

STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, ON REPAYMENT OF OIL BORROWED FROM THE U.S. NAVY DURING 1947-48 WINTER; JUNE 29, 1948.

Governor J. Strom Thurmond said today that South Carolina has become the first State in the nation to repay completely its borrowings of oil from the United States Navy during the winter of 1947-48.

The Governor said he was notified today by E. H. Talbert, State Emergency Fuel Oil Co-ordinator, that 677,000 gallons of fuel oil borrowed from December to March have been pumped back into the Navy's storage tanks at Charleston. 300,000 additional gallons borrowed from independent oil companies also have been repaid.

The oil was borrowed by 33 South Carolina oil jobbers or distributors, and was used to relieve a total of 24,000 cases of distress in which South Carolinians were suffering because of the lack of oil for heating and cooking purposes. It was repaid through purchases from Esso Standard Oil Company.

Governor Thurmond said he had been informed the State will face another critical oil shortage next winter, unless the weather happens to be very mild. It is the consensus of oil experts in the State that a severe winter next year will result in a serious difficulty, he said.

The difficulty is enhanced, he pointed out, by the fact that South Carolina's rate of conversion to oil heating has been near the highest in the nation. The State ranked second in the United States, with a 52% conversion rate over former years. Florida, with a 53% conversion, had the highest rate.

Governor Thurmond recommended that householders who depend on oil for heating purposes, begin at once to fill their tanks in preparation for next winter. This will be one way of helping to relieve the situation, since it will provide oil companies with extra storage space which will be badly needed in case of a shortage.