Governor Hon. John Lind, Secretary Peter E. Hanson, and Auditor R. C. Dunn, and December 17 the Governor issued his proclamation declaring that fact. The Governor further proclaimed that the question of the creation of the proposed new county was submitted to the voters of Polk County to be voted upon at the next general election, November 4, 1902. All these proceedings were under Chapter 143 of the Laws of 1893, as amended by Chapter 124 of the Laws of 1895. Later a proposition to create the county of Valley was made and ordered voted upon.

There was a very earnest and heated canvass over the new county question by the respective rivals. The newspapers of Fosston and McIntosh conducted a spirited discussion of the question, each editor arguing plausibly if not convincingly for his own town. As the canvass progressed the rival villages made what they considered liberal offers to the voters. Each said that if its county with the favored name should be created, then the town would not only give the site for the public buildings but would build factories and mills which should furnish employment to many and add to the development and prosperity of the old Polk County.

At the election November 4, 1902, the vote on the new county question was:

- For Columbia County: Yes, 1,513; no, 813.
- For Nelson County: Yes, 1,381; no, 112.
- For Star County: Yes, 132; no, 18.
- For Valley County: Yes, 135; no, 918.

It seemed, on the face of the returns, that “Columbia County,” with McIntosh as the county seat, had won, and great was the rejoicing in McIntosh! But the partisans of Fosston and “Nelson County” protested that they had won the fight, and Star County had hopes; only “Valley County” was out of the running. The Nelson County forces set up the claim that under the Red Lake County decision (State ex rel. Atty. Childs vs. Comrs. Red Lake Co., 67 Minn., 352) it was entitled to be the county, since on its proposition it had received a majority vote, and moreover its petition was the first filed, preceding that of Columbia County by one day. Chief Justice Start and Associate Judge Buck had said that the law did not authorize the submission of conflicting or competing petitions, and that the one first legally filed was the only one that ought to be submitted to a vote, “Columbia County” stood upon the decided majority it had received, and that all its proceedings had been regular and legal, and contended that it made no difference whether its petition had been the second filed—or the first or the fourth—because all four propositions.

The result of the vote having been canvassed and announced, Governor Van Sant, following the rule announced by the Supreme Court in the Red Lake County case, issued his proclamation declaring the proposition for the creation and organization of Columbia County carried.

Thereupon the County Commissioners of the new county—who were named in the petition and the proclamation, and who were Lawrence O’Neill, Henry G. Mitchell, Ingebr et Larson, Halvor Off, and Olaf Stardig—met at the temporary courthouse in McIntosh December 23, 1902, and organized according to the forms of law and proceeded in the usual manner of County Commissioners. There was great satisfaction and even jubilation among the new county’s people. For years they had labored for the creation of a county all their own and now they rejoiced that they had lived until their eyes had seen the glory.

**SOME PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD.**

The Board chose Commissioner Mitchell as President and Commissioner O’Neill as Clerk. The first business was the division of the county into five districts, as follows: District No. 1 was composed of the townships (or towns*) of Garden, Winger, and Knute and the village of Erskine. District No. 2, townships of Woodside, Grove Park, Badger, Lessor, and the village of Mentor. District No. 3, townships

* Political divisions of counties in the Eastern States are called townships; in Western and Southern States they are called townships. In the West and South a town is either a village or a small city.