

1916

TO THE HONORABLE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY:

In accordance with Section 192 of the Election Law, we herewith transmit our annual report as Commissioners of Elections of Jefferson County.

The year 1916 with an additional Primary and with an increased enrollment along with many changes in the Election Law, necessitating numerous forms, has made for our office the busiest year ever known since the office was created. The enrollment taken in the fall had hardly been transcribed in the enrollment books, and the printed copies with the proofs carefully read and ready for distribution before the Spring Primary was at hand. With the Spring Primary out of the way, came the preparation for the Fall Primary with numerous offices to be filled and numerous candidates filing petitions. Hardly had the work of the two Primaries been concluded before we were busy making extensive preparations for Registration. And at the same time preparing for the greatest Election, conceded by all parties since the election of Abraham Lincoln. And it is with satisfaction that we can say that the forms, supplies etc. were in the hands of the election boards and in proper shape for use on Election Day. Then came the canvassing of the largest vote ever known in Jefferson County, not only in so far as the number of ballots canvassed was concerned, but also as regards the number of candidates to be elected at one and the same time. By procuring outside help at our own expense, the canvass was ready for your Honorable Board, as a Board of County Canvassers, when you met on the day and hour prescribed by statute. After the canvass was completed, we took up the enrollment again on which we are at work at the present time.

This year we have devoted considerable of our time in an effort to get the election officials in the ninety-one (91) election districts of the county to better understand their work, to arrange for a better accommodation of the electors on Primary, Registration and Election Days, and to turn in to our office their work in better shape. With this end in view, the Commissioners found it necessary on two occasions to prefer charges against inspectors who were derelict in their duties. In one instance Mayor Breen before whom the charges were preferred, gave the inspectors a severe lecture and in the other instance caused all four inspectors to be removed and other inspectors appointed. We are convinced that this action has stimulated the election officials, both in the City of Watertown and in the country to do better work and to be on hand at the required hour on the days of Registration and Elections. The Commissioners propose to continue their efforts in this direction another year, ever being mindful of the fact that at times there may be reasonable excuses for laxity on the part of the election officials.

At all times we have made an effort to curtail expenses in our office and keep the expenses down to the lowest possible figure. Practically all of the printing of the year, other than the ballots for the Primaries and Election was let by contract and to the lowest bidder. This year the Commissioners adopted a new scheme of sending out the copies of the Election Law received from the Office of the Secretary of State. Eight of these copies for each of the ninety-one (91) election districts, on which postage of seven cents (7¢) each had heretofore been paid, were placed in the Fall Primary Election supplies. This as you will see made a saving to the county of Fifty Dollars and ninety-six cents (\$50.96).

The Election Law provides for the posting of not less than five nor more than ten notices of election in each election district of the state. These notices contain a list of candidates by parties and other information, and this year because of the number of candidates, made quite an expensive package to send through the mails, particularly where there were more than two or three districts in a town. In the City of Watertown, instead of sending them through the mails as heretofore, one of the Commissioners with his automobile and without charge, delivered them to the aldermen of the City, whose duty it was to post them. The Commissioners "worked" many of their friends from the country to deliver them to the town clerks of the various towns and in this manner a saving of a number of dollars was made to Jefferson County. Heretofore the registration supplies and the enrollment boxes have gone to the town clerks separately, but this year, the supplies were enclosed in the boxes and considerable saving was thus made to the county.

Your Commissioners on Primary, Registration and Election Days visited all of the polling places in the City several times in their automobiles without charge, and while we have gone in the country on matters pertaining to the election work, these trips have been without expense to anyone but ourselves.

The Election Office has in a way become a bureau of information and many inquiries, which have heretofore gone to the County Clerk's Office have been addressed to us, and there are few days in the year when letters and telephone calls are not received asking for much information, which does not in any way concern our office, but on every occasion when it has been possible, we have gladly answered these communications.

Much of the work in our office comes in a bunch, so to speak, and must be done within a prescribed time. On all of these occasions, we have given no thought to the time or the hours which we have worked, nor to the expense which we have met. The work has been done on time, and in this connection the Commissioners desire to express their sincere appreciation of the loyalty and industry of the efficient and capable clerk in our office, Miss Kate Grant, who at all times has never yet been heard to say, "I do not have to work after such a time."

The Commissioners appreciate the many courtesies that have been shown them by the members of your Honorable Body, particularly in the last few weeks and of your expressed desire to aid us at all times in our efforts to better the conditions in Jefferson County, so far as the work pertaining to our office is concerned. We believe that a considerable saving could be made to Jefferson County if the Board of Supervisors would make an appropriation for the printing in connection with our office, other than the bills for printing the ballots. We know that even in work let by competitive bidding considerably more is paid than would be by an individual. When the printers are asked concerning this, they always remind us that they must wait until February 1st, before they are paid. We believe that if the appropriation was made at the annual session of the Board for the coming year, that there would be a saving to the county of at least 15% and perhaps 25%.

In conclusion we ask your hearty co-operation with us in the year to come in trying to better the work, which pertains to the Office of the Board of Elections,

Respectfully yours,

Eugene F. Lovimore
William N. Mott

Commissioners of Elections.

*Read Monday
December 18, 1916.*