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THE INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT

In university politics as in national politics there is the ostensible and unreal, and the invisible and real. Elsewhere in this paper is described the ostensible, the unreal government as it makes itself known to an extrinsic observer, the good-citizen member of his class. In this column, we present the invisible class government as it manifests itself to one who has had the political process used on him and who has assisted in using the political process on others. For reasons that we shall here explain the machine and steam roller are much more facile tools in the hands of the average class politician than they were in the hands of the notorious Senator Quay and "Boss" Cox.

The facts about our invisible government are these: In the freshman and sophomore classes various competing groups are still struggling for supremacy. This is due to the fact that the lower classes are still young in political experience, still weak in the power of effective organization and unused to the habit of mutually beneficial material compromise. It is in the junior and senior classes that political machinery has reached its maximum effectiveness. In the junior class an informal but powerful junta of six or eight men provide for all the social life membership in that class affords. And our experience with this junta convinces us that it can easily be peeled down to nucleus of two exceptionally potent spirits. A small minority group has joined the machine, and the situation is now commonly spoken of, by those who have known, as "cinched." This is the junior class.

When you get up to the senior class, you find that by long applied, systematic effort most of the "irrelevant matter" has been excluded. Three, possibly four students entertain the senior class, as a class. These three students do not agree with each other

on anything. Political points upon an agreement which could be reached by persuasive means were all exhausted in the three years that preceded the senior year. Now there are between the four men who have controlled the class large and irreconcilable differences, differences which they all recognize, but which they never allow to interfere with election of any candidate whose elevation to office is at least equally beneficial to each member. The method by which this result is achieved is, of course, compromise; compromise for mutual material benefits, like hop tickets, a little "pull," or an automatic self-advertising job.

The above is a broad general outline, impersonally stated, of the real but hopeless intangible government of social life for the upper classes. The "sickenin'" details are a sort of specialty line of interest to those alone who are privy to "the system." Of the facts here presented we have not yet said what we think. We merely supposed that in addition to a front page eulogy of prospective candidates, and the alleged merits of the Australian ballot system, a slight taste of the real stuff about university politics would prove refreshingly beneficial to our readers. The next time the political pot boils over in these pages we will tell you whether machine control of class politics is right or wrong.

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