

Courier Comments....

"Give Them Light With Which To See And Stimulus To Reflect."

County Supervisors favor Weighted Voting to comply with Reapportionment Mandate

The St. Lawrence County Board of Supervisors Monday passed a local law to establish a system of weighted voting in the county government, providing the Supreme Court agrees with the plan and following a public referendum on the subject during this next general election, Nov. 8. The Court will hear arguments Aug. 16, with Judge John J. O'Brien of Washington County presiding.

Local Law No. 2, as the bill is called, met with little opposition, according to reports, and only one supervisor, Joel Howard of Waddington, offered any real objections to this form of reapportionment. Howard said that he favored a system whereby the county would be divided into several large districts, which would have reduced the size of the Board to perhaps seven men. This paper went into the seven-district plan in some detail, earlier this year, pointing out the advantages, both economic and physical of a smaller Board over the weighted voting system.

However, probably nobody in the entire county really expected the supervisors to adopt such a plan, since it would have, in effect, been voting themselves out of office, in many cases. Nobody has denied that St. Lawrence County has fallen far short of equal representation under the old system. . . towns of less than 100 persons have over the years had the same vote (and, hence, the same power) on the Board as towns (Potsdam, for instance) with populations exceeding 10,000. Each town had one supervisor and each supervisor had one vote. Only the City of Ogdensburg was slightly better represented, since its four wards entitled it to four supervisors and four votes.

Under the new weighted voting plan, those areas of the county with the heaviest population concentrations will be given proportionate voting strength. The county's adjusted population would be set at 105,554 with a voting quotient of 2,932, and a total of 361 votes on the Board. Potsdam would be assigned 40 votes, with only Massena (61 votes) and Ogdensburg (48 votes) holding more voting power. Each town within the county is to be assured at least one vote regardless of its population, under conditions of the approved local law.

One objection which has been raised from time to time to the weighted voting and which was voiced again at the public hearing in Canton on Monday has been the basis of population distribution. Using the results of the 1960 census, the plan deducts from census figures the colleges' population and the patients at the state hospital in Ogdensburg. Ogdensburg City Counsel Preston Carlisle registered formal objections again Monday, through county attorney William Craspe, complaining that the hospital population should be included in that of the appropriate city ward.

We still feel that a smaller Board, with each member paid a salary commensurate with the duties entailed and each member accepting his obligations on a full-time job basis would have been a more efficient and, in the long run, a more economical approach to the problem of reapportionment. However, as we remarked before, we never really believed that this could be accomplished under the present set-up. And, in the absence of any citizens at the public hearing to register remarks, suggestions, approval or objections, the citizenry can hardly take exception to the decision of the Board. Once again, the public has demonstrated its apathy toward its own government and the attendant problems.

The Board of Supervisors had to act and act right now, since the original order issued by Justice O'Brien had mandated a plan of reapportionment by Aug. 1. The original ruling gave January 1967 as the date the plan would take effect; but this was later changed to January 1968. The Board was also faced with the problem of assuring that their decision would meet legal standards, some of which are still not clearly defined. For instance, the weighted voting legality is still open to question apparently, since the county attorney has pointed out that any individual who opposes it may make formal protest. He also explained that in some other counties, the weighted voting plan has received temporary approval, but there is no absolute assurance that such approval will be given here. Even if it is approved, there exists the probability that we may still be faced with periodic reapportionment, to meet population changes within the various areas of the county.

Two More Days to "do" the County Fair

St. Lawrence County Fair opened Monday and continues through Saturday, with star-studded entertainment and specialty features to delight all tastes. There's something about a county fair that draws us, if we're 'county folk', at least. . . the sight and the sound and even the smell are irresistible magnets come Fair time.

Monday night saw various talent displayed, recognized and applauded from the Grandstand, with numerous prizes coming the way of young folk in our reading area. Tuesday was devoted to high school bands and. . . as usual say the band directors. . . it poured. Wednesday, the sun shone again and aspiring queens had their day in the sun. . . and under the stars, where a final choice was named from the many contestants. Today and tomorrow of course feature the racers and trotters, always a prime attraction. And Saturday the Hell Drivers will delight the daring.

