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April 4, 1938

Hon. Jesse W. Barrett,  
Attorney at Law,  
506 Olive,  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Dear Mr. Barrett:

I have your letter of April 1st making inquiry about our recent city election. I was very much disappointed in the result of the election. I thought it would be much closer than it was but I am sure that there are at least 30,000 illegal registrations on the books of this city which were voted at the recent city election. The Democratic Machine here has some 8000 office holders which includes city and county employees. It is hard to tell just the number of employees who are now on the payrolls of the city for the reason that there has been no auditing of our city books for something like twelve years. Mr. McElroy has kept the payrolls under close supervision and has refused to furnish the Election Commissioners with a list of city employees. Of course they do not want to divulge the number of employees who are being carried on our payroll. They put on something like 7000 WPA workers a short time before the election and also put on a number of persons under the Old Age Pension Law and required all these parties to vote the ticket or else lose their positions.

The Machine has complete control of the police department and the Prosecuting Attorney's office. Our Prosecuting Attorney absolutely will not prosecute for crime and is linked up with the underworld to such an extent that he will not prosecute gamblers, immoral women, slot machine racketeers, murderers and various other kinds of criminals. I do not believe that there is another city in the United States that has ever had such a lack of enforcement of the criminal laws as has Kansas City.

There is one hope left us for breaking the hold of the Machine on this city and county and that is the prosecutions

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-2- Hon. Jesse W. Barrett

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In the Federal Court for violation of the election laws in 1936. I suppose you saw in the papers that the thirteenth jury trial resulted in a conviction of all five parties and up to date there has not been a single acquittal. The Grand Jury began again this morning and

I am sure it will return a large number of indictments against other persons and I feel confident they are going to get the higher-ups before very long. The last jury convicted one of the main lieutenants of the Pendergast organization.

It was impossible to get our business men to come out and take any stand in this last election. They all seemed to be afraid of reprisals. Privately they expressed the hope that the Coalition Ticket would win, but they would not stick their heads out or do anything to help that ticket win.

In the prosecutions here we have never been able to get the County Committee to take any hand whatever or to raise any funds for the investigations or prosecutions. All that has been done has been outside of the aid and assistance of the County Committee. Some of the members have been taking an active interest in investigations but we are woefully lacking in leadership in Kansas City.

As you noticed from the papers, there is a wide rift between the Pendergast Organization and the Governor. I am in hopes that this will result in dividing the Democratic Party into two factions for the fall campaign. A number of Democrats who are for the Governor are in favor of organizing and putting up an independent ticket for the coming fall election. If this is done I think the Republicans, if they will exercise a little sense and judgment in putting up a good ticket, will have a good chance to win part of the offices at least. There is a group of Republicans here who are interesting themselves in this coming campaign and I hope that we can get an organization that will rejuvenate our party in this county and city.

If you come to Kansas City do not fail to call me up and let us visit together and go over this subject more fully. I will be glad to see you or hear from you at your convenience and will be glad to have any suggestions you may have to make. I will keep you posted as to movements being made here in Kansas City.

With kindest personal regards and best wishes, I beg to remain

Yours very truly,

I. N. Watson

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