

# Montpelier's Voting Confusion Exaggerated

"What confusion?" Robert L. Jeffrey, Montpelier city clerk asked when queried about the city's mechanical voting devices.

"The only confusion occurred at 9 a.m., when the polls opened and many people arrived to vote at the same time," he said.

"Some people still do not know what district they belong in and go to the wrong tables to get their ballots. They are accustomed to the ward system of voting and the city continues to use the ward system at the March meeting," he said.

The IBM mechanical punch card voting machines were purchased by the city this year following one year's use on a trial basis. Money for payment of the machines was listed in the 1968 budget, voted for at the March meeting, and paid for two months ago.

Voting booths at the primary election were marked "Demo-

crat" or "Republican", and one voter complained to him about going to a booth so marked, Jeffrey said. "Her objection was on the issue that all people at the city hall could see how she voted," he said.

Another voter objected to placing the punched voting tickets, without covers, in the ballot boxes, he said. "Envelopes in which to place the ballots were at each ballot table and the voter could have received a cover by asking for it," Jeffrey said.

"More than 100 ballots had been mutilated in the same manner and could not be put through the IBM counting machines. These had to be taken back to the city hall, counted and tabulated by hand," he said. The mutilation consisted of bent or rumped ballots.

"All the work of counting and tabulating the Montpelier ballots was completed by 9:15," he said.