

# MARY McLEOD Bethune

## The Women Of America Must Lead The March To The Polls

With whatever party they are registered, and regardless of their choice of candidates, the women of America must lead November's march to the polls!

America must stand on her own feet in the field of civil rights and economic security, no less than in matters of foreign policy. We women must reinforce our efforts to unite for peace and prosperity and brotherhood and freedom.

I want that great organization which we still know as the National Council of Negro Women (although it has never been exclusive as to race), to step to the forefront of this new campaign for political literacy and concerted action. I hope that it will be very active through its many "metropolitans"—its local groups—in helping to teach the techniques of the ballot and in helping to interpret men and women and the measures they advocate.

Women are people! Women are citizens! The days when they walked Indian file—literally into figuratively—behind whatever men might be around, husbands, fathers, brothers, employers . . . or preachers—are gone. So there must be an end to Indian file thinking.

Women are at least as discerning as the opposite sex. They are at least as thorough. They are at least as objective. They are competing, in thought and action, as people; but as people who are women, there are specific areas of action which claim their particular interest, in addition to the overall problems of local and national communities.

I think that Edith Sampson has given to us a strong representation at the United Nations. I congratulate her on her reappointment.

Now, what she is doing at the United Nations we must do on our own: nearthstones. We must key our minds to the problems of the day. We must analyze and select and discard—and act.

Effort? Of course, it takes effort! The pioneer women worked as hard as their men. They worked with men. We must do likewise. Often enough we will have to take the initiative in exploring problems, in suggesting action, in checking the records of candidates. Television is doing part of this job for us. Radio is doing part of it.

So what are the candidates saying and doing? What have they done? It is very easy to know

what they are saying and not much more difficult to find out what they have—or have not—done.

Most "cause" organizations—those with special interests—keep track of the actions and attitudes of public servants, with reference to their own particular fields. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—our NAACP—keeps such records. The AF of L and the CIO (through CIO-PAC, keep such records. And for the little man on the land—tenant, small owner or migratory worker—the National Farmers Union keeps such records.

The Women's Joint Congressional association keeps records. The League of Women Voters keeps records on a non-partisan basis. All of these organizations have ear-to-the-ground headquarters in Washington. Ask your local branch of these groups for further information on local or national matters. That is their function.

And find out how to vote—and vote! That is your function as a citizen. If we are not too busy to live, then we cannot be "too busy" to understand and help to direct the manner of our living.