

CITIZENS FOR STASSEN, 1000 Pillsbury Building, Minneapolis 2, Minnesota

AUTHORIZED ADVANCE FOR ADDRESS OF HAROLD E. STASSEN TO A PUBLIC MEETING, SPONSORED BY THE OFFICIAL REPUBLICAN ORGANIZATION AT ORLANDO, FLORIDA. November 20, 1947.

I have responded to your kind invitation to meet with you in this attractive state of Florida, because I believe the time has come for the development of a genuine two-party system in the South. I agree with many of the leaders of the press, of education, and of business in the South, that this development would be of great advantage to the people of the South and to the people of America as a whole.

I recognize full well that it will not be easy. I know that the black chapters in the history of the Republican Party's dealings with the South are not easily forgotten or forgiven. But I sense throughout the Southland a new awareness of the historic times in which we are living, as a great nation dedicated to the principles of freedom in a world in which a fundamental clash of ideologies and of ways of life is in evidence at every hand. I note an increased willingness to judge parties and men on the basis of the principles and programs which they advance, and upon their demonstrated sincerity of purpose rather than upon the history of their predecessors.

This new note in the Southland is at one and the same time a bright hope and a firm challenge to our Republican Party. It presents to us the fact that we will never win substantial support in the South on a negative program of vitriolic attack upon the Democratic Party. We can win new support particularly from the young men and young women of the South only as we present a constructive forward-looking program and come to grips with both the domestic and foreign problems of our country. We can gain new followers in the South only as we are convincing that we will serve the people well in the years ahead.

It has been demonstrated time and again in the history of the world that the presence of two vigorous political parties as alternatives for the people's choice has a desirable effect upon both of the parties. It contributes to the development of new ideas, to advances in economics as well as in social and political problems, to a more vigorous and successful leadership for the people, and provides a greater safeguard against political tyranny, reaction, or the loss of human rights.

Neither a one-party system nor a multi-party system responds as well to the necessities of the people and to the reflections of a free public opinion. A multi-party system, as it splinters up in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh parties, soon results that no party can command a substantial and majority support as to give effective leadership. It was one of the factors that caused the Weimar Republic in Germany to fall and gave Hitler his chance to rise. It was one of the weaknesses of France between the two wars. It is one of the retarding difficulties in much of Europe today. Under a two-party system there is first a contest between broad differences of position within each major party and out of that gradually arises a preliminary decision of position of the party as a whole. Then the people have their final choice of the alternative of two parties. The direct result is greater participation of the people themselves in effective government. The delusion of greater participation in a multi-party system is countered by the lack of effective government after the election is held.

I strongly urge concentrated effort in the States of the South to build a strong Republican Party and to participate in a two-party system. Do not hesitate in building the Republican Party to develop your own concepts as to what that party should be for. The great principles of state's rights in America apply to political parties as well as to state governments. You do have the right, in Florida and each of the Southern States to develop a strong Republican Party with its own views of the manner in which state and national affairs should be conducted. You need not echo the position of Republican Parties of States of the North. You can be - you should be - a Republican Party of the South. Developed on that basis, and entering into the national councils of the party, you there will have an impact upon the total national decisions. You will find that there are also great differences in positions between the Republican Parties in some of the States of the West and the Republican Parties in some of the States of the East. The great genius of the Party must be to talk through and find the way of fitting together the various degrees of positions upon issues, of blending liberal leadership and conservative attitudes into a joint program of action on behalf of the people. Thus is made significant contributions to progress in a free country.

It is very apparent that the Republican Party nationally needs an increased understanding of the problems, of the hopes, of the aspirations of the South. That understanding can best arise, not from a partisan debate across the aisle, but from within the party councils, by able presentation and discussion by outstanding men of the South.

I emphasize this basic question of the machinery and policies of political parties tonight because I believe now is the time for the people of the South as a whole to make an appraisal of the situation before them. The change of which I speak, the development of a two-party system, obviously will take time. It is extremely unlikely that any of the States of the solid South would be in the Republican column nationally in 1948. But on the other hand I can report to you from across the length and breadth of our land, that there is a rising tide of public opinion which indicates that if the Republican Party meets the needs of this hour, in affairs at home and abroad, the Republican Party will win the Presidency of the United States in 1948.

If that occurs, then will begin the crucial period in the development of a two-party system in the South. Looking forward to that day, it is of great importance to the people of the South that they begin now to plan on sending to the next Republican National Convention an outstanding group of men and women from each of their states. They should be men and women who truly represent the states from which they come. They should not be distant adjuncts to any Republican Party of any State of the North. They should be men and women who cannot be bought or sold, who cannot be intimidated or deluded. They should be a group of men and women selected without discrimination, without any unconstitutional exclusion on the grounds of race or religion or color.

They should be the kind of men and women whom you want to have as the manifestation and means of implementing a national Republican administration when it relates to the affairs of your own state.

This is a call for foresight and leadership now for the South and in the interest of America as a whole. These men and women you send to that Convention will, at the Convention and in the months and years ahead, be playing a part in the decisions of Republican policies and therefore of American policies, with reference to world trade, which is of vital concern to the South and to the nation as a whole; with reference to specific agricultural policies as it affects citrus fruits, cotton, tobacco; with reference to our health policy, as it affects areas now not adequately cared for with hospital and medical facilities; with reference to our tax policy and the dynamics of our capitalism in the future; with reference to our education, to the lifting of the opportunities of children for schooling in areas of limited resources; and with the whole wide range of policies in foreign affairs.

As I see it, this State of Florida can be one of the key places for the beginning of the development of the two-party system in the South. I was thrilled to hear of the election of my friend Alex Ackerman to your State Legislature as a Republican. He is a man of the South with a brilliant record in the service of his country during the war. He has demonstrated qualities of leadership to the veterans and to the people since the war. I predict that he will go far in our Republican Party and in leadership in this State. I would not be surprised if at some future day Alex Ackerman, Republican, were a United States Senator representing the State of Florida.

If you begin now to build constructively your Republican organization throughout the State, and if you send an able Republican delegation to the next national convention, I make you this one pledge, regardless of whom that delegation may vote for in the convention, if I do become the nominee of the Republican Party at the Philadelphia Convention, I will come to Florida for a major address during the final campaign. I will do so, not primarily with any hope of carrying the State in 1948, but rather to build the understanding of Republican policy in the state so that if we follow through to administer well national affairs, there would be an opportunity of carrying the State on the basis of the Republican record in the 1952 election.

I would not close this frank discussion of political affairs in the South without presenting to you also an analysis in a broader sense of the issues before our country and of our prospects for success as a people in America.

You have seen in the day to day headlines since the end of the war the rising clash of ideologies. I sound tonight a note of optimism that if we remain strong, if we develop a consistent world policy, if we are affirmative advocates of the freedom of men, if we correct the abuses and weaknesses of our capitalism and increase its modern humanitarianism, if we keep a firm hold to our fundamentals of liberty and of high production, then there is bright ground to hope for a future of expanding progress for ourselves and for others in a world of peace.



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