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DICTA

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Calendar

June 29—Denver Bar Association's annual outing at the Park Hill Country Club.

July 6, 7, 8 and 9—Annual conference of the Tenth Judicial Circuit, U. S. District Court, Post Office Bldg., Denver.

What Shall Be Our Course?

BY WM. HEDGES ROBINSON, JR.

President, Colorado Bar Association

Last month, I stated that I would report on the judiciary committee, the legislature and the supreme court. I find, however, that the Editor has obtained articles from Mr. Henry and Mr. Van Cise which cover this situation so adequately that I need say nothing further.

I do wish to point-up the effect of what these men have said. More than seventy per cent of all lawyers in the state approved the bar bill. It died in committee. A great preponderance of all bar associations and lawyers in the state approved the judiciary reform plan. A major part of this program died in the House. Fifteen thousand dollars and four years of hard and extensive work were destroyed in a few months time.

This result stresses the need for the bar association to make an unequivocal choice of its future course of action with respect to public legislation. Even if every lawyer made the bar bills a personal matter with him, fought for those bills with all his strength and all his mind, it still would not be enough. These are bills which, for the most part, are public bills, that is, they benefit the public infinitely more than they do the lawyers. The public must be convinced that these bills are actually for its good.

Opponents of good government try to kill effective legislation by attempting to show the lawyers' stake in these bills. Our interest is actually a concern about the proper functioning of our judicial system. On a purely selfish basis, we should continue to have hearings in county, district and supreme courts as we are now allowed because it means larger fees to lawyers. On a purely selfish basis, we should not be interested in a judicial council for that might result in reforms which would reduce the cost of justice. On a purely selfish basis, what concern is it of individual lawyers

whether judges are well or poorly paid, have retirement and pension funds? Or why should we care if the public is not interested in adequate disciplinary procedure, thorough canons of judicial and professional ethics?

The public nature of the bar bills is the very thing that defeated them. While the great majority of lawyers backed the bills and assisted whenever called upon, there was not enough drive from all lawyers in each locality and a public appreciation of the value of these bills to enact this legislation. Our experience should teach us that it is useless to expect that bar bills having a great public interest will secure much consideration unless we have a complete reorganization of our approach to public legislation.

Mr. Van Cise suggests a lobbyist. That is only part of the answer. We need to make the public our active partner in this effort for good government. We need a good public relations expert who can start *now* to sell the bar program to the people before the 1951 legislature meets. Then when the legislature convenes, we need a full-time man on the job to guide the bar program through the legislature in the interest of the public. Unless we are willing to go the entire way—good public relations which embodies public confidence, and a legislative consultant—we should be content to putter around with minor amendments to the statutes, and not waste our energies in programs in the public interest.

I firmly believe that it is to the lawyers' interest for the Colorado bar to unite in a dynamic and aggressive bar association—one that demands and commands public respect. It should be zealous in protecting the interest of the public in making the process of obtaining justice quicker and cheaper. It must be in a position to insist, effectively, that lawyers and judges adhere to professional morality and act as a unit in matters concerning the courts and its officers.

The choice is that of this association. It should be clear cut and definite. There can be no touring down the middle of the road, for traffic flows only on one side or the other.

Denver Bar Association Reduces Dues

Dues for the members of the Denver Bar Association for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1949 were reduced by action of the Board of Trustees on May 2.

For members in practice three years or more, the dues were reduced from \$15 per year to \$12.50 per year, and, for members in practice less than three years, the reduction was from \$7.50 to \$6.00 per year.

This reduction was made possible by the fact that some of the projects originally proposed and sponsored by the Denver Bar Association have been taken over on a state-wide basis by the Colorado Bar Association, whose dues for the next ensuing fiscal year are identical with those of the Denver association. Dues include subscription costs for Dicta and the weekly advance sheets of the Supreme Court opinions.