

# The Cauldron Bubbled

It seemed like time to make a change if the Student Senate were to achieve its purpose.

The turbulent stream of argument which began on the student senate floor boiled out of the senate chamber onto the campus. Then it swept out of Norman into the state's newspapers.

President Cross commented:

"There is considerable evidence that the student body no longer recognizes the student senate as representative of the students."

Cross' statement had been prompted by a petition signed by more than 2,000 students. It asked for immediate dissolution of the present form of student government.

Student politics, always simmering, had reached the boiling point when Bob Blackstock, past president of the senate, declared:

"It is time to make a change and revamp the student senate if true representation of the student body is to be had."

"Because representatives are chosen according to their affiliation with certain groups and not on their merits as servants of the student body, they have ceased to carry out the job that students expect of them," he charged.

Launched at the University in 1945, the student senate has functioned for five years as a student governing body. During its existence it has handled appropriations for student activities, ironed out problems such as the distribution of athletic event tickets, and provided students with an official voice in University affairs.

Operating under a written constitution, the senate is composed of representatives elected by students in the various colleges and schools of the University.

Issues which became ingredients for the current political pot boiling centered around:

1. Charges that the constitution is inadequate.
2. Charges that senators represent cliques and use the senate for personal gain.
3. Charges that student elections are ineffective due to the lack of an adequate number of polling places.

The *Oklahoma Daily*, student newspaper, likened the student senate to a "three-ring circus." Its front page played the senate arguments in heavy black type while the editorial page threw both onions and orchids at the student senators.

Stanley Brown, senate president, an-

nounced: "All this criticism of the student senate is welcome. We are glad to see all this interest in it."

Then the senate made a peace offering to dissenters by passing an amendment providing for three extra polling places on the campus. This was in answer to the charge that poll locations prevented many students from voting in University elections.

Nurtured by coffee and cigarette chat sessions, the senate issue grew to such proportions that it called for the presence of President Cross at the March 22 senate session.

Addressing the senators, Cross warned, "Going off on an emotional tangent often leads to adverse criticism by the student body and newspaper."

Cross said he had "great hopes" for student government at the University. And he announced that the University has plans for student senate control over non-academic activities. But that shift would come later, he said.

When Cross had finished speaking, Senator John L. Johnson, a leader of the anti-constitution segment, introduced a bill asking for a constitutional convention in the spring of 1950. Calling for emergency action, the bill proposed adjournment of the present session of the senate upon the meeting of the convention. Function of the senate would be assumed by convention delegates chosen by the student body.

Rejected as an emergency measure, Johnson's bill was placed on the next week's agenda. This action was followed by the launching of a petition addressed to the senate.

On March 28, more than 2,000 students had signed a petition asking that the present membership of the student senate be dissolved and a constitutional convention elected by the student body to revise the student government.

Next day the *Daily* announced a student senate committee had visited President Cross' office to protest treatment given them by factions "backed by the student paper and radical elements on the campus." A protest to the publications board was also filed, asking that Morton Stone, editor of the *Daily*, be fired.

Stone's opinions moved from page two of the *Daily* to a front page editorial:

"The coyote is wailing. It's screaming

and spitting blood. It's been forced into the corner by the pressure of student opinion."

The senate refused to recognize the petition because the constitution does not provide for student initiative measures. And when Johnson introduced his bill for revision, the senate president announced the by-laws provide that a petition must be submitted to the senate one week before consideration is desired. The measure was delayed.

Feeling in campus political circles had reached the momentum of an Oklahoma tornado when President Cross again intervened. Editor Stone, Senate President Stanley Brown, and John L. Johnson, leader of the anti-constitution group, were asked to meet in the president's office.

A recently appointed faculty fact-finding committee was present to hear out the senate problems.

When the smoke cleared, it had been agreed that the present session of the senate would not be adjourned. And charges against the *Daily* would be dropped. Johnson agreed to drop the petition asking for abolishment of the senate. Brown agreed to shelve a petition asking for a vote of student confidence and constitutional revision by senate action alone.

When the truce had been proclaimed, the senate passed a bill calling for a constitution delegate election. The vote was 17-2 in favor of the measure.

After the convention bill had passed, opponents of Johnson brought impeachment proceedings against him. Senator Quay Williams, originator of the impeachment bill, based charges on "neglect of duties, offenses involving moral turpitude, and attempt to abolish the student senate for personal gains."

A final vote failed to obtain a two-thirds majority necessary for impeachment. The fight was over.

Early in May, the campus blossomed with campaign posters, booming candidates for election to the constitutional convention. The votes are in. And the political pot has reached the simmering level once again.

## Library Shelves Sag

The University library shelves are now two tons heavier. This mammoth stack of manuscripts was donated by the Kali-Inla Coal Mining Company, located near Hartshorne. The manuscripts are the records of the company from 1902 to 1936.

The sheets are inked with production and shipping records, photographs, maps and blueprints, summary and full business correspondence.

"These documents will be of particular value to students doing research in the fields of mining, business management and economics," Gaston Litton, '34ba, '40ma, archivist of the University said.