My fellow South Carolinians:

Last week I discussed with you various aspects of the Senate farm bill, which I described as being considerably weaker than the original bill reported to the Senate floor by the Agriculture Committee. During the past week, the bill was strengthened somewhat by the passage of several amendments designed to aid our farmers who caught in the price-cost squeeze.

On Monday night, shortly before the bill was passed by a vote of 93-2, the Senate adopted two strengthening amendments. I co-sponsored one of these with Senator Stennis of Mississippi. It would guarantee a minimum four-acre cotton allotment for our small cotton farmers or the highest acreage planted for the three preceding years, whichever is the smaller. This would be done by increasing the national cotton allotment by 100,000 acres for the sole purpose of establishing minimum cotton allotments. Last week, a similar provision was knocked from the committee bill.

The other amendment, offered by Senator Humphrey of Minnesota, would provide higher price supports for cotton, corn and wheat by setting aside larger quantities of these surpluses. This means that, even with flexible supports on the lawbooks, cotton could bring 90 per cent support prices instead of the 87 per cent level promised by Secretary Benson.

While the Senate did approve these two amendments, I believe it took a step backward when it voted approval of another amendment requiring mandatory participation in the soil bank program before a
farmer can receive price supports. This amendment was passed by a margin of two votes.

The bill is now being considered by a free conference committee, which is trying to iron out the differences between the Senate and House bills.

The Senate has now shifted to consideration of the electoral college reform plan offered by Senator Daniel of Texas, Senator Mundt of South Dakota, and myself. Our plan has the support of 51 other co-sponsors, plus other Senators who have indicated they will likewise vote for it. In order for the plan to win, however, it must gain the support of two-thirds of the Senators present for the vote, as this is a proposed amendment to the Constitution.

Our plan is being attacked by Senators from the huge metropolitan areas who wish to have the minority blocs in New York and Chicago continue to control our elections. As a result of the present system, both national party platforms are drawn so as to cater to the votes of these blocs, thus throwing that state's entire electoral vote to a liberal candidate by a slim margin in popular votes.

I believe passage of electoral reform plan is one of the most important measures to come before the Congress this year. Its passage will be a great contribution to the American system of government because it will reflect for the first time the will of the people in our presidential elections.

South Carolinians, especially those residing in the Columbia area, were pleased to learn on Wednesday that Fort Jackson has been designated as a permanent military installation. Fort Jackson is one of the nation's most important training centers, and it has proved to be a great boon to Columbia and South Carolina. Since coming to
Washington last year, I have had numerous conferences with officials of the Defense Department/requesting permanent status for Fort Jackson. I am glad that the Department has now decided to give this status to both/Fort Jackson and nearby Camp Gordon at Augusta, Georgia.

On Wednesday I attended the State Democratic Convention in Columbia. I was very glad that the Convention decided to recess and to re-convene after the National Democratic Convention in August. In that way, the people of South Carolina can see who the party candidates are/and what the platform is/before deciding on a course of action in the 1956 General Election. I hope the national convention can be persuaded to nominate a moderate candidate/and to write a party platform that is not inimical to the views of the South.

That's all the time for this week. I hope you'll tune in/for my next report from Washington. Thank you.

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