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Comments at Washington Board of Trade dinner for new senators and congressmen

Strom Thurmond

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When I was invited to make a response to the address of welcome, I was perhaps a bit suspicious. During the past year, there were some people who let it be known they had doubts as to the ability of South Carolinians to read very well. And there were others who said they doubted if we could write. Both of those questions were decided in a manner I consider to have been very effective, and personally, most satisfactory on November 2 last year. However, when I received this invitation, I thought there might be people who at this time wanted to find out if South Carolinians can talk as well as read and write.
On more mature second thought, however, I came to the conclusion that I should not be suspicious. I lost my suspicion/because I do not believe any of you question the ability of anyone elected to the Senate/to make sounds.

I assure you of my ability to make a noise/but I have no intention of demonstrating any capacity for endurance speaking tonight. You might have been suspicious about that.

I am honored to have this opportunity/to express appreciation to you tonight/on behalf of my colleagues and myself/for the hospitality you have extended to us.

The Board of Trade has been an important factor in the
development of an orderly business world in this great city. Our forefathers/who laid the cornerstone for the United States Capitol in the District ten miles square/a century and a half ago/could not possibly/have visualized the tremendous growth of this city and the adjacent areas. The District of Columbia was virtually without inhabitants in that bygone day.

Today Washington is one of the great cities of the world; it is quite appropriately regarded as the Capital of the world.

Of course/the development of the District as the center of our Government/was the major factor in the growth of Washington into a major city. But with the influx of people to man the jobs of Government, there was a necessary corresponding
development of other phases of life vital to the health and welfare of the people who came here to perform the various functions of Government. Many thousands of people not connected with the Government came to operate the businesses and industries serving this vast community.

You, who are members of the Board of Trade, have wisely directed and channelled the development of such business and industries. Official Washington is one world but it is not and cannot be a world unto itself. Government workers and you who direct the business life of the District are inter-dependent for continued existence.

Although business and Government depend upon each other,
I am happy that in this country, neither business nor Government dominates the other. I hope this balance will never be upset, either in favor of business or Government domination. Free enterprise has been a major incentive which has made our country great materially. Government regulation of business should be sufficient only to ensure the general welfare.

Most government—local as well as federal—could well adopt more business practices to eliminate wastefulness and to secure the greatest value out of each tax dollar taken from the people.
At the same time, business and industry should, from time to time, review its operations in an effort to find ways of performing public services. Business and industry cannot separate themselves from the community in which they exist. They are integral parts of the community. To borrow an expression commonly used in foreign relations these days, I would say that Government and business should always seek a ground for peaceful co-existence. There must be a constant reappraisal of this relationship from the viewpoint of business and Government. But I hope the time shall never come when this relationship is unbalanced by the overt action of either out of keeping with the traditional concept of the place of business and the place of Government in the American system.
I am honored to have been designated to make this response on behalf of the new Senators. I believe that all of us can look forward to a challenging future. We must face that future with confidence in our nation and in its vast businesses and industry as well as in our Government.