

### SENATOR SAM SAYS:

WASHINGTON — The Senate Judiciary Committee is considering several alternative proposals dealing with one of the most fundamental changes ever proposed to our constitution — revision of the method of electing the President.

Two of these proposals, the direct election plan and my compromise proposal to reform the Electoral College are receiving major consideration by the Committee. Last week, in this column, I stated some of the fundamental considerations which I believe should govern the debate over this major Constitutional revision. In essence, I have advocated that we should eliminate the office of elector, because the original purpose for choosing electors has disappeared and there is always the possibility, however remote, that "faithless electors" will exercise their Constitutional prerogative of voting for whom they choose.

I have urged, too, that we remedy one of the great objections of the present Electoral College system which relates to the present contingency that when no candidate receives a majority in the Electoral College, the choice devolves upon the House of Representatives with each State delegation having one vote to be cast according to the majority vote of the State delegation. In my judgment, the reason for this procedure has disappeared with the passing of time, and under my compromise plan, any deadlock in the Electoral College would be broken by a vote taken at a Joint Session of Congress with each Member of the House and Senate having one vote.

Moreover, it seems to me that the direct election plan overlooks the most basic unifying force in the Constitution by ignoring the States in the electoral process. The great compromise which made the formation of the Union possible gave each State at least two electoral votes. Electoral vote is based upon a State's representation in the Congress and the above mentioned compromise which provides that every State shall have two Senators, I seriously doubt that a sufficient number of the original colonies would have ratified the Constitution if this basic protection afforded the

less populous States had not been written into that document. Moreover, I think that we must recognize that our Federal Government was welded together as "an indestructible union composed of indestructible States." The direct election plan strikes at the heart of this concept, and weakens the role of 34 states in the choosing of the President.

I am concerned, too, that if we adopt the direct election plan, there will be a proliferation of single-issue candidates. This would seriously increase the possibility that no candidate could win the broad popular support which was given the Presidency its influence and power. Such a contingency could lead to far more serious problems than we now have with the Electoral College.

As approved by the House, the direct election plan provides that if no candidate receives 40 per

cent of the vote, a runoff election will be held. Our present system of orderly transition of the government is based upon the need for a rapid system of orderly transition of the government is based upon the need for a rapid decision as to who shall be President. Only ten weeks span the period from election day until inauguration day, and any situation which would require a runoff election risks other delays such as a recount of the votes or a challenge that voting frauds occurred, each of which might have to be settled before the runoff could proceed. It seems to me that this runoff provision in the direct election plan could bring on many serious problems.

In essence, I think it is preferable to remedy the defects of a tried and workable electoral system rather than establish a plan which has many elements that could make for chaos in a future crisis.

## Garden Time

As I write this in April, I offer a word of encouragement to my readers in the upper Piedmont and mountain counties. Don't give up because we are seeing some better days up your way. But, you will still have to make up those school days you lost when the roads were too slick for travel.

Spring has been very slow in our neighborhood, too, but there are some promising signs. Jonquils, tulips and crocus have passed their prime but some are still pretty. The same is true for forsythia (Golden Bell). The crab apples, of which we have an abundance in Raleigh, are beautiful and the dogwoods are showing color. One or two more warm days and they will be in bloom. Camellias (Japonica) have been

blooming since last fall but many buds were frozen during our zero temperatures in January. We still have some flowers which survived the cold and are pretty in the house as cut flowers.

Bridal wreath spirea is in bloom and I think I saw a deutzia in bloom a few days ago but did not stop to be sure.

Azaleas are showing color but need some warm days to open the blossoms. The redbuds are almost wide open, and the oaks are "feathering". Evergreen lawns are growing (I have mowed twice) and the pastures are green and lush. Small grains are from 6 to 10 inches high and growing.

I bring these signs of spring to your attention to remind you what a wonderful state it is our privilege to enjoy. We really have

three springs: the first in the Coastal Plain; another in the Piedmont; and still another in the mountains. The ecology of North Carolina is unsurpassed as we sprawl from sea level to the highest peak in eastern America. It is not too difficult to find, somewhere within this varied topography, an environment suitable for growth of most of the plants to be found in the Temperate Zone.

What we need most now is to conserve our natural resources by every possible means. Electricity can be generated by steam fueled with coal or atomic energy, just as easily as it can from water power. It seems to me that setting aside 5 or 10 acres for a steam electric generating plant would be much more practical than inundating 46,000 acres for recreation and hydroelectric power. What do you think?

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