

be standards which should be safeguarded, that this language should not be so broad as to permit violation of civil rights in terms of commitment or certification. Both the Maryland Mental Health Association and the Governor's Commission to Revise the Mental Health Law strongly urged that the language, *non compos mentis*, and restrictions of the present Constitution be continued. This the Committee recommends.

Section 6 is a broad grant of power to the General Assembly to establish and define residence; to establish a uniform system of permanent registration of voters; to provide for the nomination of candidates; and to regulate the time, place, and manner of elections; to provide for the uniform administration of elections and for absentee voting; to insure secrecy of voting; and to protect the integrity of the election process.

Section 6 covers a myriad of individual provisions in the present Constitution, and the Committee interpreted this as granting to the General Assembly the authority to set the procedure, for instance, for resolving tie votes and contested elections, and any other law that would come under the broad mandate of insuring the secrecy of voting and protecting the integrity of the election process.

The last sentence of that section is, "The General Assembly shall establish a state agency to supervise and insure the uniform administration of laws under this section."

This is a new provision. In all the testimony before the Committee on the part of election officials, the need for uniformity and some responsibility lodged at the state level was made and made and made.

While there is in the Constitution now some indication that uniformity is required, in fact there is tremendous variation from county to county.

The Committee recognized the present lack of uniformity and also recognized the importance of establishing uniformity. One of the reasons which I think this body should consider is that the local county election boards are the ones that administer the state elections, and for this reason the need for uniformity should be highlighted and understood.

The sentence reads, "The General Assembly shall by law establish a state agency to supervise and insure the uniform administration of laws under this section."

One of the practices which is prevalent in this State is that each board of super-

visors of elections employs its own attorney, so that it is not unlikely that you get 24 different interpretations of the same law.

This, we maintain, should not happen.

Insofar as municipal elections are indeed mentioned in this constitution, we feel that it is necessary to spell out the rights of municipal corporations in terms of dates and procedures. At the moment they vary all over, from January to December.

The second paragraph of this section establishes that municipal corporations by local law or law enacted by a government body of that municipality can establish election procedures for its municipal elections, subject to such procedures and standards as the General Assembly may provide by public general law.

This is language out of the local government article. It was meant not in any way to conflict with those provisions.

Section 7 establishes the time of the elections. The first paragraph continues the present congressional election in every even year. The second paragraph continues the present state election in 1970 and every fourth year thereafter.

The third paragraph represents a marked departure. The feeling of the majority of the Committee was that if at all possible, it would be desirable in terms of focusing the issues on local government, which under the article previously adopted here should be even more important to the localities, to take the county election out from under the influence of the issues on the state level. For this reason, paragraph 3 establishes the election for county officials at 1971 and every four years thereafter.

Section 8, on pluralities, establishes that the candidate receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected to, or in the case of primary elections become the nominee for the office for which they were candidates. In other words, this would rule out any runoff elections.

Section 9 has no equivalent in the present Constitution and says that no ownership of an interest in property shall be required as a condition for voting, except with respect to non-resident property owners in municipal elections, or for holding any appointive or elective office in this state or governmental unit thereof, except that office holders may be required by law to furnish appropriate bonds.

Until 1802 the state constitution had varying property qualifications for state