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Opinions of a Hoover "Wet", 1928

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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OPINIONS OF A HOOVER "WET".

by the Hon. F.M. Huntington²Wilson, Of Woodbury, Conn.
(formerly Undersecretary of State, Ambassador, etc.)

Hoover will be the most important man in the United States for the next four years, whatever the result of the election. He will either be President or he will be administering relief of Democratic hard times!

Any wet who votes for Smith thinking Smith can end prohibition will show himself very easily fooled. Southern Democrats are the most determined supporters of Prohibition. Smith, as President, could not change them. He could not make his party follow him. A Democratic Congress would be dry. Only a Congress for modification can modify the Volstead Act or bring modification of the XVIII Amendment. No dry would listen to Smith, a notorious wet.

Hoover calls prohibition a "noble experiment",² but an experiment Hoover is a practical man of affairs, a wise and patriotic statesman. His views, experiences and aims embrace the welfare of the whole nation, and indeed of the whole world. The only hope of modification of the dry laws is in convincing a majority of the American people that the national welfare calls for modification. If the facts carry such conviction, - and I believe they surely do, - then, when those facts are brought home to Hoover as President, will he not be compelled, as a man of truth and reason and as a broad-minded patriot, to take cognizance of the need of modification? It is my personal opinion that he would be bound to do so.

We wets are patriots first and wets afterwards. Unless we make out a case for modification as better for the nation at large and

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more consistent with fundamental American institutions, we are not entitled to modification. If we can make out the case for modification, who would be better than Hoover, the practical statesman, as the one to give the question fair consideration? If our case is good it will convince Hoover. To Hoover, convinced of the need of modification, the whole country, including the drys, must and would listen. To Smith, notoriously wet, asking modification, every dry would turn a deaf ear.

This election gives the American voter a peculiar chance to show what he is made of. Does he like reality or words? Does he choose a president because he is a "good mixer" or for his wisdom and experience? Does he vote according to religions or according to policies? The persistent raising of the alledged religious question on behalf of the Democratic candidacy seems subtly designed to make Catholics think that they ought to vote by church instead of by political conviction; and to make liberal Protestants feel exactly the other way, that they should perhaps vote for a member of another church as a rebuke to a fictitious intollerance which they do not in the least feel. Both these ideas are "bunk" and will be ignored by any voter who knows too much to be buncoed. This is an election to decide which of two sets of policies and which of two sets of men will govern the United States the better in the interests of the prosperity, peace and progress of the American people, and to decide only that.

Certainly among intelligent Americans there is no such thing as discrimination based on religious belief. There is prejudice against any church which seeks political and material (in contradistinction to spiritual) power,- whether in lobbying for prohibition, or otherwise.

And very rightly so. Absolute religious freedom and absolute separation of Church and State are two reciprocal and inseparable fundamentals of the American system. "Render unto Ceasar the things that are Ceasar's and unto God the things that are God's". The spiritual field is for the churches, the political field is for the unprejudiced decision of national policies by one united free people, owing no political allegiance except to their country and the political convictions they find in their minds and consciences.

The speeches on behalf of the two candidacies have revealed on the Democratic side weather-vane veerings according to the local wind, on tariff, farm relief, immigration and even prohibition. To such an extent is this so that neither farmer, manufacturer, worker or wet can possibly know what to expect Smith would try to do if elected. Add to this the fact that it is very unlikely that Smith, as President, could control his party on either tariff, farm relief, immigration or prohibition (to mention a few questions only) and we find that the brightly painted picture of a Democratic future is as meaningless as a crazy quilt or the most ultra modern picture. No one can tell where we should be on any vital question.

On the other hand the position of the Republican Party and the Republican candidate has been stated with business-like matter-of-fact candor. We want prosperity. For it we want sure tariff protection and sure immigration fesyriktion so that our industry and commerce can flourish and our wage scale can be kept up. We want farm relief. We want foreign trade. With these the American home and it's standard of living will be maintained. We have the great engineering

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task of the Mississippi flood control. Hoover is a great engineer.

In fact there could not be found a man in the whole world so ideally fitted by nature, training, experience, convictions and high standards of integrity and efficiency as Herbert Hoover to take charge of the American government in precisely the situation in which America now finds itself.

Criticism, and very unfair and inaccurate criticism of the Republican Party, is being poured forth by the Democratic campaigners. Lacking constructive policies of their own, they take this easy but foolish course. Wise constructive policies and the well-weighed confidence of the people are the only safe passport to the White House.

Moreover, good man though Alfred E. Smith doubtless is, America is too great to be goverened from the "Sidewalks of New York" and Tammany is too notorious to be allowed to caste even a shadow over the National Capital.

N.B. The word wet, as here used, means one absolutely opposed to the return of the saloon but one who would have a regulated liquor traffic substituted for the présent corrupting and poisonous liquor traffic; one who would have a possible temperance substituted for an impossible prohibition.