

STATEMENT BY J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE READ TO THE SECOND ANNUAL
CONVENTION OF THE CAROLINAS RADIO NEWS DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION, MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA, JUNE
3, 1949.

I consider it a real pleasure to greet the members of the Carolinas Radio News Directors Association, and to extend a hearty welcome to those of its members who are representing our sister State of North Carolina. I know I may speak for all the citizens of South Carolina when I say that we are proud of the contribution radio has made to the convenience and to the public welfare of our two States.

The fact that the Carolina Radio News Directors Association is now holding its second annual convention is an indication of the growing importance of radio "newscasting" in the daily lives of our citizens. Within a brief span of years, the regular news broadcasts have become the steady "information diet" of millions of Americans.

In America, the dissemination of news and opinion by radio is protected by the same "freedom of the press" clause of the Bill of Rights which has made our newspapers free organs of opinion. Out of respect for that great tradition, there is no forced censorship in the United States, even in wartime. Freedom of speech on the air is one of many inviolable privileges which our democratic system has produced.

However, the preservation of that American privilege depends utterly upon how it is used. For this reason, the radio news director has a grave responsibility to furnish reliable and accurate information for the guidance of the public. As long as he does so, he is helping to nourish and protect the freedom he enjoys. Should his presentation of the news become careless or distorted, he is contributing to the breaking down of the very freedom by which he exists.

It is a heartening and encouraging thing to reflect that those who guide radio in America have maintained a rigid devotion to the public service in the matter of broadcasting the news. There have been few instances of abuse of the privilege of free speech on the air. This has been true not because of government censorship, but because of a system of ethics developed within and by the radio industry. This is a clear case of recognition of the responsibility which must always accompany privilege in a democracy.

I am confident that the Carolinas Radio News Directors Association is already making an important contribution to preserving this tradition and to its enrichment.

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