

Excerpts from speech of S. Thurmond
to J. Chamber of Commerce, Sept. 29, 1957

-1-

The issue in the Senate campaign is whether thirty-one men shall choose a United States Senator or whether the people shall choose him. This is a fight for principle. It is a fight for government by the people instead of government by a small group of committeemen. I have no selfish ambition in this race and to make the principle at stake crystal clear I have pledged to the people of South Carolina that if I am elected in the General Election on November 2, I will tender my resignation in 1956 in sufficient time to let the democrats of our State nominate a United States Senator in the regular Democratic Primary of that year which is the earliest regular primary to be held.

One of the important things which must be remembered in this campaign for the continuation of primaries is that should the bypassing of the primary be successful this time, power-hungry politicians might again try to use the same method.

South Carolina's system of primary elections was approved by the State Democratic Convention in 1894 and put into effect in 1896. Since that time, the people have never till now been denied the right of nominating their Senator for a full term by voting in a Democratic primary.

The South Carolina election law contains ample provisions under which the Democratic Executive Committee could have ordered a primary on September 3rd. A primary could still be held if the committee nominee for the Senate would agree.

That law contains a provision, Section 23-315, under which the nominee of the 31 members of the Executive Committee could now give the people the privilege of voting in a primary if he and the com-

mittee would agree to do so.

The nominee of the Executive Committee could permit a primary election by the simple act of withdrawing as the committee nominee. The ballots already printed could be used in the General Election and under a provision of the law the votes cast for the name printed on the ballots would be counted for the winner of the primary.

The committee nominee must have thought the election law was a good one as he voted for it when it passed third reading in the Senate on April 11, 1950. The Senate must have thought the election law was a good one as it passed it by a vote of 29 to 9 as shown by the 1950 Senate Journal on Page 692.