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Text of address of Representative Charles A.  
Halleck, of Indiana, nominating for the Presidency,  
Wendell Lewis Willkie, before the Republican National  
Committee, June, 1940.

Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, men and women of America:

This is a free and independent convention of a great political party. It is one convention in which the delegates are going to choose the candidate. It is representative government in action. It is proof that democracy is yet alive and efficient.

If anyone were to ask me what job in this convention I would like best to have, I would choose the job I've got right now. I'd say, I want to place in nomination before this independent body the name of the next President of the United States, WENDELL LEWIS WILLKIE.

I nominate Wendell Willkie because, better than any man I know, he can build this country back to prosperity.

I nominate him because, better than any man I know, he can keep us out of war. As a veteran who served in France he knows the horror of war at first hand. He is against war. And he can scare these dictators by building us the greatest defense system on earth.

I nominate him because he is the strongest campaigner that the people of this country have seen in a generation. He can win next November. He has licked Franklin Roosevelt once; he can do it again.

I nominate him because if he were elected he would make a president that this country would be proud of; because every one of you would be proud to say to your children and grandchildren, I helped to put that man in the White House.

I nominate him because he understands business; he is one of the most successful managers in the country:

Because he understands labor; he has thirty contracts with established unions, both A. F. of L. and C.I.O.:

Because he understands agriculture; he has worked on farms and he owns five in Indiana.



He will pull these groups together. He will never make a deal, domestic or foreign, that will be unfair to any one of them.

I nominate this man because he knows what an organization is; because, out of his own experience, he knows how to work with, through, and for an organization.

I nominate him because he is a Republican who will stand by his party, win, lose, or draw.

And in presenting this nomination I ask only one thing. I ask that this proposition be decided on its merits. That's the way I want it decided. That's the way my candidate wants it decided. And that's the way the people want it decided.

And let me tell you this from my candidate, from all his supporters, and from myself: Whoever you select to lead this Party to victory next November, you'll find us in there pitching to assure that victory.

Back in Indiana where he was born, this man had a nick-name. They called him "Win" Willkie. Indiana had the right idea about him from the beginning.

Put yourself back in that little old town of Elwood forty-eight years ago. There was a boom in natural gas. They had so much gas they never turned out the lights. Then the gas ran out and everybody in town went broke.

Why, this man Willkie knew about public utilities before Franklin D. Roosevelt had hardly heard of Indiana. And I'll say this. It'll be better to have a public utility president than a president who has no public utility.

Win's father and mother were both lawyers. They loved books, they loved ideas, and they loved freedom. That's what they taught their children.

Win is an Indiana boy. He went to Indiana University. He was admitted to the Indiana Bar. He went to war from Indiana. And he married the librarian of Rushville, an Indiana girl.

He got to work right early. When he was eleven he went into business with one of his older brothers. Later he harvested wheat in Minnesota. He dressed tools in the oil fields in Texas. He operated a cement-blocking machine in Wyoming. He ran a boom-town hotel in Colorado. And he bummed his way out to California in a freight car to pick vegetables.

He's familiar with every region of the United States, mostly because he's worked there. He knows the land and its history. He learned history in Indiana; he taught history at a school in Kansas; and he made history in the valley of the Tennessee.

He knows the East Coast and the Alleghenies; the broad plains and the Rocky



Mountains; the West Coast and the Southern Coast. He can see all that in his mind's eye.

In all those areas he has been the friend of the people; today he is hailed in all those areas by the people; and my proposition is that we put him to work for the people.

As he says, he left Indiana because the competition got too tough. But I'll tell you why he left. He left because of an irresistible urge to test himself against the toughest jobs that are to be found in this great enterprise that we call the United States.

He left Indiana to face, time after time, the challenge of a free, hardworking, competitive system.

He met that challenge at the bar: and you of Ohio can remember him as one of the most brilliant lawyers in Akron for more than ten years.

He met that challenge in industry: and you of Georgia, of Michigan, of Ohio, of Indiana, of Illinois, of Pennsylvania, of South Carolina, of Alabama, of Mississippi, of Florida know him as one who has produced more electricity for less money than any major operator in the land.

