

**BOX
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**Queens Borough President
Gresser-Investigation and
Removal**

1910-1911

R E P O R T

IN RE

CERTAIN MATTERS

OF THE

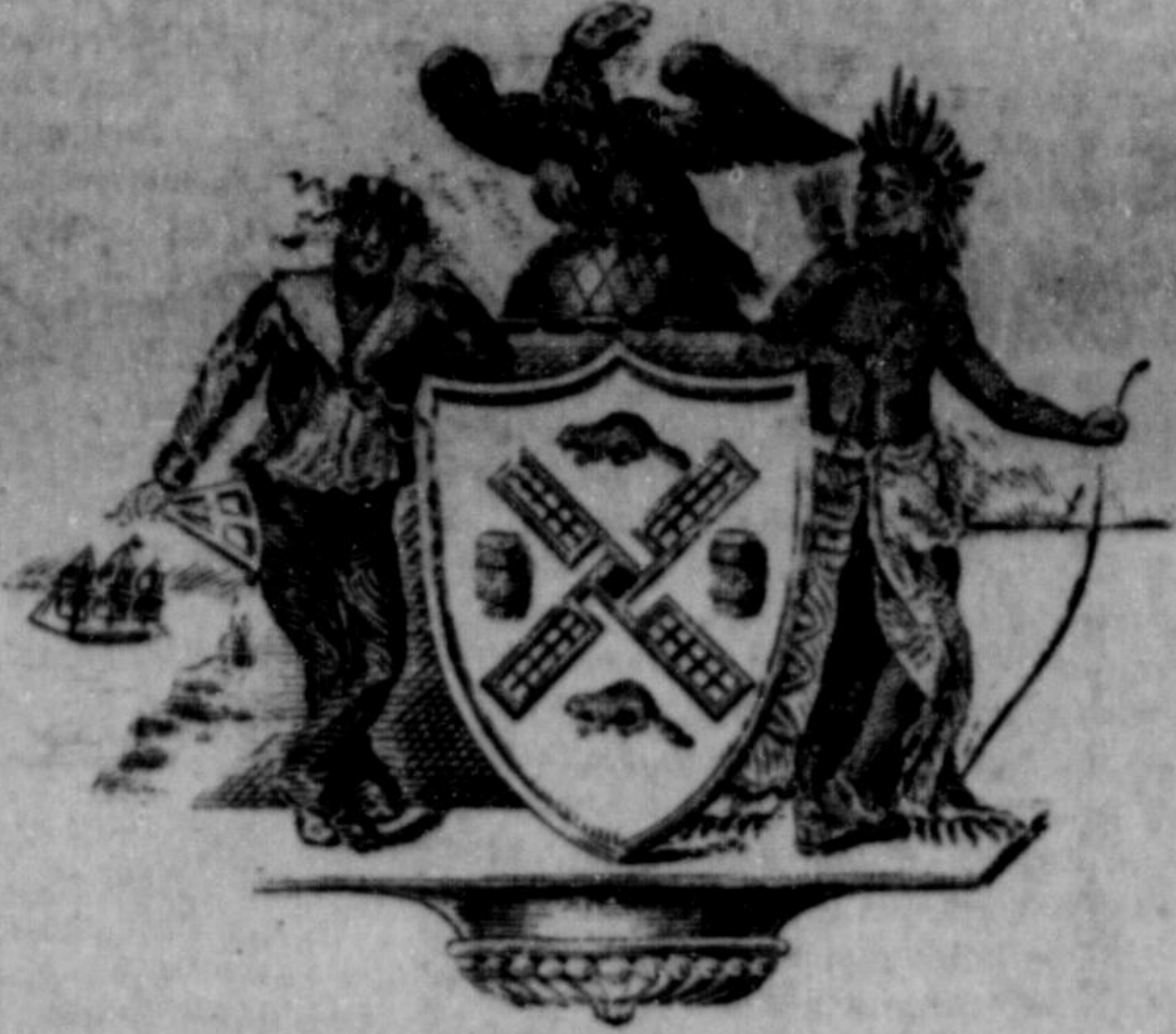
BOROUGH

OF

QUEENS.

COMMISSIONERS OF ACCOUNTS
280 BROADWAY
NEW YORK CITY

APRIL 28, 1910.



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ACCOUNTS
280 BROADWAY

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

COMMISSIONER

April 28, 1910.

HON. WILLIAM J. GAYNOR,

M a y o r.

S i r:

While our investigation of the accounts and methods of the office of the President of the Borough of Queens is by no means completed, a situation of so serious a nature has arisen that it is deemed advisable to call it immediately to your attention.

Section 395 of the Charter provides that whenever a sewer is constructed by private property owners a permit must first be obtained from the Bureau of Sewers, after plans and specifications of the proposed sewer and a copy of the contract have been filed, showing conformity to the general plan for the construction of public sewers in the city. The same section makes provision that a satisfactory guaranty shall be made to the Borough President for the payment of the necessary expense incurred in the supervision of the construction of the sewer. In accordance with this provision it is customary for the applicant for the permit to deposit a check with the Sewer Bureau for an amount which it is estimated will pay the salaries of

such inspectors as may be necessary to protect the interests of the city during the time of construction. In some cases the inspectors, after appointment by the Borough President, are paid directly by the contractor but in most instances they receive their remuneration through the Bureau of Sewers. The average rate of pay for the inspector is \$4.00 a day. The position is not covered by civil service regulations.

