President's Page

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West Virginia Bar Association

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvlr/vol61/iss1/4
The recent meeting of the Association at The Greenbrier on August 28-29, 1958, climaxed a most successful year under the leadership of retiring President Hawthorne D. Battle. Membership reached an all-time high, and the annual meeting offered an interesting program which was exceptionally well attended. The banquet speaker was Professor Hardy C. Dillard of the University of Virginia Law School, and others on the program included Howard F. Meek, Esq., Huntington, Robert Kennedy, Esq., Boston, and a panel composed of Judge C. W. Ferguson, Judge Grover Worrell, George Bailey, Esq., and Mose Boiarsky, Esq., monitored by Stanley C. Higgins, Jr., Esq., debating the issue of whether judges should be selected with regard to partisan politics.

The Association’s committee on constitutional revision was unusually active and held several joint meetings with the corresponding committee of the State Bar, resulting in a recommended revision of article VIII of the Constitution of West Virginia, relating to the judiciary. Without going into detail the principal recommendations were that judges be selected without regard to political party affiliation in a manner to be provided by the legislature, that the legislature be empowered to create small claims courts which would thereafter exercise the civil jurisdiction now held by justices of the peace, who in any event would be placed upon a salary rather than the present fee system, and that probate jurisdiction could be transferred by the legislature from the county courts to some other court of record. The report of the committee was adopted by the Association and forwarded to the West Virginia Commission on Constitutional Revision. This report and the revision of article VIII will be made available to any one requesting them.

Another major undertaking has been that of Past-President Walter F. Ball as chairman of a committee to make recommendations for the revision of the constitution of this Association. Mr. Ball, ably assisted by Joseph R. Curl, Esq., has recommended a number of changes presently being considered by the executive council before submission to the entire membership. Most members feel that some provisions of our constitution and by-laws are outmoded, or are inconsistent with the actual operation of the Association of the present
day. Any recommendations will be given the widest publicity and suggestions from all members are solicited.

President Battle, in the April 1958 issue of the Law Review, asked for suggestions as to the type of program to be presented at the annual meeting and I repeat his invitation for any one with ideas to speak up. Preparing such a program requires weeks and even months of advance planning. Interesting speakers and topics cannot be developed overnight and I would like to hear from all of our members, particularly as to whether the banquet should be continued.

Of general interest to West Virginia lawyers is the regional meeting of the American Bar Association to be held in Pittsburgh, March 11-13, 1959, in which the bars of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and the western parts of Maryland and New York will participate. The program has not been completed, but all attorneys in the state will receive notice sufficiently far in advance to make definite plans.

Harry Scherr, Jr.