

THESE AMAZING AMENDMENTS !

In the September, 1944, Mailing, the FAPA members were greeted by three proposed amendments to the Constitution, presented in ballot form. These amendments were quite elaborate and of far-reaching consequence---yet no opportunity for discussion was allowed. They came as a complete surprise, despite the Futurians' oft-repeated complaint about just this sort of thing.

Now no member acquainted with the Futurians, and their long record in Fandom, can doubt that the proposers of these amendments had the best of intentions. On the other hand, no member can fail to agree that the construction of an important legal document demands a great deal more than "good intentions".

Suppose we examine these amazing amendments and their implications?

PROPOSED ARTICLE 13.

".....we of the FAPA cannot look upon the theories of 'inferior' races with other than loathing and repudiation, as being both anti-scientific and inimical to the American way of life."

This type of emotional appeal to patriotism and ideals is in keeping with the best traditions of the unscrupulous and insincere politician, and is an insult to the intelligence. Even casual examination shows it to be both untruthful and a semantic nightmare. Making such a statement part of the Constitution could never make all members look upon theories of "inferior races" with either loathing or repudiation. Human nature simply refuses to be changed in that way. Nor can it be "anti-scientific" for the reason that science has never established any conclusive facts upon this subject. The whole question is controversial.

However, disregarding the rightness or wrongness of "theories of inferior races", no existing racial theories can be inimical to the "American way of life" when they are already part of that way of life. Such a phrase is practically meaningless. Its only possible definition is, "life as it is now lived in America". Large sections of the population now consider the negro race inferior. Others feel the same about the Japanese. And, of course, there are those who disagree with one or both of these groups. But it is obvious that an effort to eliminate one of these groups is the thing that is inimical to the "American way of life".

"It shall be the duty of the Official Editor to refuse to include in any official mailing, or list as part of a mailing, any publication wherein the doctrine of 'inferior races' is promulgated, or wherein any person, persons, groups, or nations are vilified, belittled, or are declared unworthy of what the Constitution of the United States of America declares to be the basic rights of all citizens, upon racial grounds."

Did you ever try to write a magazine wherein no "person, persons, groups or nations" were "vilified" or "belittled"? Just suppose this amendment became part of the constitution of the FAPA.

Discussion of the present war would effectually be barred. Hitler could only be spoken of in glowing terms. The German race could only be admired. To state, even to infer, that they were mislead would "belittle" their intelligence. Cartoons such as those showing the buck teeth and monkey-like build of the Japanese race clearly would be verboten. The oft-demonstrated treachery of the Nipponese could never be mentioned. The Australian Bushmen could no longer be pointed out as the most primitive existing race. Such "belittlement" would be unthinkable, and would bar the offending publication from the mailing. There could be no more speculations as to the effect on civilization had the Moors not been driven out of Spain. In fact, they couldn't have been driven out. To state such would "belittle" them. On the same grounds, the Neanderthal race must still exist, for to infer that they failed in the battle for survival would "belittle" them dreadfully. No person, persons, groups, or nations could ever be better than any other person, persons, groups, or nations in this "best of all possible worlds". To be so would imply that another was inferior, and thereby become an act of "belittlement". All Hail ! Pollyanna rides again !

The framers of the Constitution of the United States of America showed a great deal more wisdom than the framers of this amendment---they guaranteed us the right to our own opinions, and the right to express those opinions, either verbally or in print. Perhaps there are those who consider Freedom of Speech, and Freedom of the Press to be quite reactionary ! But there can be little doubt that most FAPA members will continue to cherish those freedoms, and do that which is necessary to insure them.

"It shall be the duty of the Official Editor to refuse to include in any official mailing, or list as part of a mailing, any publication containing matter which would imperil the mailing privileges of the Association upon the grounds of obscenity."

Here we have a matter that strikes at the very existence of the organization. Since the matter was brought up some months ago, there has developed a general agreement that obscenity must be avoided. However, "obscenity" is a very elastic term. The dictionary defines it as "the quality of being indecent". It defines "obscene" as "offensive to modesty; indecent." Obviously, what might offend the "modesty" of one person, could be considered quite proper by another. It is virtually impossible to define obscenity accurately for legal purposes---a fact the courts of this country are discovering. There can be no question that the FAPA publications must be, and remain, free from anything the Postal Department would term obscenity. But it must be a matter of the judgment and responsibility of the individual FAPA member, not an attempt at legislation. Giving the Official Editor, or any other individual or group, the power to reject a publication on grounds of obscenity would be giving them the power to bar nearly any publication they chose from the Mailing. If the Official Editor stated that it offended his modesty, who could gainsay him?

Let's not hesitate to do that which is necessary to insure Freedom of the Press in FAPA ! Let's pay more than lip-service to this struggle to abolish Fascism !

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLES 8 and 9.

On casual reading, the proposal that the Mailing dates be changed so that the Christmas rush may be avoided, sounds admirable. There doubtless exists the faint possibility that a mailing may be lost sometime (a good reason why EVERY member should send the OE at least five to ten extra copies of his publication). There is also the fact that the Official Editor faces the task (once during his term of office) of sending out the mailing during a very busy season of the year. However, what is overlooked is that nearly all members publish their mags during the last month preceding the mailing date. The proposed change in dates would thus relieve the OE at the expense of ALL THE OTHER MEMBERS. But there are other angles to this amendment as it has been presented.

"Officers shall serve for one year beginning August 22d, or, in the event that the ballot deadline is shoved ahead, upon notification of their election by the ballot counting committee."