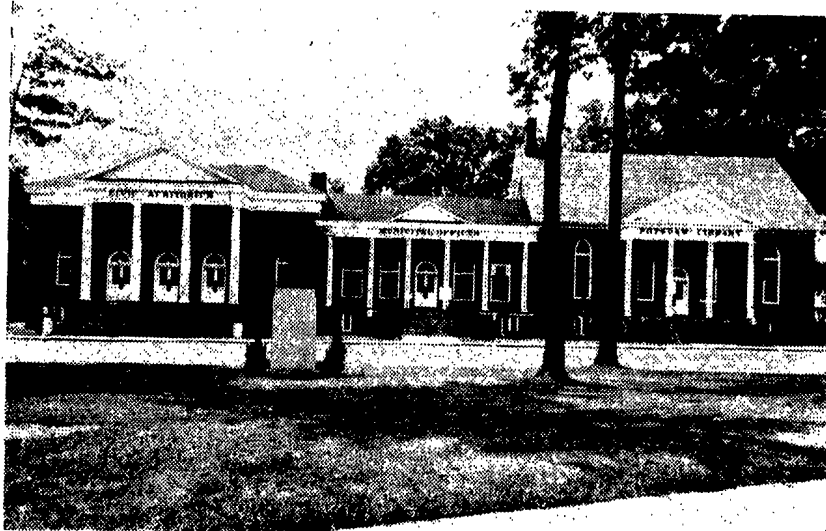
Throughout the entire week, cattle and horses will be shown, 4-H and FFA groups will have their opportunity to display their skills and accomplishments, other farm-oriented exhibits will be featured. Don't miss the Gouverneur and St. Lawrence County Fair this week.

Rev. Bell leaves his Mark on Community

Potsdam will be losing one of her finest citizens this Sunday when the Rev. Norman Bell addresses members of the Emmanuel Baptist Church as pastor for the last time. With a transferral to the First Christian Church in Brushton, however, the vibrant spirit of a man who, in five short years, raised his church membership from eight to an expanding 169 and moved a place of worship from a converted school house to a new church will not be absent from the North County.

In a college town where temporary residents often come and go, Rev. Bell will be long remembered, not only by his congregation, but by townspeople as well most especially for his work with young people. "Youth Power for Christ" and Vacation Bible Schools organized by the Baptist minister have afforded many Protestant youths opportunities for church-oriented education and action.

As full-time pastor at the Brushton mission church, Rev. Bell hopes to help the group, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Church, toward a full-time program. Certainly his record here indicates that the enthusiastic messenger with the soft-southern drawl will attain his goals. The best wishes of the community assuredly go with Rev. Bell and his family as they assume their new role a little to the north of us.



THE NEW LOOK — The new signs at the Civic Center were badly needed, as our editorial comment pointed out last week. This photo illustrates the beauty and efficiency of the improvements, and will surely aid the newcomer in locating the proper offices.



Eve says...

I'm still trying to catch up with local doings after two weeks away from my desk. . . like was there really a burglary at St. Lawrence County Bank across the street or was it a false alarm?; will the engineers have to chop off a few feet from the new pumping station at CCT?; and will Mr. Morey rebuild the bakery or improve the hazardous conditions? . . .

But before I get too immersed in current events, I'd like to go back a bit to the last Sunday before my vacation, when I and my family were among the thousands of spectators at Waddington's sixth annual Blue Water Regatta. I couldn't help comparing this enjoyable event by a small area community with a similar one we attempted to attend at a nearby resort, earlier in the season. I say

'attempted' advisedly because, even though my press card was in full sight of the beholder, we were unable to park our car near enough to the course to make the effort worthwhile.

All pleas for assistance and/or information directed to uniformed aides were met by blank stares, shrugged shoulders and barely civil "I don't no's".

In sharp contrast were the smiling (and just as efficient) firemen and officers at Waddington, and the courteous eagerness with which they helped us park our car, answered questions etc.

Officers and organizers of the regatta seem to keep always in mind the value of good public relations. . . or maybe they're just naturally polite. . . anyway, Waddington is one place where it's surely a pleasure to go. There is plenty of shoreline available and it's possible to see the races from just about any vantage point. It's a real pleasure to take the family to this particular summer event, and I'm happy to congratulate the Waddington firemen on their successful handling of a popular sports classic.

It's a wonder I remembered the Regatta or anything else after the second week of my vacation, which gathered momentum from time to time by the arrival of one more son or daughter under the old roof-tree.

Only one grandchild was present; but the rafters rang, nevertheless, with 'do you remember' and 'I'll never forget the time when'. . . the phone rang, cars arrived and left, the refrigerator door swung as of old, and Himself was heard to remark that "they're eating us out of house and home". . . all the while pleased as punch to see said food disappear where it's meant to go instead of in the garbage can.

As for me. . . well, I've lost touch with cooking for crowds and I spent most of my meal times at the range, frantically ad-libbing to make sure everybody had enough! As a result of which, our youngest returnee wondered aloud how I ever managed to eat a hot meal in the old days. . . to which I replied with feeling, "I didn't".

