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# Discussion, The Honor System

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cussion, that seems to me to be very important, and it has not been touched upon. In the matter of our statutes, for instance, in Oklahoma, the Supreme Court, or the Board of Law Examiners appointed by the Supreme Court, accepts the certificate of the law school that the student has done three years' work and has passed his examinations, without question, as the basis for admitting the student to the bar. That statute as it now exists admits students to the bar upon the presentation of a diploma from the State University. Now, how can we make that certificate, as a part of the honor system, when we do not know whether it is properly done or not? It seems to me that, if we were to do that, we would be certifying without the knowledge that the examination had been honorably passed, except in so far as the knowledge that might be gained from this pledge of the student or the certificate that the examination had been properly passed by the student himself.

**Charles M. Hepburn, *University of Indiana Law School.***

I have been deeply interested in the honor system for a great many years, ever since I was at the University of Virginia under Dean Minor. Every now and then I have heard of its adoption elsewhere. Frequently I have been met with the plea that the honor system does exist in the University of Virginia, but it cannot be said to flourish anywhere else. I think that is a mistake, but it is the plea that I have often heard. The honor system will flourish in any locality, if it is let alone. I want to approve the remarks of one of the speakers, when he said that the duty of the faculty in reference to the honor system is to let it alone. The students will take care of that without the faculty taking any action. Let me illustrate that by something that occurred at the Bar Association meeting two or three years ago. The Dean of a law school told me that he did not believe in the honor system, and he said: "I have a good reason for it. I have tried it, and I have found in my own experience that it will not work." He said: "I tried it on my boys. I said to the boys that I was going to adopt the honor system, and that I was going to leave the room. I went out of the room. The door was ajar

a little, and I stopped and looked through the opening, and I went right back on the honor system at once." I agreed with him that it was a mistake in his case. But if you will let it alone it will flourish. I don't think that it ought to be put upon the class by taking a vote—by asking for a unanimous vote. I have my doubts as to whether it ought to be brought up in the faculty, either. I believe that it ought to be impressed upon the class that they are preparing for an honorable profession, where the judge on the bench will take their professional statements, and that we are going to accept their statements as honorable men. Now, when this is done, in most instances you will find that it will be a success. I have tried it long enough to know. I have tried it for many years, and it has never failed to work. Very often there are times when I thought I could detect in a paper the fact that there had been cheating in it; perhaps no assistance given intentionally by any one, but where some student had written something on a paper, and some other student had taken it up, and you could tell by the answers that they were evidently written by the same party. But suppose that does occur in one or two cases out of hundreds of papers. It seems to me that it is very much better to let it go, as after years of experience I have found that there is very much less cheating than there is under any other system of which I have any knowledge.

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### New Officers

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On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, William R. Vance, of the Yale University Law School, was elected President, and George P. Costigan, Jr., of the Northwestern University Law School, was elected Secretary and Treasurer, of the Association for the ensuing year.