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Editors' Preface

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Editors' Preface

On a list of Things The World Needs Most, a new law review would probably rank somewhere between winter baseball and more kitchen gadgets. How then shall we satisfy our heavy burden of justification?

Conventional law reviews serve several purposes. They are thought to be outstanding training for the student editors. A cynic might wonder why, if that is so, we don't have a Minnesota Bottom Quarter Law Review for the students who would profit most by reading proofs. Anyhow, we are reluctant to justify our journal on the ground that it will improve our minds.

Typically, reviews provide an outlet for the publication of massive research projects that in other fields would probably appear in monograph form. The quality of scholarly journals is so variable that nearly anything can be published somewhere. As dues-paying members of the union, we will not sniff at that additional justification, but as editors we dare not stress it.

Our law review, unlike most, is meant to be read. For one thing, it is addressed to a real group—those interested in constitutional law and history—rather than the purely hypothetical generalists who receive most regular law reviews. We are also trying to encourage a different style of law review writing. Scholars are not, as a rule, the best of writers. But American law reviews compound our native faults by Teutonic conventions as to length and footnoting. *Constitutional Commentary* may contain some long essays from time to time, but—as the contents of this issue imply—we prefer short ones. They will have footnotes in the usual places, but not the incredibly prolix proofs of diligence that decorate so much of American legal writing.

We think that there should be plenty of history in the basic Constitutional Law course. Certainly there should be plenty in *Constitutional Commentary*, which is addressed to historians and political scientists as well as lawyers. The obsession with current doctrinal topics has been criticized often enough; we hope to be able to do something about it. Like many of our aspirations, this will depend largely on the kinds of manuscripts that we receive from you, Gentle Readers.

We suppose that law reviews are most often read by teachers.

If so, it makes sense to include pieces on teaching, especially in a journal for specialists. Ideally, we'd like to have one such essay in every issue. To pick examples at random, what is the best way to lead a discussion of the abortion cases? Is justiciability a good topic with which to begin a Constitutional Law course? What do you do with school busing cases? It needn't be long—a printed page will do.

In a similar informal spirit, we have a column of constitutional miscellany called *But Cf.* . . . In this issue, it summarizes the inaugural issues of a few other law reviews. Next time maybe we'll look up the reactions to a famous old decision.

In our second issue, and thereafter, we expect to offer more book reviews than are customarily found in law reviews. Many useful but relatively obscure books are devoted to constitutional themes, and we will try to let you know about most of them.

We will also publish articles on Canadian constitutional developments, beginning with the introductory description (*Observations: The Canadian Constitution*) in this issue. We would welcome manuscripts on Canadian topics.

You may have noticed that this first issue, originally promised for "autumn," is a little late. Autumn and spring in Minnesota are too ephemeral to serve as deadlines. With that excuse, we decided to change from a Fall-Spring to a Winter-Summer publication schedule. So look for the next issue in July.