

parties are made or destroyed, men are raised to places of highest honor or overwhelmed in defeat, political corruption is condoned and sanctioned or withered under aroused public opinion.

Far be it from my purpose to raise the cry of the pessimist, that our nation is doomed, that social conditions now being developed, will overthrow this great political structure upon which so much depends. But this much is certain. In our national life, as it is to-day, some dangerous tendencies must be faced; if we are to continue our growth we must curb social evils and eliminate political corruption.

In spite of the fact that our government is dependent on the voice of the people as is no other, there is a growing disregard for the ballot and a lack of appreciation of its significance. Though officials, from the least to the greatest, are given their positions by the ballot and though the wishes of men as expressed by their votes are supreme, there are many who neglect the chief duty of citizenship. Our country is noted for its schools and colleges, still there is practically no attempt made to train men for their political duties. To be a politician in the true sense is the noblest of aims, yet that term is now one of reproach. Speak of a politician, and instantly there rises before the mind the image of the man who gains his ends by questionable means and lives by plundering the public. In this country, where public opinion should be earnest, thoughtful, and dominant, we too often find it sluggish, careless, and dormant, slavishly obeying and serving when it should rule. We all know men who scarcely ever attend their party caucuses and who vote only on some special occasion. We all know men who vote year after year, not for right, but party. We see great commonwealths ruled for the individual profit of a small body of men who combine consummate ability as leaders with an almost total lack of conscience. It cannot be successfully disputed that under the leadership of these men the "floating vote" decides elections in many close districts. It is common report that votes in town councils, state legislatures, and even in our national congress are given in ex-