

The Agenda for the Pan-Pacific Legal Conference

The letter printed herewith is being sent to the legal fraternities in Pacific lands as the expression of the Pan-Pacific Legal Committee after a number of conferences held at the Pan-Pacific Research Institution in Honolulu.

Dear Sir:

1. Your association is cordially invited to send delegates to a legal conference, to be held at Honolulu during or about January, 1927, of representatives of the lawyers of the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean, including their judges, the members of their bar and of their legal profession, their professors of law, and their jurists. More definite information concerning dates, accommodations and means of transportation will be sent later; the principal purpose of this preliminary letter being to bring about an exchange of views respecting the subjects for discussion at the conference which are regarded as most likely to prove interesting and helpful to the countries concerned.

2. For more than a year, opinions have been frequently expressed by leading lawyers that there ought to be a Pan-Pacific Bar Association, or permanent legal organization, with Honolulu as its usual and, perhaps, its invariable meeting place. Biennial or triennial meetings for such an association have been suggested. Other lawyers, more conservative, perhaps, than they, have questioned the wisdom of attempting to effect a permanent organization of any international bar association or legal association holding regular meetings, unless it be a small association of experts in some specialty, or unless the distances to be traveled in attending meetings are relatively small. They have pointed out that the interests and activities of the existing, successful bar associations have usually been directed, primarily at least, to the amelioration

or reform of the local and municipal law, to the improvement of the procedure of the local courts and to the elevation of the standard of professional ethics and the eradication of abuses. It has been pointed out that the legal associations, dealing with matters of common interest to a considerable number of different nations (other than certain, exceptional specialties of the law) have, in general, not thriven, where regular, stated meetings have been attempted and that this may probably be found to be the case in respect of a legal organization participated in by nations so remote from one another as those established on different sides of the Pacific.

3. The question of a permanent, legal organization with regular meetings is, therefore, an entirely open one. Whether such an organization shall be formed or whether representatives of the lawyers and legal societies of the various Pan-Pacific countries shall meet at irregular intervals and only when issues of importance and interest present themselves for solution, in order to promote the welfare of the Pacific countries; this is a question which, it is thought, should form one of the subjects for consideration and determination when the Pan-Pacific Legal Conference meets in 1927.

One proposition has, however, practically unanimous support in the opinions of lawyers. It is that the legal conference of 1927 must have successors; either the stated meetings of a Pan-Pacific, legal organization or the occasional, specially-called meetings of judges and lawyers, interested in promoting the welfare of the Pacific nations by harmonizing and improving their laws and the legal and quasi-legal principles governing their international relations.

4. In addition to planning for an international, legal organization or formulating a general policy of coöperation and