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The Lawyers' War Emergency Committee

BY BENJAMIN E. SWEET*

In accordance with recommendations of the American Bar Association, Edward L. Wood, president of the Colorado Bar Association, has appointed a special committee to be known as the lawyers' war emergency committee, whose function is the organization and direction of the war efforts of the lawyers of Colorado. The general chairman and chairmen of the various sub-committees, whose names appear in the November loose leaf service, have met, and after a careful study of ways and means of further aiding the war effort and of the methods which are being employed by other bar associations, have set up a committee organization which is now functioning.

It is the hope of the committee that lawyers of the state will discover in this program some activity in which they can further assist and participate. The officers of the local associations are particularly urged to study the plan, offer suggestions and help by coordinating their efforts with those of the committee. As general chairman I hope to keep informed as to what other associations and lawyers are doing, relay this information and suggestions to the chairmen of the sub-committees and endeavor to secure and maintain a harmonious and effective organization.

The names of the six sub-committees which have been appointed suggest the functions which they will perform.

Council. The council, composed of three representatives at large, the chairmen of all sub-committees and the association officers, ex-officio, will meet bi-weekly, determine policy and coordinate the work of all the sub-committees.

Legal Aid to Men in Service. This sub-committee will direct the furnishing of legal service to men, in or about to enter the armed services, and their dependents, and assist legal selective service advisory boards.

Under the able leadership of John L. Zanoni of Denver, former chairman of the war work committee, who is now serving as a member of the council, the plan of a legal clinic was inaugurated and has flourished at Lowry Field. The system, which has attracted the attention of other associations and of the War Department, involves the establishment at each army post of a clinic manned by army officers and enlisted men with legal training who furnish to each man entering and leaving the post advice regarding wills, powers of attorney, allotments, insurance and related subjects. In other words, legal advice on matters strictly of a service connected nature would, under this plan, be handled by the lawyers in the armed forces. Soldiers with problems of a purely personal nature are referred to a lawyer of the man's selection. From those posts near Denver he is referred to the Legal Aid Bureau in Denver.

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which in turn refers him to some one or more lawyers whose names have been registered with the bureau. Any lawyer who desires to be so registered should communicate with the Legal Aid Bureau. These lawyers devote considerable time and effort in handling without compensation those matters for which no charge should be made or cases where the ability to pay is lacking.

Public Information Committee. The public, particularly those men about to be inducted or those contemplating enlistment and those already in service, are entitled to advice and suggestions as to what business or legal matters should be attended to promptly. A series of legal institutes will soon be held, and thereafter by radio programs and press announcements we hope to carry our suggestions to the people. A speakers' bureau prepared to furnish lawyers to speak on appropriate occasions will be established.

Committee to Spike Rumors. Various organizations throughout the nation have undertaken to assist in "spiking" rumors. This work has been helpful and the subject is becoming increasingly important. Lawyers are particularly equipped for such work. This sub-committee will guide our efforts.

Conservation of Legal Practice. To this sub-committee falls the duty of helping to protect and preserve the practice of the lawyer who enters service. Added functions have been assigned, such as assisting in adjusting legal machinery and processes to the war effort, conserving manpower, preserving standards of legal education and procuring the placement of lawyers.

Emergency Powers of Local Governments. A survey of this problem by appropriate committees of the American Bar Association is now in progress and there will soon be published a manual relating to war emergency ordinances and statutes. This sub-committee will cooperate in that effort, give special attention to a study of legal problems associated with the exercise of unusual and emergency powers of local governments and be prepared to assist local governmental agencies with such problems.

Preserving Bill of Rights. This title needs no explanation. With the rapid and sometimes violent changes in the relation of the citizen and the government, brought about by the requirements of war, this subject becomes increasingly important. The post-war problems will not be less grave. Our duty as lawyers in this field is clear. In short, the function of this sub-committee is the protection and preservation of the fundamentals of our government.

The committee has considered other activities and some of them will, no doubt, be attempted as the work gets under way. Detailed reports of the various sub-committees will appear in future issues of DICTA. In the meantime, we solicit your suggestions, your criticism, and above all your active support.