

CHAPTER XXIII

The American Legislators' Association

ALA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
The Officers and Executive Director

President

HON. HENRY PARKMAN, JR.
State Senator, Massachusetts

Vice-President

HON. GEORGE WOODWARD
State Senator, Pennsylvania

Vice-President

HON. T. V. SMITH
State Senator, Illinois

Executive Director

HENRY W. TOLL
Colorado State Senator, 1923-1930

TO THE American Legislators' Association goes the distinction of being the first to break trail in the venture of Interstate Cooperation. In 1926 a group of state legislators, alarmed over the unsatisfactory performance of state legislatures, set



HENRY PARKMAN, JR.
President

out to enlist the cooperation of the 7,600 state lawmakers in improving the lawmaking processes.

To accomplish this, they agreed upon certain objectives as necessary and they have been successful in getting each of the forty-eight states to endorse these objectives by formal reso-

lution. In addition the resolutions provided for the establishment of two groups in each state, each to consist of five members, known as the House and Senate Councils of the American Legislators' Association.

The Goal

This Association is exceptional in that the motivating force for reform and improvement came from within the ranks of the legislators rather than from without. It is a direct effort on the part of the legislators to improve legislative standards and personnel. It is carried on on a nonpartisan basis and is concerned primarily with the work of the forty-eight state legislatures and their 7,600 legislators. It is not concerned with questions of federal legislation, except as they affect problems of state legislation.

Since membership in the legislature is the first step, or introduction, to public life of many state officials, and since the legislature is the hub around which many of the principal activities of the state revolve, it is important that the legislators should be well-

informed and well-equipped to carry on the responsibilities of state government.

Underlying the plan of the Legislators' Association is the thought that there should be a central organization through which proposals calculated to improve legislative organization can be presented to the legislators in a regularly established way.

Services

The American Legislators' Association, through its various services, hopes to make a valuable contribution to the art of state legislation and to the better government of our forty-eight states.

From its inception one of the aims of the Association was to supply the legislators with information which would aid them in the solution of the problems which faced them as lawmakers.

The pamphlet, *The Legislator*, which dealt briefly with legislative problems, was issued during the years 1926, 1927, 1929, and the beginning of 1930. In 1930 the first issue of *State Government* appeared—a magazine devoted to advanced thinking along the lines of state legislation.

The Interstate Reference Bureau was established as a clearing house service to which legislators and other state officials could send requests for authoritative data on their specific legislative or administrative problems. In addition to this service the Association was keenly interested in the promotion of the establishment of legislative reference bureaus in each of the states.

The inquiry service was especially popular, and federal, state, and local officials availed themselves of it. On the whole there was no dearth of authoritative data, but there was lack of an established channel through which this information could be made available to the individual legislator. This bureau and the legislative reference bureaus provided facilities through which he could conveniently acquaint himself with the principles or standards set up by specialists, with the most reliable and up-to-date statistics, and with the experience of other states as to problems to be met and the best technique for meeting them.

The American Legislators' Association keeps an up-to-date card index of all the state legislators, which is a complete list of the names, addresses, and party affiliation of

7,600 state legislators of the forty-eight states.

When information on age, vocation, and length of service in the legislature can be obtained, it is also recorded on the cards. The Association is making a study of the personnel of state legislators which will be published sometime within the year. Among other things this study computes the average age and length of service, as well as the principal occupations or professions and political affiliations.

Meetings

Since most of the legislatures meet for a limited period of time, within which they must pass laws on subjects requiring specialized knowledge, and since most legislators carry on full-time businesses in the period between legislative sessions, most legislators find themselves unprepared for the solution of the problems which they must face. The Association has sponsored pre-session, regional conferences to acquaint the legislators more fully with these problems, together with suggestions for their solution. In addition to the pre-session meetings, the Association held annual meetings in conjunction with the American Bar Association during the first seven years of its life. In 1933, the Association called the First General Assembly in Washington, D. C., at which the Council of State Governments was officially endorsed; and in 1935 the Second General Assembly was held in Washington, as a joint project of the Council and the Association. Since that time the Association has participated in the meetings of the Council of State Governments.

