MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This is a happy occasion for me, because I have always felt close to the teaching profession. As an educational worker for a period of 10 years, both as a teacher and County School Superintendent, I had ample opportunity to learn something of the problems of teachers, something of their joys and sorrows, and something of their hopes and aspirations.

Later, as a member of the General Assembly and as Governor, I have had opportunity to extend some of that experience into the field of legislation. In all my efforts in this field, I have tried to see that education is given its proper place at the top of the list of legislative and governmental affairs.

We all know of the important relationship between the teaching profession and its State Government. After all, it is in the legislative halls that nearly all of our educational improvements are started. That is why it is so important that our teachers maintain an intelligent and energetic interest in State matters. The professional educator can do little
to improve the condition of the school children of the State without the full cooperation and understanding of those who sit in the legislative and executive chambers of the State.

It is even more apparent, however, that your State Government is powerless to raise the standards of education without a corps of teachers who are both capable and devoted. The work of every teacher in South Carolina has a direct and tangible bearing upon the future of our people. The results of the painstaking, daily efforts of our teachers may be found in the unmistakable marks they leave on our people, for good or bad.

Except for that of his parents, the influence of his teachers is perhaps the most important influence that ever comes into a man's life. The teacher moulds the character of the citizen, and through the citizen, the teacher shapes the destiny of the nation. Good teachers are, therefore, the best hope for the future of our country, and for the preservation of the ideals of personal freedom and local self-government upon which our democracy depends.

For this reason, the teaching profession demands the best talent available. I have tried to emphasize this point in several recommendations to the General Assembly that
teachers salaries should be raised and their working conditions improved so as to attract the best people we can get for our schools. As a result, teacher salaries have been placed on a basis of qualifications, and we now have the best teacher-pay schedule in the history of the State. It is still not sufficient to meet the needs, however, and this year I again recommended pay increases in my Annual Message to the General Assembly.

In addition to enacting the most constructive school legislation in the history of the State, the last General Assembly provided for a survey of the public school system. This survey has now been completed, and copies are available to anyone interested in our educational needs. If you have not read this report, let me urge you to do so. It is probable that you will not agree with every one of its recommendations. But the information it contains is a vital contribution to our school improvement program, and the survey is well worth your careful study. The action of the Legislature will undoubtedly reflect the attitude of the people, and in this you can be a potent factor in helping our State make the education progress it should.
I cannot over-emphasize the importance of education in the up-building of South Carolina. Our educational problems are part and parcel of the great task we have of raising our economic level of life to a point more nearly approaching the national average.

In 1945 South Carolina ranked near the bottom -- Number 44 -- among the 48 states in expenditures per pupil. In that year we spent $74.31 per pupil, as compared with the national average of $136.41. The latest figures compiled by the Council of State Governments show that we increased that expenditure by 45% in 1947-48, spending $110.09 per pupil.

Our educational effort, according to ability to pay, makes a much better record. In 1947-48 we were 11th among the states in our expenditures per pupil according to ability to pay. We spend 2.6 per cent of our income for education, as compared to a national average of only 2.2 per cent.

Such figures show that much remains to be done to make the public school system of South Carolina the important instrument in the life of our people that it should be. We must not hesitate to attack this problem with vigor and energy.
Our economic development is inevitably dependent upon equipping our people, both white and colored, to become productive citizens and carry their per capita share of the load.

Higher income follows better education and training, and the educational dollar yields the highest possible return on the investment. Education is the means whereby we can most rapidly equip all our citizens to make their maximum contribution to the State's total economy.

Our principal speaker today is one who is well aware of the importance of education, and of the problems of the school teacher, having started her career in public life as a teacher. She later became a business executive in a telephone company, a newspaper concern, and in other types of businesses.

In 1930 she was married to the Honorable Clyde H. Smith, a prominent public official of the State of Maine. Her political career began in 1930 when she was elected to the Republican State Committee of Maine. In 1936, when Mr. Smith was elected to the United States House of Representatives, she became his secretary.
Upon her husband's death in 1940, she was elected to fill his unexpired term, and was reelected to the 77th, 78th, 79th and 80th Congresses. While in the House of Representatives, she served with distinction on the House Naval Affairs Committee. In 1947, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, she inspected the devastated countries of Europe.

Last year Mrs. Smith was elected to the United States Senate over three opponents. Her election was by the highest majority in the history of the State of Maine.

Senator Smith is now serving on several important Senate committees. Her recent honors include the "1948 Politics Achievement Award," given her by the Women's National Press Club, and the Associated Press award for the "1948 Woman of the Year." She is also the holder of honorary degrees from several colleges.

Every American should be proud of the career of Senator Smith, for it is a splendid example of the manner in which a woman may serve her country. I have always advocated a larger role for women in public life, and have endorsed the principle of equal remuneration for equal services. As Governor, I have appointed a large number of women to important positions.
It is a great pleasure to me to welcome this distinguished woman to South Carolina. And it is a privilege to present to you at this time, the Honorable Margaret Chase Smith, United States Senator from the State of Maine.