

August 30, 1955

Memorandum No. 5

Subject: Committee work by Commission members.

With the Commission's organizational year behind us and as we begin to work on our first Calendar of Topics, the Commission has reached a point where it is beginning to operate more and more through committees. It seems to me to be desirable for the Commission to give some thought to this fact and to its implications and some problems which are presented by it.

Our present plan is to have each of the Commission's studies conducted under the direction of a committee of its members. Personnel limitations indicate that such committees cannot exceed two in number in most, if not all cases. An important question to be considered is what the responsibility of such committees shall be, particularly in respect of the studies which will be done by Research Consultants. One reason for its importance is that the answer will determine in part what the responsibility of this office must be in connection with such studies.

One possibility is that once a research consultant has been obtained for, and a committee has been assigned to a study, the primary responsibility for the study shall shift to the committee. In this event the committee would actively supervise the study, including setting up a time schedule with the Consultant, checking on his progress, studying the consultant's report carefully, meeting with him to discuss his work, and drafting a proposed recommendation to the Legislature for the Commission to consider. Under such an arrangement, the responsibility of this office would be limited to responding to the committee's requests for assistance, presumably largely of an administrative nature.

Another possibility would be that the committees will play a considerably more passive role and that this office will actively supervise the study, to include making a careful study of the consultant's report, taking a leading role in the discussions with him, writing the draft recommendation to the Legislature, etc.

It is important for me to know whether the Commission expects its committees to proceed in one of the two ways outlined or in some different way so that I can act accordingly.

I think that it is fair to state that the Commission has proceeded to date more nearly along the second of the two lines outlined above than the first. My own view is that it would be better if the reverse were true in the future because the Commission's work would then more nearly be a commission product. But time limitations must necessarily have great if not controlling weight in this determination and you alone can be the judges of that.

Whatever is decided, I think that it is important to realize that committee work will be of the greatest importance to the Commission's accomplishments and that attendance at committee meetings and preparation for them should be given the same priority as in the case of meetings of the Commission.

I suggest that these matters deserve your thought and some discussion at the September meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Secretary