

FINDINGS

*[Report of the Chancellor's Committee on the UCLA School of Law controversy]*¹

May 24, 1956

Chancellor Raymond B. Allen

Campus

Dear Chancellor Allen:

The committee you appointed April 9, 1956, to investigate the controversy between Dean L. Dale Coffman and certain members of the School of Law faculty submits the following report and findings.

We have individually and collectively analyzed the documents you submitted to us, including copies of (1) the memoranda of allegations submitted to you by the eight dissenting members of the Law faculty; (2) Dean Coffman's rebuttal or explanation of the allegations in these memoranda, with supporting statements or letters from Professor Rollin M. Perkins, Professor Harold E. Verrall and Dean Roscoe Pound; (3) written statements voluntarily submitted by witnesses who appeared before the committee; (4) letters to Chancellor Allen or to the chairman of the committee regarding the reputation and character of Dean Coffman and Professor

¹ For further information, see the Editor-in-Chief's introduction on page 1 of this volume: 11 CAL. LEGAL HIST. 1 (2016). This is a verbatim transcript in all respects.

James H. Chadbourn, and also regarding the reputation of the School of Law; (5) excerpts from confidential letters to Chancellor Allen in reply to inquiries he had addressed to administrative heads and professors of law schools throughout the country, who knew one or more of the principals in the controversy or who were aware of the controversy — these letters were from two chancellors, nine deans, and seventeen professors from leading universities across the country. These and other relevant documents (originals or copies) are submitted as Exhibits one to eleven to this report.

For our analyses of the documents of items (1) and (2) referred to in the preceding paragraph, we have arranged the allegations and their rebuttals in juxtaposition on large sheets of paper. The allegations of the eight complaining faculty members are on the left side of each sheet; the rebuttals of Dean Coffman are in the middle; and the statements from Dean Pound, Professor Verrall, Professor Perkins, and others are on the right. These allegations or issues and their rebuttals, indexed for convenient reference, are submitted as Exhibit 1.

The allegations and rebuttals concerning anti-Semitism and “left wingers” speak for themselves as presented in Exhibit 1, and, as background information that undoubtedly contributed to the controversy, we carefully examined the documents in Exhibit 1; we were unable to obtain from the witnesses we interviewed any additional relevant evidence on these two issues. After we had heard and analyzed the testimony of witnesses we found that, although these two issues, and also several other issues or allegations, were significant in contributing to the schism, the fundamental issue or question was, has the Dean lost the confidence of his faculty, and, if he has, can he regain and maintain that confidence?

From the beginning of our investigation of the schism we have endeavored to find some promising meeting ground on which we could help you and the disputants mend the schism between the faculty and the dean. We regret that we have not found this promising meeting ground. We hope that the evidence we have obtained from the interviews and the findings we have made will help you and President Sproul make such decisions as will best serve the welfare of the School of Law and the University. We shall be pleased to confer with you and the President, if you so desire, to further clarify or amplify this report.

Summary of interviews. The committee conducted interviews with the following persons, in the order in which their names appear: J. H. Chadbourne

[sic], R. S. Rice, L. Dale Coffman, Arvo Van Alstyne, K. H. York, J. D. Sumner, R. C. Maxwell, E. A. Jones, A. H. McCoid, H. F. Verrall, R. M. Perkins, Justin Miller, Judge W. C. Mathes, M. Philip Davis, Paul Hutchi[n]son, Judge Frederick Houser, Frank Balthis, and John Canaday. Messrs. Chadbourne [sic] and Rice were interviewed together and the five past presidents of the Alumni Association came, at their own request, as a group. All others were interviewed singly. Each interview took from one to three hours.

Following is a brief summary of each of the interviews, along with an attempt to analyze the general impression which each of the witnesses made on the committee.

J. H. CHADBOURNE [sic]. The witness amplified many of the charges contained in the September memorandum. He stated that no modification of the present method of administration of the Law School would be of any avail. "It is not a question of management, not a system, but a person." He stressed the "lack of leadership," "abuse of power," "imperious attitude" of the Dean. He stated that he would be forced to resign if the Dean remains. Not only by his statements but by his manner and his tone, the witness made it quite clear that he is committed to a course of action which would preclude any reconciliation. He stated that the return of the Law School to the Academic Senate was not an issue in the controversy.

R. S. RICE. This witness generally corroborated Chadbourne's [sic] statements and cited the fact that of the thirteen men whom the Dean had appointed over a six year period, three had left under circumstances that indicated their dissatisfaction and eight are now desirous of leaving. In reply to a direct question he said that he would certainly look for another position at once if the Dean remained. He agreed with Chadbourne [sic] on the issue of the Academic Senate. (See Exhibit 5.)

L. DALE COFFMAN. The witness took the position that the situation in the Law School had been brought about by the machinations of Chadbourne [sic] with the possibility of instigation and connivance of unnamed persons outside the Law faculty. Upon further questioning along this line he produced no evidence of outside interference. He minimized the involvement of all members of the faculty with the exception of Chadbourne [sic] and Rice, and was very positive that no one would resign. Upon being asked what remedies he would suggest for the situation, he said emphatically that all that