On October 19, 1909, Frank J. Carberry, a plumber living at 139 Webster Ave., Glendale, Borough of Queens, applied to the Bureau of Sewers for a permit to construct a private sewer in Madison Street. At the time that he made this application he was accompanied by his partner, Louis Dornbach. In conformity with section 395 of the Charter, above noted, a check for \$50., payable to Joseph B. Nelson and signed by Louis Dornbach, was handed over to Mr. Nelson, the Chief Clerk of the Bureau of Sewers, to cover the estimated cost of inspection. Both Carberry and Dornbach were subpoenaed before me and produced the cancelled voucher for the \$50. in question. The check which was marked in evidence is endorsed with the name of Joseph B. Nelson. According to the records of the department no inspector was ever appointed upon the construction work of this particular sewer. This record evidence was substantiated by both Carberry and Dornbach, who testified that during the process of construction neither they nor their men saw any city inspector.

Joseph B. Nelson, who, until lately, was Chief Clerk of the Bureau of Sewers, was subpoenaed and examined under oath. He stated that sometime in October, 1909, Carberry made application for the permit in question. He identified the check

above mentioned as the check which had been handed him by Carberry to cover the cost of inspection. He stated that, as was customary in all such cases, he deposited the check in his account in the Corn Exchange Bank, to be paid out in the weekly salary installments due the inspector. He further testified that at the request of President Lawrence Gresser he had not appointed an inspector upon the work in question, that the sewer had been built absolutely without inspection, and that the \$50 paid in for this purpose had been handed to Mr. Gresser personally, at the latter's request, to augment his campaign funds. (Record pp.168-170) According to Nelson's testimony this money was handed to President Gresser in the latter's private office on Saturday afternoon, October 23rd, at about half-past one o'clock. (Record p.170)

In this connection Gustav Newman, an inspector of private sewers in the Borough of Queens, was subpoenaed and placed under oath. He stated that sometime subsequent to the election, he was summoned from the Amity Club to the Borough Hall by Henry Baccus, a chauffeur in the Borough President's office. In spite of the fact that Newman's testimony was most reluctantly given, he finally admitted that when he arrived at the Borough Hall he was asked by "some one" - the identity of whom he refused to disclose - to hand in signed reports in regard to the inspection of the Madison Street sewer, although he had had nothing whatever to do with the matter. These reports he refused to make.

This testimony was corroborated indirectly by Alfred Denton, Judge of the third district municipal court, Borough of Queens, who was subpoenaed and testified that some time in December 1909 Newman told him that he had been requested by somebody in the borough hall to sign affidavits to the effect that he had inspected the construction of the private sewer in Madison Avenue. The identity of the man making the request Judge Denton refused to divulge, for the reason that his relation with Newman was that of attorney and client. Both from the records and all the testimony, it is clearly evident that the money paid in by the contractor for the inspection of this sewer was diverted to other purposes, and that considerable effort was made at concealment.

In connection with this \$50 check, another matter arose to which attention is called at this time, inasmuch as it seems to fall within Section 41u of the Penal Code. Nelson testified that on October 25th, when he handed the \$50 inspection fee to Mr. Gresser, he also gave him \$200 in cash which had been collected at President Gresser's direction from various employees in the bureau of sewers for campaign purposes. He further stated that Mr. Gresser had personally requested him as chief clerk of the bureau to take charge of the assessment of the outside force. His testimony on this point is illuminating:

"Q. Did he say anything as to the amount of the assessment?

A. No; it was understood that every year they gave two per cent.

Q. Two per cent of what?

A. Of their salaries.

Q. Of the year's salary?

A. Yes."

(Record p.173)

In accordance with this direction from the borough president, Nelson sent word to the various inspectors and foremen on the outside force to the effect that they were expected to contribute.

"Q. How did you send out word, by letter or orally?

A. Orally. * * * * I would tell them when I saw them.

Q. Who were the men that you saw yourself?

A. Oh, I saw all the foremen.

Q. What did you tell them?

A. I told them Mr. Gresser expected them to contribute."

(Record p.177)

* * * * *

"Q. Did you keep a list of those who paid you?

A. I did have a list but I destroyed it."

(Record p. 176)

Nelson further testified that in addition to the \$200 handed President Gresser on October 23, 1909, he gave him \$250 more the following week, which sum was paid him personally in his private office, and the day before election he handed him \$350 in the hallway of the Shinnecock Club at Flushing. These sums were entirely made up of the contributions of employees in the bureau of sewers.

To confirm this testimony, some of the employees of the sewer department were selected at random, and subpoenaed before me. Without exception they stated that they had all contributed to Mr. Gresser's campaign fund in response to requests either from Nelson or from Cornelius Burke, the superintendent of sewers. The names of the contributors and the amounts follow:

John P. Hayes,	Inspector,	\$10.
Joseph Dillhoff,	Asst. Foreman,	15.
Ferdinand Kruger,	Clerk,	30.
Louis Stoeckicht,	Foreman,	Between 10. & \$25.
James J. Hiland,	Foreman,	20.
Michael Tuite,	Foreman,	10.
Louis C. Walters,	Foreman,	20.
George D. Mickel,	Inspector,	30.
William Salmon,	Foreman,	20.

The following testimony illustrates in a general way the attitude of the men assessed:

"Q. Did you contribute to the last campaign fund?

A. Yes.

Q. How much?

A. \$20.

Q. To whom did you pay it?

A. To Mr. Burke.

Q. Did he ask you for it?

A. Yes. I says to him, says I "What is the cost this year?" He says, "What have you been in the habit of paying?" I said "\$10." "Well," he says, "it will cost you \$20." -- and three days after that I was laid off."

