

Letters to the Editor

NYTimes

To Succeed a President: A 'Senator at Large'

To the Editor: JAN 31 1974

Your Jan. 15 editorial indicates the dubious value of various proposals to correct the present unsatisfactory method of electing our Vice Presidents, whom we don't really vote for at all. We accept them, often reluctantly, in a sort of package deal.

Let's abolish the office. Instead, when a President for any reason is unable to complete his term, I propose his successor to be a Senator at large. The obvious advantage is that such a person would have been elected on merit, by all the voters of the country, using much the same criteria as when voting for a President.

How this new kind of Senator would normally function would have to be a matter of careful consideration, but I could envision his duties and prerogatives as including the following:

1. He would preside over the Senate.
2. The Senator at large would have all the rights of Senators from the states. He could have ex officio membership on all committees but could not assume any chairmanship.
3. He would have no executive privileges and would not be responsible to the President — only to the people.
4. The whole country would be this Senator's constituency and he might act as ombudsman for the nation.

While this is possibly less convenient, the Senator at large might better be elected at mid-term. The voters thereby would be provided a sort of national plebiscite through which to

register their approval or disapproval of the administration in power.

The extra-Senatorial office might be attractive to women or men with less thirst for power or political advantage than a desire to interpret, publicize and serve the needs of the country. This Senator might well be an advocate for the people and a goad to the executive and legislative branches. I could see a John Gardner in such a position. ROYAL H. RASCH
Medford, N. J., Jan. 17, 1974

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The Loyalty of Mr. Ford

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Vice President Ford, I would think, should see that he has a clear duty to the public to avoid becoming an apologist for the waterlogged Nixon Administration.

No one in the public demands that he stand up and be counted about matters in rather advanced stages of investigation by grand juries, the special prosecutor and a formal impeachment inquiry now begun by the House. The best we could ask for is that he value and preserve the neutrality and good name with which he assumed office until such time as the courts and Congress have completed their work, just in case he does become President.

In other words, I hope he will put his loyalty to the nation and rule of law above that of a now-misguided loyalty to his party's President.

ELIOT STANLEY
Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., Jan. 22, 1974