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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
LAWYERS AND BAR ASSOCIATIONS

By FREDERICK H. STINCHFIELD

President of the American Bar Association

If you and I could sit down and talk together about the things which the Bar could do as an organized group, we should probably agree. We want a better administration of justice; although as individuals our efforts may have too little effect, if we work together I have no doubt of our ability to convince legislatures, courts, and the public that what we propose is sound and in the public interest.

There are 78,000 of us in state bar associations and 30,000 or 40,000 more in local bar organizations. But we don't get together; our groups working separately have failed to realize on the possibilities of united action.

You know what happened at our Boston meeting this summer. We there achieved greater possibilities for group action of the Bar of the United States than have ever existed before. In our new Constitution, adopted by an overwhelming vote, we give representation to every state bar association and to as many of the larger locals as could be represented without making the membership of the House of Delegates so large as to be unwieldy.

You are therefore directly represented in the American Bar Association and through your delegate can have your views presented. There are many advantages in this. For example, for the first time our representatives who go before Congressional committees to advocate or

oppose legislation which has been passed on by the Association, will represent a numerical majority of the Bar of America. Can there be any doubt that this will make our decisions more important and give us a better hearing?

We have heard much about the decline of the Bar in the opinion of the public. You and I know that as between ourselves and our individual clients, this is not so. Every day in every town and city of this country, men and women are putting their affairs in the hands of their lawyer, with complete trust and with the knowledge that they will get the full measure of service which their chosen lawyer can give and his wholehearted devotion to their interests. To drive home the truth that the Bar as a whole is composed of these individual lawyers, who are trusted as individuals, is one of our tasks as an organized group. We all know that we must make admission to the Bar a prize to be awarded only to those who are well qualified to serve the public; that we must divorce our judges from politics and political influences; that we must speed up and make more efficient the operation of our courts, improve the enforcement of criminal law, make our machinery of disciplinary procedure more effective, and protect the public from unauthorized practitioners.

We know we can do these better when we work together and the new possibilities in united action on a national scale are limitless.

But don't forget that with these new benefits, new duties are also imposed. You have a responsibility to interest and inform yourselves as to what the Bar is doing and to give of your knowledge and skill in framing the best plans for improvement in these fields.

Twelve hundred members of the American Bar Association are giving their time and effort to this work. Seventy-five hundred members of the state and local bar associations are serving on their association committees on the five National Bar Program subjects alone. Countless others are giving their services to the organized Bar in one form or another. This is a powerful army, and when we swing into action together, can it be questioned that results will be forthcoming—that is if you, individually, will join in with your help and support?

The new House of Delegates is an interesting body. It is composed of about 165 lawyers, each of whom will act in a representative capacity. In addition to the state bar associations and some twelve to fifteen of the larger city associations, various other organizations of the legal profession, such as the Association of Attorneys General, the Association of American Law Schools, the Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, the American Law Institute, the Judicature Society, and the Federal Bar Association of Washington, are represented. The Board of Governors and the Section Chairmen of the American Bar Association are *ex officio* members of the House, and the American Bar Association members in each state have one

representative, known as a State Delegate, whom, in the future, they will elect by mail ballot. In Boston, the sessions of the House were impressive. The Attorney General and the Solicitor General of the United States have seats in the House by virtue of their office and they were on hand to take part in the meetings which were held after the House had been created by adoption of the new constitution. Senator Scott M. Loftin, of Florida, and Mr. John W. Davis, of New York, former presidents of the Association, took their places as members of the new House, and there were many other distinguished lawyers and judges from all parts of the country.

A meeting of the House has been called for January 5, in Columbus, Ohio, and it is anticipated that a full attendance will be present. Important matters, including the adoption of permanent rules, will be up for consideration. Your representatives will be present, and they will bring back to you a report of what is done. The success of this representative body will depend in no small degree on the interest taken in its deliberations and decisions. Unless the membership of the House is truly representative of the lawyers of this country, it will fail of its purpose. It will not be so unless your delegate expresses the views of yourself and the majority of your colleagues, and to accomplish this you must keep informed of the actions of the House and let your views in reference to them be known.

I have said that you and I could probably agree about what the Bar should do as an organized group. While that is true as to general objectives, it is also probably true that we might disagree as to details. Action will necessarily involve those details and we need your advice and suggestions with reference to them. Above all, we need, and your state and local bar associations need, your active participation in the work of the organized bar.
