

The early years of Wilford Clark stimulated the lifetime interest he showed in government. His dealings with the Ezra T. Clark & Sons landholdings; his concerns for matters of land uses and boundaries; his ministering to people in the mission field; his role as a peace-making bishop: all these contributed to his awareness of the uses and abuses of public office.

While most men know they could not explain the theory of relativity, win an Olympic decathlon, or perform an open-heart operation, most of them feel they could run the nation or hold down an important position therein. The Patriarch was in the minority in this regard, for he deeply felt the need for a political candidate to be suited for the office he sought:

I once suggested that Uncle Wilford run for the County Commissioner. He replied, 'I am not successful enough with my own affairs to run for that office.' While I did not agree with his opinion of his own qualifications, he did point up the fact that public candidates must have aptitudes for the offices they seek.<sup>1</sup>

In dealing with either his spiritual congregation or his political district, at least two main principles--personal example and fairness to all--guided his actions.

Around the turn of the century there were two factions in Montpelier, the railroading 'downtown' non-Mormons, and the agrarian 'uptown' Mormons. The uptown and downtown teenagers wanted to mix socially. Dances held in downtown Montpelier were enticing to the uptown Mormon youngsters. To keep the situation under the supervision of both groups of parents Bishop Clark built the Pavilion, for dancing and other entertainment, midway between uptown and downtown. The place was attended by people from both parts of town and all was well.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the dances being well-supervised there were mothers on both sides of town who were reluctant to allow their daughters to attend. I recall many times when Mother was called by