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Southern Governors' Conference: Industrial Development in the South

Strom Thurmond

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In South Carolina we have recognized that we must provide our agricultural economy with a balance of industry if we are to achieve prosperity for our people. Toward that end we have been working very hard for the past few years, and our efforts have already been rewarded with satisfying results.

Since V-J Day, more than 1,800 new industrial plants have been established in South Carolina. Many of these are small, but some of them are giants, such as the new Orlon plant of DuPont recently opened at Camden, and the new Celanese plant at Rock Hill.

Within the past four years alone, more than $425,000,000 has been invested or announced for investment in our State in new industries or expansions of existing ones. These dollar figures become more meaningful when you realize that this expenditure means more than 50,000 brand new jobs for our people, with new payrolls amounting to approximately $100,000,000 annually.

South Carolina has many attractions for industry, the most important of which is the quality of our people. They are friendly, energetic, capable, and quick to adjust themselves to new conditions and new skills. They are 99.7% native-born Americans—in fact, South Carolina is the first state in percentage of native-born...
white people. Our labor supply is plentiful. One manufacturer with 300 jobs to fill had 3,500 applicants. About 90% of these were high school graduates, and 23% had a college education.

To back up our natural attractions to industry, we have instituted a vigorous state-wide program to encourage industrial development.

Our Research, Planning & Development Board employs a staff of trained experts to work with industry, making the road to South Carolina easy and profitable. Moreover, this Board has engaged in a highly effective, low-budget advertising program which has led the nation in results obtained.

As Governor, I have traveled with the officers of this Board to many parts of the country to visit industries and "sell" the merits of our State.

To insure industry of a reasonable profit, we have maintained a sound and reasonable tax structure. We have reduced our corporation license taxes, and have fought jealously any attempt to penalize industry by unjust taxation.

We have built a system of primary and secondary highways second to none in the nation, making industrial sites accessible.

We have encouraged livestock production, realizing that not only does livestock raise the farmers' per capita income, but it provides auxiliary industries in processing, canning, and packing.
Our state-supported Clemson College has engaged in extensive industrial research, such as a study of clays which leads to the possibility of producing white brick in this State.

We are developing our three fine seaports to their maximum efficiency, working through a State Ports Authority which has been highly effective. The Port of Charleston last year topped all other South Atlantic ports in total cash exports.

All these things are given added significance because our people now realize that their destiny lies in an adequate balance between agriculture and industry, and they are working in harmony to gain it.

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