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Strom Thurmond

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SPARTANBURG, S.C., June 4--Senator Strom Thurmond stated here today that the solution to the "civil rights" issue does not lie in "words and speeches" but rather in united political action to counterbalance the source of "civil rights" agitation--"minority bloc voting outside the South."

The strong States' Rights advocate made this statement in a campaign re-election speech in which he also devoted considerable attention to the perplexing problem of low-wage textile imports.

Quoting from speeches by anti-South leaders, Thurmond said they would have the people believe that the "civil rights" issue is one of morals when their actions in agitating the issue are based on "the harsh reality of political expediency." The Senator cited figures to show that political bloc voting by minority bloc elements in eight large States could come within 53 electoral votes of electing the President of the United States. He also described how the 93 electoral votes of the nine States which constituted the "heart of the Confederacy" could be used as the weapon to force both national political parties to settle the "civil rights" issue to Southern liking.

Thurmond said non-Southern Senators are reluctant to publicly admit their political motivations, but that privately they are not so reluctant. In drawing on public statements, he quoted Senator Javits of New York as saying that by strongly pushing "civil rights" the Republicans could win the electoral votes of 17 populous States.

He also quoted Senator Clark, another ardent civil righter, as trying to peg the issue to a matter of morals. "Publicly, those
Another colleague quoted by Thurmond was Senator Capehart of Indiana. He pointed out how Capehart's Northern colleagues refused to heed his plea that the Senate talk about the blessings of minority groups in America rather than conveying a false impression about race relations in our country by debating "civil rights." Capehart's "sincere" plea did not "stop the drive of the pro-civil rights forces," Thurmond said, because the "dominant factor in determining their course was the harsh reality of political expediency."

On the subject of textiles, Thurmond pointed up the importance of the industry to South Carolina's economy. He said 75 per cent of all persons employed in industry in South Carolina are engaged in textile work, adding that the industry's payrolls in the State account for 78 per cent of industrial payrolls. He stated further that for purposes of national defense, the industry ranks second only to steel.

The Senator decried the current "Washington attitude on free trade at any price." He charged that the State Department has perverted the basic trade policies embodied in the Trade Act by its author, the late Cordell Hull, into an instrument of foreign policy. "I believe in trade also," he stated, "but not to the extent of sacrificing entire industries and thousands of jobs."

Thurmond, who has been credited with leading the fight against low-wage imports, cited figures which show that from 1947 to 1958 a total of 719 textile mills have been closed and that from
1946 through 1957, 325,000 jobs have disappeared in the textile industry, 102,000 of them in the South. He said further that cotton cloth imports increased from 47 million square yards in 1950 to 199 million square yards in 1959. In the first quarter of 1960, he pointed out, cotton cloth imports jumped 102.8 million square yards, more than double the previous quarter.

"In view of the attitude of the State Department," Thurmond said, "the Congress must resume its constitutional control over imports and tariffs in order to save our textile industry and its more than a million jobs from the grave peril posed by skyrocketing low-wage imports."

Thurmond, an ardent champion of restricting textile imports, has won adoption of amendments to the trade bill and was instrumental in setting up the special Senate subcommittee to study the problems of the domestic textile industry. He serves as the only Southern member of this subcommittee, which last year made ten recommendations for improving the welfare of the industry and its employees. Since that time most of these recommendations have been put into effect.

The Senator reviewed his Senate record against integration of the races and in favor of States' Rights with these facts: (1) his authorship of the original draft of the Southern Manifesto which was signed by 101 Members of Congress and which put the South on the offensive against the desegregation decision; (2) his testimony and speeches against the 1957 "civil rights" bill, including his record-breaking speech of more than 24 hours against final passage; (3) his work in winning 34 co-sponsors for the States' Rights bill, which lost in the Senate by one vote; (4) his discovery and elimination from a housing bill of a provision which would have permitted integration of housing by a method of
"scatteration" of individually integrated public housing units in neighborhoods; (5) the successful efforts of the 18 Southern Senators to defeat the most vicious proposals in the 1960 "civil rights" bill by an organized filibuster and other parliamentary tactics; and (6) Congressional Quarterly's voting record analysis which showed him to be the "Most Southern of the Southern Senators."

On the subject of segregation, Thurmond denounced the recent action of the national leadership of the Textile Workers Union in taking over the treasury and affairs of a local union at Front Royal, Va., because the local had contributed $3,000 to support a private school system for the purpose of avoiding integration. He said he had made a Senate speech about the matter and had called it to the attention of Senator McClellan's investigations committee and to Labor Secretary Mitchell, both of whom are investigating the seizure as a possible violation of the 1959 Labor Reform Law.

In reviewing other aspects of his Senate record, the South Carolina Democrat pointed to his record of perfect attendance last year, his fight for labor reform legislation to protect the public and the working people, his number one standing among Senate Democrats on voting for economy in government spending, and his efforts to serve the people in every capacity and report fully to them on his actions in the Senate.

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