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Hoover for President

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HOOVER FOR PRESIDENT

Address before the Women's Research Club at their annual luncheon, September 24, 1928, following the address of Milton Miller, who spoke in favor of Governor Al Smith.

Madam chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I have listened with great interest to this fine address which my good friend Mr. Miller has given in favor of Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence. I am in favor of both of them. But I was not aware that either of these was a candidate for election November 6. I am not surprised that Mr. Miller was so anxious to tell me what to talk about, nor that he spent so much time extolling the Democratic party under Jefferson, Jackson, Cleveland, and Wilson, and so little time in actual discussion of the present candidate for the presidency of the United States. I don't blame him. I think I should have done the same thing. Speaking in favor of such a man as Al Smith, for such an office as the presidency of the United States, before such an audience as this, is a hard job. I don't blame Mr. Miller for avoiding it as much as possible and trying to steer my address away from the discussion of Smith and Hoover. But I am not foolish enough to follow his suggestions and be side tracked from the issue, which is definitely this; should Al Smith or Herbert Hoover be elected president of the United States November 6?

I suppose that nobody in the world is surprised that I am supporting Herbert Hoover. But when ex-senator Daniels, ex-governor West, ex-governor Pierce, ex-senator Miller, and other x's and y's (and otherwise) and z's fall in behind this Tammany candidate--well it seems that here as in algebra, we must put these x's, y's, and z's among the unknown quantities. If Mr. Miller has not already found those who were astonished that he would support Al Smith, I assure him that he has found one today. Nobody but himself could have made me believe that Milton Miller would support this dripping, wet, ~~and~~ saturated representative of Tammany.

We shall be going to the polls on the sixth day of next month to choose a man for a big job; a job on which the welfare of 120,000,000 of our own country men directly depends; a job which may involve peace and the welfare, perhaps the very life, of the more than 1,600,000,000 inhabitants of the earth. For the first time in the history of the world mankind has in his hands the power to annihilate the race. In no man's hands on earth lies more power than in the hands of the president of the United States. You and I, as good citizens, are facing honestly and fairly the question as to who shall be our chief executive. Our choice lies between Alfred E. Smith and Herbert Hoover. One of these will be chosen for this great responsibility.

There is a wide variety in the routine tasks which fall to the president of the United States. Few have an adequate conception of the multiplicity of the duties to which the president must attend. He must daily meet many people for interviews on an almost infinite variety of topics; flood control, rivers and harbors, famrelief, business, taxation, war debts, world commerce, national parks, mines, fisheries, administration of all government departments. The president needs to be the best informed man in America, a real student.

In these routine affairs of the national government who knows more, who has better judgment, who has more administrative ability than Herbert

Hoover? He who should have been chosen eight years ago was big enough to take his place in a subordinate department under the president who had defeated him for the nomination, and became the backbone of that cabinet and of that of his successor. It cannot be denied that Herbert Hoover has been one of the ablest government executives who ever held a chair in Washington. What he has done with the Department of Commerce is one of the wonders of the world. His advice has been sought in the cabinet more than that of any other man. In the routine affairs of the government, many of the really big things, no man has ever been a candidate for this high office of President of the United States who is better fitted for the task than Herbert Hoover.

I wish I had time for details on many of these things, but, of course, that is impossible here. Think of a few of them for a moment.

There is the great problem of Flood control. Who is better qualified to handle that matter as our chief executive, Alfred E. Smith or Herbert Hoover, one of the greatest half dozen engineers on the earth? ~~There~~ There is the problem of farm relief. Alfred Smith is a product of the sidewalks of New York and the farm vote of his own state has always been against him. Herbert Hoover was born on an Iowa farm where he lived for a number of years, then worked next to the soil, and presently as an employee of the Oregon Land Company for a number of years; and in addition to all his other equipment he has the vast experience in connection with his work in food administration.

Every one knows that the matter of war debts is by no means settled. In whose hands would that problem be ~~safe~~ ^{dealt}? In the hands of a New York Tammany politician or in the hands of Herbert Hoover who knows his world as Smith knows his Tammany? ~~There~~ There is the great matter of world commerce, on which the prosperity of the United States so largely depends. In this there is nobody like Hoover, a great business man himself, now looking at business from a disinterested standpoint of a man no longer making money for himself.

One might go on at length in ~~detail~~ ^{dealing} with these various matters that must come to the President of the United States, but there are two issues which overshadow all others, Prohibition and Peace. Shall the American people--and as goes America so goes the world--destroy themselves by alcoholic indulgence? Shall the world destroy itself by war?

On the matter of prohibition, it seems to me that it is a definitely tenable proposition that no man has a right to destroy himself by drinking even if it would harm nobody else. If I should attempt to cut my own throat before this company, you would seek to prevent it if you could. Certainly no man has a right to destroy himself by drinking when this drinking of intoxicants also harms others; and the man who drinks does harm others as truly as I should be doing if I used my knife in an attack upon some woman here. It should be still more clear that no man has a right to harm himself and to harm others, and to violate the law in so doing. And it should be still more evident, if possible, that a man has not the right to harm himself and others and to violate the laws and defy the Constitution of the United States at the same time.

