

PREFACE

It has been my experience to find that CORE staff is just as ignorant about the political structure of Louisiana as the people in the community in which they are working. This is not a reflection on anyone, it's just that the people in the community have been denied the right to vote and the majority of staff were either too young to vote or were concentrating on other programs and had no interest or time for politics. Now, with the passage of the voting bill, it is imperative that there be a political awareness among the people and staff alike.

A serious shortage of paper (and money) in this office prevents us from supplying you with more than one booklet, but if you have need of a booklet of this type in your political education program, I would strongly urge that you cut the stencils and run them off on your project.

These booklets may be used as you see fit, but it is my suggestion that only one page be issued to your class or group at a time. This has a twofold purpose, first, it allows the teacher to stay ahead of the class, thus, any local person can teach, which would be a tremendous step towards community organization in some areas. Secondly, if you have a shortage of stencils and paper, as most projects do, you won't have to use your complete supply all at once and it will give you more time to hustle up more supplies.

After page "one" has been issued to the "class" or "discussion group" (or whatever you prefer to call it), it is then read and thoroughly discussed before the quiz sheets are distributed. After the questions have been answered, there should be another discussion and a question and answer period.

(continued)

They are then given the next lesson, (not the questions) to take home and study. The answers to some of the questions cannot be found in the text of this booklet. This was done deliberately to stimulate the interest of the group and start them to asking questions and doing their own research into the political structure of their parish. Classes should be held at least once a week but preferably twice a week, possibly on Tuesdays, since these are relatively uncluttered days as far as the community is concerned.

This is the first of four booklets designed as a teaching aid for political education classes. I sincerely welcome all criticisms and comments and if there are any suggestions for improvement, please dont hesitate to write or otherwise contact me.

FREEDOM,

RICHARD TINSLEY

REGISTRATION

After qualifications for voting have been determined, some procedure must be set up so that a record may be compiled of those eligible to vote. This is known as registration, a procedure the purpose of which is to assure the public that only those qualified will be permitted to cast their ballots. This is but one of many safeguards against such corrupt practices as stuffing the ballot boxes, padding the rolls, voting the names of deceased or fictitious persons, repeating, or voting by non residents or floaters. For example, a 1958 Act of the Louisiana Legislature on this subject makes it unlawful to buy the registration of any voter, to offer money or anything of value or the promise of anything of value to induce him to register, and also makes it unlawful for any person to receive money or anything of value, or the promise thereof, for his registration.

Registration in Louisiana is required of all voters throughout the state, both urban and rural, for both primary and general elections. The registrar of voters, who is elected by the governing body of the parish, (except in Orleans parish, where the Governor makes the appointment.), conducts registration. The State Board of Registration, composed of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, can remove any registrar at will. The board appoints a State Director of Registration.

Louisiana uses both periodic and permanent registration. The former plan lies in effect in all parishes in which permanent registration has not been adopted. The period of periodic registration is four years, with the current registration running from January 1, 1965 through December 31, 1968. Under permanent registration a voter must register only once, providing he does not move or his name is not in some other authorized manner stricken from the records as unqualified. If the voter resides in a parish having a population exceeding 300,000 and he fails to vote during a two-year period, in cases in which he has registered a party affiliation (four years if he is not affiliated with "a party holding a primary in parishes containing cities having a population exceeding 100,000") his name is taken off the rolls and he must re-register to become eligible to vote. In all other parishes the names of all voters who fail to vote at least once in every four years are removed from the rolls, and a new registration is then necessary prior to again exercising the right to vote.

Permanent registration is mandatory in all parishes with municipalities of over 100,000 populations (Orleans, Caddo, East Baton Rouge). Other parishes have an option to come under the plan through the action of the governing body of the parish. By January 31, 1959, a total of 38 of Louisiana's 64 parishes had adopted permanent registration. Well over one-half of the state's total population live in these parishes.

