Politics as She Is in Practice Here

Politics, the national sport of Oklahoma, has reached its most elegant state of perfection on the fair campus of this celebrated university. The events of the last month have set more tongues wagging and more brains thinking than ever did textbook or learned professor.

The astute and unselfish lawyers have student politics in their Bismarckian grip. All the drammer, all the hoop, is done legally and in a manner that would excite the envy of the late lamented Mr. Barnum.

The generality of students have the same keen and inquiring interest in their government that the average citizen has. Thus they approved, heartily, we presume, a student constitution that virtually limits the presidency of the student council to members of the law school.

During the last several years only lawyers have been president of the student council. It is not because lawyers are the only species of homo sapiens who know the art of government. The reason lies in this interesting little "joker" in the student constitution setting out the requisites for the council president:

"He must at least be completing his third year of work at the time of his election."

To our way of thinking, this is one of the cleverest coups de main ever "put over" on our intellectual self-governing students—students, incidentally, who thirst for more power.

In practice, this constitutional clause limits the council presidency to lawyers.

And in this fashion: Elections are held at the end of the first semester and the new council and president assume office during the first semester. Now, any student in order to file for president of the council must be completing his third—or junior—year. In other words, no freshman, no sophomore and no junior, unless he is a junior who enrolled mid-year, is eligible for the presidency. There are relatively few who are thus accidentally qualified. The average senior, who is really the only person actually eligible, would serve only a half-year as president, leaving the vice-president, who must also possess the same peculiar qualification, to succeed him. Thus, an engineering student could serve only a half-year as president of the council. And the same is true of all other schools except one—the law school.

Having completed three years of arts and sciences work, the prospective lawyer enrolls in the law school for three more years of work. So he is the least bothered by the three year requirement. Graduate students, of course, have an obvious advantage over the regular arts and sciences student.

In keeping with this enlightened policy of lawyer-dominance, the students at the mid-year election this year named Morton Munson, president of the senior class, and a freshman lawyer, as president of the council.

His opponents were both lawyers. Roy Holbird, running as an independent candidate, is a junior lawyer. Don Dickason, candidate of the administration party, is a junior lawyer.

Munson was the candidate of the anti-administration party. Your guess up elaborate bills of political fare. Only a lawyer could discover the difference. The administration party was in the saddle and the antis were gripping the stirrup. By forty-eight votes, Mr. Munson became the jockey of student government instead of Mr. Dickason. Mr. Holbird suffered the same lampable fate that has attended all who have undertaken an independent path in American politics—he received 233 votes. The proportion of his votes to those of Munson was about that of Thomas to Smith in the presidential election last fall.

The election left the administration party with a majority of one on the student council. With commendable promptness and fortitude, the administration party decided not to let the totality of votes cast in the election for president interfere with righteous government, i.e., government by the administration party.

Thursday night, January 10, Mr. Munson et al., prepared to mount the mustang he had captured in the political paddock, and found to his grief, that the beast had a shrewish disposition.

The administration party succeeded in keeping the campus safe for who knows what by a motion that irked the antis exceedingly and caused their good souls to suffer grievous pain.

Robert Harbison, a member of the council and a junior lawyer, moved that "the power of appointing committees be withdrawn from the hands of the student council president and be placed in the hands of a committee of three, selected by the house."

Failing in their effort to prevent the use of proxies, the sorely tried antis withdrew from the meeting and the Harbison motion passed. Whereupon, Robert Shelton, administration party, acting president of the council, and a senior lawyer, was named chairman of the committee to name the committees.

So Mr. Munson enters on his administration shorn of his power by fellow lawyers. We might be inclined to weep with the antis, were the quarrel one of the student body; but under the present constitution, affairs of the student council are affairs of the law school. And we refuse to intervene in a strictly family quarrel.