

1914

To the Honorable, the Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Section 192 of the Election Law, we as Commissioners of Election herewith submit our annual report for the Year ending November 20th, 1914.

The year 1914, has been the busiest for the Commissioners of Elections since the Board was created, due to the Special Election, increased duties in connection with Primaries, another Registration Day and the many changes in the Election Law, which necessitated much time and no small amount of preparation of new forms to meet the requirements of the law. One of the most burdensome tasks of the year was the sending to every registered voter in the county outside the city of Watertown, a sample ballot, bearing the name of John Doe, as the Election Law provided. The voters in the City of Watertown, receiving their sample ballots as they appeared in person to register. In order to get these out in time to give all an opportunity to fully understand the new ballot, no time was lost in getting the registers from the sixty-eight (68) country districts.

The enrollment was about to be takes up a year ago when the annual report was made. Immediately after this was out of the way, the Board began preparing for the Special Election to determine whether or not a convention was to be held to revise the State Constitution. The law fixed the day for Registration for those qualified to vote in a district where they had not voted at the last Election and arrangements were made to meet these requirements. Then the ballots for such Election were prepared and delivered to the town clerks, and after this Election, a canvass of the result made. To facilitate matters when the hurry time

came during the campaign, the printing of the enrollment blanks for the coming year was gotten out of the way and the blanks placed in envelopes ready for distribution to the various election boards.

Next came the designating petitions filed in the office over which the Commissioners had to go to see that those who had signed, or a sufficient number, were qualified to sign, and with all of these petitions in, the ballots were prepared for the Primary. Instructions were prepared in explicit detail so that no person would be deprived of his vote if he was entitled to vote, and on Primary Day a tour of each polling place in the city was made by both Commissioners. The vote was canvassed and because of the numerous candidates in each party, particularly the Democratic Party, where there were at least two candidates for each State office and for Delegates-at-Large to the Constitutional Convention, the task was no small one.

Preparations were then made for Registration and more instructions were mailed to the election boards; but still there were many calls on the Commissioners for information, which they were always glad to impart. With the nominations certified from the Secretary of State, the arrangement and form of the ballot was next taken up, as was the form of the new tally sheet and statement of canvass, which was no small job, to say the least, and follow the Election Law to a letter, and this the Commissioners were bent on doing, and when they had been completed received favorable comment from the State Superintendent of Elections. The ballots finally having been cast and counted the work of compiling the canvass was immediately commenced and night and day the Commissioners worked in the effort to get the greatest task that has ever stared those in the face, who have had it in charge, complete before the Board of Canvassers met. How well we succeeded we will leave to you and particularly to your sub-committee of the Board of Canvassers. The great amount of work was due to the fact that there were so many

parties and names on the general ballot, the fifteen (15) candidates for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention in each party, and the submission of the County Proposition. As soon as the last work in connection with the recent Election was over we took up the work of compiling the enrollment and at the present time we are well along with it.

The Commissioners would like instructions relative to printing the enrollment. The law provides that one certified copy of the enrollment must be furnished to the chairman of each party committee which means that six (6) copies in addition to the two originals must be made, compared and certified to. To do this enrollment books like the originals must be printed at considerable expense, and when they are written up by the Commissioners to correspond with the originals, they are far from as satisfactory to the chairman of the committees as the printed pamphlets to which the Commissioners certify after having read the proof and corrected proof. The blank enrollment books to be used as copies, six in number would cost very little less than the printing of the enrollment books. It is understood that the Republican and Democratic County Committee have adopted resolutions which have or will be presented to you, requesting that you have these books printed, and the Commissioners concur in their recommendation because members of the various political parties will be able to purchase from the printer, more of these books to supply the needs of all parties at a most reasonable figure. The enrollment has always been printed.

The Commissioners with the assistance of a very competent stenographer have done the work which came under our department the past year and in performing this, have not considered the hours which we have worked, many days and nights, having nothing in mind but to complete each successive job in the allotted time, and have done it in compliance with the law.

This it is believed has been done down to the minutest detail. The office has been conducted as economically as possible, and as illustrations; no new stationery was procured when there was a change in the Commissioners, an auto was gratuitously furnished by one of the Commissioners when making the rounds of the polling places in the city Primary, Registration and Election Days, and in going to the country after registers, immediately after the first day of Registration in order to hasten the work of sending out the sample ballots. The awards of printing, other than ballots, were practically all made on competitive bidding, and the Board is willing to assume the responsibility for letting small jobs of printing amounting to a few dollars, which had to be done quickly without the presence of the printing committee, the presence of which would have meant a larger expense than that of the printing itself.

Harmony has prevailed to the greatest degree in the office at all times, and the same courteous treatment has been extended to all by both Commissioners, and when questions involving the right to register or to vote have been asked, one thing that the Commissioners have refrained from asking or finding out was, what the man's politics was.

You as Supervisors, and as Chairman of your town boards could be of material assistance to the Board of Elections if you would take it upon yourself to do so, and insist that the men who are appointed election officials in your town are competent, willing to do their duty, and will try to find out what their duty is. That there is a laxity on the town board's part in making these appointments is demonstrated by the fact that this year no less than three complaints came to us that on as many boards there were men who were intoxicated and who must get off or charges would be preferred. The Commissioners understand that all three of these consented and did get off without formal charges being preferred, although the law governing such cases had been communicated to the complainants, who requested information.

The Commissioners consumed many hours of time in drafting and placing instructions in the hands of every election official directing him as to his duty, yet when matters would later come up and inquiry was made at the Board of Elections' Office, the Commissioners found that the officers had received the instructions but did not consider them of sufficient importance to more than find out what they were, and then throw them aside. The work of some of the inspectors was a most deplorable job, as some of you know. The Board of Elections has no authority in the matter and relies upon each of you to render such assistance as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) Fred H. Moore,

(Signed) Eugene F. Livermore

Commissioners.