Taking Schools Out of Politics

Dave Logan Proposes Three Constitutional Amendments

ON - POLITICAL governing boards for the various state educational institutions is the constructive suggestion of Dave M. Logan, '16 geol., member of the state house of representatives from Okmulgee.

An earnest friend of higher education in Oklahoma, he sponsored the bill which the eleventh legislature passed, placing the board of regents of the University of Oklahoma beyond political machinations. The present board is serving under that law.

Former students and alumni of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical college have been insistent that their college be withdrawn from the political arena. They have formed an active organization and have rallied to the support of President Bennett, who is desirous of eliminating politics from his school.

Mr. Logan's bill in the eleventh legislature is subject to legislative changes, however. He has now prepared a bill which would submit to the people the proposition of changing the constitution through amendments creating non-political boards for the state university, the state agricultural college and the various state teachers' colleges and state schools.

His proposal has been warmly greeted by many editors of the state, and there seems no doubt that the twelfth legislature will act with favor on his bill. And certainly, alumni of the university will not be backward in helping secure the endorsement of citizens of Oklahoma to the constitutional amendment, once it is submitted for a vote. On this question, all state schools should see alike, in Mr. Logan's opinion. And this opinion is shared by many alumni of the university.

Mr. Logan visited the university December 9, at which time he outlined for members of the University of Oklahoma Association his proposal.

"Oklahoma is now of age and the time is ripe to remove even the suspicion of political intrigue from the control of the state's institutions of higher learning," he declared.

"Regardless of anything else which may happen during the coming session of the legislature, let us hope that the twelfth legislature will be known as the one that took our schools out of politics.

"The progress of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical college has been hampered more than that of any other state institution on account of its form of administrative control. If taken from the university and the agricultural and mechanical colleges, why not go all the way with a third amendment and provide for a non-political state board of education?

"This would protect the six teachers' colleges in the state from the danger of an upheaval following a change of political administrations. Our schools for training teachers should be given the same protection afforded our other colleges.

"The constitutional amendment freeing the state board of education from political dictation could be made to give that board the authority to select the state superintendent of public instruction. This would remove that office from partisan politics and, in my opinion, would be the most constructive act of the three amendments.

"These constitutional changes will have to have certain safeguards. The board members should be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, and should be subject to removal by impeachment or by court action. There should be nine members of each of the boards mentioned; the term expiring one each year. This would prevent any politically minded chief executive from dominating the board during a four-year administration.

"It may be well to provide that a certain number of the board of regents of the agricultural and mechanical colleges hold degrees from one of the agricultural and mechanical colleges or that a certain number be farmers. Certain scholastic attainments could be made a prerequisite to membership on the board of education. To prevent politics within the board it could be provided that no member would be eligible to become state superintendent until one year after serving with that body."

One result that is bound to come, should these changes become realities, would be uniform standards in curricula. A state board of education could correlate curricula of its various schools so that requirements would be uniform.