MFH

Without exception, the men seemed to think that the contribution was necessary as a matter of expediency.

A copy of all the testimony taken in the course of this proceeding, and the original cancelled check for \$50, are transmitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond B. Fozdick

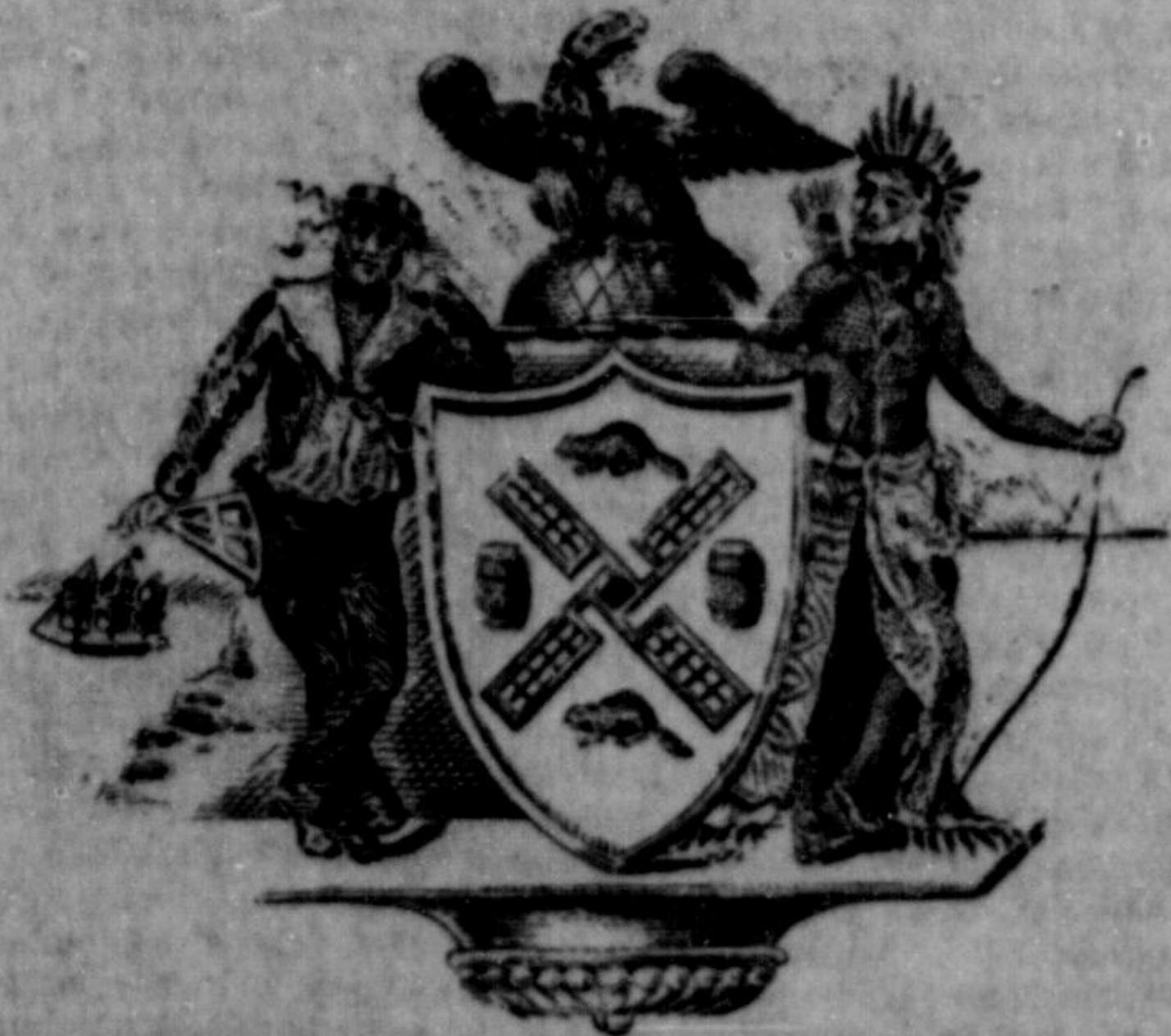
RBF/MFH

Commissioner of Accounts.

PRELIMINARY REPORT
RELATING TO
A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION
OF THE ACCOUNTS AND
METHODS OF
THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
OF THE
BOROUGH OF QUEENS.

COMMISSIONERS OF ACCOUNTS
280 BROADWAY
NEW YORK CITY

May 18, 1910.



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ACCOUNTS
280 BROADWAY

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

COMMISSIONER

May 18, 1910.

HON. WILLIAM J. GAYNOR,

M a y o r.

S i r:

On April 28, 1910, I presented to your Honor a report on the testimony taken before me in the matter of certain charges made by Joseph B. Nelson, formerly chief clerk in the Bureau of Sewers, Borough of Queens, relative to the collection of political assessments during the campaign of 1909. It will be remembered that Nelson testified that on October 23, 1909, he handed to President Gresser, in the latter's private office, \$200 which had been collected at Mr. Gresser's request, from various employees of the Bureau of Sewers, together with \$50 paid in by a contractor to cover the cost of inspection in the construction of a private sewer; that during the last week in October he paid President Gresser \$250 in campaign contributions; and that on November 2nd, the night before election, he handed him \$350 in the hallway of the Shinnecock Club, Flushing, this latter sum being made up of assessments levied on employees.