Affiliation with the Council

As the work progressed in the direction of improving the legislative conditions and standards within the states, the legislators realized that under existing conditions of more rapid transportation and easy communication, the citizens of their states were victims of chaotic conditions brought on not only by their own laws but by conflicting laws and regulations of neighboring states. If, in the motor vehicle field or in that of taxation, to mention only two, the several states would harmonize their laws and regulations, there would be incalculable savings in time, money, and effort to their citizens.

In taking the next step of a program, that of getting the states to cooperate, especially in matters of interstate character, the impermanent features of an organization of legislators became apparent—the high turn-over in the personnel of the legislatures, their short stay at the Capitol, with the resulting difficulty of developing a long-time program.

As one plan for interstate cooperation was developing from a nebulous state into the formulated plan of the Council of State Governments, the Board of Managers of the American Legislators felt that the program which had been laid out for the legislators could be advanced by integration with that of the Council.

Organization and Integration

Each state in joining the Council establishes, by law, a permanent Commission on Interstate Cooperation made up of five members from the house, five from the senate, and five appointed by the governor. The members from the house and senate are re-

ferred to in the act as the standing committees of the American Legislators' Association, and in fact take the place of the former house and senate council of the ALA.

The executive work of the Association is carried on by a board of managers of 19 members. The administrative work is done by the executive director who is under appointment by the board. The president and two vice-presidents of the Legislators' Association are automatically members of the Board of the Council of State Governments, thus insuring the mutual cooperation of the two organizations.

Thus the Association is still actively carrying on the work for which it was established, the improvement of American legislative affairs, through a central organization which has an assurance of permanence, and in close coordination with the men who must administer the laws when made, and those men who have had experience and training in the fields in which legislation must be drawn up.

Board of Managers *of the* American Legislators' Association

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CHAPTER XXIV

The Governors' Conference

The National Association of the Governors

Executive Committee

Chairman: Governor GEORGE C. PEERY (Virginia)

Governor ROBERT L. COCHRAN (Nebraska)

Governor HENRY HORNER (Illinois)

Governor WILBUR L. CROSS (Connecticut)

Governor HARRY W. NICE (Maryland)

Other Officers

Secretary: Former Governor CARY A. HARDEE (Florida),
1336 New York Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Treasurer: Former Governor STANLEY C. WILSON (Vermont)

Brief History of the Conference

THE history of the Governors' Conference is the history of its annual conventions. The organization's span of life has so far extended from Roosevelt to Roosevelt, and its meetings have reflected each year the topics which were



GEORGE C. PEERY
Chairman

uppermost in the minds of American public officials. With the exception of one year, the Governors' Conference has met annually since 1908, when the governors came together in Washington at the invitation of President Roosevelt to discuss the national problem of conservation. The Conference itself was not born at the first meeting of the governors, as it was not contemplated then that the gathering should become an annual affair. On May 13, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt welcomed to the White House thirty-eight governors of states and territories, each with three advisers. In explaining his invitation, the President said: "So vital is this question

(of conservation), that for the first time in our history the chief executive officers of the states separately, and of the states together forming the nation, have met to consider it."

In addition to the governors and experts who discussed mineral, land, and water resources, several high officials and notable citizens addressed the conferees. These included William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, Secretary of State Elihu Root, John Hays Hammond, Secretary of the Treasury George B. Cortelyou, and Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson.

There was no permanent organization formed at this time, but the conference declared: "We advise that from time to time, as in his judgment may seem wise, the President call the Governors of the states and members of Congress and others into conference." Governor Blanchard, of Louisiana, the introducer of this declaration, added an idea which precipitated the appointment of a committee on permanent organization: "I have long thought that, if the Governors of the states could themselves from time to time get together, . . . much good would come out of it. Such meetings could be had by the Governors on their own motion, and some kind of an organization . . . it might be well to initiate."

A Wilsonian Hope

In 1910 Woodrow Wilson, then Governor-Elect of New Jersey, said: "If it grows into a dignified and permanent institution, it