5-30-1958

Address by Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) at groundbreaking ceremonies for new steam generating plant of Carolina Power and Light Company at Hartsville, S.C., 1958 May 30

Strom Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code). Use of these materials beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

For additional rights information, please contact Kirstin O'Keefe (kokeefe [at] clemson [dot] edu)

For additional information about the collections, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

Recommended Citation
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/1693

For additional information about the collection, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Manuscript Collections at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100 by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
HOLD FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY: Expected Noon, May 30, 1958

ADDRESS BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) AT GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES FOR NEW STEAM GENERATING PLANT OF CAROLINA POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY AT HARTSVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, MAY 30, 1958.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Robinson, Congressman McMillan, Congressman Hemphill, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Hunnicutt, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen of the Great Pee Dee Area:

It is a great pleasure to be invited to speak on this auspicious occasion. I feel honored to be introduced by one of the most distinguished citizens of our State and Nation, Lee Wiggins. I wish to thank him for his gracious remarks.

It is always a pleasure to come and visit in the great Pee Dee area. The people here have a deep sense of pride in their section, and they all feel a close kinship as residents of this fine area. This sense of pride and kinship, together with abounding initiative and ingenuity, have made it possible for the people here to boast of some of the best farmers and farmlands in the world. In fact, some of the most important discoveries and accomplishments in agricultural research have been made right here in this area by the Coker family and other outstanding farmers. I am of the opinion that if we could get the Agriculture Department transferred from Washington to South Carolina, we could cut out the red tape, make progress toward ending the agricultural cost-price squeeze, and show the bureaucrats how to keep in step with true agricultural progress. Since such a move is probably out of the question, at least South Carolina and other Southern farming areas should be given more representation in the hierarchy of the Agriculture Department.

During the past decade, the people of this area have put forward a major effort to balance their agricultural economy with industry. When the people of South Carolina elected me Governor in 1946, I determined that I would make this one of the primary goals of my
administration. At the conclusion of my service, more than one billion dollars had been expended/or announced for investment/in new industries and expansions. This created 60,000 new jobs, with new annual payrolls of approximately $125,000,000.

These ground-breaking ceremonies/for the erection of this large steam generating plant/point up the fact that South Carolina/continues to inspire the confidence of the business world/and to forge forward industrially. Private enterprise has the initiative, the desire, and the willingness/to expand and develop/where the atmosphere of State and local government is favorable/and where the attitude of the people is conducive and cooperative. These conditions--and more--exist in South Carolina, and I hope it will not be long/before we have at least one industry in every community. As a result of the setback which agriculture has suffered in recent years, it is more urgent than ever/that we locate more industries in our farming areas.

These ceremonies signify here today the progress--past, present, and future--of the people of the Pee Dee area. Because you have raised your standard of living/and have attracted more industries to this area, the demand for domestic and industrial consumption of electric power/has increased to such an extent/that the Carolina Power and Light Company/has decided to erect on this site, this plant/which will house the largest single generating unit/of its entire system. This demonstrates the progress of the past and present. The company's confidence in this area/gives ample evidence of the bright future which lies ahead.

This was brought to my attention/when I asked why a steam generating plant/would require a large cooling lake covering 2,550 acres. This is larger than some hydro-electric power lakes. It was
explained to me that Carolina Power and Light/expects great things from this area--so great, in fact, that in its planning/it has provided for eventual expansion of this plant from 250,000 to 1,350,000 horsepower. This is a compliment to the people of this area, and it is also a compliment to the good judgment and wisdom of the leadership of the Carolina Power and Light Company.

This, however, is typical of the type foresight and vision/which the company’s able president, Louis Sutton, has always displayed/in guiding the fortunes of Carolina Power and Light. In directing the activities of the company, as well as the planning of this plant, Mr. Sutton has been ably assisted by a South Carolinian, Mr. H. Burton Robinson of Columbia, who is vice president and general manager of the company.

Mr. Robinson bears one of the State’s most prominent family names. And, the fact that every one of his five brothers and sisters has a professional degree--three of them being lawyers, one a medical doctor, and another having a doctorate of theology--attests to the high caliber, ability, and accomplishments of the Robinson family.

I am also proud that we have two other distinguished South Carolinians who are playing an important role with Carolina Power and Light Company. They are Mr. Fulton Creech of Sumter and Mr. J. L. Coker of Hartsville. Their outstanding character and ability contribute greatly to the Board of Directors.

