



1934

A Constructive Program

North Dakota Law Review Associate Editors

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Recommended Citation

North Dakota Law Review Associate Editors (1934) "A Constructive Program," *North Dakota Law Review*. Vol. 10: No. 5, Article 10.

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/ndlr/vol10/iss5/10>

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A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAM

The State of North Carolina seems to be the first State to experiment with a program of constructive effort to save our constitutional democracy from itself. Through its Institute of Government, a voluntary organization including various groups of public officials and private citizens, it is proceeding to study, to survey, to train citizens for official participation in government, utilizing guidebooks, laboratories, systematic courses of study, and a journal with which to maintain a continuous contact.

This is a comprehensive scheme, recognizing the basic needs of the day: "The need for training of governmental personnel; the need for simplification of the governmental structure; the need for the extension of governmental education; and the need for expertness in governmental organization."

We are informed that "the symbol of the law is in the office, but the life of the law is in the officer. . . The hope of popular government, centralized or localized, is in the effective and efficient handling of governmental affairs, by effective and efficient governmental officers, responsible and responsive to the people"; to which we should be ready to agree, but until Mr. Average Citizen is ready and willing not only to agree but to make that agreement effective through some such program as that undertaken by North Carolina we shall continue to have political administration and domination, with all of its attendant failure, inefficiency and waste.

Through the program proposed by the Institute of Government, quoting, now: "We can lay the problem bare; we can demonstrate the present workings of the system; we can lay solid foundations for the rebuilding of the governmental institutions"; and, continuing: "We must not forget that within the last fifteen years unprecedented extensions of state and local governmental activities have placed unprecedented strain on the foundations and superstructure of our governmental institutions. These institutions are the foundations of our social and economic structure, the guarantee of security to the business transactions and the human relationships of our present life, the promise of stability as by evolution rather than by revolution we move into the days ahead. We cannot let them topple and tumble like buildings in an earthquake. . . We are called upon to look to the rock whence we were hewn and build upon it, to rededicate ourselves to the preservation and development of American governmental institutions" . . . Today against a background of banks breaking, industries rocking, agriculture in the slough of despond, the shrill cry of the auctioneer ringing round our homes, waste in public places is intolerable, inefficiency in public office is a fraud, ignorance in public officers is a sin—visited on the miseries of the people. In the name of popular government this generation is called upon to turn its present flaming governmental interest into constructive channels and through a far-reaching program of training our governmental personnel, simplifying our governmental structure, and vivifying our governmental education, bring new knowledge, new strength and new courage to officials in the cities, the counties and the state."