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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

I find that the duties of the office I now occupy in the Association are increasingly interesting. One of the points of contact that is new to me comes through the various complaints against members. These come first to the executive secretary of the Internal Affairs Committee. I have been permitted to examine the files in some of these. I note that a number of them involve nothing more than civil contract disputes between attorney and client. Very seldom do they involve conduct such as runs counter to our Code of Professional Ethics. All claims are, however, investigated and disposed of for two reasons: First, in fairness to the members so as to prevent further captious criticism upon the complaint involved: It is our duty to protect the Bar from the imputations attached to such complaints. Second, we also have a duty to the public to see that all proper complaints have such redress as we are able to give within our very limited sphere of action.

I have lately come upon a new form of complaint, that of "ambulance chasing." Here in my office, in a "Main Street" town, I have remained in blissful unconcernedness as to such practices. As there are no very large cities within the state I have been of the opinion that the situation was similar elsewhere. But it seems not. I am familiar, of course, with the contests that have been waged in the larger cities of the United States over this question which has made it necessary to adopt regulatory statues. One such was initiated by the Milwaukee City Bar Association and resulted in the enactment adopted July 28, 1927, by the Legislature of Wisconsin. Michigan, New York and other states have similar laws made necessary by the need to curb the unholy zeal of some lawyers to be first on the ground of the accident with their sympathy, professional cards and advice.

The Wisconsin statute makes, as grounds for disbarment in such cases, the following lines of conduct:

"The stirring up of strife and litigation; the hunting up of causes of action and information thereof in order to be employed to bring suit; to breed litigation by seeking out those having claims for personal injuries or other grounds of action in order to secure them as clients; or to employ agents or runners for like purposes, or to pay a reward directly or indirectly to those who bring or influence the bringing of such actions or business to his office, including policemen, court or prison officers, physicians, hospital attaches," etc.

Sections 20 and 21 of our Code of Professional Ethics declare such conduct to be unprofessional. Certain parts of the prohibitions in the Wisconsin statute are covered by some of our statutory misdemeanor definitions.

Whether such practices are or are not ground for disbarment in this state has not been determined, but they are clearly such as no reputation-loving lawyer will indulge in. If such violations of our Ethics Code are prevalent in the state I would respectfully suggest as a first step towards their elimination that the local Bar Association where the complaint arises, either City, County or District, take the matter up with the attorney against whom complaint is made and if the charge is found to be true then to end the practice if possible. This would be eliminating at the point of infection. This would also afford the local Bar an opportunity quietly to remedy the existing conditions in the home community. It will further give the local body a chance to practice Home Rule and demonstrate the inspiring effect of teamwork within the Association.

If the trouble is not remedied in this manner then the Internal Affairs Committee of the Association will take it up immediately and vigorously, and if need be drastic measures will be resorted to.

One of the reasons for the formation of our incorporated Bar was that we might thereby raise the standards of each member nearer to those high ideals that should govern every lawyer in his practice. It is our collective aim to make our practice square with our professed Ethics. The Association stands uncompromisingly behind the clear pronouncement of these precepts as defined in our Code of Ethics.

A. M. KVELLO, *President.*

A PRACTICAL MOVE TO IMPROVE THE JURY SYSTEM

Every lawyer is aware that the jury is not representative of the best citizenry of the county, and he knows that the reasons are two-fold: first, that the local boards of the cities, villages and townships in selecting and certifying the names of persons to be placed in the jury box as required by Section 820, C. L. 1913, do not follow the plain directions of the statutes but yield to the requests of persons who are desirous of serving and obtaining a job, and second, that many persons best qualified to serve offer excuses when selected and obtain their release for one reason or another, although really able to serve.

To date no better method of deciding disputed questions of fact has been devised, and it is a safe assumption that we shall always have the jury method with us. Therefore, why not improve it? As a first step in that direction, why not make it our business to see that as constituted the jury panel is truly representative of the citizenry of the county from which it is drawn? Why permit the test of one's competency for jury service to be his desire to get on the jury? Why tolerate longer the "repeater" and "professional" juror who is so prevalent in most counties, if not all of them. As an illustration, I cite an example from my own county, Cass, where one person served on the jury for nine consecutive terms, and another where a man and wife, either one or the other, served for 15 years, and both were on one panel. Similar examples could be furnished by you from your own county.

I do not mean to imply that the local boards, or even those who importune them to see that they are given a job as jurors, are actuated by sinister motives or by any desire to corrupt the administration of our Courts. They do not think of results or effects, but think only of the immediate desire to favor a friend or make one for political reasons. They act without consideration of the civic duty involved and out of a lack of knowledge of how the law intends that the jury panel be constituted.

It is quite clear, I think, that if the local boards would observe the directions of the statute and if the trial judges would be less lenient in granting excuses we would have gone a long way toward obtaining more representative juries. It is, I believe, largely a matter of educating the local boards, the Clerks of our courts of record and other county officials entrusted with the selection of the jury panel, as to their duties, followed by the exercise of the disciplinary power which is inherent in the trial court to see that there is no departure from the mandate of the statute prescribing those duties. Present statutes are entirely adequate to assure the selection of a fair and representative jury if they are followed. I cite section 831, C. L. 1913, which reads:

"It shall be the duty of the respective boards in selecting and