Ah, well, it was good training for next month when I expect an Air Force delegation to arrive from Okinawa. . . son Warren, his wife Shirley and four youngsters, for one month. Perhaps I'll be back in the swing of things by then.

I can't close without expressing thanks and heartiest commendation to my assistant, Miss Betsy Mahony who held down the fort while I was gone. . . so well did she do her job that I feel positively dispensable!; also, Mrs. Little who always comes forward to fill in where needed at vacation and other times of crisis.

We Get Letters. . . Land Owner lauds Firemen

August 3, 1966
Syracuse, N. Y.

Dear Sir: I wonder if it would be possible, through your news paper, for my husband and me to express our appreciation to the South Colton Volunteer Firemen for the splendid work they did on July 4 when the David Bowen farmhouse on East Hill Road, South Colton was destroyed by fire.

We own a tree plantation across from the house which burned and I am told the me worked hard and long to keep the fire from sweeping on over through the dried grass an into our trees.

We have found out the name of the Fire Chief and am sending a concrete expression of our thanks to him.

Thank you very much.
Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Dorothy Avera

Questions, Propositions, Amendments will appear on Ballot November 8

There will be 12 statewide questions on the ballot this year for voters decision—one proposition and 11 proposed amendments to the State Constitution.

NOTE: The order in which the questions will appear on the voting machine has not yet been decided officially. An addenda to this For Your Information will be sent to you when that order has been officially determined. It also should be noted that one or more local questions may be submitted in different local voting jurisdictions in addition to the statewide questions on the ballot.

The Board of Trustees of the Citizens Public Expenditure Survey recommends approval of three proposed constitutional amendments, rejection of two proposed amendments and has taken no position on six proposed amendments and the proposition.

PROPOSITION — Outdoor Recreation Development Bond Act:

This proposal would authorize the State to borrow \$200 million for development and acquisition of lands for outdoor recreation. The \$200 million would be allocated as follows: Marine projects — \$90 million; state park projects—\$55 million; forest recreation projects — \$15 million; municipal park projects in New York City — \$25 million; mu-

nicipal park projects outside New York City — \$25 million, and historic site projects — \$20 million.

These allocations would be part of a 10-year, \$400 million program. The other \$200 million is estimated to be received from the following sources: appropriations of \$7.5 million a year over the 10-year period from state general taxes—\$75 million; federal aid—\$90 million, and local government spending—\$35 million.

Debt service on the \$200 million bond issue along with debt service on the \$100 million debt for park and recreational land acquisition authorized earlier (\$75 million in 1960 and \$25 million in 1962) is to be paid off by fees and charges for the use of the facilities, motor boat registration fees and tax revenues from motor fuel used by boats.

The Survey's Board has not taken a position on this proposition.

Constitutional Amendment— STATE LOTTERIES:

This proposal would permit lotteries operated by the State and the sale of lottery tickets as authorized and prescribed by the Legislature. The proposed amendment provides that the net proceeds "shall be applied exclusively to or in aid or support of education in this state as the legislature may prescribe."

Many people are opposed on

moral grounds to the financing of government by gambling. Others argue that a state lottery does not differ morally from state-legalized pari-mutuel betting on horse racing.

How the lotteries would be operated and how tickets would be sold is left to future decision by the Legislature. Application of the proceeds exclusively to education still leaves a wide area of discretion to the Legislature in the way the money will be spent—for elementary and high schools or colleges and universities? public and private education? manpower training, scholarships, "scholar incentive" handouts or educational TV broadcasts to the general public?

The Survey's Board recommends REJECTION OF THIS PROPOSAL.

Constitutional Amendment— Increase City, Town and Village Debt for GOVERNMENT HOUSING:

In addition to other indebtedness, cities, towns and villages may borrow for construction of public housing and urban renewal projects. Under present constitutional provision, the additional debt is limited to 2% of the average assessed valuation or real estate subject to taxation in the city, town or village on the last five assessment rolls.

The proposed amendment would change this limit to 2% of the average full valuation of the taxable real estate on the last five assessment rolls.

This proposal was part of proposed Amendment No. 1 submitted to the people at the election in 1964 and was turned down by the voters at that election by a margin of 717,418 votes—2,225,760 voting No and 1,508,342 voting Yes.

In reference to the effect of this 1964 proposal, State Comptroller Arthur Levitt reported that the change would increase the authorized debt limits of the 62 cities and the 93 largest villages in the State by \$236.4 million.

The Survey's Board recommends a "NO" VOTE ON THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT.

