those of us who backed Okuda had no such exhibitionist tendencies.

And about Okuda's qualifications; it has been charged that he has not been here long enough to know anything about Oberlin. But is long residence in Oberlin in itself a genuine prerequisite for eligibility to the Student Council presidency? In his chapel speech and in his platform statement published in the *Review* Okuda demonstrated most adequately that he was aware of the problems facing Oberlin student government. It may even be added that knowledge of Oberlin student government tradition has less importance now than ever before because of the peculiarity of the wartime situation.

We will not question the motives of those who think so disparagingly of the Oberlin student electorate. They were undoubtedly sincere, but unfortunately, uninformed. It would be fruitless to attempt to interpret the election as a "meaningful demonstration of Oberlin liberalism." The majority of those who voted for Okuda never intended that their votes be seen in any such light—R.L.S.