

SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTIONS

GOVERNOR'S RACE

Attorney M. W. Plummer, Moderator: Dean (Kenneth S.) Tollett, is the governor's race significant?

Dean Tollett: Yes! Very significant.

Attorney Plummer: Dean Tollett, would you mind telling our radio audience why you think the governor's race is very significant?

Dean Tollett: Not at all Attorney Plummer. I should say first, all election races are very significant and important. The hard won American democratic ideal that ours is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people presumes the continual exercise of the privilege to vote. "Of the people, by the people, and for the people" becomes an empty slogan if the people do not trouble to vote; perhaps, I should say if the people do not care enough to vote. Every vote is very significant and important. Vice-president Johnson would not probably be where he is today if he had not been elected to the United States Senate ~~back~~ in 1948. In the statewide election then he won by only eighty-seven votes - a mere fraction of the votes cast in almost any one precinct in Houston.

Obviously, this means every vote counts and tells in all races, including the Governor's race. The

Governor is the chief executive of the state. He has broad powers which may be roughly characterized as executive, legislative, and political. As the chief executive he has a substantial influence on law enforcement (the peculiar function of an executive), he is Commander-in-Chief of the State military forces, he has the power of clemency and pardon together with the Board of Pardon and Paroles, he has substantial financial powers, he is the channel of direct communication between the Federal Government and other state governments and this state, and he has the power to appoint public officials to various state boards and commissions and other state offices of local and state wide importance.

His legislative powers comprehend the duty to recommend the consideration of various subjects and problems for legislation in the state legislature, he may veto legislative enactments, and he may call or convene special sessions of the legislature, as he has done recently, to enact laws of vital interest and concern to the people.

His political influence is less defined, but probably more far reaching than any of his other powers, if aggressively exercised. He may set the tone of state government. We have all read in the

newspapers, seen on TV, and heard on the radio how various southern state governors have attempted to thwart recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

He who does not vote not only will not help determine what type of executive, legislative, and political leader we will have in the governor's seat, but non-voters really do not deserve the right to complain.

Attorney Plummer: Dean Tollett, one short question, I noticed you spoke of the "privilege to vote." Why did not you say "right to vote"?

Dean Tollett: Because if you do not obtain a poll tax receipt you can not vote. In other words, at this time the state gives the opportunity to vote only to those who have poll tax receipts. Basic constitutional rights are not subject to the kind of regulations privileges are. Privileges by definition are subject to reasonable regulation. Therefore to date, states may require poll tax receipts and some other conditions, such as, a certain age and length of state and county residence before a citizen is eligible to vote.

Attorney Plummer: Thank you, Dean Tollett.

Dean Tollett: It was my pleasure.

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