

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY:

The Commissioners of Election for the County of Jefferson, New York, have the honor to submit to the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County the following report for the year ending November 30, 1912, pursuant to the provisions of Section 192 of the Election Law.

Since the date of our last annual report one of the then Commissioners, Hon. Perley A. Pitcher, tendered his resignation as such Commissioner and ~~Mr.~~ Fred H. Moore was duly designated his successor by the Chairman of the Republican County Committee, which designation was subsequently confirmed by your Honorable Board. Mr. Moore immediately qualified and has since and is now serving as such Commissioner.

At the time of the submission of our last annual report the Board of Elections was occupying an office fitted up for them on the top floor of the County Clerk's building. This office proved to be inadequate for our needs and your Building Committee designated the office in the Court House formerly occupied by the County Sealer of Weights and Measures. This office we are now occupying.

At the time of the submission of our last annual report on December 1, 1911, we had just taken up the work of preparing for the 1911 enrollment. For this work we were obliged to prepare forms, blanks, etc., to comply with the law which was entirely new to the entire State. These forms were satisfactorily prepared by us and the entire plans made for the enrollment, which was held on the first and second Tuesday in December, 1911. The returns from the

personal enrollment on these days were made to us and subsequent returns were made from the enrollment by mail, which was permitted in the year 1911, on the first Tuesday in January, 1912.

Each of the enrollment envelopes had to be opened by us and the enrollment of each voter as designated on his blank entered after his name in the enrollment book. This took a long period of time and after it was completed we had to make certified copies of each enrollment book in each District for each political party. This we succeeded in completing by March 1, 1912, so as to comply with the law.

Thereafter we were obliged to prepare printer's copy for the printing of the complete enrollment list in pamphlet form by Towns and Wards.

This enrollment was scarcely completed before we were obliged to prepare for the Spring Primary. Committee designations were filed with us commencing March 1st. All parties filed designations and one independant Republican designation was made. We were obliged to prepare in this election an entirely new set of forms, blanks, ballots, statement of results, tally sheets, supplies, Etc., in as much as the Primary Law was new to the entire State. These forms we prepared in a manner to comply with the law, and in addition thereto we were obliged to arrange with the proper Town and City officers for the preparation of voting booths, the appointment of election officials, and the instruction of the elections officials in the working of the new law. The Primary was held March 17, 1912, and was conducted with comparatively little friction or trouble.

Immediately after the Primary we were obliged to canvass the returns and compile statements of the result in much the same manner as a canvass is made of the returns

for a general election. This, as your Honorable Board is well aware, is a difficult and arduous task and it is a source of gratification to our Board that we completed it within the one hundred and twenty hours permitted by law without the detection of an error of any kind.

The work incident to the enrollment and the Spring Primary came with such rapidity that we became considerably behind in our usual routine office work and from that time until the summer vacation period we were busy catching up in our correspondence which, by the way, has become practically incessant, and arranging in order and filing the various returns, registration books, papers, etc.

The Corrupt Practice Act requires all candidates for any elective office, whether at the official primaries or at the general election, to file a statement of his receipts and expenditures while a candidate for such office. In the Spring Primary committeemen and delegates to the various Conventions were elected in each party, and of necessity there was a very large number of candidates. Each of these candidates filed such a statement with our office and under the provisions of the Corrupt Practice Act we were obliged to copy each individual statement and to attach and sign a certificate of its correctness, and to file the same with the Secretary of State. This in itself, as your Board will readily understand, entails a very large amount of work and the expenditure of a great amount of time.

At the completion of the work above enumerated we were well into the summer season and we commenced taking vacations of two weeks duration in routine order, giving the same vacation to our two employees. This provided for keeping the office open each business day of the week as provided

by law, and in this connection we desire to report that we have rigidly adhered to the office hours established by us, from nine A. M. to five P. M. of each business day of the year.

During the summer as opportunity offered we caused the ballot boxes and enrollment boxes to be overhauled and repaired, and gathered together so far as possible supplies and materials in preparation for the Fall Primaries.

On the 12th day of August, 1912, pursuant to the provisions of Section 75 of the Election Law, the Chairman of each political party filed with us a statement of the Conventions, the time when and the place where they were to be held, and the committees, candidates, delegates, etc., to be elected. Thereafter we prepared and published according to law a notice of such Primary Election to be held on September 17, 1912. This notice contained the date of the Primary Election, the voting hours and the location of each polling place in each Election District of the County. The information for this notice we were obliged to obtain from the various town officials throughout the County, which was the occasion of considerable effort on our part.

From August 20 to August 27, 1912, the designations of candidates at the Primary were filed with us by the various political parties and immediately thereafter we began our preparations for the conduct of the official Fall Primary. We were obliged to prepare a separate ballot for each political party in each Election District, the usual other supplies including tally sheets, statement of result blanks, cards, envelopes, etc., and in addition we arranged with the proper town and city officials for the equipping of the polling places with voting booths, guard rails, distance markers,

battot boxes, etc. Throughout this period we were obliged to work practically every evening and as a result of our efforts the Primary on September 17 was held in a satisfactory manner and without any serious difficulty or trouble in any Election District.

Immediately after the close of the Primary the returns were filed with us and we proceeded to canvass the result. With all the political parties participating in the Primary and the necessity of canvassing the result of each party election separately it was necessary for us to work constantly to complete our returns and file them with the Secretary of State within the time permitted by law. This, however, we succeeded in doing and completed the same in a satisfactory manner.

After completing the canvass we issued certificates of nomination or election, as the case might be, to each of the candidates in each party at said Primary.

