

G A L L E Y

March 25, 1960

On the agenda for the Community Meeting scheduled for Monday night is the establishment of a new Constitutional Revision Committee. It will be the responsibility of this body to review the work of last term's Committee and to draft a Constitution serving the long-range, deliberate interests of the majority of the Community. This draft will then be submitted to the Community for adoption, hopefully before June.

The open hearings and Community Meetings held on the Constitution last term made clear to all the existence of two conflicting concepts of government. One, which we might call the Bicameralist view, is characterized by a commitment to a two-house form of government: an Upper House consisting of the faculty and the administration, and a Lower House consisting of the students. In the Bicameralist schema, the legislation of the Lower House is subject to the final authority of the Upper House. The second concept, which we might then call the Federalist view, is characterized by a commitment to a pluralist form of government consisting of three legislative bodies, the students, the faculty, and the administration, acting coordinately. In this schema, each body operates autonomously on matters within its proper sphere of action while in matters of common interest, the three collaborate.

If we are to establish an effective Constitutional Revision Committee, we must indicate either by a majority vote or by our selection of the Committee members, our commitment in principle to one or the other of these two concepts of government. By indicating our expectations, we can establish a Constitutional Revision Committee whose members will be responsible to, though not wholly bound by, our commitment; one which will be able to act thoughtfully and expeditiously and, what is of prime importance, one which will draft a Constitution that we are likely to accept and adopt. By its prior knowledge of our commitment, the Committee will be relieved of the tenuous deliberation on principles and will be free to develop and refine the structures and mechanisms necessary to support the kind of government to which we have committed ourselves.

In the service of these ends, I suggest that three kinds of nominees be identified and presented at the Monday meeting: the Bicameral, the Federalist and the non-committed. I suggest the possibility of establishing two slates: the Bicameral-and-non-committed and the Federalist-and-non-committed. In this framework, a vote would indicate which position was supported by the majority.

It should remain clear that the commitment of the Community and of the Committee be a commitment to a principle, not to any predetermined structure and that the commitment shall not be wholly binding. It should also remain clear that a compromise Committee cannot be formed by including both Bicameralists and Federalists, but only by the inclusion of neutrals.

The more thoughtful and careful the deliberations at this juncture, the more apt we are to arrive at a well-defined Constitution.

R.L.P.