That is our situation right now. All the old arguments for sobriety are still valid, and in addition we have the laws and the Constitution declaring against the liquor traffic.

And the election of the President of the United States this year has a definite and vital bearing on this question of prohibition. Everybody knows that there has been a wet and dry fight during recent years in the Democratic party; nobody claims that the drys won, and the candidate is wetter than his platform. Nobody claims that all the Republicans are dry; some of them are so wet that if they died you would not need to bury them, but could simply pour them back into the jug. And yet nobody claims that the wets won in the Republican national convention and the candidate is drier than his platform.

I wish you would face with me the question as to what it will mean if Al. Smith is elected President of the United States.

What would it mean first of all, in the matter of enforcement of existing laws? Well, Al. Smith says he will enforce the law. But what is his record? He signed the bill by which New York repealed all its enforcement laws, and while maintaining that this whole matter should be in the hands of the states, he insists on leaving the enforcement of prohibition entirely to the United States officials. As governor of the state of New York, he has not enforced the prohibition laws nor tried to enforce them. I saw more drunken men in New York City in one day than I have seen in Oregon in five years. It makes no difference what the animal may say, I am not going to choose a fox to guard my hen roost.

In fact Governor Smith's attitude on law enforcement reminds me of a story of two negroes who were in a quarrel which seemed likely to result in a fight. One of these negroes said to the other: "Look-a-heh Mose, Ise g'wan to black youah eye, an' smash youah nose, an' bust youah jaw, an' cave in youah ribs, etctetra." The other replied: "G'wan yah fool niggah yah don't means etctetra, yah means Viceversa."

Smith is ^{playing} ~~playing~~ for the wet vote. Perhaps he thinks that the dry Democrats will vote for him anyway. The support West and Pierce, and Miller are giving him lends some color to that supposition. Smith seems to favor some form of government dispensary, but in Ontario where that has been tried drunkenness has shown a tremendous increase; he says he does not wish the return of the saloon but he has always been for it until now. Look at his record. He is the friend of John Barlycom. The wets are not fools in flocking to his standard. If you are a wet there is where you really belong.

Smith is definitely committed to a modification of our present prohibition law and a change in the Constitution of the United States. Everybody knows that the President swings a tremendous power in the matter of prohibition. He appoints directly or indirectly a vast corps of enforcement officers, district attorneys, United States marshalls, judges, etc. When one reflects that the entire complexion of the United States Supreme Court might be changed by appointments in a single presidential administration, I as a dry citizen do not want the appointive power for the naming of those Supreme Court justices in the hands of a man as dripping wet as Al Smith.

If you are wet, if you want the Volstead act repealed, if you want other states to follow New York's lead and repeal their enforcement laws, if you want the United States to go as far back as possible toward the "good old days" when a man could see more drunken men on one block than in

Oregon in ten years, if you want every highway lined with emergency hospitals and the gutters piled full of auto wrecks, vote for Smith. He is personally and politically wet, and he ought to have the wet vote. But if you are dry and want a sober nation and bye and bye a sober world, vote for the man who has sand enough to declare, in language that even the way-faring man can understand, that he is for law enforcement and for the 18th amendment--they'll never repeal that till they have repealed the 19th and robbed you women of the privilege of the ballot.

There is little time left for consideration of the question of world peace. It will not be on the ballot next month nor is it considered by most people, one of the political issues before the American people. And it was not on any ballot in 1912 and was not considered a political issue then. But a world war came up on us, approximately 10,000,000 of the world's youth sleep under the sod of Europe, an equal number went back to their homes permanently incapacitated for the lives they once had lived, and 20,000,000 more died as the indirect toll of the world's worst war.

And there are occasions for war in plenty on earth today. And America is far from popular among the peoples on the other side of the Atlantic--in some sections Americans are very cordially hated.

We shall elect to the presidency on the sixth of next November a Tammany politician with no knowledge of and no experience in international affairs; or we shall elect the man more widely known and more sincerely loved than any other man on earth; the man who headed the movement which saved the lives of millions of starving Russians, which not only saved the cause of the allies in the food administration but sent into the land of our former enemies ship load after shipload of food which unquestionably saved millions from death. We could spend billions upon preparation for war without doing a small fraction of the work of insuring the peace of our country with Europe than would be done by electing as president the man who helped to save more lives than were ever saved in the world's history under the direction of one man.

Because of his wonderful achievements, his own private business in the work of Belgium relief, in the work of American food administration, in the vast activities of the American relief administration and the marvelous achievements in the Department of Commerce under his leadership, because of his wonderful preparation for the high office of President, because of the courage with which he faces the work of law enforcement and the maintenance of the prohibition amendment and the laws which back it up, and because of the greater security of America and the world from the devastation of war, I hope you will all go to the polls on the sixth of November and vote for Herbert Hoover for President of the United States.