Abraham Lincoln has come to us down through the years as the inspiration and spirit of a free people and a form of government based on principles of justice.

His greatness has been so thoroughly etched upon the world that any peoples, any Nation, and yes, any political party, who will but listen to the story of Lincoln will find a guiding light and a set of principles that cannot fail.

We, of the Republican Party, are particularly close to Lincoln. It was in the fateful mid-century years preceding the Civil War that Lincoln and the Republican Party emerged together from a confused and strife-ridden cauldron of political thought to assume the position of leadership and to weld together the principles on which this Union was saved.

Since those years the Republican Party has constantly looked to the great force of wisdom and truth which the teachings and spirit of Lincoln has cast on the present and future from his magnificent past.

In this year of 1952 it is particularly fitting that we turn to the past for possibly some thread of advice—some ancient landmark from the life of Lincoln—to aid us in charting this Country's course for the future that lies ahead.

This is the year of decision.

Our Country stands now at the very cross roads where once it stood in those pre-Civil War days of approximately 100 years ago.
The fundamental principles of Government once more are at stake just as surely as they were in Lincoln's day, and the Republican Party is the only instrumentality which has within it the power to save our form of constitutional Government.

Today let us look back to the times and events leading up to the Civil War, the greatest crisis this Country ever faced up to the present day. The battle lines were then drawn on the fundamental issues of whether a country "so conceived and so dedicated" as this country was conceived and dedicated under the constitution could continue to endure.

From the beginning the question of slavery had given much concern to our forefathers and as time went on and as the country grew it divided this country into two camps - the slave states of the south, the free states of the north. Both sides, antagonistic to the other - for years by way of compromise staved off the inevitable conflict.

The conflict was not limited alone to the question of whether slavery was an evil. Most of the leaders - many of them from the south itself, recognized that the institution of slavery - tragically a part of this country - must in time be abolished, and would in time come to an end.

Other vital questions and differences between these two sections of the country - such as the tariff question, the difference in economic structure, the contest over the admission of new states as either slave or free which would determine which section of the country would control the Federal Government, all built up to the point where brother was set against brother, State against State.

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The churches themselves were divided and political parties were torn in two.

Every person and every institution was choosing sides, and yet the whole of the country was drifting aimlessly in a welter of confusion refusing to face the issue—trying compromise after compromise in a vain attempt to stave off the inevitable conflict—hoping against hope that the Union might be saved and the constitution preserved—yet unwilling to face up to the price of decision.

This is the background of Lincoln's day.

How very much alike the background of this country is today to that of Lincoln's day.

True, we are not divided slave state against free state, south against north—those issues have long been decided. But the issues dividing this country today are just as real and just as fundamental as they were in the days of Lincoln.

Today we are divided over the fundamental question of whether we shall continue to follow the New Deal—Fair Deal road into the land of state socialism with all of its inevitable evils—complete Governmental controls of business, arms and labor—unbearable taxation stifling all initiative, which is the only true path to progress,—the drying up and dissipating of national resources in crack-pot schemes at home and abroad,
The continued futile sacrifice of American boys in a fools war that is not designed with victory in mind,
And the complete destruction of constitutional Government, substituting a Government by men rather than laws—by
centralized bureaucracy rather than a Republic of States.

Or whether we will return to a government of free men, a government of free business - free labor - free farms - a Government allowing men the opportunity to work out their own salvation, with a minimum of Governmental interference. A Government with a sound currency - with limited powers of taxation.

A Government that allows initiative, brains and thrift to be rewarded.

A Government with a foreign policy designed with but one thought in mind - the best interest of the American People.

A Government of law under our constitution.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, this country is now at the cross roads of its existence. The issue is clear.

Yet it is not new!

The issue has been clear for the last 20 years but never presented in all of its aspects to the country as a whole in a presidential contest.

This country has continued to drift further and further away from the straight and narrow path of constitutional government and the people have been unable to halt its progress in that direction.

As in Lincoln's day, the people of this country have been wandering in a wilderness without a standard to rally around.

The only alternative to this trend toward socialism that has been presented to the people in the last 20 years is the watered-down cry of lost souls grasping for victory, and murmuring "me too", "I am for the same thing, but I can do it better".
Is it little wonder that the party in power has not been cast from office?

There will be no clear-cut decision of what kind of Government the people of this country want until they are presented with a choice.

There was no real choice presented in the last presidential election. We were sure of victory without making anybody mad. We were everything to all people. The results were disastrous - not just to the Republican Party but to the United States of America.

In this year of crisis - in this year of decision - it is the absolute duty of the Republican Party to present to the people of this country the opportunity to choose the right way from the wrong way.

A platform and a candidate geared solely to the reaping of a long sought victory is not enough. Victory for victory's sake alone is an empty thing. It would mean nothing.

Republican victory must be beat out on the anvils of Americanism - it must be wrought in the forge of Constitutional Government.