This testimony, which was of so serious a nature that it was deemed advisable to call it immediately to your Honor's attention, was totally denied by President Gresser in his

sworn testimony before me on April 28, 1910. "I didn't know that anybody was making campaign contributions", he said.
 " * * * * * They certainly got no orders from me or my office, none whatever".

"Q. And no money was handed to you for this purpose?
 A. No." (Record p.258)

Questioned as to the \$350 which Mr. Nelson stated that he had given to him the night before election in the hallway of the Shinnecock Club, Mr. Gresser testified as follows:

"He didn't give it to me at all. He gave it to Mr. Harvey. I didn't see what he gave -- know nothing about what he gave -- never handed me a penny."

"Q. He gave it to Mr. Harvey?
 A. Handed it to Mr. Harvey." (Record p.243)

Further than stating that he himself had not seen the money passed, he refused to explain his remark.

On Monday, May 2nd, President Gresser voluntarily brought to my office an affidavit signed by one Martin F. Cody, a steam engineer in the Bureau of Sewers of the Borough of Queens. The affidavit which was subsequently verified by Mr. Cody's testimony before me and which was corroborated by Mr. Gresser's own statement at the time he presented it, stated that on October 20, 1909, a list of employees containing the campaign contribution for which each was assessed was left with the chief engineer of the disposal plant of the Sewer Bureau by Joseph B. Nelson; that he (Cody) upon being informed that his assessment was \$30 called upon President Gresser, stated the facts to him, and asked him whether he had authorized the collection of assessments for political purposes from the employees of the disposal plant; that President Gresser replied that he had not authorized the collection of any campaign funds whatsoever

and asked him "to constitute himself a committee of one by returning to the plant and instructing the men that their failure to contribute would in no wise cause discrimination", as he had authorized no one to collect assessments and was opposed to such collection. In his testimony before me Mr. Cody stated as follows:

"Q. Did you mention Nelson's name to Mr. Gresser?

A. That Nelson left a list there?

Q. Did you tell President Gresser that?

A. I certainly did, yes, sir.

Q. Did President Gresser say Nelson had no business to leave that?

A. Yes, and that it was clearly illegal, and for me not to pay."

(R.p. 611)

This testimony as to the interview between himself and President Gresser was verified by the latter's statements before me. The different phases of the testimony were also corroborated by the testimony of Mr. Nelson, Mr. Paynter, the chief engineer of the disposal plant, and various employees. Testimony was further reduced to the effect that when Nelson left the list at the disposal plant, he was accompanied by James H. Johnson, Chief Engineer of the Bureau of Sewers.

If, as President Gresser claims, he believed the statements of Mr. Cody relative to Nelson's levy of campaign assessments, his subsequent action is difficult to understand. Not only did he make no investigation of Cody's complaint, but his relations with Mr. Nelson continued to be of a most intimate character. Early in October 1909, certain charges, alleging misconduct

in office, were filed with Governor Hughes against President Gresser by one William F. Rozelle. President Gresser was represented before the Governor in this matter by Charles J. McDermott, an attorney with an office at 2 Rector Street, Manhattan. Mr. McDermott stated that his negotiations with Mr. Gresser, during the time that the charges were pending, were conducted largely through Mr. Nelson, who was instrumental in securing him to care for Mr. Gresser's interests. The charges in question were dismissed. On November 1, 1909, Mr. McDermott rendered his bill to Mr. Gresser for professional services. The bill bears the receipt stamp of the Borough President's office under date of November 1, 1909. It appears that in accordance with a prior agreement between Nelson and Mr. Gresser this bill was immediately forwarded by the Borough President to Mr. Nelson for payment. In any event, it was paid by Mr. Nelson out of his own private funds on December 21, 1909, as is evidenced not only by his cancelled check endorsed by Mr. McDermott, but by the testimony of Mr. McDermott himself. "That was my campaign contribution", said Mr. Nelson in explanation of this payment.

That the relationship of attorney and client existed between Mr. Gresser and his lawyer was established not only by the statements of Mr. McDermott and Mr. Robert H. Fuller, private secretary to the Governor, but by the correspondence in evidence between Mr. McDermott and Governor Hughes on one hand, and Mr. McDermott and President Gresser on the other. For example, the following letter, relative to the charges in question, dated October 14, 1909, was mailed to President Gresser by Mr. McDermott:

"Hon. Lawrence Gresser,
Borough Prest.

Dear Sir:

I have today written Gov. Hughes regarding the Roselle charges. The article of the constitution does not seem to fix any time within which the charges must be served or heard.

Very truly,

(Sgd) Chas. J. McDermott."

And yet President Gresser, in his sworn testimony before me on May 16, 1910, denied that he had ever retained Mr. McDermott to defend him in this matter, or indeed that he had ever heard of the gentleman. "I did not know there was any such man in existence", he said. "I never retained an attorney in my life". He further stated that while he had learned from the newspapers that charges had been preferred against him before the Governor, he had taken no steps to defend himself. He testified that he had never received any communication from Mr. McDermott, or any other man, about the case in question. His office receipt stamp on Mr. McDermott's bill he was unable to explain.

Furthermore, on November 29, 1909, President Gresser promoted Nelson from book-keeper to chief clerk, with an increase of salary from \$1950 to \$2500 per annum. The increase of salary was made retroactive to take effect as of October 22, 1909, and it was necessary to issue a supplementary payroll for October to accomplish the result. The letter notifying Nelson of this change is as follows:

"Office of the President
of the
Borough of Queens.

Long Island City,

November 29, 1909.

Mr. Joseph B. Nelson,
Elmhurst, L.I.