We appreciate the valuable contributions which Mr. Sutton, these South Carolinians, and the other officials and employees of Carolina Power and Light/have rendered to the Carolinas through the years. We are highly pleased/that they have made the decision to build this huge plant and lake, which will create 350 construction jobs until
the completion date in 1960. After that date, the plant will require 50 employees on a permanent basis. In addition to providing power for numerous new industries which will be attracted here, this fine steam plant itself, will be a great stimulus to the economy of this section of our State.

This plant will be the product of our vast free enterprise system which has made the United States the greatest country in the world. It is a refreshing thing for me to be here on the spot, and to get a glimpse of the free enterprise system in action. This is one of the things that make Hartsville today a more refreshing place than Washington.

The atmosphere in the Nation's capital is one that reflects an alarming disregard for the virtues of the free enterprise system. Hardly a day goes by in Congress without some new scheme being proposed to put the Federal government further into business and deeper into debt. Action of this nature is not new. In this year of general business recession, however, it has been greatly intensified so much so that we will wind up with a deficit of approximately $9 billion this year and some new socialistic programs that strike at the very foundations of our free enterprise system and of our Constitution.

These proponents of government in business have used the recession as an excuse to win approval in the Senate of some wild-eyed programs that would not even be considered by the Congress under normal circumstances.

Even during a slight recession, they bring great pressure on the government to "do something," and the "something" very often turns out to be a scheme to interject more government regulation into
private business.

In the name of doing something for the American economy, the Senate recently passed one of the most dangerously socialistic bills to come to the floor in a long time. This legislation, known as the Area Redevelopment Bill, would set up a Federal loan and grant fund to be used to aid communities in areas of chronic depression to secure new industry. Essentially, it provides a Federal subsidy to bring industry into areas where, at the present time, industry does not want to go.

I do not believe that the Federal government should be a party to any such scheme.

In a more indirect way, the Federal government is already involved in a plan to encourage industrial plants to remain in areas where they cannot compete with other plants in the same industry. The procurement procedure now being followed in the Department of Defense provides for special consideration to plants in areas where labor is surplus. This policy places a premium on inefficiency, and in the long run weakens the economy. I have introduced legislation to prohibit this discriminatory procurement policy, and the bill, S. 5, is now pending on the Senate calendar.

Recently, the Senate passed another measure, the Community Facilities Bill, authorizing a billion-dollar program of loan assistance to local governments for public works construction.

The bill has a number of flaws. I will mention a few of them to indicate the extent to which the Federal government is getting into matters which should be left to the free enterprise system.

The Community Facilities Bill sets forth the terms under which communities may obtain loans from the Federal government. It also
makes it a matter of Federal policy that all communities shall be eligible for these loans if they cannot obtain loans on terms equally as good in the open market. It does not matter whether the terms available on the open market are reasonable terms -- they must be equally as good -- and the terms in the bill are most liberal. There are three reasons why I classify this as bad legislation: It encourages local communities to go into debt over their heads; it discourages private investors from making loans to local governments; and it puts the Federal government further into the lending business.

Both the Area Redevelopment Bill and the Community Facilities Bill include the Davis-Bacon wage-fixing procedure, by which the Secretary of Labor, in Washington, sets the wage scales for construction projects undertaken with the Federal loans. This is merely more Federal dictation from Washington. This kind of control and interference in the public works projects of our local communities is completely unwarranted and is contrary to every tradition and concept of the responsibilities of local governments for carrying on local affairs.

I could go on telling you about other instances in which the Federal government has extended its long arm into the workings of our free economy, with bad effects. The legislation I mentioned was approved by the Senate in recent weeks.

I do not like to be critical without making some affirmative suggestions. I would like to take a few minutes to mention some of the ways that the government can and should give aid to the economy.

I do not believe that government should be in business unless two conditions are fully met. First, the project must be something that is vitally needed. Second, it must be something that private
enterprise is not willing to do.

If Congress would apply this simple test to every piece of legislation, calling for the Federal government to go into business, we would have much less government in business, lower taxes, an improved economy, and less chance of turning our government into a socialistic welfare State.

It is important for us to bear in mind the simple economic fact that the government does not have any money to spend except the money it takes from the taxpayers. This is a very basic thing. Surely a ten-year-old child can understand it. Nevertheless, it is not understood as well as it should be; otherwise we would not have so many mature and presumably well-informed people continually asking Congress to appropriate more money for every conceivable project under the sun.

