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DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS

By LOUDEN L. BOMBERGER*

The various steps by which the Board of Managers has been set up disclose an interesting process of evolution. In the beginning there were the usual general officers; then an executive committee was created and directed to meet before each Annual Meeting. In 1916 this was supplanted by a Board of Managers, consisting of the President, Vice-President, the Secretary and Treasurer, and three other members. In 1928, the Board was expanded to include one member for each Congressional District, the President, the Vice-President and the immediate past President. Also, there was provided machinery for nominating and electing the Board to insure the largest participation by the membership. These developments prove that an organization of the present scope and influence of the Indiana State Bar Association cannot be conjured forth by any magic wand or instantaneous process.

This expansion of the responsibilities of management reflects the general development of the Association. In the beginning, with aspects largely social and merely an annual meeting which furnished almost the only opportunity for the great majority of lawyers to meet others outside of their own judicial circuits, there was a much less demand for service than that which has appeared upon the widening horizon of the Association's affairs. There are more committee members today than total members in any year of the first decade of the Association's life. There are more lawyers seriously and unremittingly concerned with the welfare of the Bar and the administration of justice than ever before. In practically the last of the four decades, roughly speaking, of the Association's existence, more has been accomplished

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than in the preceding thirty years. Although during that time the ground work was being carefully laid, fruition was deferred.

Within a few years, as most of us know, we have secured the enactment of some twenty-four uniform laws, the introduction of marked reforms in criminal procedure, the establishment of a judicial council, the adoption of the rule-making bill and control of admission to the Bar by the Supreme Court. Not the least important was the successful resistance, at the session of the General Assembly just closed, by a determined organized Bar, of an equally determined effort to destroy the Court's control of admissions and reduce the standards of qualifications for the members of the Bar. Even this negative result was a distinct triumph.

It is true that not all of the Bar's goals have been attained, but efforts must be redoubled to accomplish them through the education of the Bar to an understanding of its objectives. Here is where a very definite function of the Board of Managers arises.

While the Articles of Association say that the Board shall be vested with authority over the business and prudential concerns of the Association, the functions of the Board are much broader than that. The Board members not only bring to the Association the local atmosphere of their respective districts, but a much greater responsibility and opportunity is upon them, to disseminate throughout their districts knowledge of the policies and programs of the Association. The things they take back home are the results of the combined judgment of the representatives of all the districts, and their proper presentation, district by district, is of tremendous importance. Each alert member of the Board will learn the attitude of his constituents, as it were, and put this in the crucible with the other ideas that are presented, in the belief that in all probability the result, though different from that of any of the component elements, will be best for all concerned. The Board member, therefore, has upon his shoulders the task of dissemination in his district of informative pre-

sentation of the program agreed upon, and the effort to obtain support for it among his members.

A method of more closely knitting the Association and its members is that of conducting district meetings. While it is by no means a perfect plan of organizing our districts, the Congressional lines seem to be the logical ones to follow. This makes the work of some Board members extremely difficult, but certainly the Association has not used to the utmost the plan of bringing its plans to its members by frequent district meetings. The responsibility for having such meetings is clearly that of the Board members.

If the Association is to succeed in its general program, a member of the Board who finds himself originally in disagreement with that program owes to the Association the conduct of a good soldier, of one willing to accept the rule of the majority and promote rather than hinder, or even remain passive.

The Association cannot be expected to wield its fullest influence if those occupying official positions, finding themselves in personal disagreement with the majority, refuse to endorse or support it. Success of Association undertakings depends upon complete cooperation by all those who are vested with any degree of authority.

A famous statesman once said that he had learned to trust the judgment of his people when the truth was made available to them. This philosophy should be adopted by those who are entrusted with the management of the Bar Association. Policies are formulated after careful study and by at least the majority of those charged with the duty of making the decision, and, moreover, provision is made for broadening the base of responsibility to include the whole membership. Therefore, it devolves upon the Board of Managers to see that "the truth is available" to the lawyers of their districts. It may be asserted with boldness that the lawyers of Indiana will, by at least an impressive majority, support a progressive program if they understand it. Those who do not understand usually enlist in opposition, which they conceive to be the course of safety.

Almost without exception the members of the Board of Managers have functioned willingly and graciously, sometimes at considerable personal sacrifice and inconvenience. One who accepts the responsibility of membership on the Board should take it for granted that these sacrifices will be exacted of him and that he is the medium through which the program of the Association shall be thoroughly understood among the members in his district. He should be the first therein to stand for the Association's plans, though he may have personal reservations in some respects concerning them. By such cooperation it may be confidently expected that the influence of the Association will not only be sustained, but increased, and that the objectives so frequently expounded will be accomplished.

Anything less than fully synchronized teamwork by the chosen leaders of the Association will tend to defeat its purposes. The program of education designed to enlist support for the Association's efforts should find its most zealous advocates among those who have had a voice in defining and adopting such objectives. The members of the Board of Managers are preeminently the key-men in what must be an unrelenting drive for the things we have so earnestly and repeatedly avowed. They can lead us, undismayed and with enthusiasm, for we are striving for no mean objective—the most efficient methods of administering justice.