REGISTRATION

1. NAME THREE METHODS OF CHEATING AT THE POLLS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE 1958 ACT OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE. _____

3. WHO CONDUCTS REGISTRATION? _____

4. WHAT OFFICIALS COMPOSE THE STATE BOARD OF REGISTRATION? _____

GIVE THEIR NAMES AND TITLES: _____

5. HOW MANY TYPES OF REGISTRATION ARE THERE IN LOUISIANA? _____

NAME THEM: _____

6. WHAT TYPE OF REGISTRATION IS IN EFFECT IN YOUR PARISH? _____

7. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL TO VOTE WITHIN A FOUR YEAR PERIOD? _____

8. WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO STATE WHAT TYPE OF REGISTRATION THAT A PARISH WILL HAVE? _____

9. IF A PERSON IS REMOVED FROM THE ROLLS FOR NOT VOTING DURING A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME, CAN HE EVER BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AGAIN? _____

EXPLAIN: _____

10. HOW DOES THE STATE DIRECTOR GET INTO OFFICE? _____

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING IN LOUISIANA

AGE.....Twenty-one years

RESIDENCE.....1. State; One year
2. Parish; One year
3. Precinct: Three Months
4. Municipalities: Four months

CITIZENSHIP.....United States Citizenship

LITERACY.....No literacy requirements

DISQUALIFICATIONS.....1. Conviction for crime without pardon and express restoration of suffrage.* (*The right to vote)
2. Confinement in public prison at the time of elections.
3. Inmates of charitable homes except the Soldiers Home and the United States Hospital at Carville.
4. Interdicted persons, as well as those not interdicted who are obviously insane or idiotic.
5. Deserters from the military service who have not served out their time of enlistment.
6. Dishonorable discharge from the Louisiana National Guard or from the military service of the United States, where not reinstated.

ABSENTEE VOTING..... Permitted, by mail, for members of the armed services, United States Merchant Marine, civilian employees of the United States serving outside the United States, members of religious groups and welfare agencies officially attached to and serving with the armed forces, and spouses and dependants of any of these; also for persons required to be outside the United States for more than 15 days. All other qualified voters not in the parish on election day must vote in person at the clerk of courts office, (civil sheriff in Orleans Parish) from two to ten days prior to the election

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING

1. HOW LONG MUST ONE RESIDE IN THE CITY TO BE ELIBIBLE TO VOTE? _____
2. IN THE PARISH? _____ IN THE STATE? _____
2. IF A PERSON IS INSANE BUT NOT COMMITTED TO AN ASYLUM, CAN HE QUALIFY TO VOTE? _____
3. IF A PERSON IS IN THE ARMED FORCES OVERSEAS, CAN HE VOTE IN HIS HOME PARISH? _____ IF SO HOW MAY THIS BE DONE? _____
4. WHAT ARE THE LITERACY REQUIREMENTS FOR A POTENTIAL VOTER? _____
5. IF YOU ARE A QUILIFIED VOTER AND PLAN TO BE OUT OF THE PARISH ON ELECTION DAY, CAN YOU STILL CAST YOUR VOTE? _____
HOW? _____
6. HOW LONG MUST YOU RESIDE INA PRECINCT BEFORE YOU CAN VOTE IN THAT PRECINCT? _____

PARISH OFFICIALS

THE SHERIFF is elected in the state general election for a four year term.

He serves as the chief law enforcement officer and appoints his own deputies. It is the duty of the sheriff to enforce the laws, maintain peace and order, keep the jail, and act as an officer of the district court in preserving order and executing the courts writs. He collects state, parish, and if a city desires it, municipal property taxes.

THE CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT is the recorder of the court proceedings and custodian of the records of the court and other important parish records. He is elected for a four year term at the state general election.

THE ASSESSOR is also elected at the state general election for four years. He assesses the value of property for the purpose of taxation.

THE CORONER should be a qualified physician. He is responsible for investigating cases of death where the cause is unknown. He acts as sheriff when there is a vacancy in that office, or when the sheriff is an interested party in a case. He may also be appointed parish health officer by the police jury. The coroner is elected for a four year term at the state general election.