Constitutional Amendment— PENSIONS OF WIDOWS OF RETIRED TEACHERS:

At the present time, Legislature has power to provide for an increase in the pension of teachers who retired in earlier years on pensions no longer commensurate with cost of living. This proposal would permit the Legislature to make provision for adjustment in the pensions of widows of retired teachers. No implementing legislation has been proposed on which an estimate of cost could be based. There is clear need for pension adjustments in certain cases, however, and specific proposals can be evaluated when the legislation is introduced.

The Survey's Board recommends approval of this proposed amendment.

Constitutional Amendment— Job Development Authority Bonds

The New York State Job Development Authority grants long term, second mortgage loans to local nonprofit industrial development corporations to assist in construction of new plants and expansion and rehabilitation of existing plants. The Authority loans up to 30%

of the cost of land and buildings with the other 70% provided from private sources.

As of July 1966, the JDA reports that 213 loans have been made totaling approximately \$28 million and that these loans have created an estimated 9,100 new jobs and have saved an estimated 4,200 jobs in localities across the State of New York. The number of loan applications and approvals is increasing.

At the present time the Constitution permits the State of New York to guarantee up to \$50 million of bonds issued by the Job Development Authority to provide money for these industrial development loans. This proposed amendment would permit an increase in that amount to \$75 million.

The Survey's Board recommends approval of this proposed amendment.

Constitutional Amendment— Extend JDA Loans to Additional Areas

At the present time, the Job Development Authority is permitted to use the money borrowed through the sale of state guaranteed bonds only to provide additional employment in those areas of the State in which unemployment is or may become a critical problem. This proposal would permit the JDA to loan such money to improve employment opportunities in any area of the State. The removal of the restriction to areas meeting certain requirements would enable the JDA to avoid discrimination between areas.

The Survey's Board recommends approval of this proposed amendment.

Constitutional Amendment— Mental Health or Mental Retardation

With certain specified exceptions, the Constitution now prohibits the gift or loan of state money and credit for private purposes. Among the present exceptions are care and support of needy persons and education and support of the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the physically handicapped. This proposal also would make an exception for the mentally ill, the emotionally disturbed and the mentally retarded. No implementing legislation has been introduced so that there is no basis for estimating the extent to which the State would provide for the added group or the methods by which provision would be made.

The Survey's Board has not taken a position on this proposed amendment.

Constitutional Amendment— Absentee Registration for Voters

At the present time, voters otherwise required to register in person do not have to meet this requirement if their duties, occupation or business requires them to be outside the State of New York on registration days.

This proposed amendment would remove the requirement for personal registration for voters whose duty, occupation or business require them to be outside the counties of their residence or, in the case of voters in New York City, outside that City on registration days.

The Survey's Board has not taken a position on this proposed amendment. (See Questions, page 12)

We Get Letters. . .

Keenan should reveal birthplace, says Pucker

As your Conservative Candidate for the Assembly in Albany, I Eugene Francis O'Grady, wrote an article for the Ogdensburg Journal and also two (2) weeks ago wrote another article for the Massena Observer to let the voting public know all about your Conservative Candidate's birth place, which is Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence County, (May 22, 1924) and I also stated in the articles (for the voters to see of this county) my education record, pointing out that I graduated from the Ogdensburg Business School in 1951.

I just want to tell the voters of this county, that I am proud to state in the papers throughout the St. Lawrence County, that my birthplace is Ogdensburg, here in the St. Lawrence County.

I want to take this opportunity to tell the Republican people of his County, I think your candidate, Republican Edward J. Keenan, owes your party and your Democratic friends an explanation as to why on all his pamphlets that he had printed in Ogdensburg and that he has passed all through this county to you voters in this county to represent your party as the republican candidate for the Assembly, NOT ONCE, like most people would say on the Election Pamphlet does he mention the birthplace of Edward J. Keenan nor does he mention his Education.

I, Eugene Francis O'Grady, Conservative Candidate for the Assembly to represent my people of my County (St. Lawrence) am a born native of this County am proud to tell the whole State of New York Also the Republican Board of Elections member tried her best to stop me from running for the Assembly of my County and I guarantee to you Republican people of this wonderful County, and I asked her in Canton, She does not even know the birthplace of Edward J. Keenan, the Republican Candidate for the Assembly.

So I am publicly requesting your Republican Candidate, that is trying to represent our County of St. Lawrence in Albany, to state to every paper in this County HIS BIRTHPLACE and how long of a resident of our County that he has lived with us. Just remember, your Conservative Candidate, Eugene Francis O'Grady, was born in St. Lawrence County (May 22, 1924) and I tell you with all my honesty that my heart lies with my County people, and not some other unknown county.

Many people are opposed on

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