

# Fraud Check Proposed by Vote Commissioner

BY WILLIAM CURRIE\*

A member of the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners has threatened vote stealers with a spot check of ballot application signatures in the board offices after the Nov. 7 elections.

The unprecedented plan to thwart the historic vote fraud in Chicago was disclosed by Francis P. Canary, one of the two Democratic members, in an interview with The Tribune.

The plan would be a radical departure from the steadfast refusal of the Democrat-controlled board in the past to initiate its own investigation of fraud in Chicago wards.

The mere suggestion of the spot check election experts observe, could make a drastic cut in the number of forged signatures.

## Mrs. Suthers Concur

Concurring in Canary's idea was the Republican member of the three-member board, Mrs. Marie T. Suthers.

"It's something we should have done a long time ago," she said, adding, however, that she would rather see a "thoro" check of all applications after the election.

Canary said he expects a problem in getting sufficient manpower after the election to make the check.

A spot check of signatures

would be similar to those made by Tribune Reporter William Mullen, who worked undercover in the board offices for three months.

## Random Check Finds Fraud

While checking stacks of precinct ballot applications and records at random, Mullen discovered more than a thousand cases of fraud, which to date, have resulted in the indictments of 40 Democratic precinct captains and election officials.

By checking the signatures on the ballot applications to see if one was similar in handwriting to others in a precinct, Mullen discovered applications which appeared forged. Subsequent analysis by several handwriting experts proved Mullen's observations to be correct.

An impediment to the spot check proposal could be Chairman Stanley T. Kasper Jr., the other Democratic member of the board, who, since Tribune disclosures of neglect in his office, has denied vehemently that the board is responsible for such policing after an election.

The plan would have to be approved by the majority of the board members.

## Denies Any Responsibility

Kasper has said repeatedly that the board only makes such

investigations when a specific complaint is made, denying that his board has any responsibility for controlling fraud at the precinct levels.

Canary agreed that vote stealers in the precincts may have become complacent over the years because they were assured that only a very rare complaint would put their forgeries under scrutiny.

Canary said also he plans to raise the subject of a management study in the board's voting machine service department, and made assurances that he would look into offering bids for the contract to move and store the huge machines.

The Tribune recently disclosed that the board for years has been awarding profitable moving and storing contracts to favored companies, never putting the contracts up for formal public bidding.

The Tribune also learned that the voting machine service department is overstaffed when compared with Cook County and several other cities in the Midwest, costing Chicago taxpayers thousands of dollars each year.

Canary, who has spoken little with reporters since the board rocked with the recent scandals, said he would not make a motion to initiate the bidding or to commission a management study until the members have studied the issues thoroly.