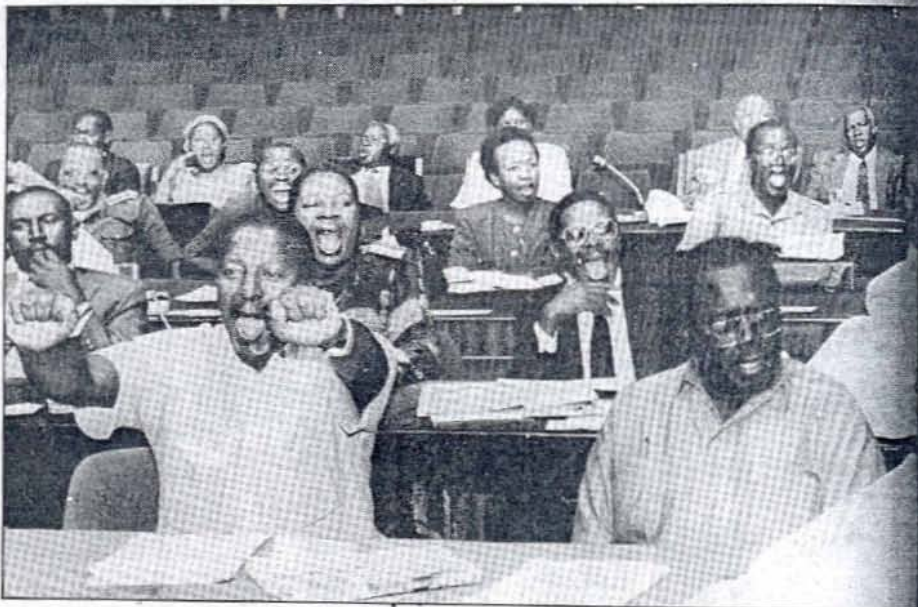


## To whom more is given, more will be asked



CADs shouting 'aye' in favour of the enactment of the constitution. It is not over for the CADs, they have to teach people at the grassroots about the constitution.

By J.M. Waliggo

I wish to join the jubilant Ugandans in congratulating the CA delegates and Commission staff for the historic achievement of a successful conclusion to the eight-year constitutional process. This has been a unique exercise in nation-building.

Many people have become politically acute and adequately educated in democratic governance. Everyone who cared must have learnt a valuable lesson for the Uganda of tomorrow.

No one can doubt that Ugandans of opposing ideas can sit together and iron out their differences under the overall control of the general public. We have learnt the importance of consensus method of work, how to manage dramatic 'walk-outs', how to control extremists on either side, and never to lose sight of the principal objective of achieving the common good.

Now that we have a new constitution, the CA delegates have a triple challenge. First, they should be in the forefront in educating their respective electorates on the new constitution.

People's active participation in constitution-making will mean very little unless it is followed by their empowerment in knowing its exact contents.

For 14 months, the CADs have debated, argued and

# Let CADs educate people on constitution

passed the provisions of the constitutions. They are among the best people to explain how they arrived at the final provisions.

They should make a clear difference between the exact text of the new constitution and what each one of them had wanted or preferred to be adopted. People are entitled to know what the constitution says before they get personal views and comments on it.

The 284 delegates, in addition to the honourable chairman and his vice, and the staff of the Commission form a formidable team of educators of the new constitution. This should be done

now when people's enthusiasm is still high.

This duty, unlike the CA sittings, is especially a patriotic one, since it carries no financial remuneration! It is an obligation the CADs owe to their electorates.

The future of the new constitution will depend on how widely and deeply its message has been accurately communicated to the people at the grassroots, who were its main source.

The second aspect of the challenge concerns respect for the constitution. One of our local proverbs gives a warning: "It is the owners of the shrine who desecrate it."

A *Kadongobamu* singer summarized long ago his experience of Uganda when he sang: "Our lawmakers are the first to break the laws." It is the old story of the mother duck telling its young ones to start walking in a straight manner like the hens. When challenged to lead the way and demonstrate, she walked in the old zigzag way, to the great amusement of her young ones!

Ugandans are going to keenly watch the behaviour of the CADs to see how they respect what they have collectively made. It is difficult to teach what one does not believe in.

It is impossible to teach others to love and respect the new constitution when

the makers lack the love and respect for it! This is a real challenge to the CADs to fully recognise what was passed by their collective decision, even when individuals are determined to influence the process for amending the provisions they dislike. People are likely to judge the CADs seriously on this matter. Henceforth constitutional changes ought to be done constitutionally, otherwise we shall have learnt nothing from our past chaos.

The first test of the leaders' political will to respect the constitution is going to be the next general elections, in which certainly many CADs will participate. The campaigns, which in several quarters have already started, are going to reveal whether the principles approved in the constitution are strictly followed or not.

This exercise may strengthen or begin to undermine the new constitution. The political will to do everything constitutionally will determine the future of the new constitution.

The last aspect of the challenge is in the effective defence of the constitution. It is something to know, love and respect the constitution and quite another to put in place practical, effective and peaceful means for its defence.

Constitutions are not overthrown at ago. The process of undermining them takes long and usually starts with the less significant provisions which may not be so clearly understood by the unsuspecting general public.

It is the duty of the CADs and others to alert the people at the earliest moment in order to take the necessary precautions. In order to sustain and develop a culture of constitutionalism, the CADs must exhibit proper attitudes and carry out the expected roles. The political leaders ought to amass the strong political will to abide by the constitution. Only then will the general public follow suit. One important task is completed, the real challenge now begins.

### The private life of a public servant

BY PHIL