Dear Sir:

President Gresser directs me to advise you that he has changed your title from Bookkeeper to that of Chief Clerk, in the Bureau of Sewers, and fixed your salary at \$2500.00 per annum.

Effective as of October 22, 1909.

Respectfully,

(Sgd) John M. Cragen,

Secretary of the Borough of Queens."

In this connection it is perhaps well to call attention to the fact that nearly all of the employees of the Bureau of Sewers, as well as of the other departments in the Borough of Queens, seem to have contributed to the campaign fund of 1909. It appears that while Mr. Nelson, with the assistance of Superintendent Burke, was collecting from the outside force, Mr. James H. Johnson, Chief Engineer of the Bureau of Sewers, received the money from the representatives of the engineering department. To confirm this point, we subpoenaed several of the engineers and their assistants. Their names and the amounts contributed follow:

William H. Hastings,	Draughtsman,	\$35.
William Mason	Inspector	20.
Thomas Brennan,	"	30.
Elmer W. Firth,	Assistant Engineer,	50.
Albert Decker, Jr.	" "	45.
William L. Pyne,	" "	50.
Albert Schreiner,	" "	50.
Jacob Thoma,	Draughtsman,	36.
John D. C. Mackey,	Transitman & Computer,	30.
Rodman J. Pearson,	Draughtsman,	20.
Carl Nordell,	"	33.
J. Franklin Perrine,	Assistant Engineer,	36.
George W. Martin,	" "	50.
Francis J. Christie,	Inspector,	10.
Douglas McLaughlin,	"	24.

In every case above cited, but one, the money was handed by the employees to the head of the bureau, Mr. Johnson. Most of the men stated that they were not directly asked to contribute. Both Christie and McLaughlin, however,

who are inspectors at a salary of \$4 a day, gave strong testimony to the effect that their contributions were solicited directly by Mr. Johnson.

- "Q. (To Mr. Christie) Did he (Johnson) ask you for it?
A. He did.
Q. How much did he ask you for?
A. Well, he asked me for \$24.
Q. Where were you when he asked you for it?
A. In the Borough Hall.
Q. In the office of the Bureau of Sewers?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. What did he say?
A. He said, "We need a little money for the campaign fund and I suppose you will contribute" -- I says, "certainly".
Q. And the amount was fixed at that time?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. And did he suggest \$24 ?
A. Yes.
Q. * * * * * And that was just a week's salary ?
A. Yes, sir. "

(R. p. 505)

McLaughlin's testimony was substantially similar to the foregoing.

Mr. Johnson, when called to the stand, admitted that he had received money for campaign purposes, but denied that the contributions had been solicited. He stated that the money had been given voluntarily to him by his employees

and that he in turn had handed it over in several installments to Mr. Gresser's campaign committee at the Shinnecock Club. The individual to whom this money was paid and the amount of money which was collected he failed to remember.

Mr. Johnson's activities in the matter would seem to justify inquiry by a Grand Jury. I therefore suggest that the facts included in this report be forwarded to the District Attorney of Queens County for whatever action may be deemed advisable.

The receipted bill of Mr. McDermott and Nelson's check for the legal services rendered are transmitted herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond B. Fosdick

Commissioner of Accounts.

July 25, 1910.k

Dear Governor Hughes:

Commissioner of Accounts Fosdick has just called on me, and fears that you may misunderstand his attitude in refusing to give up to a so-called committee which is presenting charges against Borough President Gresser the notes of the evidence which he has taken in investigating official conduct in the Borough of Queens. The evidence is not given up for the reason that section 1545 of the Charter requires him to give a certified copy of "any book, account or paper" kept in his department, and he does not deem such notes of testimony to come under that phrase. The testimony which he takes is very often of a very delicate character, and if he were obliged to give it up to any one who should demand it great wrong might be done to persons, and in addition his investigations would often be frustrated. The next reason is that he finds that the committee, although pretending to act from a righteous point of view, is really trying to oust President Gresser in order to get ex-President Cassidy

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into the office, which would be a misfortune, while President Gresser has been and is working with me to put all of the bad people out of office over there. He has heretofore discharged three principal officials and put first class men in their places nominated by

...which he takes is very often of a very delicate character, and if he were obliged to give it up to any one who should demand it great wrong might be done to persons, and in addition his investigations would often be frustrated. The next reason is that he finds that the committee, although pretending to act from a righteous point of view, is really trying to oust President Gresser in order to get ex-President Cassidy

-1-

into the office, which would be a misfortune, while President Gresser has been and is working with me to put all of the bad people out of office over there. He has heretofore discharged three principal officials and put first class men in their places nominated by respectable citizens, at my suggestion, and we are about to deal with another department in the same way. On having his investigators watch Mr. Caldwell, the lawyer and leader of the said committee, he found him to be in regular communication with Mr. Cassidy. He desired me to write all of this to you so that you would not think he was improperly withholding from you any information.

Sincerely yours,

W. H. Ayer
Mayor.

Hon. Charles E. Hughes,
Governor,
Albany, N. Y.



August 4, 1910.k

Dear Sir:

I thank you very much for your letter of August 3rd. The complaints of malfeasance in office were so many that I had a thorough investigation made in Queens county, and as one officer after another was implicated President Gresser caused him to get out or dismissed him, and in every case has appointed good men instead. He has worked with me all along. Now to my surprise there are certain people in Queens county who are trying to get him out of office in order to undo all the good work which we have done and get some one else in office who will go back to the old method. *I almost feel*

like quitting.

