

Report of the Special Committee for the Revision of the Constitution

The Constitution of the Society was originally drawn up and adopted at the foundation meeting in June, 1946. In the intervening years, it has served the Society admirably, even to the extent of anticipating and making provision for some of its principal activities—e.g., the activities of the Committees on Current Problems and on Research and Publications. The work of the Committee which drew it up, headed by Father Thomas Owen Martin, cannot, therefore, be too highly praised.

Since 1946, however, the Society has grown to an extent which was not envisioned by the earliest members, and it bids fair to grow even larger. More than that, several activities whose possibility could not, in the nature of things, have been foreseen from the beginning, have become part of the permanent life of the Society. Chiefly for these reasons, the Board of Directors of the Society, in November, 1951, appointed the present Committee to study the Constitution and By-Laws and to recommend such revisions as might seem necessary.

Acting in accord with its instructions, the committee has left altogether intact all sections relating to the fundamental organization and structure of the Society. Only such revisions as have been deemed truly necessary, in the light of experience and in consideration of the circumstances alluded to in the preceding paragraph, have been suggested. The Committee believes that the adoption of these revisions will enable the Society to function smoothly, even should its membership notably increase, and will give permanence and stability to mechanical arrangements which, as tentatively employed, have already proved their value.

The nature of the suggested revisions will be indicated by the following points:

In *Article III*, changes have been introduced into *Sections 2* and *5*, precisely because of the increase in membership. It was felt that

in a Society of four hundred or more members, it is not proper that so small a number as twenty should have the right to commit the Society to a special meeting. It is suggested, therefore, that a proportionate number be set, and that this right be granted only to a number which will be the equivalent of one-quarter of the total active membership (*Section 2*). It was noted also that, although through the years the membership of the Society has more than tripled, attendance at the regular annual meetings has consistently been limited to some one hundred members. Thus, it is quite possible that, if one-quarter of the total active membership be required normally for a quorum, the numbers present at some future annual meeting may not constitute a quorum. It is, consequently, proposed that the total active membership actually present at the regular annual business meeting constitute a quorum (*Section 5*).

Other sections have been changed, in order to give stability to certain activities and functions of the Society, which were not envisioned from the beginning. *Section 7* has been added to *Article III*, to make constitutional provision for the publication of the annual PROCEEDINGS and for the distribution thereof to all the members; and *Article VI, Section 3*, has been revised to provide for the editing of the PROCEEDINGS by the Committee on Research and Publications. The latter section has also been modified, in order to regularize the position of the Society's Archivist, without establishing an additional elective office. Also, *Section 5* has been added to *Article VI*, with the purpose of giving constitutional standing to the Cardinal Spellman Award Committee and of assuring the permanent observance of the charter of the Award, which was adopted at Notre Dame last June.

Finally, the dues of associate members have been raised to five (5) dollars in a revision suggested in *Article II, Section 2*. With the rising costs of printing and shipping, it is no longer economically practicable to retain the lower fee. At the present, such memberships are a liability rather than an asset, and, as a result, no attempt has been made to increase the number of them. At the increased rate, memberships of the associate type can contribute much to the financial health of the Society. It may be noted that, except for the privilege of voting, associate members share in all the benefits of the Society equally with active members. The committee, however,

recommends that the few associate memberships now in existence be continued at the former rate.

The revised Constitution, together with the By-Laws, is being sent to you at this date, in order to comply with the regulations of the present Constitution which govern amendments (Cf. *Article VIII* of the Constitution, *Article III* of the By-Laws). It will be offered for adoption at the business meeting in Baltimore on June 24, 1953.

(Signed)

JOHN M. A. FEARNS,
MARTIN J. HEALY,
ALOYSIUS McDONOUGH, C.P.,
JAMES EDWARD REA.