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"The Outlook for Textiles in South Carolina."

Strom Thurmond

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South Carolina moved into 1948 firmly entrenched in its dominant position in the textile industry, and there is every indication that its leadership in the field will be extended through continued development of allied lines such as garment plants, knitting mills and synthetics.

The year 1947 was unexcelled for textiles in South Carolina. The value of the products made by 250 mills exceeded $1,100,000,000, an increase of $326,000,000 over the previous year; employment and capital invested likewise showed tremendous gains.

Employment in textiles reached a high mark of 126,005 in those plants engaged in bleaching and dyeing, carding, spinning, and weaving. Many other thousands are engaged in kindred industries. The average daily income per employee advanced $1.62 in the single year.

Currently our textile mills are running full time. The demand for quality goods produced in our modern plants by our capable workers has not been fulfilled and there is every expectation that South Carolina-made products will continue to be sought in the world's textile markets.

I am asked to discuss the outlook of the industry in our State and to comment on reasons why it should continue to expand. There is a true saying that "nothing succeeds like success". I could use that phrase to illustrate this point. I might add that the people of South Carolina, from governmental officials through the whole range of our people, are determined that our
State shall continue its industrial expansion, not only in textiles but also in many other lines of endeavor. We know that our resources, our people, our climate and our location mean profitable production by many industries and we are determined that our growth shall continue.

That is a principal reason why the present outlook is so bright, and the trend may rightly be expected to continue.

There is overwhelming evidence that this is so. Only recently, one of the largest textile producers decided upon South Carolina as the location of its new $15,000,000 plant. Another large textile firm has selected South Carolina, after thoroughly studying many sites elsewhere, for a $4,000,000 plant expansion. There have been others, lesser in size but nonetheless important, to select our State in the first few months of this year.

In spindles-in-place and in active spindle-hours, South Carolina is at or near the top of all States and in 1947 the average spindle hours for those in-place put South Carolina at the top of all the leading textile States.

There have been many other developments in South Carolina's textile industry. One has been the sharp increase in the number and value of plants using wool right here in the heart of the cotton country. We are glad to see this diversification of products and we believe that the pioneer mills have shown the way for others to follow. Workers in South Carolina are capable people, easily adapting themselves in new types of work and to modifications of jobs in which they have been trained.

An industry, directly allied with textiles, is the garment and
clothing industry. In this field, South Carolina has made much progress recently. Two years ago, we had the privilege of reporting that the gain in this business was the largest of any in our State. Last year, 27 new clothing plants were established, thereby continuing the trend. Today we have about 100 clothing and garment plants with an annual valuation of products exceeding $50,000,000—a total that will be greatly increased this year because many of the new plants started operation late in 1947.

To us in South Carolina, development of the clothing industry completes the cycle. We grow fine cotton and for years we have turned out fine grey and finished cotton goods. Now the process is taken to completion in our garment plants, often located within sight of the cotton fields from which their cloth originally came.

None of this would be worthwhile if these developments were accompanied by industrial strife or if the new industries were of the sweatshop type. We have been careful to encourage the location in South Carolina of only those companies which we believed were of the top grade. We have been extremely pleased at the way our development has taken place with management and employees working harmoniously together—all of them working for greater production, and for a better South Carolina.

The real significance of this development is that it has not slowed down. It is continuing unabated. We have plenty of room for other industries, in the textile field where our dominance is being strengthened each month, and in other lines as well. Our State remains primarily agricultural.
More of our people are dependent upon farming for a living than are in all industries combined. Many locations exist where the farm population would enjoy the opportunity of working in good, sound industries and we are doing all we can, through our State Research, Planning and Development Board, and through other agencies including the Governor's Office, to see that our industrial progress is maintained and that it is maintained on a high level.