Very truly yours,

A. J. Mayors
(M a y o r .)

Sol. Stern, Esq.,
Arverne,
Long Island.

✓

August 8, 1910.k

Dear Mr. Gresser:

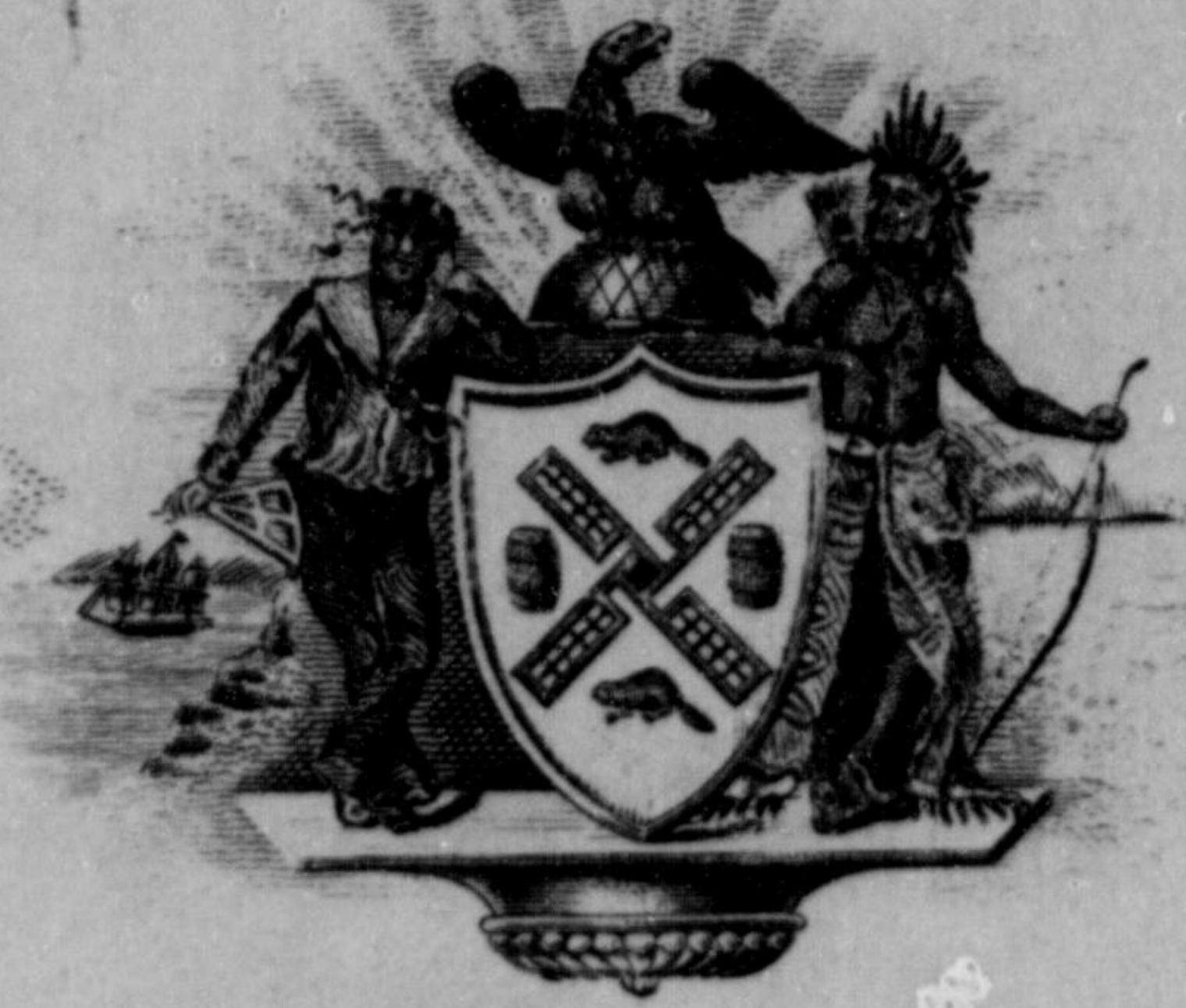
Mr. Walter J. Bunn, your newly appointed commissioner, called on me this morning. It is very gratifying for me to express my thanks to you for your unvarying cooperation in the effort to discover corruption in government in Queens county, and to replace derelict officials by good officials. You have been doing that with me now for several months, and I desire to bear testimony to it. The Public Works Department, the Building Department, the Sewer Department, the Highway Department and the Topographical Bureau have all been examined into, and new heads and officials appointed in them one after another as the old ones were got out. I regret that after all this there should be certain persons who are trying to get you out of office.

Very truly yours,

W. J. Bunn
Mayor.

Hon. Lawrence Gresser,
President of the Borough of Queens.

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CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ACCOUNTS
280 BROADWAY

RAYMOND B. FOSDICK

COMMISSIONER

September 16, 1910.

Hon. John Purroy Mitchel,
Acting Mayor,
City Hall,
New York.

S i r :-

On September 13th, I was requested by Governor Hughes to meet him at the Hotel Astor to talk over certain phases of the investigation of the office of the President of the Borough of Queens. In the course of the conference, the Governor asked me whether my investigation led me to believe that the indictments now pending in the County of Queens against various officials and employees of the borough would be honestly and efficiently prosecuted. I was obliged to answer in the negative. The Governor thereupon requested me to put my opinion in this matter in a formal letter to him, as a basis for subsequent action on his part in the appointment of a special deputy attorney general.

