

# 37 Indicted in Vote Fixes; Total Hits 75

BY GEORGE BLISS

U. S. Atty. James R. Thompson announced yesterday that a federal grand jury has named 37 persons in vote fraud indictments following an investigation that found up to 50 per cent of the votes cast in many precincts were obtained thru forgeries.

The eight indictments naming the election judges and precinct workers were returned Thursday and ordered suppressed until yesterday while federal agents with arrest warrants

sought the defendants. The indictments, charging conspiracy, if proved can bring a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine, 10 years imprisonment, or both.

The latest indictments bring to 75 the number of persons charged to date in the investigation of the March 21 primary election. On Sept. 16 the jury named 40 persons in vote fraud indictments. Thompson said two of the persons charged on Sept. 16 were named again Thursday in indictments which supersede the earlier action.

Thompson said the jury will continue its probe with hopes that "witnesses appearing will lead up to those higher in re-

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sponsibility for this massive vote fraud." He warned that the Justice Department and the grand jury will closely monitor the Nov. 7 election for any possible fraud.

#### 1,000 Indictments Possible

Tyrone Fahner and George Gilkerson, assistant U. S. attorneys who conducted the investigation, said the fraud cases are so prevalent that more than 1,000 indictments could be returned "if we had the manpower and time."

Indicted by the jury were 17 Republican and 15 Democratic election judges, four Democratic precinct captains, and Sidney Friedman, described as the 24th Ward Democratic coordinator.

He is section foreman of the Department of Streets and Sanitation.

In some of the precincts, Thompson said, Fahner and Gilkerson found that forged names were used to apply for 50 per cent of the total votes cast and in some precincts both forgeries and blank ballots were found. He said the blank

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ballots were used to ring up votes for favorite candidates.

The forgeries on the ballot applications were so crude that Payner and Gilkerson found them by simply flipping thru the applications, Thompson said. He said the forgeries were turned over to expert document examiners for further study.

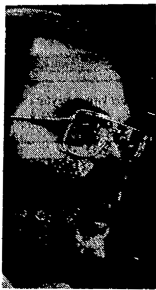
Thompson charged that the voting irregularities were so "blatant" and easy to uncover that they should have been discovered by officials of the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners.

"Stanley Kusper [chairman of the board] will have to account to the community for his stewardship of his office," Thompson said when he was asked if Kusper is a target of the grand jury investigation.

## Claims Manpower Shortage

Kusper has consistently insisted that his office doesn't have the manpower to check for vote fraud among the applications which are stored in his office. He has also said that he doesn't have the authority to check the precinct polling places for fraud cases.

The grand jury investigation was touched off by Tribune Task Force disclosures of more than 1,000 cases of fraud, in-



U. S. Atty. James Thompson at press conference.

cluding forgeries of ballot applications, multiple voting, phony Republican judges and the casting of votes for persons who didn't exist.

"But there is no doubt that in these cases there are violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1966, which guarantees a qualified voter the full value of his vote," Thompson said.

"If no one else is going to investigate these vote frauds we are going to continue to do so and will investigate any vote frauds committed during

the Nov. 7 Presidential election."

Fahner and Gilkerson said there appeared to be an element of laziness in many of the fraud cases because a large number of blank ballots were counted along with the obvious forged ones. They said that those responsible evidently got tired of forging the names from poll lists and binders and took the easy way by simply tossing in the blanks and counting the votes.

The jury has also spent considerable time questioning board employes and supervisors, including two secretaries of Kusper, in an effort to find out why the vote fraud cases have gone undetected in the board offices.

## Violations of State Laws

Thompson said there were violations of state statutes involved in the fraud cases uncovered by his office.

Many of the forged names, Gilkerson said, were taken from precinct registration lists. They were cast at the end of the day in the names of registered voters who failed to vote, he said.

"If it really happened that way it would mean that a complete neighborhood would have had to walk into the polling place at the same time and vote the way they were listed

on the poll registration lists," Thompson added.

Republicans Actually Democrats A study by Task Force reporters of those indicted disclosed that many of the Republican judges named were actually Democrats who had been placed in their jobs by Democratic ward bosses.

Thompson said most of the vote fraud cases occurred principally in the "river wards," on the city's near South and West Sides.

Thompson said most of the cases were found in predominantly Democratic precincts and involved Democrats because there were few or no Re-

publican contests in the primary.

"There was little incentive to steal Republican ballots," Thompson said. "But there was incentive in stealing Democratic votes since there were at least two heated elections, namely for governor and state's attorney."