Perhaps they feel like the young housewife who asked her husband for money every day at the breakfast table. Finally, the husband got tired of it. "Money, money," he complained. "Every day you ask for money. You don't need money as much as you need some brains."

"I know," she replied sweetly, "but you don't have any brains to spare."

It occurs to me that people may think the same of the Federal government.

Seriously, however, one of the best ways that the government can aid business is by practicing strict economy in its own affairs. Our public debt has gone from $17 billion to $280 billion in less than 25 years, despite the fact that the Federal government now takes nearly 70 per cent of our tax dollar, leaving only 30 per cent for all State and local governments combined. Economy at the Federal
level is necessary, in order to leave enough tax sources free to support State and local governments, and to reduce the heavy load of taxation, which is a major item of expense to every individual and business enterprise in the United States. I am proud that my Congressional record showed that I ranked among the top in voting for economy in key Senate votes last year. I believe the people expect their representatives to handle the public's money as wisely as they handle their own.

Business also needs relief from the ever-increasing burden of expense, which accompanies the filling out of the endless series of complex reports, required by a multitude of Federal agencies.

Certainly, it behooves the Federal government to encourage the development of new markets for American products, both at home, through research looking toward the development of improved products and broadened markets; and abroad, through the regulation of foreign trade.

The expansion of markets, it seems to me, is one of the most desirable goals we can have in mind in formulating a realistic foreign trade policy. Since the formation of the American government, the tariff has been used for a variety of purposes. Originally, the tariff was conceived as a means of producing revenue for the government, and no attempt was made to regulate the flow of imports. Later, as manufacturing developed in this country, it was thought desirable to use the tariff as a barrier to protect domestic industry. Since World War II, we have made the tragic mistake of using foreign trade primarily as an instrument of foreign policy, without sufficient regard to the well-being of the trade itself. We have subsidized the establishment of textile mills in
foreign countries to compete with our own textile industry, and, by lowering tariff barriers, have encouraged these foreign textile interests to compete with our domestic mills on unfair terms. I believe in world trade, and I am convinced that our government should encourage the expansion of foreign trade to provide new markets for our domestic industry. However, we should not make the grave mistake of sacrificing our domestic industry on the pretense of foreign policy.

Because I believe in the free enterprise system, and want it to continue, I am a sponsor of legislation to remove tax inequities which put a special burden on the small businessman. Almost every business begins as a small one. Some survive, some fall by the wayside. The path of the small businessman has many pitfalls. I do not believe that the Federal government can remove those pitfalls, but I am firmly of the opinion that it can restrain itself from adding new ones. It is important to our free enterprise system that we retain, in our country, the right for a man to go into business for himself and take a chance, with the expectation that, through the application of good sense, hard work and a little bit of luck, he will be able to make a success of his enterprise.

Let me quote a few sentences from a brief talk which a distinguished statesman made last fall:

If you take a worm's eye view of the ills of American life and our foreign relations, you may worry that we are entering the decline and fall of the greatest nation in history.

If you take a bird's eye view, you will see the increasing skills, growing productivity, and the expansion of education and understanding, with improving health and growing strength of our nation.
And from whence comes this strength? It lies in freedom of men's initiative and the rewards of their efforts. It comes from our devotion to liberty and religious faith. We will have no decline and fall of this nation, provided we stand guard against the evils which weaken these forces.

"Freedom of men's initiative..."

Freedom of initiative is not listed in the Bill of Rights, but perhaps it should be. It is there in spirit, if not in letter. The American Revolution was not aimed at setting up a regulatory government. Quite the contrary, it was aimed at establishing a form of government which would keep regulation to a minimum.

It was, in short, a government admirably designed for the development of individualism, and the freedom of men's initiative.

The foundation principle of individualism is that one reaps what and where he sows, and finds happiness according to his competence in the pursuit of happiness. There is a dignity in self-reliance that is sharply in contrast with the degradation of the individual, which is part and parcel of Russian Communism.

I am proud to be a citizen of a State that is known for its individualism. South Carolinians have cherished the priceless heritage of individual freedom, through lean times and good. I hope that we will continue in this high tradition in the years that lie ahead.

The State that stands for freedom of initiative is a State that will prosper richly in years to come. It is also the State which will lead in human happiness through its recognition of the dignity of the individual.

Only through protecting freedom of initiative can we, in the words of the Constitution, "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." END