This victory must be gained by a Republican who will campaign without compromise - who will attack the Roosevelt-Truman-Atcheson and Hiss administration in all of its weaknesses - not just part of them; who will stand fast to all of the principles of Republican Americanism and not just part of them.

Lincoln was met with this same challenge.

He had just received the Republican nomination to run for the Senate against Stephen A. Douglas at the Republican Convention at Springfield in June 1858.
He knew the nomination would be his and had carefully prepared his acceptance. He called in his friends and advisors and read them his speech before delivering it to the Convention.

It was the "house divided" speech.

Do you remember the words? It went like this:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand".

"I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or the other".

On hearing those words that have since been marked as among his greatest, his friends and advisors urged him not to make it - They were afraid - it was too positive - it drew the issues too clearly - it would lose some votes from the timid, and the "riders of the fence".

Listen to the answer of Lincoln:

"I would rather be defeated with that issue in my speech and discuss it before the people than to be victorious without it".

As in Lincoln's day we cannot continue to exist half slave and half free - half socialistic and half free enterprise - we must be one or the other.

We can remember many things of Lincoln. His life has been the subject of thousands of speeches, each with a different purpose - each bringing out a great truth.

But today, in this year when the fate of the Union is once more placed squarely on the shoulders of the Republican Party it is this
trait of Lincoln's character that we of the Republican Party should turn to - his uncompromising nature when a great fundamental principle was involved.

With that in mind I want to speak briefly on the question that is in everyone's mind these days.

What candidate for the Presidency and what platform will the Republican National Convention present to the people come July of this year?

I think it not only my privilege, but my duty to do this.

I am one of the candidates on the Republican ballot as delegate to the Convention. To become a delegate is a position of responsibility to the people of my district and my country as a whole.

I would not have it any other way than to publicly state who, in my best judgment, should be nominated.

I believe that this election must be fought out on all of the issues which exist from taxes to morality in Government - from foreign policy to National solvency, and more than anything else, just plain Americanism!

On all of the issues that have been accruing through the years and still plague this country.

These issues can best be presented by a man who has dedicated his political life to meeting these issues headon. By a man who has said all there is to say many, many times concerning these issues. By a man who knows the constitutional framework of our Government from A to Z and cherishes it, and who will devote himself to sustain it rather than attempt to side-step the Constitution for an expedient answer to a particular problem. By a man who will maintain a firm
hold on his own party and will vigilantly insist that it never sink to the level that the Democratic party has sunk to through the activities of people interested in personal gain at the expense of the Country.

By a man who will maintain a foreign policy based on one thought alone - What is the best for this country? - and who will not be influenced by starry eyed dreamers who blink at reality and think the world is one. A man who realizes that our foreign policy must be tied in with the solvency of this Nation, and that aid to other Nations against the communistic hords can only be successful and should only be given provided those countries themselves first accept their own responsibilities. A man who realizes that this sense of responsibility on the part of other Nations must come from within the heart and soul of those Nations, and cannot be purchased for a dollar -

and last but not least, - a man who owes nothing to anyone, except the American People.

This man is SENATOR ROBERT A. TAFT

I am saying this not only as a candidate for delegate to the National Convention, but as Jim Wham, a lawyer from Centralia, Illinois, who intends to stay in Centralia and practice law.

I am not now interested in seeking public office or position, and doubt very much if I ever will be.

I am just one of the countless thousands in this Country whose only interest in politics is to fulfill what I consider the duty of every man and woman -- and that duty is to take active part in the affairs of our Country's Government.

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I say this for the reason that there has been a concerted effort on the part of some elements of the press and backers of other candidates and a devious attempt on the part of certain members of the Democratic party to create the false impression that only the so-called professional politician is actively urging Senator Taft's candidacy, while everyone else is for some other candidate.

This is clearly not the case.

The supporters of Senator Taft are made up of those people - call them what you will - professionals, amateurs, independents, and just plain people who are demanding that the Republican Party wake up and meet its responsibility to this Country and present as its candidate a man who has the brains and guts to present the issues in an uncompromising manner, and let the chips fall where they may!!

I say again - and with all the emphasis I can call forth - that Republican victory for victory's sake alone is an empty thing. To be worth the time and effort, victory must be won by a clear-cut response to the issues which will be defined and carried forth by Robert A. Taft.

And so in closing this occasion of honoring the great and noble man, Abraham Lincoln, let us take renewed faith in ourselves and our cause. Let us so conduct ourselves as we believe Lincoln would have conducted himself in these circumstances. Let us accept the challenge which Lincoln flung out to the world at Gettysburg in those words that have been hallowed by time:

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us" and it is for us to test:
"Whether this Nation or any Nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure".

I think if we accept the spirit of that challenge and accept the responsibility which is ours, this Country will emerge from this dismal swamp of bewilderment and march steadily up the rough and narrow path of human progress and the stars of freedom will continue to shine on our banner for thousands of years.