

need of reorganization.

A Tradition Reaffirmed

The tradition that no U. S. President shall serve more than two elective terms, handed down by George Washington but broken by Franklin D. Roosevelt, has now been written into the nation's Constitution. This week Nevada became the 36th state to ratify the 22nd Amendment, making it law.

Arizona might have had this distinction but party-mindedness closed our legislators' eyes to the amendment's value as protection for the two-party system against the dominance of a personality. Two Democratic governors of Arizona kept the measure from coming before the legislature. Republican Governor Pyle submitted it to the current session but it got nowhere. Although our legislators have put party politics aside on local issues this year, they refused to consider ratification of an amendment that will affect both parties equally in the future.

The 22nd Amendment specifically exempts President Truman. He could run and be legally elected in 1952. Besides the limitation to two elective terms for any other President, the amendment provides that anyone who has held the office for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected shall not be elected more than once. The net effect is that no one shall be President for more than 10 years.

This is a prudent rule for a democracy. It prevents too great a swing in the nation's policy along a line that may be personal as much or more than partisan. In the early progress of the amendment through state legislatures, the votes were party battles, the Republicans favoring, the Democrats opposing. But among the more recent states to ratify, this division had begun to disappear. Gradually it was recognized that an indispensable man in the White House reflects a concept that doesn't fit with democracy.

Arizona's legislators might well have put themselves on record as sharing this view.