

CHAPTER XI

Officially Approved

Forty-Six States Commend the American Legislators' Association

Purpose of Endorsement

TO PLACE the American Legislators' Association on a firm basis as the only organization of, by, and for legislatures of all the states, resolutions of endorsement were presented to all the legislatures convening in 1931. The resolution—a copy of which is given below—contained a simple statement of the reasons for interstate legislative cooperation, a description of some of the services rendered by the Association, and a commendation of the work. The Board of Managers in suggesting the presentation of this resolution to the forty-eight legislative bodies placed no great stress on the value of a perfunctory endorsement. State financial support would be, of course, far more important as a means of broadening the scope of the Association's activities. At the same time, however, it was only fair that the endorsement of the legislatures should be secured before the Association could fairly claim to be representative of the country's lawmakers. Moreover, the desirability of acquainting all legislatures with this project for service to them was undeniable. Finally there was always the question: Do the senators, representatives, delegates, and assemblymen, of forty-eight different states and commonwealths wish to establish one organization?

The endorsements approved by the various states of course differed somewhat in form but the following model resolution was the one most widely used.

Resolution of Endorsement

Whereas, all experienced persons know that in each State, legislative problems continually increase, both in number and in complexity.

Whereas, it is obvious that in order to solve such problems most effectively, each legislature must give systematic, scientific and business-like consideration to the actual *facts* which have a bearing upon each question—to the extent that such facts have been determined by reliable research.

Whereas, each legislature must give similar consideration to the methods and experience of other jurisdictions in dealing with problems similar to its own.

Whereas, no such problems can be dealt with adequately until facilities are established to assist every inquiring legislator to secure the most accurate information and the most expert advice which are available.

Whereas, experience indicates the necessity for an interstate legislative reference bureau to serve as a clearing house of information between all of the legislative reference services which are now being conducted by numerous states, and also to serve as a clearing house of information between the legislatures and all other agencies which are engaged in the study and analysis of legislative problems, such as governmental departments, political science departments of universities, competent reputable associations, and all other sources of information.

Whereas, experience also indicates that in certain States which do not maintain substantial legislative reference services, there is an imperative need for such an interstate legislative reference bureau, which will assist the legislators of those States to secure whatever information they desire in analyzing the legislative problems which they must determine, and to make more readily accessible for them, without cost, the valuable material which is at all times available

from the legislative reference libraries and bureaus of various other states, and from many other reliable sources.

Whereas, every individual legislator in the United States shares the responsibility for improving the present inadequate and unsatisfactory condition of the legislative processes, but neither any individual legislator, nor any group of legislators from one State, can bring about such improvement without the cooperation of legislators of other states.

Whereas, such an interstate legislative reference bureau cannot be maintained by any one State alone, without the cooperation of the legislatures of other States.

Whereas, in order to set the machinery in motion to secure the necessary cooperation of the forty-eight legislatures, members of each legislature are working together in the development of the project of the American Legislators' Association.

Whereas, the said American Legislators' Association has now established in the vicinity of the University of Chicago, the Interstate Reference Bureau, which by explicit pledge is without color of politics, partisanship or propaganda, is conducted without profit, and is engaged upon three principal purposes:

First: To procure promptly for all inquiring state legislators, and their agents, whatever information or advice they desire in connection with any legislative problem, primarily by assisting them to secure, without cost, the benefit of all researches conducted by governmental departments, universities, associations, legislative reference bureaus, and other agencies throughout the United States.

Second: To conduct a systematic study of the legislative processes of each of the States, in order to ascertain the practices which contribute most to efficient and economical organization and procedure; and to render all possible assistance to each legislature—and to each legislative reference bureau—which is endeavoring to improve its organization.

Third: To publish for the benefit of all state legislators the monthly magazine, *State Government*, as well as special Bul-

letins, and thus to disseminate information which will be helpful to all conscientious students of legislation.

Whereas, the American Legislators' Association is promoting acquaintance and mutual understanding among all individuals and organizations officially concerned with the impartial and scientific functioning of the legislatures of the various States, by the organization of Standing Committees and Advisory Boards, and otherwise.

Whereas, the character and project of the American Legislators' Association have the endorsement, and its organization has the active cooperation, not only of its membership, which consists entirely of members and ex-members of state legislatures, but also of numbers of other responsible citizens, many of whom, having specialized knowledge, are serving on the Association's Advisory Boards.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED: That the organizations of the American Legislators' Association and of the Interstate Reference Bureau are hereby commended as legitimate and constructive efforts to assist the legislatures of the various States in the efficient performance of their work.

Results Obtained

The response was extraordinarily gratifying to the men who felt that this organization was worth while. Senators, representatives, delegates and assemblymen, agreed with remarkable unanimity. The record of endorsement came in one sixteen-day period in which eighteen legislative bodies announced their approval of the organization. Others came before and after in rapid succession, until all but two of the forty-eight had joined in their endorsement of the organization. And even in those two—Connecticut and Maine—the Association has had the active support of many of the legislators of the best type, and it has supplied a great deal of information upon the request of individual members of these legislatures—thus, by overwhelming majority the Association was recognized as the official organization of American legislators.