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## Current Events of Bench and Bar

Fred E. Neef

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# **Current Events of Bench and Bar**

By FRED E. NEEF

## *Harvard Will Experiment with New Law Course*

Harvard University will experiment, in a limited way, this fall with a new seven-year legal education plan. The course will call for three years of broad cultural training, two years of grounding in the law, and then two more years of law combined with liberal arts courses. The important feature of the plan is the fact that difficult courses in the social sciences will be given at a time when the student's mind is more mature and better disciplined, and he has become inculcated with the professional as distinguished from the collegiate attitude toward his work.

## *Judicial Certainty Better than Speed*

Judge Curtis D. Wilbur, of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals of the Ninth Circuit, recently warned judges attending the annual conference for the Ninth Circuit against hurrying their decisions through systems designed to speed up procedure. While in sympathy with the ideal of promptness and dispatch in the handling of business, Judge Wilbur said a judge should take all the time he needs to form a satisfactory conclusion before he decides a case.

## *I. C. C. Examines Lay Practitioners*

Where a federal agency takes effective steps to see that lay practitioners before it are actually qualified, practice of law by non-lawyers can be reduced to the vanishing point. A striking illustration of this is the I. C. C. written examination instituted in August, 1938, which requires the lay applicant to pass a comprehensive examination designed to show whether he is technically qualified to render a valuable service to his clients. Results of this examination last year show that of the 1,272 applicants admitted to practice only 27 or two per cent were non-lawyers.

## *Negligent Notary Held Liable for Loss*

A rather common form of notarial carelessness ended in a \$2,000 recovery on the notary's bond as the result of a decision handed down by the Supreme Court of Tennessee.

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The notary had certified that she was personally acquainted with an individual who was executing a deed. Actually she did not know him, and he was an imposter. On the faith of this deed the grantee obtained a bank loan for \$2,000. The court held the notary was liable by statute for negligence resulting in loss to another.

#### *Number of Law Schools Same, but Fewer Students Enrolled*

There was no increase in the number of law schools in the United States during the past year, but there was a substantial drop in the number of students enrolled. A report issued by the American Bar Association noted that there were still 108 schools, but that whereas student enrollment last year was 37,406, it had dropped this year to 34,539.

The decrease in enrollment was assigned to the increased entrance requirements and also an increase, in many schools, of tuition rates.

#### *Advance Sheet Hours*

The Kings County Bar Association has been giving a series of symposia called "Advance Sheet Hours" each Monday from 5:15 to 6:15 in the afternoon, at which time the association sponsors discussion of cases reported in the advance sheets for the preceding week.

Experts in various branches of the law, specialists in given subjects, serve as lecturers. After an hour's talk on the interesting features of outstanding cases, questions pertinent to the cases are answered by the lecturer.

#### *New Criminal Procedure Advocated*

After a year of deliberation, Congress has passed legislation, approved by the President, completing the United States Supreme Court's rule-making power by giving it authority to prescribe rules of pleading, practice and procedure in criminal cases.

Actively urged by the American Bar Association, this new legislation also bears the endorsement of the American Judicature Society. This new Act completes the restoration to the Supreme Court of its ancient powers. Similar legislation regarding civil procedure was passed in 1934, and the power to regulate procedure after verdict in criminal cases was restored to the court in 1933.

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