

The leaders of the People's party claimed that there had been frauds perpetrated by the Liberal party sufficient to bring about this result, both in the matter of registration and at the polls.

FAIRNESS AIMED AT.

It is a noticeable fact, that notwithstanding these charges of fraud, no action has been brought to test the legality of the election of any officer, either as to the manner of registration, or as to illegal voting at the polls, or as to the canvass of the returns. Nor has any specific charge of fraud ever been brought to the knowledge of this Commission, but only general charges made through the party newspapers, or by individual members of the People's party, wholly unsupported by proof.

The Commission has no information of anything like fraud being imputed in any case to the Commission, but only to its agents in the persons of the registrars and judges of election appointed by it.

The Commission deem it just to itself to state that it has studiously endeavored in all instances to appoint the very best men to be procured who will accept the positions, selecting in each instance discreet, sober, honest, fair-minded men, as free from partisan influence and bias as practicable, and has invariably urged upon them to do equal and exact justice to all citizens of the Territory, without reference to creed or religion, and where an abuse of power by those appointed as registrars or judges has been brought to the knowledge of the Commission, it has not hesitated in its action but has promptly removed such persons from office.

This, however, we are gratified to say, has occurred in but few instances, and the Commission takes great pleasure in bearing witness to the fidelity and efficiency with which the majority of its appointees have discharged their difficult duties, and to the uniform fairness of the elections throughout the Territory.

The complaint most frequently made to the Commission is, that the registration of Salt Lake City and of Ogden contain each a large number of names of persons who cannot be found on inquiry and search, and that they are kept there by the registration officers to enable the Liberal party to have the names represented by persons who are not legal voters.

It has not been brought to the knowledge of the Commission in any way that this fraud has been perpetrated in a single instance, but, in order to satisfy the seeming fears of leading members of the People's party, the Commission proceeded to Ogden prior to the last election, and held a conference with the registrars and judges of election appointed by the Commission, in the presence of a number of the leaders and official representatives of the People's party, and agreed upon rules for the conduct of the approaching election which were satisfactory to both parties, and the Commission has since heard no complaint in regard to the fairness of that election, and

does not believe that the frauds anticipated therein, or those charged in the former elections, were attempted to be practiced.

BAD STATUTES.

The whole trouble in regard to the condition of the registration lists complained of is owing to the laws in regard to registration and elections, enacted by the Territorial Legislature, which is the creature of and dominated by the People's or Mormon party, and those laws must be amended before any right of complaint will exist.

All registered voters have been required to take the oath prescribed by law before being registered, and these oaths are filed in the office of the Probate Court of the respective counties.

In making the revision of the registration lists, the registrar is required "to make careful inquiry if any person, whose name is on his list, has died or removed from the precinct, or is otherwise disqualified as a voter of such precinct and if so to erase his name therefrom." (Compiled laws of Utah, Vol. I, page 319, Sec. 240.)

It will be seen from this that he can only erase names while revising the lists when he has satisfactory information, that the registered voter "has died or removed from the precinct, or is otherwise disqualified as a voter." The simple fact that he does not find him is not sufficient.

After the revision, it is provided that the lists be posted for fifteen days, and for hearing objections to the right to vote of any person registered until sunset of the fifth day preceding the election, but this is restricted by a somewhat remarkable provision of the statute, as follows:

"Said objections shall be made by a qualified voter in writing, delivered to the said justice, (under the Edmunds law the registrar acts instead of the justice as mentioned in the Territorial act,) who shall issue a written notice to the person objected to, stating the place, day and hour when the objection will be heard. *The person making the objection shall serve, or cause to be served, said notice upon the person objected to, and shall also make returns of such service to the justice before whom the objection shall be heard.*" (Compiled Laws Utah 320-321, Sec. 246.)

There is no other provision in the law for purging the registration lists, and it is impossible to serve the notice required if the person objected to has died, removed, or is absent and cannot be found, and if it be a fact, as alleged, that many names of non-voters are upon the lists, it is the fault of the law, and not of the registrars, and the law should be amended.]

COURSE OF THE COMMISSION.

When the Commission was first organized, it was a matter of grave consideration with the able men then composing it, headed by that wise and safe counselor ex-Governor Alexander Ramsey as chairman, as to the proper policy to be pursued in discharging the very responsible as well as delicate trust committed to its direction.

After mature thought and deliberation, it was unanimously considered by the Commission that, under the Act of Congress establishing it, the duty of the Commission was to so shape its policy, and the administration of the affairs committed to it, as to be in harmony with the spirit of the laws of Congress, regarding the principal and perhaps sole object in view in its creation to be the extinction of polygamy, and the stamping out, as far as possible, of all polygamous influences and tendencies.

How best to accomplish this was a grave question, and was approached with some hesitation and much serious thought, but as subsequent events have shown was determined wisely.

The Act of Congress of March 22, 1882, commonly known as the "Edmunds Law," cut off polygamists, bigamists and those who might thereafter be convicted of kindred offenses, from exercising the right of suffrage, and from the privilege of holding office in the Territory, and it became the duty of the Commission to exclude all such persons from participating in the elections.

The Commission did not, however, consider this to be the sole object of the law, but that it was also intended to make those offenses which were practiced by the Mormon people in direct violation of the law, and which were under the ban of civilization everywhere, odious.

In order to accomplish this, and to thoroughly convince the Mormon people of its earnestness of purpose, and to impress them with the idea that the government, through its organized agencies, meant that polygamy should be punished and eradicated, and its sovereign power in the enactment of laws for the suppression and punishment of crime should be respected and obeyed by all people within its jurisdiction and limits, the Commission adopted the rule of appointing registrars, wherever practicable, from the Gentile, or non-Mormon, element of the population, believing them to be more in harmony with the attempts to carry out and enforce the provisions of the law than members of the other party, and in the matter of judges of election, the law requiring three persons, it appointed, wherever they could be found, two out of the three from the non-Mormon element. In many precincts none but Mormons were to be found, and in such places Mormons were appointed. They have thus had representation upon all election boards, and entire control of some.

This policy of the Commission has been steadily pursued to the present time, and, it is believed, with the most satisfactory results, as evidenced by the steady increase of the anti-Mormon vote, and by abandonment, except in some remote districts, of the open practice of those offenses, for the suppression of which the law was enacted.

Notwithstanding these results, this line of policy has not met the unanimous approval of the non-Mormon element, which has repeatedly urged the Commission to the adoption of more stringent regu-