Hon. J. P.M.-----2

Pursuant to his request, I have prepared the enclosed letter, addressed to him as the chief executive of the State, and I am sending it to you to determine whether it meets with your approval and sanction.

Very truly yours,

Raymond B. Fordick

Commissioner of Accounts.

RBF/MFH

(Enc.1)

Sept 16/10

At the meeting of
Gov Haughes re to
the cases in the Boro
of Dublin

June 28, 1911.e

Dear Mr. Watson:

I am much distressed about the matter of removing Gresser being in any uncertainty. I can not conceive it possible that he should be removed. When I came to Brooklyn about 1874 the Mayor of Long, Island City, Debevoise by name, was in jail for malfeasance in office. The government there was in a terrible condition, probably the worst in the United States. He was succeeded one after another by Mayors who were no better, and some of whom were worse, than he was. Bad government there continued up to the time that city was taken into the City of New York. The officials literally robbed the city. The Borough Presidents elected over there were of the same kind as the Mayors whom I have mentioned. The same bad government was continued. I think it even got worse under one or two Borough Presidents. Finally Bermel resigned and Gresser was appointed to serve out the remaining year of his term. He naturally had to take things as they were. The offices were all filled, mostly with unscrupulous and dishonest men.

Then the year I was elected Mayor Gresser was elected Borough President. I knew the conditions over there well. I had observed them for years. I used to hold court there at least once every year and in that way in court and outside learned of the existing conditions. Shortly after I took office Gresser saw me. Indeed he came and saw me in December before we took office. I entered into the whole subject of government in Queens Borough with him. I told him that things ought to be cleaned up there. He entered into the work from the start with alacrity and zeal and did everything that I asked him to do. One by one the grafting officials were removed, and finally we had in their stead a full set of honest and capable officials. The like was never seen over there for twenty-five years or more. All this while the corrupt politicians in the Borough were denouncing Gresser and me for what we were doing; but we went right on and did the work. Gresser literally cleaned up the place by removing dishonest officials and appointing honest ones in their places. After the work had been completed a so-called Citizen's Committee

came forward and accused Gresser before the Governor. That is the proceeding now pending. They gave him no help while he was cleaning up the government over there. The lawyer of the so-called Citizen's Committee came to see me. I said to him that your object is to get a certain former Borough President, whom I named, back in the office, or some tool of his. He denied this, and said that he had nothing to do with the former Borough President. I told the Commissioner of Accounts of this, and he put men on this lawyer and in a few days reported to me, that he was in communication directly with this former Borough President, and met him. On the other hand the real appreciative citizens over there formed a Committee in Gresser's favor, and they had worked with him in the doing of the work which I have mentioned.

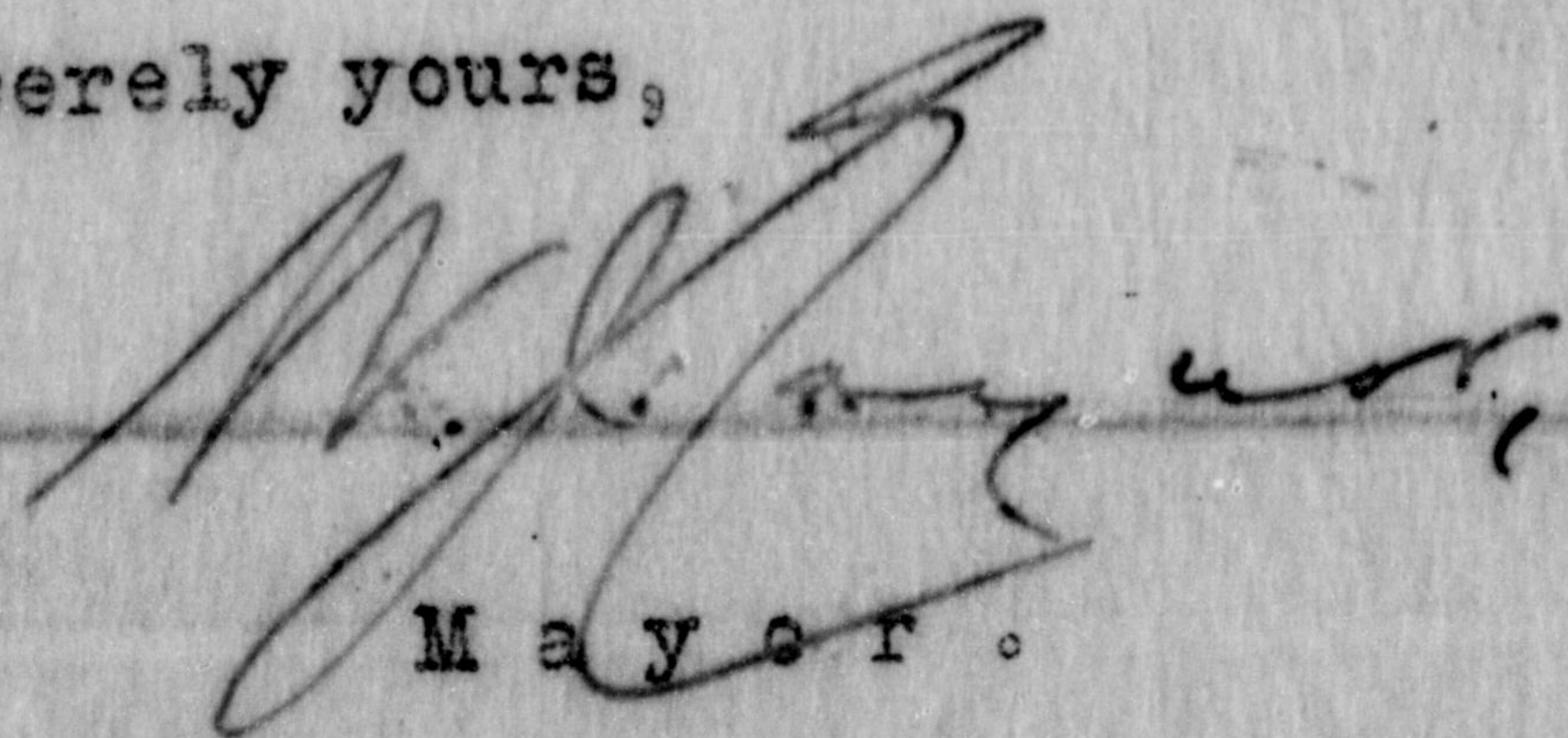
If after all this Mr. Gresser is to be removed — which I deem impossible — I shall regret as long as I live that I had anything to do with the cleaning up of the government over there in the way of assisting Mr. Gresser. For him to be removed after doing everything that he could to correct the evils over there would be a terrible fate.

