

Vote buying charges led to campaign dispute

"Indict the buyer and the seller as well; array at the bar those scoundrels who have been giving out money as well as the poor man that accepted it."

Judge Martin,
Bloomington Telephone,
April 1, 1902

The subject was voting fraud, and the instructions were given to the grand jury. Martin, who, like others, was concerned by blatant and massive multiple voting, also told the jury, "Friendship must serve no one — honesty, fair-dealing and secrecy are the requirements (of their



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By Rose McIlveen

term on the jury)."

Determined to put an end to the disgraceful stealing of votes at elections, Martin said that if any grand juror would not do his duty on this point, he should "stand aside."

The judge had been stung by newspaper stories about a recent primary election in which it was alleged that votes could be had for 75 cents each. Grumbled Martin, "Let the man who published such charges be brought before you and either establish such facts or admit that it is a false charge only published as a sensation."

The grand jury of 1902 may not have indicted anyone involved in voting fraud up to that time, but the scandal cropped up again in October of 1905. In a tongue-in-cheek article on the front page, the Bloom-

ington *Courier*, proclaimed, "It will be a chilly day for the floaters in Bloomington on election day as the Democrats and Republicans are preparing to sign articles not to use any money or whiskey to buy votes."

The article may have been a trifle premature in that it was the local Democrats who had proposed an agreement, but it had not yet been signed by their counterparts.

Explained the *Courier*, "Attorney J.F. Regester, chairman of the Democratic City Central Committee, has addressed the following letter to

William W. Weaver, chairman of the Republican City Central Committee, in reference to the non-use of money for campaign purposes."

The provisions give a glimpse of what was wrong with election day procedures in those days. The second point said, "We agree that on the day of the election all windows and doors of the several polling precincts in the city shall be entirely screened so that no one outside of the election room can see the members of the various election boards

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