He met that challenge when he stood up almost alone against the New Deal on an issue involving the rights of all of us to do business -- and won it.

And he is meeting that challenge today by standing without compromise for the simple, homely principles of liberty.

Mr. Chairman, and fellow delegates, in this day of trial, when we stand in doubt before the terrible events of Europe; when we stand in danger, our arms bound by the restrictions of a hostile government in Washington, our minds poisoned by political philosophies that we can only dread: I submit that this man who has thrust himself into every corner of our American life, from the wheat-fields to the skyscrapers of Manhattan, and from the Indiana bar to the committee rooms of Congress -- that this man Wendell Willkie is the man we need for the defense and rehabilitation of our American life.

The people of this country are worried, and perplexed. They want the wheels of industry to turn, they want bigger farm incomes, they want a better break for labor, they want to give new opportunity to those who are now unemployed. Above all they want to defend this country from aggression.

I submit, Mr. Chairman, that this is the man the people are looking for. If any man can do that job, Wendell Willkie can.

I have heard it said -- and we have all heard it said -- that he is



unavailable to our party because he is a businessman. Worse, he has made a success of that business and of himself.

Are we to understand from this proposition, Mr. Chairman, that any man is barred from our deliberations who has been an American success?

What should that Indiana boy have done when he accepted the challenge that came his way? Shall we say that a man must refuse to enter American industry in order to become a leader of this nation?

Is that the stand that the Republican Party is prepared to take?

Fellow delegates, that is New Deal propaganda.

I have a boy eleven years old. He's ambitious. And I want him some day to make a contribution to his country.

What path shall I tell my boy to follow? Shall I say to him:

"son, if you want to get anywhere in this world for heaven's sake don't succeed in business? If you get an offer to head up a big industrial company, don't accept it! If you have a chance to increase our American standard of living by producing more goods for less cost, don't take that chance! Because if you do the Republican Party won't accept you."

Or shall I say to that boy: "I know a man born in Indiana just like you. His Dad didn't have any more dough than I've got. He didn't have any better opportunity than you've got. But that fellow got a chance to run one of America's big enterprises. He took that chance. He succeeded at it. And I want you to do likewise."

You bet I'm going to tell my boy that. I'm not going to fill him full of New Deal Propaganda. I'm going to fill him full of the old fight.

Let's look at the record.

On January 1, 1933, this man I'm giving you became the President of a business with assets of over a billion dollars, employing 25,000 men and women in ten states. This company was operating at a deficit. Its morale was low.

On March 4, 1933, four months later, Franklin D. Roosevelt took office as President of the United States. Our country was also operating at a deficit; the national debt was twenty-three billion dollars; and industry and agriculture were demoralized.

Now what's the picture. Why, the enterprise entrusted to Franklin Roosevelt is worse off. The national debt is crossing forty-five billion dollars. We still have at least nine million unemployed; labor dissatisfied; business without hope; and the country unprepared for the international crisis facing it.



But what happened to the job that America gave Willkie seven years ago? He hit it like a ton of bricks. That company is making a profit today. It has built new plants. It has expanded. It has cut its prices and raised its output.

While Roosevelt was promising the more abundant life, Willkie was delivering it. He raised the standard of living of every schoolteacher, factory worker, and farmer on his lines.

While Roosevelt was unbalancing an eight billion dollar budget, Willkie was helping to balance the eight-hundred-dollar family budgets of his customers.

I tell you, the balancing of those eight-hundred-dollar budgets is the immediate goal of the Republican party.

My man has helped to balance them in ten states. Let's let him try it in forty-eight!

Or do you believe with the New Dealers that there is no hope?

Do you believe that the growth of this country is finished?

Do you believe that the family budgets can never be balanced, the family incomes never increased?

If you believe these things don't nominate my man.

For I tell you that this man is going to fight. He believes that this country will grow, that those budgets are going to be balanced and those incomes increased. If you nominate him, that's what he'll fight for, and that will be a fight to tear a man's heart out.

