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A Symposium on Legislation

The necessity for the development of adequate aids for the state legislatures and other law-making bodies in meeting the complex problems of programming, research, drafting and statutory revision has received widespread attention in recent years. It is a continuing need which cannot be over-emphasized or stated too often. Legislative aids have the common objective of improving the process by which our statutory laws are made, but they assume a variety of organizational forms. Louisiana, with its unique State Law Institute, its Legislative Council, and its recent legislative reorganization has acted comprehensively to strengthen the Legislature. It is appropriate and timely, therefore, to include in the pages of the Louisiana Law Review a symposium devoted to a consideration of some important aspects of the subject of legislation. In these pages the current Louisiana developments are described in the papers which discuss the role of the Louisiana State Law Institute in law improvement and law reform, the work and accomplishments of the recently established Louisiana Legislative Council and the changes embodied in the Louisiana legislative reorganization of 1954.

Students of the field of legislation will welcome the description of the policies and accomplishments of the University of Michigan's Legislative Research Center by Samuel D. Estep. There are far-reaching implications for legal education to be drawn from the Michigan experience as can be seen from the detailed description of the operating procedures of the Legislative Research Center. Those procedures may be viewed as pointing the way toward filling the increasing need of providing more comprehensive and adequate training in legislative research and draftsmanship. The work of Columbia University's Drafting Research Fund described in the paper of John M. Kernochan reflects much progress in legislation that can be attributed to the sustained activities of the Fund, spanning a period of forty-five years. It is quite significant, as the author observes that, despite the progress that can be shown on many fronts in attacking the problem of effective drafting assistance, the growing volume and complexity of our

legislative law makes increasing demands upon the trained draftsman. One who reviews the activities of the Columbia Legislative Drafting Research Fund can hardly avoid the conclusion that added efforts are called for in many American law schools if the specialized legal training exacted of the legislative draftsmanship is to be adequately stressed and developed.

Attorneys who have the task of draftsmanship of ordinances for municipalities and other units of local government will find Professor Arvo Van Alstyne's discussion of legislative aids in this field to be of special value. The significant role of the various private, public, and quasi-public agencies that are available to provide much-needed assistance to the busy city or county attorney needs to be known and clearly understood. To that end, Mr. Van Alstyne's paper, if studied carefully, will open up many avenues of approach that should prove most useful in improving the draftsmanship in the voluminous area of legislation through local ordinances.

It is our hope that this symposium on legislation will provoke and stimulate an added interest on the part of the individual lawyer in visualizing the lawyer's responsibility in the whole area of legislative drafting. It is further hoped that it will chart varying possibilities for law improvement and law reform through the discussion of organization and methods of the legislative aids and legislative research agencies of which it treats. The responsibilities referred to in these pages will not lessen in the years ahead. Law schools, in common with the other branches of the profession, must move forward in the quest for more effective treatment of the problems and research out of which sound legislation may be expected to emerge.

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