

Statement of Strom Thurmond

Oct. 20, 1954

In a speech reported from Spartanburg Tuesday night Mr. Brown, the Senate candidate of the 31 Committeemen, referred to his "chief write-in opponent" as "legging for" the nomination. Mr. Brown could mean no one else but me when he referred to his chief opponent.

The statement that I sought nomination by the Committee is false. No member of the Democratic Executive Committee, or any other person, can truthfully state that I sought nomination by the committee. I have previously stated on several occasions that I was not a candidate for nomination by the Committee, and that I would not have accepted such a nomination.

Before the committee met, I stated emphatically to Mr. Charles N. Plowden of Clarendon County and to Mr. R. M. Figg of Charleston that I would not permit my name to be presented to the committee, and that I would not accept nomination by the committee. Even earlier, on the day Senator Maybank died, I had made a similar statement to fellow Legionnaires in Washington while attending the annual convention of the American Legion. Several legionnaires from South Carolina were present in the Legion Convention Hall discussing Senator Maybank's death and who would be his successor when I walked up. One of them inquired whether I would be a candidate for nomination by the committee. I replied that I did not believe the committee would abuse its power by attempting to select a nominee, and that I would not accept nomination by the committee because there should be a primary so that the people could choose Senator Maybank's successor. I further stated that I would not want to be Senator unless chosen by the people. Among those present at that time who heard my statement were E. Roy Stone, Jr. of Greenville, James F. Daniel, Jr., ^{of Greenville,} and O. D. Freeman of Horry County, all of whom are past State Commanders of the American Legion.

In his speech in Spartanburg the Committee candidate asked:
"What can be lawful and then be wrong?"

The answer is that since it was lawful to have a primary, it was morally wrong to deprive the people of the right to a primary.