Radio Address at Florence, S. C., 18 June, 1946 at 8:00 P.M.

I am glad to be in Florence, the center of the Pee Dee. The County of Florence was established in 1838 from parts of Marion, Darlington, Williamsburg and Clarendon Counties and derived its name from the town of Florence which was selected as its County Seat. The promoters of the town desired to compliment General W. W. Harlee, who was Lt. Governor of S. C., 1862-64 by naming the town for him, but he requested that they pay the compliment to his daughter, Florence, and thereby getting a prettier name. I wish to congratulate the people of Florence on their progress they have made.

[4] I resigned my position as Circuit Judge of S. C. to offer for the position of Governor as I felt I could be of service to the people of my state in this post-war period. I feel that my twenty-three years of public service as a school teacher, county superintendent of education, state senator, circuit judge and soldier qualify me for the varied responsibilities of this office.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY

The people of our State are by nature God-fearing and law abiding, and have a keen and wholesome respect for law and order. They want and expect the laws of the State to be enforced by the Governor as Chief Magistrate under the Constitution, without fear or favor, and without partiality or privilege. It is the duty of the Governor to see that this is done, and as Governor I shall do my best to cooperate with the local authorities in each county, city or town to the end that the wishes of the people shall be carried out.
It is particularly important, in view of the increase of crime in other parts of the country as the aftermath of war, that we have a Governor for the next four years who is determined to see that lawlessness shall not be tolerated in our State.

And when the courts have tried law violators, I shall not try to use the power of clemency to change their sentences or to spare them from the punishment which they have earned.

I have already shown my respect for the courts of the State by resigning from the bench when I offered for Governor, so that the courts might not, to the slightest extent, be involved in political discussion; and I shall exercise the power of clemency only in those rare cases where it was intended by the Constitution to be used. The power of clemency was written into the Constitution to serve the ends of public justice, and not to enable a Governor to act like an emperor or like Santa Claus with it.

While I shall never abuse the pardoning power as Governor, it is my intention to recommend to the General Assembly that an amendment to the Constitution be submitted to the people by which the unlimited power of clemency, now reposad in the Governor, shall be changed to end all possible abuses in the future.

RING RULE

It is a matter of common knowledge that the government of South Carolina is under the domination of a small number of cunning, conniving men. It is said that their influence extends even into the Governor's office.

Ring rule is inconsistent with democracy. When the ring rules, the people are deprived of their right of self-government.
They are deprived of their freedom and liberty. A Democratic state contemplates a Government of the people, by the people and for the people, but in S. C. we have a Government of the ring, by the ring, and for the ring. The people of S. C. do not like that kind of government, and they are demanding a change, a big change. The people want a governor who will be loyal to them, and not the puppet of a small group of scheming politicians.

It is vital that the next Governor furnish effective leadership and not allow the functions of his office to be usurped or controlled by others. As Governor, I shall see that the office is conducted on the high plane on which it should stand.

The Barnwell Ring was opposed to me when I ran for Circuit Judge of S. C. Both Mr. Brown and Mr. Blatt were against me in that race and they are both against me in this race for Governor. They do not want me for Governor because I will not do their bidding and they cannot control my actions.

(A close and reliable friend of mine has brought me first-hand information that the leading henchman and go-between of the Barnwell ring already has started raising money to use against me in my campaign. This henchman of the ring told my friend that they were out to defeat Strom Thurmond, and that they would raise a big fund for that purpose.)

("He said he had not decided just what other candidate they would support but that they were waiting to pick up a man that they thought might be strong enough to beat me.

("I gladly accept the challenge of opposition from that crowd.)

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"It will be interesting to see whom they lavish their money on in this race.

"I doubt seriously if there are many candidates in this field who would want the support of the Barnwell ring with its re-echo of manipulations and false treatment of the public trust.

"I know one thing, that the money that gang raises is not coming from the good people of the state."

When I am elected Governor of S. C. I shall use every resource at my command to crash the power of this small bunch of selfish, scheming politicians who are benefitting at the state's expense.

Veterans

No one knows better than I do the great debt which the people of the State and nation owe to the young men and women who entered the service of our country in the war. A veteran of three and a half years of army service myself, a large part of which was spent in both the European and Pacific Theaters, I saw with my own eyes their sacrifices and hardships. I will champion every worthwhile activity in their behalf. They should be given every opportunity to catch up on their education, and the state should do its full part, in cooperation with the Federal Government, to help them make up for what they lost while at war.

Income

We have many ills in S. C., but the fundamental cause of many of them is poverty. South Carolina must increase the per capita income of her people. The average income per person in this state is only $354 against the national average of $693, or only about $
of the national average. That means that our people have to work two hours to get as much as workers in other States earn in our hour. They buy two hours of our labor with one hour of theirs. The low earning records reflect themselves in every phase of life in S. C. Retail sales in S. C. per person average only $175 a year as compared with a national average of $319. It is on the farms that our State reaches its depths. The farm income per person in S. C. is only $126 a year, exclusive of food and feeds, as against $500 for the nation. This is entirely too low and our farmers must receive more for their work. The average wage paid in S. C. is only $796 a year as against $1361 for the nation as a whole. Our average wages are the lowest of any state in the U. S.