Let's do a little s'posin'. The present officers of FAPA took office on July 15, 1944, in accordance with the present constitution and their terms expire July 14, 1945. Now suppose this amendment becomes part of the constitution. The next set of officers would not take office until August 22, 1945. For five weeks we would have no officers! "But," many will say, "the President has the power to appoint members to fill vacated offices." Ah! There is the rub. The constitution gives him no right to appoint members to offices to be vacated. Those offices become vacated all at once, and when that happens there will be no President to do any appointing. Still, for purposes of this discussion, let's grant that this might be called a quibble. Let's suppose the President manages to appoint himself to succeed himself for those five weeks. Of course, appointing oneself to office is hardly in keeping with the ideals expressed in that Constitution of the United States of America that the framers of these amendments so lovingly mention. But we'll imagine that the President figures out some way of getting away with it. Having kept himself in office, he can then proceed to fill the other three offices with whatever members he desires. He could appoint those members who had just vacated the offices. But he could just as easily appoint others. It might prove amazing what a President could do with an Official Editor, Secretary-Treasurer, and Vice-President-Judiciary who were willing to take orders! Naturally, we all feel that none of our FAPA members would stoop to such action. Still those nasty possibilities would exist.

Next, suppose the Official Editor is delayed three weeks in getting out the "July" mailing. According to this amendment, the ballot deadline would be moved ahead from August 8 to August 29. In that case, the next officers would not take office until October 10, 1945, and their terms of office would expire October 9, 1946. But suppose the next Official Editor has more time to devote to his job, and gets the mailing out when it should be. Then the officers for 1946-1947 would be inaugurated on the proper date of August 22, 1946. For three weeks FAPA would be blessed (?) with two complete sets of officers. What could be more ridiculous? The 1945-46 officers,

according to the constitution, would be entitled to serve for one full year. The 1946-47 officers would equally be entitled to take office August 22. And just suppose these two sets of officers held opposing views on what should be done about important business or policy that might be up for quick action at that time. What a lovely mess that could turn into! And these situations could continue to occur for as long as these weird amendments were part of the constitution.

It is to be hoped that any elected officials of the FAPA would be big enough to refuse to allow such situations to cause any trouble. Yet, if the organization is to be operated upon a basis of naive faith in one's fellow members, what need is there of any constitution at all? None can doubt that the framers of the amazing amendments never intended such potentialities to creep into them. But there they are---ugly proof that "good intentions" are not enough in matters of this kind.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 12.

"An affirmative vote by a majority of the active membership shall be necessary for the adoption of new amendments."

The above is the crux of this amendment. It is based upon the theory that less than an affirmative vote of a majority of the membership would mean a minority rule, in view of the well-known fact that less than two thirds of the membership usually bother to vote at all.

However, there is another side to this question. How can any member complain of being ruled by a minority, when he is not sufficiently interested to bother to vote? If a minority of the total membership causes adoption of an amendment to which a number of non-voting members are opposed, what right have they to complain after rejecting their constitutional opportunity to express that opposition? It has been suggested that this situation be overcome by making voting necessary to retention of membership. That would seem to solve the problem---but does it? The NFFF originally used that method---with notably tragic results. The framers of the Constitution of the United States of America made voting a privilege of citizenship, not a requisite to its retention!

An affirmative vote of a majority means the few, if any, amendments or petitions would ever pass, simply because too many members do not care whether they are or not. The organization would tend to stagnate. To make voting compulsory would be an unwarranted imposition on the membership. But...there is another method of accomplishing the desired end. If a two-thirds, or even three-fourths, vote were required for the adoption of an amendment, there could be no complaint, and no chance for any small minority to rule the Association.

In their florid and faulty way, these amazing amendments propose to make changes in our Constitution that examination proves to be undesirable. In their flowery fashion, they set out to increase the size of the Constitution by more than half. Yet they contain a certain superficial plausibility which has caused many of us to vote for them without first carefully studying their potentialities. One

member even appealed to the Vice-President for permission to change his vote after he had mailed his ballot. As the next report of the Vice-President will show, it was necessary to deny him this privilege. But doubtless there are others who would have liked to make similar changes. Those who would like to correct errors made in haste, and who would like to keep Freedom in FAPA, are now offered their opportunity.

FREEDOM FROM BOTH MINORITY RULE, AND COMPULSORY VOTE!

FREEDOM FROM DUPLICATE OFFICERS, AND OFFICIAL CHAOS!

FREEDOM OF OPINION, AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS!!!

These are the Freedoms all sincere FAPA members must demand. These are the Freedoms we must insure by doing that which is both necessary, and possible under the Constitution.

Let's prevent our beloved Association from becoming the farce that the inadequacy of "good intentions" would make it!

Let's not wait for these amazing amendments to become part of our Constitution just because many of us voted yes before we realized their full potentialities.

Let's keep FAPA Free, and prevent any further proposed amendments from being brought to vote without ample time for study and discussion.

SIGN THE ENCLOSED PETITION AND MAIL IT NOW!!!

MAIL PETITIONS TO:

AL ASHLEY
25 POPLAR
BATTLE CREEK
MICHIGAN.

AN INSTRUMENT TO OVERRULE AND AMEND

Acting under Article 12, of the Constitution of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, which states that a majority of the active membership may over-ride any acts of Officials, or suspend sections of the constitution in particular cases without repealing them, the undersigned hereby express a desire for the following:

(a) That the act of the President in bringing to special vote the two proposed amendments, and the proposed article 13, as presented in the September, 1944, Mailing, be nullified, and subsequent voting be considered null and void.

(b) That "Article 12 - Amendments" be suspended without repeal to permit the insertion of

"Proposed amendments shall be printed complete in the issue of the Official Organ preceding the issue in the Mailing wherein they are brought to vote."

after the second sentence of Article 12 which ends in the words, "other officers", and before the third sentence which commences with the words, "Such amendments".

Signed,
