

November 6, 1928

Today is election day in the United States and for that reason it is one of the most important days in our government. It is truly the one day in four years when our people have an opportunity to express themselves in an official way as to what policies this government shall pursue and as to what people should be our executive, judicial, and legislative officials. Every two years we elect some of these people but every leap year we elect the national president of the United States.

One of the most important duties resting upon a citizen in a Republic like ours is the duty to cast his ballot for the person or persons he wishes to be the officers in this government.

When the government of the United States was first organized they had no idea that it would take on the peculiar kind of form that it has taken. There was no provision made for political parties. It soon developed out of just the nature of the place that people would come before the citizenship of this republic with certain declarations about the things that they thought this government should do and should stand for. And that certain other citizens should come forward with another scheme and yet in the founding of this republic those wise people did not see that. The result is that in the United States we have developed two large political parties. There are more than two political parties but there are only two large ones. There is no need of talking about the others for it is conceded by all that the next President of the United States will be the candidate of one of the two large parties. This party organization sets forth a declaration of what the party believes the people of the United States should do and that declaration is called a party platform. A party platform is nothing more or less than

what this group of people think should be done by the government. They meet with a certain number of delegates at some place within the union and these delegates select their party candidates, that is those people that they are going to support for the various offices in the republic. These selected proposed officers chosen by the party run on the party platform. As a matter of fact, we do not vote for either of the candidates directly but we vote for electors who meet and cast their vote for the candidates.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs in the United States are offering two sets of prizes, one for high school students and one for college and university students to write a paper not less than seven hundred words and not more than one thousand words on the subject, "Why should I vote". This organization of women in America is striving to get the youth of our nation to study politics and government, (and I use the term politics in its best sense). For this reason they are offering these prizes for a nation wide contest in the high schools and in the colleges. They would be glad to have you win the contest. They would be glad to have you write a paper. That is because this Federation of Women's Clubs realizes that many people in this republic do not vote and they realize that we do not get a real consensus of opinion of the people of the United States in our general election and they are trying to create interest in the young people and are trying to create in them the importance of this governmental function. I think it is a great thing they are doing.

A person who does not vote in the election ought not have a word to say about the kind of government we have. If he or she refuses to participate then it seems to me that he has no right to criticize. I have an opinion but no knowledge as to how this election is coming out but I do know that this year there is unusual interest in it. Thousands and millions will

stay up all night to see who is elected. Some states have schemes by which they can count them rapidly but we are not going to really know for at least twenty-four hours and it may be longer.

We have had a most interesting campaign in this country. For the first time in the history of America the candidate of a given political party when he delivers a speech really and truly delivers that speech to the whole United States because in every case they have broadcasting instruments in front of the speaker and he does not just speak to the audience in front of him but he is speaking to all the people who are sitting by radios all over the United States. For that reason this campaign went on until last night. In other words, a man today in politics if he is a prominent character in national politics, no longer speaks to a small audience but he speaks to a nation. It is the result of improvement in our methods of communication.

If the person I vote for is not elected, what should be my attitude as a good citizen? There is not but one thing for me to do and that is to accept the verdict of the nation and give the person that is elected one hundred per cent of loyal support, even though he is not of my political party. That has nothing to do with it. It has something to do with it today but tomorrow it behooves me as a good citizen to accept the will of the nation and to give my whole-hearted support to the successful candidate.

---Robert H. Wright, President