

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

Under Section 192 of the Election Law, it is mandatory on the Board of Elections of each and every county to not only keep a daily record of its proceedings, but to submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors during the month of January. From this daily record in our office, which is open to public inspection, the accompanying annual report is made and submitted to you at this time as your board will not be in session during the month of January.

The year 1920, was a record breaker in the Office of the Board of Elections in more ways than one. The first time in four years, a Spring Primary was held and on this occasion the vote was an unprecedented one, for a presidential primary, 2838, votes being cast.

This may have been in part due to the unofficial judiciary primary. The Fall Primary brought out a vote of 9637, by far the largest vote ever polled in the county. The Registration for 1920 Election, totalled 44584, of which 32603 were registered in the rural districts and 11981 in the City of Watertown. The total vote in the last Election, exclusive of the soldier vote, (yet to be canvassed), was 32882. The Enrollment made on the days of Registration and on Election Day will approach 40000.

As will be seen by the report of the Committee on Elections, presented to your Honorable Board, and which has been adopted, the expenses incident to the elections show an increase this year of about \$5000, over last. This increase is almost entirely due to the second or Spring Primary, and also to the cost of the printing.

due to the marked advance in both paper and labor. The Absentee Voter's Ballots and the expense incident to it, also added a few hundred dollars.

In connection with the reference to the Absentee Voter's Ballots, the matter of economy in our office might well be referred to. In the first place all of the printing necessary was awarded, in so far as possible, under competitive bidding. Economy was the watchword and every cent that could possibly be saved was looked after. An expense of not less than \$ 75., was wiped out by reason of a change in the emblems used in the list of candidates to be voted for, as published in three papers. So far as is known by the local Commissioners, the Onondaga County Commissioners were the only ones to so arrange the emblems and printing as to make this saving. Early in the year, through competitive bidding, it was found where the small tag board boxes used in assembling the small supplies going to the inspectors, such as pens, penholders, ink, pencils &c., could be bought at far less expense than heretofore, despite the fact that there had been a marked increase in the cost of material. This same firm had heretofore had an opportunity to make bids on these boxes but had never availed itself of that opportunity. These boxes had been costing of late around seven and eight cents. When a bid of \$13., a thousand was made, the Commissioners purchased a quantity sufficient to last a few years.

Under the head of economy, it may be stated that the heavy paper used in wrapping the supplies has been used five or six times and until it becomes so full of holes that it is no longer available. Even the heavy twine from the outgoing and incoming packages, returned to us, has been saved, this twine costing not less than 40 cents a pound. Heavy pasteboard tubes for holding the tally sheets have been used about five successive years, the town clerks and

city clerk each year being directed to return the tubes for future use. The bills of the printers have been scanned carefully and every effort made to reduce them to a minimum.

With the additional Primary this year, there has been practically no let up in the work in the Election Office and even now, we are in the midst of compiling the unprecedented Enrollment, a task that takes us from the Tuesday following Election until March 1st, before the Enrollment Books will be printed and ready for distribution.

The issuing of certificates of citizenship to registered voters anxious to cross the border has added to the work of our office, as well as the demand on us twice during the past year for changes of enrollment, where enrolled voters had moved from one Election District to another, boys who had become of age, and persons who had inadvertently enrolled in the wrong party. Applications for change of Enrollment under the last head meant that the records in our office for the past five years had to be referred to before the change could be made.

The changes in the Election and Primary Law each year and the new questions, which daily arise during the Primary and Election Campaign necessitate almost constant study and the frequent reference of matters to the attorney-general for his decision. The Absentee Voter's Ballots, and the applications therefor, made it necessary for the clerk of our board, who took almost exclusive charge of this work, to devote practically a month answering applications, inquiries and sending our blank applications, filing applications in proper form, ascertaining whether they were qualified voters of the district where they claimed the right to vote and finally in sending out the ballots for marking and later distributing them in the proper districts. There is no reason to doubt that the number of applications and ballots will be materially increased from year to year.

Under the head of suggestions and recommendations, we might say that we heartily approve of the action of the Board of Supervisors in authorizing a charge for the issuance of citizenship certificates, the elimination of considerable printing incident to our office and that we favor a revision of the Election Law in many particulars doing away with both red tape and expense, many of which changes the Association of Election Commissioners of the state favored at their last annual meeting, but all of which were killed in the Senate Committee, when presented to the Legislature.

The canvassing of the soldier votes entails considerable expense and trouble. In the event that Congress declares peace before another year, there will probably be no such ballots in 1921; but it seems to our Board that it would be well to amend the Election Law so that the soldiers' votes in counties not containing a city of the first or second class, could and should be counted and canvassed either in the Office of the Board of Elections or by the Board of County Canvassers of such county where they are sent by the Secretary of State.

It has long been the practice of inspectors of election in a number of districts in Jefferson County to carry names on the register from year to year, of persons who are no longer voters in these Election Districts. As an illustration in the First District of the Town of Alexandria, 660 persons were registered, and 357 voted. In the First District of the Town of Watertown, 409 names were registered and the total vote was 215. A number of similar illustrations could be given. Under the Election Law, we are obliged to furnish one and one-fourth times as many ballots as there are registered voters, and it will be readily seen that padding the register, so to speak, materially increases the cost of elections in Jefferson County. Some provision should be made to put an end to registering persons not entitled to vote. Some of the inspectors have admitted to the Commissioners that

five years, during which time such persons have never appeared.

This year a school of instruction was held in almost every town in the county and also in this city in order that the inspectors of election and clerks might better qualify themselves to perform the duties devolving on them. When the returns were received, the Commissioners found that there was a marked improvement in the work done and we would recommend a continuance of these schools of instruction.

It is a source of great pleasure to the Commissioners to know that no returns ever sent out of our office to the Secretary of State have been returned for corrections, and to hear the high compliments paid to our clerk by Deputy Secretary of State A. B. Parker and by Henry G. Adams, who is head of the State Election Bureau in the Office of the Secretary of State, they telling us that the returns from Jefferson County are always among the very first to be received and that in neatness and accuracy none excels ours. We are advised that work from this office to Albany has been held up as a model for other Election Offices to follow.

In conclusion, we wish to thank the members of your Honorable Board for the many favors shown, and extend a cordial invitation to you to visit our office at any time, and become acquainted with the work in which we are engaged.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Dated December 7th, 1920.

By _____

Commissioners.