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Address for broadcast on "Town & Country" Program, Radio Station WMSC

Strom Thurmond

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As I told the General Assembly in my final Annual Message, it is difficult for me to give full expression to my emotions as I relinquish the helm of State Government after 4 years in the office of Governor.

It has been my privilege to serve the people of South Carolina in many capacities for over a quarter-century, and there has grown within me an abiding love for our traditions, our institutions, and our people. I have never been more conscious of this love for South Carolina than now, during the closing days of my administration.

When I was inaugurated in 1947, the economy of the nation was turning toward peacetime activity. Here in South Carolina, we saw ahead of us the greatest opportunity for development and progress in a hundred years, provided we did the things necessary to take advantage of it.

It was obvious that we needed to do some hard work on two fronts: first, to modernize and diversify our agriculture; and second, to balance that agriculture with substantial business and industrial development. It was only through such a program that we could raise our living standards, and give our people the increased State services they needed.
To insure a more prosperous agriculture, we have taken many forward steps in 4 years, perhaps the most important of which was to vigorously encourage the development of a livestock industry. I am convinced that we can find a new source of wealth in livestock, and I have sought to promote this opportunity in every possible way.

Other progressive steps we have taken to build our agriculture include: Initiation of a State Farm Market System, with one market completed at Pageland, a large central market almost completed in Columbia, and planning started on 3 others; creation of a Foundation Seed Organization to distribute higher grade seeds; a vast increase in funds for agricultural research in many fields, especially livestock; and the paving of 4,100 miles of farm-to-market roads, making it easier for farmers to market crops.

Even greater achievement has marked our efforts toward developing industry. As Governor, I have made this a special project, making countless trips out of the State to present the many attractions of South Carolina to those who were in a position to order the building of new plants. Mrs. Thurmond and I have had the pleasure of entertaining many industrialists at the Mansion, where we tried to make them feel they were welcome here.

These efforts have borne fruits of which I am proud, and which will mean much to our economy in years to come. During
the past 4 years, we have witnessed the establishment or announce-
ment/of more than a billion dollars' worth of new industries or
expansions. This means the creation of more than 60,000 new jobs,
and over $125,000,000 in new payrolls annually.

To bring this about, it was necessary to make many
reforms in State Government, to create a political "climate"
favorable to industry. Great sums of money are invested/only
when industry is assured of a sound, stable government. Therefore,
it has been my aim to make good government a reality in our State.

A complete review of the improvements we have made/
would take too much time, but there are several outstanding
accomplishments which should be mentioned.

We have set up machinery to reorganize the State
Government to increase efficiency and economy. Several reorganization
plans were passed, including consolidation of 8 fiscal agencies/
and adoption of central purchasing, which alone will save taxpayers
several million dollars annually.

Abuse of the pardon power has been ended by removing
this power from the Governor. Before this was done, no paroles
or pardons were granted by me/except on recommendation of the
Probation, Parole & Pardon Board. Not a single "leave of absence"
has been granted to any prisoner.

Education has been raised to the highest level in
our history through an expanded educational program which included: the best teacher-pay schedule we ever had; an increase in school funds of almost 100%; enactment of a permanent 9-months school term; completion of a survey to determine school needs; provision for reorganizing school districts; and many other forward steps.

We have passed an adequate election law to protect the sanctity of the ballot, including single registration for all elections, a single secret ballot for general elections, and punishment for fraud and corruption.

Improvements of benefit to working people included: reorganization of the Industrial Commission to better protect awards in cases involving compensation for injuries and death; establishment of an Area Trade School System to enable workers to acquire skilled training and thereby increase earnings; an occupational disease law; and the creation of 60,000 new jobs in industry.

We have developed a State highway system second to none in the nation.

We have brought about more adequate control of the liquor traffic by imposing a graduated liquor surtax, which has channeled excessive liquor profits amounting to about $5,000,000 annually into the State Treasury.

A Surplus War Property Agency was created, saving the State, counties and cities about $9,000,000.
Our penal system was improved by initiating a modern penitentiary building program, and by construction of an Industrial School for Negro Girls.

We made provision for a $10,000,000 teaching-hospital at the Medical College, which will diagnose and treat unusual diseases for our people, whether they can afford to pay for it or not, and which will greatly assist in training doctors. We also provided $6,000,000 to counties for hospitals and health centers, and created a $500,000 cancer clinic program.

A State institutional building program was made possible by allocation of $12,000,000 in surplus funds for construction of needed buildings.

All state services to the people have been vastly increased, especially in health, welfare, libraries, State parks, and conservation of natural resources.

Throughout my administration, I have insisted on a balanced budget and business-like methods in State Government. During the past 4 years, we have operated on a strictly cash basis, without borrowing one penny for operations. We have raised the State's credit rating from A to AA, leaving to my successor, Governor Byrnes, no unpaid bills, notes, or financial encumbrances of any kind.

Those are some of the most important accomplishments of my administration. A complete report was attached to my 1951 Annual Message to the General Assembly as a printed appendix, and
will be available to the public in the Extension Division of the University of South Carolina and at the State Historical Commission.

As I retire to private life and the practice of law at my new home, Aiken, I can think of other things which our State should do, some of them being projects we have worked on during the past 4 years. We have developed strong sentiment for them, and I feel certain they will soon be passed.

I am gratified that such an able and distinguished South Carolinian will succeed me, and it will be my pleasure to support his administration as a citizen in the ranks. It shall ever be my purpose to work for the best interests of South Carolina, to the end that she may become the great State she is destined to be.