

## CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND REFORMS

Regarding the legislative reforms, a distinction must be made between formal and substantive reforms.

A reform that cuts down the number of House committees is, by itself, a procedural matter that promises no improvement in the quality of legislation. But even if it is merely a formal type of innovation, it is likely to result in grumbling among Congressmen and in economy.

We will explain. The proliferation of committees in the House, which number 43, was basically due to patronage. House leaderships in the past increased the number of committees due to the great number of Congressmen desiring to be committee chairmen. And why did they want to head the committees? Purely because they wanted more power. The chairman of a committee decides whether the bill

should be given a chance to pass the chamber. If he refuses to report out the bill, that is the end. Somehow a committee however unimportant will hold the power of life and death over some bills, and that is additional power for the Congressman. The reduction of the number of committees from 43 to 19 may well earn for Speaker Laurel the ire of displaced committee chairmen. We do not know how he will placate them, if the reduction of the number of committees is not a *quid pro quo* arrangement.

The fact remains that the Speaker's move, if it prospers, will mean a saving for the House because it will entail the reduction of personnel assigned to the committees. It will also mean a consolidation of some powers, and this, perhaps, will mean a saving in time and effort on the part of the peo-

ple who would be interested in the passage of some measures in the House.

Thus, it can be seen how a mere procedural reform in the House can involve some courage on the part of the House leadership.

It will take a lot more courage and firmness on the part of the same leadership to move from mere formal reforms to substantive changes.

How does one, for example, go about controlling the output of nonsense of the chamber? Can one actually control the proliferation of appropriation laws that do not have the ghost of a chance of implementation due to lack of money but are passed just the same to show some constituents that their representative has done something in their behalf but which nevertheless constitute deceit played on the gullible people?

How can one go about implementing the broad policy of selfless service on behalf of the people in the field of legislation when many members of the chamber cannot think in terms of the national good because they

cannot correlate individual power with national welfare?

If the general character of the membership runs in opposition to the broad policies of reform that the Speaker has in mind, then implementation of the reforms will primarily involve control. One will control House expenditures, House behavior, and the output of the House.

In this connection, there is no room for pessimism, although there is plenty of grounds therefor. If the House leadership initiates reforms of whatever type, he ought to be supported in his effort, because it is the critics themselves that have been blaming the House for a lot of ills that the country suffers. If the reforms run against the grain of the membership that ought to be castigated for nursing outdated ideas of power and politics. If the immediate future does not provide a fertile ground for Congressional reforms, the pertinent ideas must be encouraged just the same.

Still Speaker Laurel must also give sufficient assurances to the people who ought to encourage his measures by

leaving no room for them to doubt his sincerity. This in fact is the crux of leadership. Critics are human. They will not see any point in heaping encomiums and encouragements to leaders who say one thing but do

another. They would like to see a display of raw courage by the leader who can stick to his world. Since the Speaker comes from Batangas he just may have that courage. — *Manila Daily Bulletin*.

## EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY . . .

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of knowledge has not necessarily relation to wisdom. After all, the best the college can do is to give the students breadth of knowledge, not necessarily depth of knowledge.

Personally I have not been in sympathy with the view that because there are already so many well-trained men, something must be done to prevent younger men from entering our professional schools. It certainly is a sad commentary on our times if we introduce unnecessary obstructions and obstacles to prevent students from entering the professions or to trap unwary students, so that they may be prevented from continuing their studies after their course is started, unless such procedures result in turning out better men and are not merely evidence of an unconscious trade-union state of mind which tends to make a profession an aristocracy.

Let us not get the idea that there are too many doctors, too many lawyers, architects, engineers, nurses, grocers, coal-miners, and what not. As a matter of fact, it would appear that there are too many of all of us, yet that assumption of itself refutes the argument that we must reduce the number in each class. It is almost a paradox that when we have too much of everything collectively, we worry most because we have too little individually. — *By William J. Mayo, M.D. in Vital Speeches of the Day.*