

# ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### To the Member Schools:

The preceding issue of the JOURNAL carried a brief account of the initial meeting and the preliminary proposals of the Committee on Program.<sup>1</sup> It will be recalled that this committee has the initiative in projecting plans for our next annual meeting, to be held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago, December 28-30, 1949. While the committee's plans continue flexible, something in the nature of a progress report may be in order at this time.

The proposals which have been put forward to assure more and better coordinated round table meetings seem to have been well received everywhere. At least, if there are those who doubt or oppose they have not been articulate. Proposals to reverse the trend toward a multiplicity of set speeches and restore to the round table meetings a true round table procedure have been uniformly and enthusiastically approved thus far. The importance of careful planning has been emphasized by many. Some excellent suggestions have been forthcoming which we shall pass along to the chairmen.

There has been concern in some quarters that the committee may be concentrating too heavily on teachers' problems of material and method. Such has not been the committee's conscious purpose. It has been assumed that materials and methods are to the fore in some areas, pressing for consideration, and that elsewhere the content and policy of the law may have a better claim to recognition in program planning. These are matters which we think each council or group will wish to determine for itself, with such help in coordinating as the committee may be able to provide.

As of the end of March, we are assured of round table meetings in Commercial Law, Family Law, Jurisprudence, Labor Law, Legal History, Library Problems, Problems of Schools and the Bar, Property, Public Utilities, Special Problems of Smaller Schools, Taxation, and Trade Regulation. Under consideration and probable are Equity, International Law, Problems of Part-Time Schools, and Torts. Other suggestions have been advanced and are being explored. We have had some helpful comments. More will be appreciated.

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## THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The year 1950 will mark the passage of the fiftieth year of the life of the Association of American Law Schools. As the half-century comes to a close, it seems appropriate that some particular notice be given the Association's advancing years. The Executive Committee is planning now for the meeting in 1950, which it feels should be made a notable one. At the 1948 meeting of the Association in Cincinnati, a resolution was passed providing for the appointment of a committee to consider the possibility of changing the time of meeting of the Association. This committee will make a recommendation to the Executive Committee with respect to the time of meeting for the notable year of 1950. Any suggestions as to a possible time may be sent to the Secretary of the Association for transmittal to the committee.

Nearly half a century ago, on August 28, 1900, a group of some fifty professors of law, representing various law schools who had received invitations from the Section of Legal Education of the American Bar Association, assembled at Saratoga, New York. There they held a three-session meeting, lasting throughout day and evening. The record of that meeting shows it to have been purposeful and brief. Charles Noble Gregory of the University of Wisconsin was chosen chairman of the group, and Ernest W. Huffcut of Cornell University was chosen secretary. George M. Sharp (Yale University), for the Committee of the Section of Legal Education, stated the object of the conference, and presented a draft of articles of association prepared by that committee.

On motion, the proposed articles were taken up section by section. After a full discussion and various amendments, the articles were adopted as amended and referred to a Committee on Style, consisting of George M. Sharp, William Wirt Howe (Columbian University, now George Washington University), and James Barr Ames (Harvard University). The committee reported back the articles and they were adopted as read, and ordered printed and sent to all law schools.

In that meeting the first officers and executive committee were elected. James B. Thayer of Harvard University became president and Ernest W. Huffcut of Cornell University the secretary-treasurer. The three members of the executive committee were J. Crawford Biggs of the University of North Carolina, William P. Rogers of the Indiana State University, and George M. Sharp of Baltimore, Maryland.

Thus the professors there assembled organized the Association of American Law Schools and adopted the first Articles of Association, which were sent to the schools for ratification.

On August 21, 1901, the first annual meeting of the Association was held at Tabor Opera House, in Denver, Colorado. Twenty-seven of the law schools represented at the organization meeting had ratified the Articles in the time provided therefor, and five more charter members were admitted to membership at the meeting of 1901. Of these thirty-two member schools, twenty-seven are still members of the Association, although there have been some changes in names through the years.

If one reads the four requirements for election to membership set out in Article *Sixth* of the first Articles of Association, he cannot but be struck by the strides that have been made since those provisions were formulated in 1900. First, turn to the provisions of the present Articles of Association and the Standards concerning entrance requirements. Then consider:

*Sixth* . . . 1. It [the law school] shall require of candidates for its degree the completion of a high school course of study, or its equivalent . . . *Provided*, that this requirement shall not take effect until September, 1901.

Next, in relation to Section 6-2-3 of the Articles and Section VIII of the Standards, consider that portion of the old Article *Sixth* setting forth the Association's first "five-year plan," from which the present graduation requirements evolved:

2. The course of study leading to its [the law school's] degree shall cover at least two years of thirty weeks per year, with an average of at least ten hours required class-room work each week for each student; provided, that after the year 1905 members of this Association shall require a three years course.

The third provision of Article *Sixth* simply required that:

3. The conferring of its [the law school's] degree shall be conditioned upon the attainment of a grade of scholarship ascertained by examination.

Lastly, with the standards concerning the law library in mind, gaze upon your well-stocked shelves. The first Article *Sixth* concluded with the following requirement:

4. It [the law school] shall own, or have convenient access to during all regular library hours, a library containing the reports of the State in which the School is located and of the United States Supreme Court.

In the workings of the Association there seems little today that has not been expanded, or in some manner changed. Among the exceptions, there is a notable one in the all-embracing objective of the Association as set forth in Article *First* of the original Articles of Association: "The object of the Association is the improvement of legal education in America, especially in the Law Schools." Even the very wording survived until the present Articles of Association were adopted on December 28, 1947. The present wording is (Section 1-2): "The purpose of this Association is the improvement of the legal profession through legal education." This is only a broader statement of our purpose, which, after nearly fifty years, remains the same.

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