I am, therefore, of the opinion that expenses of the county registration officer or registration board are to be allowed by the board of county commissioners and paid as other county claims are allowed and paid and that the county election board has no powers or duties in relation thereto.

OFFICIAL OPINION NO. 20

March 1, 1946.

Hon. William C. Stalnaker, Director,
Department of Veterans Affairs,
431 North Meridian Street,
Indianapolis 4, Indiana.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of February 15th in which you ask the following questions:

"1. Are County Recorders, upon request therefor, required by law to furnish, without charge, certified copies of discharges from service of members of the Armed Forces of the United States?

"2. When necessary for the procurement or drawing of any pension, bounty, back pay or prize money of any soldier, seaman, or their widows or orphans, are County Recorders, upon request therefor, required by law to furnish without cost, certified copies of discharges from service of members of the armed forces of the United States?

"3. Is the law to be interpreted that copies of discharges, or any public record such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage licenses and divorce decrees must be furnished without charge, or is it to be interpreted that only the attestation or signature may be furnished without charge and that a fee may be charged for the writing and preparing of these documents?"
On September 21, 1945, in my official opinion No. 106, addressed to Hon. Beecher Conrad, I expressed the following conclusions:

"1. In answer to your first question, I am therefore of the opinion that whenever a copy of any public record if required by any person or his representative, or by the United States Veteran's Bureau or its successor, for the purpose of determining the eligibility of any veteran to participate in benefits made available by such bureau, that the official charged with the custody of such records is required, without charge, to provide such applicant or his representative, or such bureau, with a certified copy of such record.

"2. In answer to your second question, I am of the opinion that all clerks of Circuit Courts, County Auditors and County Recorders are required to administer oaths, affix jurats and attestations and the seals of their respective office, free of charge, to any and all instruments in writing necessary for the procurement and drawing of any pension, bounty, back pay or prize money, for any and all soldiers, seamen, their widows or orphans.

"I am further of the opinion that the answers set out to your questions numbered one and two are equally applicable to veterans of World War II."

Applying these conclusions to the questions which you ask, I am of the opinion:

1. An honorable discharge which has been recorded is a public record and when a certified copy of such record is required for the purpose of determining the eligibility of any veteran to participate in benefits made available by the Veterans Administration the recorder is required to furnish, without charge, certified copies of such honorable discharge.

2. When necessary for the procurement or drawing of any pension, bounty, back pay or prize money of any service man or his widow or orphans, other than benefits made available by the Veterans Administration, county recorders may not charge for their certificate but may charge for the cost of preparation of any copy which they are required to make.
3. As above indicated, where any public record is required to determine eligibility for any benefit made available by the Veterans Administration the entire certified copy must be furnished without charge. Where the pension, bounty, back pay or prize money does not come through the Veterans Administration the official may not charge for his attestation or certificate or for comparing any such copy with the original, but may charge for preparing the copy which he certifies or attests, if he is required to prepare that copy.

The official may, of course, make reasonable inquiry as to the purpose for which the certified copy is required, but the statute requires no particular method of establishing such purpose and the official may take verbal statements or require written proof in his discretion.

OFFICIAL OPINION NO. 21
March 15, 1946.

Hon. Clement T. Malan,
State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
State House,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of February 27, 1946, has been received in which you request an opinion on the following questions:

"1. May a school township be bonded up to 2% and the civil township bonded up to 2% for school building purposes?

"2. May a school city be bonded up to 2% and the civil city bonded up to 2% for school building purposes?"

Article 13, Section 1 of the Constitution of Indiana provides in part as follows:

"No political or municipal corporation in this State shall ever become indebted in any manner or for any purpose to an amount in the aggregate exceeding two