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WATSON, ESS, GRONER, BARNETT WHITTAKER
DIERKS BUILDING
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
TELEPHONES VICTOR 3132

June 27, 1938

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Hon. Jesse W. Barr Attorney at Law,
506 Olive Street,
St. Louis, Missouri.

Dear Mr. Barrett:

I have yours of the 25th advising that you have shown my recent letter to you to

Governor Caulfield. I think I will write him a letter outlining my views.

I do not believe that the Republicans in this county and the Stark Democrats should form a coalition movement to purge the registration lists, but my idea has been that the Republicans should act as an organization for themselves and not for coalition, and that the Stark Democrats should do likewise and aid the election commissioners in purging the registration lists, because both movements are working toward the same end, that is, to purge our registration lists. My idea has been that our Election Board should use every means to purge these registration lists, and that the Stark Democrats and Republicans should aid the commissioners in every way possible in such a movement. There is no question in my mind but that there are at the present time at least 40,000 illegal registrations in Kansas City. At last spring's registration there were over 216,000 registered and are now on the registration lists. There has been quite a number added since the last spring registration closed. There are at least 25,000, and I think 30,000 would be nearer correct, persons in this city who are entitled to register but did not register at last spring's registration. Adding the number on the registration lists to the number of persons who did not register but had the right to register, makes over 240,000 persons entitled to register when we all know that 200,000 is the outside limit.

I am advised by one of the parties engaged in

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taking the census of our city for the 1938 city directory, that the new directory will show not quite 190,000 and this includes stenographers over 18 years of age. I have had some canvasses made in our second ward and the returns clearly indicate that in that ward alone there are close to 6,000 illegal registrations. Just before last spring's registration the Democratic organization here moved a lot of parties into vacant houses, put in some second-hand furniture, and registered a number of names from such places.

That was repeated in a number of instances in the second ward and I have a check of the 1936 registration of this ward and a check of the 1938 city registration which show in many precincts of this ward as few as 10 persons residing in the precinct in the 1938 registration who resided in that precinct in the 1936 registration. In some of the precincts 250, and in some places 270, persons that were registered in 1936 disappeared off the registration lists in 1938 and in their stead some 86 or 87 new names appeared and one where only 10 names were registered in 1938 who were also registered in 1936. There were something like 4,000 court orders put on at last spring's registration and they are scattered out, most of them being registered in precincts where in 1936 there was heavy fraudulent registration.

In my judgment there should be a complete canvass made of all the precincts in Kansas City and I believe that if our election commissioners would send out registered letters to all these voters in the bad wards, with instructions to deliver to addressee only and with a return card for signature, they could cut off twenty- five or thirty thousand of these names. These fraudulent registrants here will not sign for registered letters, fearing that they will get into trouble with Uncle Sam's grand jury. I have been urging our Republicans to get behind the election commissioners and push the scheme of sending registered letters with return cards to be delivered to the addressee only, and then challenge every name where they do not sign for the letters. I think that Governor Stark's friends and Judge Douglas's friends would be the beneficiaries of such a course, as well as the Republicans. Unless something is done along the lines suggested, this corrupt organization will start out with forty or fifty thousand illegal names on the registration lists for the primary election, and you may be sure that they will vote every one of them, so that Judge Douglas will have to start out with forty to fifty thousand in the box, or as good as in the box, against him, and this is a big handicap to overcome. The place to overcome this is to purge the registration lists of such illegal votes, thereby keeping them off the registration lists and from voting.

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I am writing Governor Caulfield and sending him a copy of this letter for his consideration. It seems to me that it is high time for the Republican party of this State to insist that the first requisite of a political campaign is to block the illegal registrants from voting, not only here but in other cities.

A party was in my office last week and advised that some of the road overseers in the county outside of Kansas City were offering parties special inducements if they would let them put on a half dozen names at the residences of such parties and then get the residents to vouch that such parties were living there when the canvassers came around, so you see what we have to contend with, and it is time for us to do some thing or else get out of the field entirely.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

I. N. Watson

INW:HWC

cc- Governor Caulfield