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Washington Bar Convenes

A Member of the Board of Governors Surveys the July Convention, Its Problems and Accomplishments.

The annual meeting of the Washington State Bar Association was held at Paradise Valley, Rainier National Park, on July 29 and 30. About 300 lawyers were in attendance, in addition to the wives and families of many of the members.

Preceding the meeting, the Association of Superior Court Judges held their annual meeting at the close of which the Honorable C. G. Jeffers of Ephrata, Washington, was elected as president for the ensuing year.

As an innovation this year the first morning of the convention was devoted to sectional meetings presided over by the chairmen of the various committees. Considerable interest was shown in these meetings, which considered the following subjects: public relations, legislation, free legal aid, law enforcement and the unauthorized practice of law. The groups being small, everyone present felt free to express his own ideas, as a result of which several worthwhile suggestions were made for the consideration of the convention and the Board of Governors.

The general session of the convention met in the afternoon. The president, Hon. J. E. Stewart, reviewed the work of the past year, discussing the overcrowded condition of the profession and the serious plight in which many lawyers find themselves at the present time as a result of the economic situation. Attention was called to the steps taken by the Association to discipline certain members and to remove from its ranks those unworthy of engaging in the practice of law.

On the floor of the convention the two subjects that brought forth the most discussion were free legal aid and the unauthorized practice of the law.

The free legal aid discussion was led by Mr. Lane Summers of the Seattle Bar, chairman of the committee, who, at the present time, is making a survey for the American Bar Association of the necessity for free legal aid in Washington. He pointed out that there is an insistent demand for some workable agency to supply free legal aid to the indigent. The consensus of opinion was that this matter should remain under the control of the Bar Association, and the committee was directed to continue its study and to urge the various local associations to set up workable committees within their own organizations for free legal aid where the need exists.

Mr. Robert R. Pence, of the Spokane bar, chairman of the committee on the unauthorized practice of the law, directed attention to the many inroads being made upon the legal profession by

accountants, realtors, adjusters, notaries public and the like. He reported that several actions are being started to enforce the discontinuance of this practice.

The Association was fortunate in having as its guest speaker Thomas Reed Powell of the Harvard Law School, who gave a very interesting paper on "Constitution for an Indefinite and Expanding Future."

The report of the committee on the selection of judges, made by Mr. Elias A. Wright of the Seattle bar, indicated that the committee had been playing no small part in the appointment of judges to fill vacancies caused by death or resignation. The committee has received splendid co-operation from the Hon. Clarence D. Martin, Governor of the state of Washington, as a result of which his appointments have been well received by the members of the bar and the public in general. The Governor has followed very closely the recommendations of the committee and of local bar associations.

All was not serious at the convention. On Friday evening several members of the bar, under the able direction of Tracy Griffin, presented a revealing and enlightening "hearing before the National Labor Relations Board". At the Saturday noon luncheon the membership was delightfully entertained by a group of young lawyers from Seattle. Several older practitioners were put to shame in a pseudo radio contest where they matched wits with some of the younger members.

The meeting was brought to a close with the annual banquet held Saturday evening. W. B. Chandler, of the Spokane bar, acquitted himself in masterly fashion as toastmaster and, notwithstanding a long array of speakers, was able to move the program along with considerable dispatch. Splendid talks were made by Thomas Reed Powell of the Harvard Law School, R. L. Maitland, K. C., of Vancouver, B. C., and Robert F. McGuire of the Portland, Oregon, bar, who brought to the meeting greetings from the Oregon Bar Association as well from the American Bar Association where he was in attendance, having hastened west by airplane from Cleveland.

As provided by the by-laws of the Association, the president is selected by the Board of Governors and the appointment is announced the last day of the annual meeting. Two members of the Board of Governors were directed by the chairman to escort the newly elected president to the head table, and when, after tense moments of speculation as to his identity, Robert E. Evans of Tacoma, Washington, was escorted to the chair, enthusiastic applause informed the Board of Governors that they had made a judicious selection. Mr. Evans, of the firm of Evans & Ellis, is one of the outstanding practitioners of Tacoma and has long been active in the affairs of the Washington State and American Bar Associations. He brings to the office a wealth of experience in matters vitally affecting the interests of the lawyer today, and there is no doubt that much will be accomplished under his able guidance and direction during the coming year.

PHILIP S. BROOKE.