RADIO AND TELEVISION REPORT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON FEBRUARY 15, 1956

My fellow South Carolinians:

This is an important year for South Carolina and for the Nation because, in addition to other things, it is Presidential election year. We should remember that democratic processes by which candidates are nominated for President start at our own doorsteps.

If you want to have a voice in the selection by the Democratic Party, you should attend your Democratic precinct meeting on Saturday, February 25. Delegates will be elected from the precincts to attend the County conventions and delegates from the County conventions on March 3 will be elected to the State Democratic Convention in Columbia on March 21.

The delegates elected at the State Convention to represent South Carolina's Democratic Party at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago in July will have a very serious and important task.

South Carolina delegates should go to Chicago determined to seek re-adoptions by the Convention of the rule which would require a vote of two-thirds of the delegates to nominate the Democratic candidate. The adoption of the two-thirds rule would make it possible to prevent the nomination of a person who is antagonistic to the views of the South. Also, the South would have a strong voice in party matters again and Southern views would be recognized in the party platform.

Some elements of the National Democratic Party have made political capital of the segregation issue, just as have members of the other major political party. South Carolina must send delegates to Chicago who are prepared to fight against this radical faction of the Democratic Party.
On Monday, the Senate will turn its attention to one of the most important legislative matters to come before the Congress this year. This is the new farm bill which is designed to alleviate our farm problems. The main provisions of the bill include the following:

1. A return to 90 per cent of parity on basic commodities/such as cotton, corn, peanuts, rice, and millable wheat. Tobacco, another basic crop, is supported at 90 per cent of parity under present law.

2. The creation of a dual parity. Under the bill, parity prices would be figured on the higher of two parity formulas.

3. Establishment of a voluntary soil bank program. A total of $750 million would be authorized to pay farmers this year for taking out of production part of their allotted acreages of corn, cotton, rice, wheat, and burley and flue-cured tobacco. Safeguards were written into the bill to protect the interest of the tenants and sharecroppers on land put in the soil bank.

4. Establishment of a conservation reserve as another phase of the soil bank program. Under this phase, farmers would be paid $350 million this year to shift marginal land to grass, trees, and other such crops.

5. Establishment of a broad program of assistance to the States for tree planting and reforestation. Under this program, the bill proposes the utilization of more than 50 million acres of idle lands for building up and maintaining a dependable future supply of industrial wood.

6. The orderly sale of surplus cotton on the world markets at competitive prices in order to re-establish our historic share of
these markets. This is a part of Senate Bill 2702 which I introduced last year.

7. An increase in price supports for dairy products from 75 to 80 per cent of parity.

And, 8., The creation of an acreage protection program for small cotton farmers.

Most of the Senate debate over the bill is expected to center around the provision restoring 90 per cent of parity. The Administration and some Republican and Democratic Senators have expressed strong opposition to this provision. They favor a continuation of a flexible scale for all commodities supported by the Government.

Agriculture Committee Chairman Ellender has stated that he believes the parity provision will stand, and that the bill will receive final Senate action late in the week. The farmers of South Carolina can be assured of my full support of a return to 90 per cent.

I hope you will be able to tune in for my next report from Washington. Thank you.

The End