

VOTING ON PROHIBITION.

Seldom in our history has the fate of one non-partisan political issue been so closely bound up with the results of a national election as this year. In 1920 many Republican believers in the League of Nations voted for HARDING on the assurance of some of the most eminent of their fellow-partisans (HUGHES and HOOVER among them) that HARDING'S victory was the only sure route to Geneva. Thus the effort of the Democrats to make the election a clear referendum on the League failed.

Next Tuesday, however, the issue between SMITH and HOOVER in the matter of prohibition is sharp and clear. HOOVER proposes to attempt to correct the abuses of enforcement, but stands for the amendment and the Volstead law unalterably. SMITH, pledged to attempt real enforcement of the law for the first time in its history, would amend the amendment and modify the law so as to permit the several States to undo prohibition. It is the first opportunity which Americans opposed to prohibition have ever had to register their opinion and make it felt by the politicians. If this opportunity is not grasped, years may pass before it comes again. All the Dry forces are militantly for HOOVER. They accept the issue as real. The Anti-Saloon League officially concedes that the victory of SMITH would be a definite blow to the theory of prohibition and a menace to its presence in the Constitution and the statutes. Every other prohibition group in the country recognizes in the voting of next Tuesday a political instrument which will be powerful if placed in the hands of the Democratic candidate.

The duty of all to whom the conditions under prohibition seem the most important concern of the nation is plainly to vote for ALFRED E. SMITH. He is the first leader in a national sense to whom they have been able to turn since enforcement became a scandal and social consequences of prohibition became serious. If he is defeated every fortress will be in the hands of the Drys. Congress will more than ever accept the voice of the Anti-Saloon League as the voice of the American people. If SMITH is elected, liberalism will have a leader in a position of great power, carried into office by so widespread and popular an uprising that the barriers of reform (which Mr. HUGHES describes as unscalable even by the people who set them there) will begin to crumble. If HOOVER is elected, every anti-prohibitionist who votes for him should acquiesce in present conditions without further complaint.

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