THE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD is in charge of administration of the schools on the parish level, and is independent of the other local governmental operations. In all parishes members of the parish school boards serve for overlapping six-year terms, the sheriff Bogalusa (Washington Parish), Monroe (Ouachita Parish), and Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish) have independent city school systems with separate school boards. Each of these boards consists of five members who are elected at large.

(For more detailed information on school boards see "Education")

THE CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT is the recorder of the court proceedings and custodian of the records of the court and other important parish records. He is elected for a four year term at the state general election.

THE ASSESSOR is also elected at the state general election for four years. He assesses the value of property for the purpose of taxation.

THE CORONER should be a qualified physician. He is responsible for investigating cases of death where the cause is unknown. He acts as sheriff when there is a vacancy in that office, or when the sheriff is an interested party in a case. He may also be appointed parish health officer by

PARISH OFFICIALS

1. WHO ACTS AS SHERIFF WHEN THERE IS A VACANCY IN THAT OFFICE? _____
2. WHO DETERMINES THE VALUE OF YOUR PROPERTY FOR TAXATION PURPOSES?

3. WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT? _____

4. WHO COLLECTS STATE AND PARISH TAXES? _____
5. HOW MANY CITIES IN LOUISIANA HAVE INDEPENDANT CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS? _____
NAME THEM. _____
ARE THEIR SCHOOL BOARDS SEPARATE? _____.
6. HOW LONG IS THE TERM IN OFFICE FOR A SHERIFF? _____
7. HOW LONG DOES A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SERVE IN OFFICE? _____
8. THE _____ MAY BE APPOINTED PARISH HEALTH OFFICER BY _____
_____.

TRUE OR FALSE

9. DEPUTY SHERIFFS ARE ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE. TRUE _____ FALSE _____
10. THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY INVESTIGATES _____ CASES OF DEATH WHERE THE CAUSE
IS UNKNOWN. TRUE _____ FALSE _____

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Government by the people cannot exist in reality unless there is some adequate method by which the people can express their will concerning how and by whom they shall be governed. One way in which the people may effect changes in Government personnel is by revolution but for more than 150 years now the American people for the most part have spurned the resort to arms as a method of political action. They have been content to use the free popular election as a device for indicating officially their wishes for or against current public policies and practices and whether they want A, B, or C for President and X, Y, or Z for Governor.

REGISTRATION:

The first step in any electoral process is the establishing of those qualifications which must be met by the potential voters. These requirements vary to some extent from state to state but usually include provisions relating to age, residence, citizenship, disqualifications and registration. After the qualifications to vote have been determined, then some procedure must be devised so that a record may be compiled of those eligible to vote. THIS IS KNOWN AS REGISTRATION. A adequate and effective registration procedure will go far toward assuring honesty and fairness in the conduct of elections. Upon the honest and faithful maintenance of the registration books depends the purity of the ballot box, and upon the purity of the ballot box depends in large measure the success or failure of our democratic form of government. A delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1845 stated this point well when he said: "The abuse of suffrage(right to vote) was certainly one of the greatest evils that threatened the durability of a representative system of government."

ELECTIONS:

There are two types of elections--the primary election, at which party candidates for the various offices to be filled are nominated, and the general election or inter-party election. If either of these types of elections is to be honestly and fairly conducted, three conditions must exist: first, it must be assured that only those persons who are qualified by law to exercise the suffrage shall be permitted to cast their ballots; second, that only the ballots cast by qualified voters shall be counted; third, that votes cast by qualified voters shall be counted correctly and the totals certified without fraud or deceit.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

1. THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF ELECTIONS, THEY ARE _____ AND _____
2. WHAT IS SUFFRAGE? _____
3. WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP IN ANY ELECTORAL PROCESS? _____
4. THE COMPILING OF RECORDS OF THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IS KNOWN AS _____
5. THERE ARE TWO WAYS FOR A DISSATISFIED PEOPLE TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, THEY ARE _____ AND _____
6. TO CONDUCT AN HONEST AND FAIR ELECTION, THREE CONDITIONS MUST EXIST;
NAME THEM: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____