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The New Freedom

Woodrow Wilson



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In 1912, Woodrow Wilson was the Democratic nominee for President of the United States. He campaigned against the Republican incumbent, William Howard Taft, and Taft's predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt, who had split off from the Republican Party to form his own Progressive, or Bull Moose, Party. Much of the campaign focused on the US economy, particularly the candidates' views of the business monopolies and the Federal Reserve System. This book is a collection of pieces from Wilson's campaign speeches, edited by William Bayard Hale, to form a discussion of those topics. As Wilson says in his introduction, the book is "not a book of campaign speeches. It is a discussion of a number of very vital subjects in the free form of extemporaneously spoken words.... The book is not a discussion of measures or of programs. It is an attempt to express the new spirit of our politics and to set forth, in large terms which may stick in the imagination, what it is that must be done if we are to restore our politics to their full spiritual vigor again, and our national life, whether in trade, in industry, or in what concerns us only as families and individuals, to its purity, its self-respect, and its pristine strength and freedom. The New Freedom is only the old revived and clothed in the unconquerable strength of modern America." Woodrow Wilson was born in Virginia in 1856, and earned his Ph.D. in history and political science from Johns Hopkins University. In 1890, he was appointed a professor of jurisprudence and political economy at Princeton University, and in 1902, he was named the 13th president of the university. In 1910, he was elected the 34th Governor of New Jersey, and left Princeton for that post. Two years later, he won the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. Following Theodore Roosevelt's splitting of the Republican Party, Wilson was elected the 28th President with 42% of the popular vote, and 82% of the electoral vote. In 1916, he was re-elected, becoming the first Democratic President to serve two consecutive terms since Andrew Jackson (1829-37). Following the end of World War I, Wilson traveled to the Paris Peace Conference, spending four months in Europe. Though he was unsuccessful in getting the US to join his proposed League of Nations, Wilson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in 1919. In October 1919, he suffered a massive stroke which incapacitated him for six months (during which time his second wife, Edith, was presumably acting President). Wilson recovered somewhat, retired from the Presidency in 1921, and died at home in Washington, DC, in 1924.

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