For the last half year, I have been told that Sumter is the fastest growing city in South Carolina. I read recently where it is now estimated that your population is about 25,000—(and that was the size of Columbia about 25 years ago)—and you certainly have not stopped growing.

(And from what I have seen today and on other recent days when I have been in Sumter, I can tell you that I really do believe that you are growing faster than any other city.)

Because you do have this progressive spirit and because you good people are determined to get ahead in this world by helping yourselves build your own industries and increase the values of your own farm products, I want to talk with you tonight about the future of South Carolina if it shakes off the domination of ring rule by selfish, conniving, willful men, and selects the right type of leadership in our Democratic primary next month.

I want to speak plainly. I most certainly shall speak truthfully.

It is necessary that you have as governor of South Carolina a man who has had experience in government and who has the desire and strength to throw off the yoke of those who wish to control our government for their own purposes. In order to accomplish this task—and I tell you truthfully that these men of greed and power are firmly entrenched—a governor must have the background of fair-dealing and the determination to get things done and done honestly and fairly.

It is my belief that my 23 years of public service to the people of South Carolina—service as teacher, senator, judge and soldier—fit me particularly to do this job for you. I am running...
for governor on my records in these four fields, and on the profound belief that I have the honesty and integrity to carry out the reforms that are so sorely needed in South Carolina.

And I want to tell you about a determined effort by the Barnwell ring to defeat me. I am reliably informed that right now members of this gang are raising money to be spent against me. Members of this degrading outfit apparently have not decided upon which other candidate for governor to lavish their ill-gotten cash but you can be sure that they are going to dump it into the campaign fund of some candidate whom they believe they can control.

They know that they cannot control Strom Thurmond. I have denounced them by actions and by names on the stump throughout this campaign and I shall continue to denounce them all summer-long. And if you good people elect me your governor, I promise you here and now that I shall eliminate their pernicious influence from the state house and shall do my best to restore the governor's office to one of respect and influence in the councils of state.

Now that you completely understand my position about Edgar Brown and Sol. Blatt and Dick Jefferies of Santee-Cooper fame— I want to talk about how we can help South Carolina grow and prosper.

We can do this ourselves without depending upon hand-outs from Washington.

I am not trying to flatter you Sumter people in order to get votes, but I honestly believe that we in South Carolina do have three outstanding examples of drive and push and honest energy that the rest of the state would do well to follow. One of those examples is right here in Sumter.

You are growing rapidly because you are thinking soundly and working expertly. You are using, in many instances, your own capital
to secure the new industrial enterprises that are filling Sumter to the overflowing. You are using your own young men and women to fill the jobs in those industries—jobs from the top to the bottom, from the head man to the lowest paid learner. You are creating, right here at home, employment for young men and young men who are getting out of the armed services or who are graduating from our colleges. You are going to create your own wealth and you are sharing it with the people next door and down the block and around the corner. But you are doing more than that. You are taking advantage of a fine school system in Sumter to train boys and girls for jobs immediately after they finish school—the youths who cannot afford to go to college.

There are other examples of local determination and industrial growth that are needed so greatly in South Carolina today. One of them is in my own section of the state—around Johnston and Edgefield and Saluda. We have secured, through local energies and through assistance from the state research, planning and development board, numerous local manufacturing concerns. And the other example that comes to my mind tonight is old Charleston which at the end of the war found itself with many war-time facilities going to waste. It set to work skillfully and has secured in this short space of time at least a score of new enterprises. 

There are other localities which have gone ahead just as Sumter has done. You cannot keep such determination and energy that you people have demonstrated from succeeding. You have been a wonderful example to the rest of South Carolina.

As governor of South Carolina, I shall do the best in my power to help Sumter and our other cities to grow and prosper and to lead all of
South Carolina to its proper place in our federation of states.

Now to my mind, there are other things of great importance to our state and our people. They are issues in this campaign and I shall face them squarely.

To me, these issues are liquor and law enforcement. I want to make myself perfectly plain about both of these. I intend to speak frankly about them just as I intend to speak frankly about all issues.

Now about liquor. I do not drink. I am a personal dry but the governor of South Carolina cannot in good conscience promise a solution to this question because he does not make the laws of this state. Don't let any one attempt to fool you on this fact. The people of this county and other counties of South Carolina will have the opportunity this summer to elect to the general assembly, which does make our laws, legislators who will express their wishes in the form of legislation.

If these elected representatives shall enact a prohibition law, I shall sign that law. If these elected representatives of the people shall enact county option, I shall sign that law. If these elected representatives of the people shall pass any other law that will help control the liquor situation, I shall sign that measure. Personally, I should not like to see our state in the liquor business, and I shall never advocate any form of state dispensary—by whatever name it be called. I would not desire the additional power that would accrue to a governor.

In any event, I pledge myself to enforce to the best of my ability whatever law on the liquor subject that the properly elected representatives of the people may regard as expressing the wishes of you people.

While the governor does not have the power to make laws, he does have the power—and the duty—to enforce the laws. I promise you here and now that I shall do whatever I can to run the illegal liquor dealer, the bootlegger, the violators of our laws, out of business and into jail.
That is a frank statement. It is an honest statement. It is spoken from a determination that intrigue and corruption shall be banished from the governor's office.

Now that brings us to the question of law enforcement. And law enforcement includes the question of executive clemency—the matter of a governor's setting free the men and women criminals who have been convicted by you who serve on the juries of our state.

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—they expect these laws to be enforced without fear or favor, 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 and town to the end that the wishes of the people shall be carried out.

It is particularly important, in view of the increase in crime in other parts of the country, as the aftermath of war, that we have a governor in 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.

If you good people elect me governor, 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 a Santa Claus with it.

I think, too, that there has been too much talk about agriculture and assistance to the farmers and entirely too little has been
done about actually helping them. You hear a lot of loose talk about raising the farmers' income but you hear little about how this might be accomplished.

I advocate that a program be instituted right away under which the young men on the farms get the opportunity to receiving training in handling farm machinery. We need better schools for the country people and more vocational training. If we can improve the educational and vocational advantages of our young generation on the farm, we are going to raise the income of these farm families and the standards of living of the state as a whole.

Perhaps one of the reasons Sumter county has been known as a good farm county is that more than 20 years ago you set out to pave your most important roads. Now you are giving attention to the improving of additional farm-to-market roads. Sumter and other counties should get needed rural electrification and telephone lines. More canneries, freezing plants and dehydration plants are needed—and needed now.

There is no reason why the South should be further discriminated against in the matter of freight rates and the inequitable differences in these rates should be removed. There is no reason why pulp should sell for $5 per cord higher in New England than it does in South Carolina. The trees of South Carolina are just as good as the ones in New England. The labor is just as efficient and is worth as much as labor anywhere.

More small industries are needed in South Carolina and they should be distributed so as to give farm people work jointly in agriculture and industry.

This, my friends, is my platform. I offer you my record of 23 years' service as a teacher, a senator, a judge and a soldier, and my earnest desire to eradicate ring rule and corruption from our state. Upon this platform and upon my record, I ask your support in my campaign for governor of South Carolina. Good night.