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"Industrial and Agricultural Outlook for South Carolina."

Strom Thurmond

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Prior to World War I South Carolina was primarily an agricultural State with an agricultural economy. Shortly after the first World War considerable expansion took place, principally in the cotton - textile manufacturing field. During this period cotton - textile manufacturing plants moved from the New England states to South Carolina in great numbers. Prior to World War II, there was a leveling off in textile expansion, although many plants in South Carolina had extensive expansion programs.

Many of the leaders in South Carolina have advocated a balance between agriculture and industry. This same program is being carried out by the administrative offices and legislative bodies of the State Government at the present time. During World War II the value of farm products and the value of manufactured products increased greatly. Some of this rise in value of the farm and manufactured products can be attributed to an advance in prices received for the product; however, a considerable portion of the increase was due to increased production.
Since 1943 the number of farms in South Carolina has constantly decreased. This is due in large measure to a shortage of labor during the war period, which resulted in mechanization of the farms. Since the close of the war there are many farm laborers who have been displaced by mechanization. At the present time we have a replacement rate in agriculture of 214 young men for every 100 farmers who die or retire.

In 1945 the total value of all crops harvested in South Carolina amounted to about $280,000,000. This represented an increase in value of farm crops of 141% since 1940. In 1945 there were 410,000 persons who were 14 years old or older living on farms. Comparing this figure with the manufacturing establishments, the following facts are significant:

In 1946 the capital invested in South Carolina manufacturing establishments was approximately $482,000,000, excluding sawmills and cotton gins. The 1946 figure represented an increase of 19% above 1940. The value of products manufactured in 1946 was approximately $1,000,000,000, an increase of 149% above 1940. In 1946 there were approximately 157,000 persons employed in the manufacturing plants of the State. This was an increase of 20% over 1940. These employees received in wages for their services in the manufacturing plants $231,000,000, an increase of 131% above 1940.
These figures are cited to show that the dream of persons who have long advocated a balance between agriculture and industry is approaching reality. While we do know that industrialization of South Carolina has not yet reached its optimum position, it has had a remarkable growth during the past twenty years. During this period many farm products have appeared on the list of profitable undertakings for farm owners. In the Piedmont section of South Carolina a new crop, Turkish tobacco, is appearing on the field, and promises to become a valuable asset. Over the entire State dairy and beef cattle production is increasing at a rapid rate. South Carolina has become the Number One State in the union in the production of fresh peaches shipped to the markets of the North and North Central States. Irrigation promises to become a great boon to the peach and vegetable growers. All in all the picture for agriculture seems brighter than ever.

In the industrial field South Carolina has had a remarkable growth since 1945. According to a survey recently completed, there have been established 650 new industrial plants since January 1, 1945, with capital investment of over $80,000,000. In addition, more than 900 existing plants have either begun or are planning to begin expansion programs which will cost over $120,000,000 during the next two years. Included in the new industries group is one
plant manufacturing cellulose-acetate filament yarn which will be the largest single manufacturing plant within the borders of the State. Another firm has recently completed two of the most modern woolen mills in the world. South Carolina has at last obtained a Portland cement plant, the only one in the Carolinas. Of special note is the wide diversification of the manufacturing establishments which have come into the State during the past few years. Approximately 80 garment and sewing plants have started operation within South Carolina.

Since January 1, 1945, the new industries coming into the State have employed 23,500 South Carolina men and women. This represents an annual increase in total wages earned of $29,000,000.

The industrial growth which has taken place during the past three years is a testimonial to the manufacturing interests of the State and to the sound legislative program which has been followed by our State government. We have just and equitable laws relating to industrial production and our taxes are not excessive.

We believe that we will have a continuation of the industrial expansion in this State, because we have abundant natural resources, excellent transportation facilities, and a plentiful supply of skilled native-born American labor.