I'm not kidding you. This is one of the serious moments in American history. We are not gathered here merely to confer a title of honor, or to distribute rewards.

I say we are gathered here to save this country from disintegration. We are gathered to assign the most stupendous job on the American record. We are not rewarding anybody.

He whom we choose here will age more rapidly than we. He will never again enjoy life as he has enjoyed it in the past. The scars of the fight that lies ahead of him will be with him forever.

The people of this country have risen up in overwhelming numbers to tell you this. They have risen up to tell you that they want this fighter, this man Willkie.

How do I know this? Again, the record is my proof.

A year ago a few personal friends began saying that this man ought to be President. He turned them off with courteous and friendly gestures. Six months ago he was known as an occasional contributor to national magazines. Three months ago a few individuals who made no pretense at a knowledge of politics set out to



see what they could do.

And then -- less than nine weeks ago -- the first Willkie for President Club was started. And a great uprising of the people began.

In less than nine weeks, by voluntary effort, without a political organization, and with no campaign fund, this man has been taken up by the people in every walk of life and in every corner of the land.

And as one who believes in the democratic process and the Republican Party, I am confident that you delegates will not ignore that demand.

I have heard it said that we, the delegates to the Republican National Convention, would never nominate this man because he is too recently a Democrat.

Is the Republican Party a closed corporation? Do you have to be born in it?

In 1936 my candidate became a Republican by conviction. He voted that year for the ticket that we nominated in Cleveland. In 1938 he demonstrated his conviction by enrolling in the Republican Party.

Mr. Chairman, We do not run the Republican Party on the basis of seniority.

Let it never be said that we bar from our deliberations a man who is one of us -- a man who believes in us -- a man in whom millions of our people, members of our party, already fervently believe.

Now let's get down to business here.

You know, and I know, that Wendell Willkie can win next November.

I ask this question of those delegates and candidates in whose districts he has appeared. If you were running for office wouldn't you like to have this man come into your district as the head of your party? Wouldn't you like to have him stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you on a platform to make the fight of your political lives? I know the answer. The answer is Y E S.

My man can win because he stands four-square for those two great principles of our party -- freedom of life and freedom of enterprise. The Republican Party will vote solidly for Willkie.

He can win because millions who habitually belong to no party -- the huge, shifting balance-of-power vote -- crave those blessings of freedom. They will vote for Willkie.

He can win because millions now enrolled in the Democratic party crave those blessings -- denied to them by their own party. They will vote for Willkie.

When this man appears before the country in a real campaign, the whole blessed nation will vote for him. I tell you we'll have a Republican stampede.

I know what I'm talking about. I've been here in Philadelphia for two weeks riding in front of a tidal wave the like of which has never been known in national politics. I've felt the surge of the people beneath me. And I've seen a vision.



I see now as I have never seen before that a great battle has broken out upon the earth. It is a battle between slavery and freedom.

We have talked about economic competition and industrial competition. But I see now a more desperate competition -- a competition between two different ways of life -- the totalitarian and the free.

Fellow delegates, to win that competition we must be strong. Only the strong can be free.

If Hitler can build a stronger system than ours, we shall lose that competition to Hitler. Our way of life will be liquidated.

Already the New Deal, impotent to compete against the rising totalitarians, has made a move toward drafting the manhood of this country. This is exactly the opposite direction from the one in which we ought to move.

The only way we can compete against a competitor is to make our own system work in its own way better than the competitor's system.

This is my vision. Millions of people in this country have seen it, and millions more will follow.

We, the people, want a man whose honor and integrity cannot be questioned;

We, the people, want a man whose personal loyalty has met the test of thousands upon thousands to whom he has freely given it;

But above all we, the people, want a strong man to defend our freedom:

A man who can liberate us from the grip of depression;

A man who can save us by building the greatest defense system in history;

A man who can awaken our energies to create for us a New World.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just a young Congressman from Indiana, but in six years I've seen 'em all. And when I stand in the presence of this man in this crisis I say to myself: There's a man big enough to be President of the United States.

WENDELL LEWIS WILLKIE.

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