The referee appointed to take the testimony acquits him of dishonesty — he could not do otherwise for Gresser is an absolutely honest man. The referee also says that Queens now has the best and most honest government it has had for many years. Is this all to count for nothing? But it is said that he is incompetent, or not intelligent enough. Well, I do not wish to go into that too far. The people who elect public officials are the judges of their intelligence and competency. I never supposed that any power of removal on such a ground is contemplated by the Constitution, and I do not believe that it is. The question of competency or ability is altogether too variable. It might be easy to remove many officials on that ground. It would make a dangerous precedent to remove a high official on any such ground. The Constitution says that the Governor may remove officials "on charges" after a hearing. This means charges of some dishonesty or dereliction of duty, manifestly. It does not mean that the Governor can put his judgment up against the judgment of a community which elects a man on the question of his intelligence or competency.

More than that Mr. Gresser is not an incompetent. He has performed his duties with good judgment, and has been a valuable member of the Board of Estimate. I do not think any of his associates there would concur in the proposition that he is an incompetent man. We can not always have the ideal man, or the brilliant man, in office, and maybe it is just as well that we should not have. The affairs of life as a rule have to be done by people of ordinary ability and judgment.

You may show this to the Governor if you see fit.

Sincerely yours,


Mayer.

Archibald R. Watson, Esq.,
Corporation Counsel.

Sept. 28, 1911. s

S i r:

In pursuance of the order of the
V Governor dated September 27th, 1911, removing
Lawrence Gresser from the office of President of
the Borough of Queens, and section 382 of the
Charter, I hereby call you in session with the
aldermen representing the Borough of Queens, on
October 2nd, 1911, at 10:30 o'clock in the fore-
noon in the Mayor's Office, City Hall, for the
purpose of electing a successor to Mr. Gresser.

Very truly yours,

W. J. Gayles
Mayor

Hon. Edward Brady,
Far Rockaway,
L. I.

October 3rd, 1911. s

Dear Mr. Pople:

I should be very glad to have some such man as Mr. Quinlan appointed Borough President, but I fear the action of the Governor has thrown the borough into the realm of dishonest and baneful politics again. The removal of honest old Gresser has upset everything, and I suppose the men he appointed to the heads of all departments there at the request of honest citizens will have to walk the plank also.

Sincerely yours,

W. J. Quinn
Mayor.

George W. Pople, Esq.,
Care of Inter Borough Realty Co.,
10, Wall Street,
New York City.

October 3rd, 1911.

Dear Mr. Sholes:

Your letter of September 30th, recommending Mr. Pople for Borough President is at hand. I fear I can do nothing to aid the honest people of Queens, Borough to have a proper selection made. I have no vote in the matter, and as you know my influence with those who have been engaged in corrupt government in Queens County in years gone by amounts to nothing. Mr. Gresser, with his rugged German honesty, has been turned out, and I fear the result to your Borough is to be lamentable. It was conceded that he was honest, but he was turned out on some standard of fitness. You could turn almost anybody out of office in that way. At the beginning of my administration Mr. Gresser disclosed to me the corrupt conditions to which he had succeeded in Queens County, and asked me to help him to get rid of it. I worked with him, and the Commissioner of Accounts made a complete investigation. The result was that the heads of the departments, from top to bottom, and others, were put out,

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And haest men selected by the best citizens of the Borough put in their place, and in that way we restored the government of Queens Borough to strict honesty. The result was that those who were turned out, and corrupt politicians generally, made a movement to have Mr. Gresser turned out of office, and they have succeeded. I shall always regret that I ever had anything to do with helping Mr. Gresser, for the good work we did provoked a movement which ousted him from office.

Very truly yours,

W. J. Gaynor
Mayor.

A. E. Sholes, Esq.,
Publisher Flushing Daily Times,
Flushing, New York.

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W. J. Gaynor
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A. E. Sholes, Esq.,
Publisher Flushing Daily Times,
Flushing, New York.

November 22, 1911. b

Dear Mr. Mellen:

I am very glad to receive your letter concerning Mr. Bunn. I may not be able to appoint him in the end, but my estimate of him is the same as yours. The removal of Gresser was the worst thing of the kind I have ever known. After doing everything that could be done to do away with dishonesty that had flourished in that borough and had been going on for two generations he was removed from office. I suppose you know the motives which brought it about.

Very truly yours,

R. L. Taylor
Mayor.

Chase Mellen, Esq.,
27, William St.,
New York City.