STATEMENT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND FOR WEEKLY BROADCAST, MARCH 13, 1958.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

During the past week, the Senate has taken several steps to stimulate business activity and combat the bad effects of the economic recession. I was able to play an important part in pushing forward some of this important legislation.

I am glad to report that we have won the battle for Soil Bank money for South Carolina farmers.

I am also glad to say that the Senate has extended the G. I. Housing program in very nearly the same form proposed by Senator Sparkman and me.

Along with the legislative program, I have been working hard to get prompt action on a number of public works and defense construction projects that have been deferred by the Executive branch of the government.

Although the Labor Department's statistics indicate that the recession has not affected South Carolina as severely as it has some other states, I am convinced that our State has special economic problems that do not show up in the statistics. We have many farmers and small businessmen who are not covered by the unemployment compensation laws, and their financial plight is not reflected in the Labor Department's statistics.

During the week ending February 22 -- the last week for which the exact figures are available -- almost 24,000 South Carolina residents filed claims for unemployment compensation.
This figure represents 5.7 per cent of the workers covered by the unemployment compensation laws. It indicates that unemployment in South Carolina has risen about 66 per cent in the last 12 months.

I think we can take this figure — 5.7 per cent — as the minimum in estimating the number of people out of work in South Carolina. The Labor Department estimates that 6.7 per cent of the total national labor force is unemployed.

My primary reason for insisting that Congress provide the full $750,000,000 authorized for Soil Bank payments was that the Federal government has a moral obligation to honor its implied contract with the farmers. It is important for the government to keep its promises. I also believe that true prosperity begins on the farm. We have never had a depression in this country that was not preceded by a farm depression. If we stand by and let the small farmer fail, we are inviting a general depression.

Another fundamental consideration in stimulating business is home-building. The population of this country is growing rapidly. New homes will be needed in every State to house the young people who are growing up and getting married.

The extension of the housing provisions of the G. I. Bill approved by the Senate is aimed to permit both direct loan for our veterans living in rural and small town areas and mortgage insurance financing through July 25, 1960. The bill also has several features designed to make it easier for veterans to secure mortgage loans. In recent months, it has been very difficult for eligible veterans to secure G. I. financing.
There are a number of government building programs that have been delayed, either by the Budget Bureau or elsewhere in the Executive Branch. Just as an example, the construction of a military hospital at Fort Jackson was authorized by Congress in 1955, and money appropriated, but the Budget Bureau has not released a penny for this valuable project. The Executive Department is also holding up the construction of Reserve training centers and National Guard armories, for which Congress has appropriated money.

This kind of project represents an excellent field for the government to use for stimulating business. These projects have had the careful attention of Congress. They have been thoroughly studied and found to be valuable, in the considered opinion of Congress. They should have priority over hastily conceived new projects for spending tax money to stimulate business.

This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.

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