Agriculture

There are many things that must be done for our farmers. We must build more all-weather farm to market roads. Rural electrification must be extended and made available to more country homes. Telephone lines must be extended to the homes in the country. The young men on the farms must have an opportunity to receive training to handle farm machinery, as we are coming into a machinery age. Better country schools with more vocational training must be provided. More canneries, freezer lockers, and dehydration plants must be established. More processing plants, storage plants and better marketing facilities must be provided for the farmers. There must be an extension of the program to provide more pine seedlings to the farmers. Our farmers must organize more by joining the Farm Bureau, Grange, Farmer's Union, or other farmers' cooperative movements, in order that they receive just treatment.
I hold in my hand a handkerchief that costs 15¢. It weighs 1/2 ounce and 32 of these are required to make a pound. This handkerchief is made from cotton, and a pound of these handkerchiefs cost $4.80. If the farmers received such a price as this for a 500 pound bale of cotton, the bale of cotton would bring $2400. The spread between what the farmer receives for his crop and the amount he pays in the open market for goods he buys is entirely too great. Forty cents a pound would not be a dime too much for farmers to receive for their cotton.

Our government should take into consideration farm labor in determining parity for farmers. This is only fair and just.

There is no reason why the South should be further discriminated against in the matter of freight rates, and the inequitable difference in freight rates paid in the South as compared with those in the North should be removed.

There is no reason why pulp wood should sell for five dollars per cord higher in New England than it does in S. C. The trees in S. C. are just as good as those in New England. The labor here is just as efficient, and is worth as much as labor there.

Lots of small industries are needed in S. C. and they should be so distributed as to give farm people work, as agriculture and industry go hand in hand.

12 Old Age Pensions

I was a member of the committee that wrote the first law providing for assistance to the aged people, the blind and needy children. I am in sympathy with underprivileged groups and shall advocate policies for their welfare.

13 Institutions

Hundreds of people in this State mentally sick or feeble-minded
cannot be admitted to our state institutions for the care of such people. Arrangements must be made to expand these institutions so that they can accept them.

Education

With regard to education, only one state, Louisiana, ranks above us in illiteracy. 1/12 of the people of this state have received less than 1 year’s schooling. 35% of our people have received less than 5 years of schooling and 80% of the people of S. C. have not graduated from high school. It is shameful when I tell you that the average salary of a school teacher in S. C. in 1941, the last year for which comparative figures was available, was $745 per year as against the national average of $1441. Again we are only a halfway state, even with our school teachers, the people on whom we depend to educate the children, who will later become the men and women of our state. It is good that the average pay of teachers has been raised somewhat since 1941, but the same is true in other states, and I doubt if their relative pay is any higher than it was in 1941. It is alarmingly significant that a total of 15% of the draftees in S. C. were rejected due to a lack of education, this in spite of the fact that the armed services were seeking men desperately.

Health

Another subject which should command the attention of every thoughtful citizen is that of public health. It is, I think, shocking to know that 33 per cent, 1/3, of our draftees were rejected as being physically unfit. We seem to be as far behind in public health in South Carolina as we are in education, and certainly there is nothing
more important to a State than to have a healthy population. Nothing is a greater asset than a healthy body, and when there is a healthy body you usually find a good mind. There is a crying need for more hospitals, clinics, health centers. We must have an expansion of these facilities for our people. With these facilities the cost of hospitalization could be brought within reach of people in moderate circumstances. Today, if the average man has to send his wife to the hospital for even a week or two, it sets him back for many weeks in his budget.

Future

The most vital problem facing us in the next four years is the future of our state. We stand on the threshold of an opportunity which we shall never see again in our lifetime. The post-war world offers unlimited possibilities to develop and exploit our natural resources; to encourage industrial and business establishment and location within our borders; to plan and perfect transportation facilities and marketing methods to increase the income of our farmers; and, in general through trade and commerce with the rest of the nation and in world markets, to strive to raise the economic level of our state and of our people; and capitalize on our finest crop, our young people as they come of age, so that they can stay here and contribute to the future prosperity and welfare of S. C., and will not be forced to go elsewhere to find the opportunities in life to which they are justly entitled.

If we do this, we can quickly modernize and expand our public school and college facilities; guarantee to our teachers the compensation which they deserve and the future which their profession should enjoy; bring about the increase in the wage of our working people and
in the farm income of our state, without which we shall never be a great state; broaden and expand our programs of public health, public welfare, and assistance to the aged, the blind, and our dependent children; and furnish to business, industry, and agriculture the conditions under which our system of free enterprise can best work and prosper.

15 Industries

S. C. is ready to develop in a real way if we only wake up to our opportunities and seize them. Where we lacked local capital in the past, our banks are bulging now, and there should be a determination within the State to use local capital in setting up new industries, and in mechanization of our farms.

Our industries are not processing enough of the State's raw products. The finishing work, with its higher wages and profits, has been done outside the State. This has been true of cotton textiles, lumbers and other leading products. Our production of cotton in this State is great, but more finishing and garment factories are needed here. We have a splendid natural resource in our forests. We produce the trees, but more industries are needed here to manufacture furniture, barrels, caskets, plywood, paper and paper products. S. C. has splendid kaolin and clay deposits, but more ceramics and brick industries should be brought here to produce the finished product. This State has excellent sand for the manufacture of glass, but most of the glass factories are located elsewhere. There is no excuse in having cement blocks imported to this State. S. C. produces large quantities of tobacco, but the cigar and cigarette factories are located elsewhere. We produce hundreds of tons of cotton seed, but
the factories that manufacture food products, oils, etc. are chiefly located elsewhere. We need more freezer locker plants. We need more canneries and dehydration plants for our fruits and vegetables. There is no excuse in importing shrimp, oysters, and other sea foods to this State. Meat packing could become a substantial industry in S. C. These matters challenge us.

Closing

We dare not, we must not, fail to meet the challenge of the future. We need a progressive outlook, a progressive program, and a progressive leadership. We must face the future with confidence and enthusiasm. I pledge my faithful and unflagging efforts to develop and carry out such a program.