

3168
June 13th, 1911.

Mr. Henry G. Stott, Chairman,

Committee on Methods of
Nominating and Electing Officers.

Dear Mr. Stott:-

Recently while in conversation with Mr. C. F. Scott regarding the present method of nominating and electing Institute officers, I spoke to him regarding the petition plan of nomination and the details of the method whereby it could be adopted in such a manner as to meet practically all of the objections which have been made to the present system and at the same time could be tried without revising the present Constitution but merely by the adoption of a by-law by the Board of Directors. Mr. Scott thought favorably of the plan and asked me to write you fully regarding it. Of course, the petition plan has been frequently suggested, but, so far as I know, no one has worked out the details whereby it can be used in accordance with our present Constitution.

My views of the matter are the result of several years experience as a member of the Committee of Tellers, during which I was strongly impressed by the "lost energy" caused by the large scattering vote due to the fact that at present there is no method whereby members may know who are actually candidates for the various offices. We all know there are many members who possess superior qualifications but who object to having circular letters issued by their friends urging their candidacy, which at present is practically the only method whereby any considerable number of members may be informed regarding candidates.

The scattering vote is increasing each year; for example, this year there were 225 different members who received one or more primary or nomination votes for Vice-President and only seven of these received three per cent. of the total vote, which is the percentage necessary under the Constitution to render a member eligible for election. There were 581 different men who received one or more votes for the office of Manager; only thirteen of these received three per cent. In all probability the majority of these members were not actually candidates, that is they were not aware that they were being voted for. These figures clearly indicate the need of a simple method whereby the votes can be concentrated on a comparatively few men who are actually candidates. This need can be met by the adoption by the Institute of an official plan presenting the names of all candidates to the entire membership when the nomination forms are mailed.

An attempt to meet the situation was made a few years ago by the adoption of a by-law (See Section 18) requiring that a list shall be published in the January and February Proceedings each year containing the names of all persons who received three per cent. in the primary of the preceding year, and also the names of all directors, and of ex-Vice-Presidents and ex-Managers, who have held office during the preceding five years. This plan does not fully meet the situation, however, as it does not provide for new candidates. It has also been severely criticised as tending to favor the perpetuation in office of men who have already been elected. The details of the proposed plan are as follows:-

PROPOSED PLAN FOR DIRECT NOMINATION OF OFFICERS
OF THE INSTITUTE BY MEANS OF PETITIONS.

1. Repeal Section 18 of the present by-laws.
2. Adopt in place of Section 18 a new by-law reading substantially as follows:-

Section 18: In the November and December issues of the Proceedings each year there shall be printed a notice to the membership that petitions may be sent to the Secretary's office for the nomination of any Member or Associate for any Institute office for which he may be proposed as a candidate. The signatures may appear on one petition or separately, and should 25 or more names in favor of a candidate be received by the Secretary on or before January 15th, the names of the candidates suggested shall be printed in alphabetical sequence upon the nomination form, which is distributed to the membership in February of each year, grouped according to the office sepected.

Blank forms for the petition may be obtained from the Secretary. The petition form is, however, not essential.

3. All names proposed by petition be printed upon the regular nomination form with the addition of as many blank lines under each office as there are vacancies to be filled so that any member may, if he desires, refrain from voting for any of the candidates who have been nominated by petition and may vote for any other members of the Institute. The form should be so arranged that it will only be necessary for members to place a suitable mark opposite the names of candidates voted for, thus making it easy to vote and insuring thereby a much larger vote in the primaries than usual. During the past five years it is seldom that more than 20 per cent. of the membership have voted in the primaries. One of the reasons for this is that in order to vote, a member must write the name of each candidate voted for. The principal reason, however, is that the members do not know who the candidates are. The vote in the actual election has averaged about twice as much as the nomination vote. In the election the ticket is printed and it is only necessary to enclose it in an envelope and mail it. If the operation of voting for nominations is made as simple there is every reason to believe that the vote will be very largely increased, which is exceedingly desirable for the reason that at present members who receive not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ and 5 per cent. of the nomination votes are placed upon the Directors' Ticket and consequently elected, whereas, it is, of course, desirable that all candidates elected shall have been the expressed choice of a much larger percentage of the membership.

Very truly yours,