

EXCERPTS FROM STATEMENT BY STROM THURMOND, CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S.SENATE, IN CAMPAIGN MEETING, CHESTER, S.C., JUNE 8, 1950

Governor Thurmond today charged that while his opponent, Senator Olin D. Johnston, was Governor "a pardon racket flourished", and said he had proof that "3,221 criminals including 93 murderers" had been "turned loose by parole, by pardon, by leaves of absence, by letter, by telegram, and sometimes by mistake."

He charged that as Governor Johnston "went on an unconstitutional, unbridled, and unbelievable pardon spree" and added, "How many were issued by telephone or without a written record I have been unable to determine."

"After our sheriffs and peace officers, solicitors, judges, and jurymen had devoted weeks and months to arresting and convicting murderers, rapists, and other criminals," Thurmond declared, "my opponent recklessly and promiscuously turned them out of the penitentiary after they had served only brief periods of their terms."

"Why should the solicitor spend days and nights acquiring evidence," Thurmond asked, "When he knew all his work could be set aside by the stroke of a Governor's pen, if the prisoner at the bar could raise sufficient money to get a pardon?"

He recalled the case of Dave Dunham, Chester Negro convicted of murdering 3 persons in 1932 and paroled by Johnston in 1945. He said Dunham while on parole had attacked a Chester couple and killed a young veteran who sought to defend his companion. Thurmond charged Johnston had paroled Dunham after the Parole & Pardon Board had rejected the case.

Declaring his administration had "ended the pardon racket" by removing the pardon power from the Governor, Thurmond said, "We have seen to it that there will be no more Dave Dunhams turned back on our communities."

Quoting from a speech by Senator Maybank attacking Johnston's pardon record in 1941, Thurmond said his opponent "did not defend his record then. I call on him to do so now," he added.