Once again, under the Corrupt Practice Act, each candidate filed with us his statement of receipts and expenditures and we in turn were obliged to copy each individual statement, prepare and sign a certificate of the correctness thereof, and file the same with the Secretary of State. This, as before, consumed a large amount of time.

We were only able to complete the formal and necessary work of the Primary and were obliged to lay this work aside in an uncompleted state in order to take up the registration for the general election. The details of the completion of the Primary work have not yet been entirely completed but will be before the first of the year.

The enrollment, the details of which we have reported first hereinabove, was a special enrollment for the

year 1912. The Primary Law provides for a new enrollment each year to be used throughout the next succeeding year only. Therefore we were obliged to and did immediately prepare for a new enrollment which commenced on the first day of registration, on October 11, 1912, At this meeting we prepared the usual supplies for registration in addition to the supplies for the enrollment which we have mentioned. For this enrollment and registration we had to provide enrollment books, blanks, envelopes, boxes, and the registration books, notices, markers and supplies generally used on Registration Day. In the City of Watertown, where all registration is personal, the enrollment was, of course, completed on Registration Days, but in the Country Districts, where the registration is not personal, the enrollment was completed on election day. The difference in the methods employed in the City and Country districts caused not a little confusion and necessitated a great amount of correspondence, telephoning and explaining on our part. We are pleased to report, however, that so far as we have been able to ascertain the enrollment was carried out in a satisfactory manner.

Throughout this period of time and from about the first of September we worked continuously throughout the days and most of the time in the evening arranging for the smooth working of the General Election machinery. As soon as the registration was out of the way we at once took up the preparation necessary for the general Election on November 5.

For this we provided copy for the ballots, statement of result, tally sheets, markers, blanks, and supplies generally with which your Board is familiar. The amendment to the Election Law requiring a separate ballot for Presidential electors caused considerable confusion and misunderstanding.

We endeavored so far as possible to make this matter plain and we believe that we succeeded in giving the election officials a comprehensive understanding of the same.

While there were a great many blank ballots, as the returns show, we believe that it is due more to the ignorance of individual voters who refused to ask for instructions and explanations from the election officials than to the ignorance of the election officials themselves. In many Districts in the County where voting machines were formerly used a return was made to the ballot system. In practically all of these Districts the inspectors were unfamiliar with the ballots and this entailed a lot of instruction to them from us.

We believe that it is generally conceded that the general election held on the 5th of November was conducted in a most satisfactory manner without any serious trouble in any District in the County.

On the morning after Election the Districts commenced bringing in their returns and from that date to the present time we have been continuously engaged in the post-election work, during a large part of which time we have worked evenings. We first took up the canvassing of the results and the strenuousness of our labor on this work can be attested by the subcommittee of your Board of County Canvassers. It is a source of considerable gratification to us that we were able to complete the tallying of the returns in time for the Board of County Canvassers to commence work upon them on schedule time.

As soon as the canvass was completed we issued to the successful candidates their certificates of election.

As in the case of the Primaries above related all

candidates again filed with us statements of their receipts and expenditures and these statements we have copied, and after certifying to each individual statement as to its correctness we have filed them with the Secretary of State.

As soon as this work was disposed of we took up the enrollment which was had on Registration days and Election Day and this work we are engaged in at the present time. It is necessary for us to open each individual envelope and ascertain under which party the voter enrolled and then enter in the enrollment book the politics which he declared on the enrollment blank. This must be done by Districts separately. After it is completed we will be obliged to prepare certified copies of the enrollment in each separate District for the use of each political party. Thereafter we will be obliged to prepare copy thereof for the printer in order that they may be published according to law in pamphlets containing each Town and Ward separately. This work, of course, is not yet completed and will not be in some time to come.

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We have endeavored in this our second annual report to give you a brief synopsis of the work performed by us during the period embraced from the date of our last report to this date without going into any detailed statement as to days and dates. Your Board has performed a great amount of labor which would not show in a report and which it is impossible for one to understand except by personal observation. The duties of our office are such that the work has become practically continuous for twelve months in the year.

In addition to the physical labor and energy which we are obliged to expend on the work there is a very large amount of responsibility and worry which we are obliged to assume. In addition there is a considerable amount of legal knowledge and ability required in the performance of this work. In as much as your Commissioners are both legally admitted attorneys at law it has been unnecessary to call in the assistance of an attorney in this County at any time since the office was created.

It has been the policy of your Commissioners to administer the affairs of the Board of Elections in a satisfactory manner, yet as economically as possible, and in this we feel that we have been successful. We feel justified in stating that the administration of our office has been conducted in a more satisfactory manner and with less expense than has that in most of the Counties in the State. In fact our office has been used by other Boards of Elections as a source of advice to them and the forms which we have established in this work have been copied by other Counties.

The salary fixed by your Honorable Board for the Commissioners of Elections is not at all commensurate for the services which we are obliged to render. Section 193 of the Election Law provided that the salary of the Commissioners of Elections shall be fixed by the Board of Supervisors and that it shall not exceed \$1200 annually for each Commissioner in any County having less than one hundred thousand inhabitants. In practically all of the Counties of the State having less than one hundred thousand inhabitants and in many of them smaller in population than

Jefferson County the Commissioners of Elections are now being paid the full \$1200 per annum as allowed by law.

We are, therefore, of the opinion that it is not improper in this our annual report to respectfully recommend and ask your Honorable Board to increase the salaries of the Commissioners of Election so that they will receive each \$1200 per annum, payable monthly.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Dated December 2nd, 1912.

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS.

By _____

Commissioners.