The composite committee of the Constitutional Convention is holding hearings in Lafayette this afternoon and tonight to give citizens a chance to express their views on writing the state’s new basic law.

Hearings will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. in the USL Student Union ballroom.

Sen. Jesse Knowles opened the first of five hearings over the state this week by telling the committee in Lake Charles Monday that his constituents were most concerned with the future status of civil service.

"Obviously they like it the way it is," he said. "They don’t want to water it down.

Elective Posts

Knowles said there is sentiment to keep the elective posts of superintendent of education, commissioner of agriculture, comptroller and voting machine custodian.

There have been suggestions that all four offices be eliminated in the new constitution.

He also said voters favored retention of the two-thirds requirement in the legislature to increase taxes.

Tax Advantages

James R. Friesen, president of the Calcasieu Farm Bureau Federation, urged the new constitution keep tax advantages for farmers such as exemptions on tractor fuel and ad valorem taxes on farm implement and livestock. He also asked that farm land be taxed at use value rather than potential value.

Judge Cleveland Fruge, presiding judge of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal, recommended an adequate salary for legislators, saying, "I believe in paying the legislators as much as the judiciary."

Board of Regents

Judge John T. Hood Jr. of the 3rd Circuit recommended creation of a board of regents as a planning and coordinating body for two appointive boards for higher education, one for the Louisiana State University system and the other for other state colleges and universities.

An alternative proposal came from Rep. LT. LaBorde of Sulphur who recommended one board for all higher education and another for all elementary and secondary education. Both would be under an elective state board of education.

Mcs. Esther N. Terry, representing the Louisiana Federation of Business and Professional Women, asked that the constitution include an equal rights provision for women.

John Woodard, representing the Council on Development of French in Louisiana, recommended the French be officially recognized as an alternate language.

Judge Clevelaund Fruge, presiding judge of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal, recommended an adequate salary for legislators, saying, "I believe in paying the legislators as much as the judiciary."