

To Exchange Club, Greenville, over radio
Spring, 1946

I greatly appreciate the opportunity of meeting with you today. It is always a distinct pleasure for me to come to Greenville. Indeed, it is an inspiration to see the whirl of activity in and around your prosperous community. I predict that the time is not distant when Greenville will be even busier than it is today, and that many South Carolina communities will be following suit from an industrial standpoint.

It is on this subject of progress that I wish to talk today. We have for many years in South Carolina boasted about our possibilities of industry, agriculture, recreation, and other phases of life, but unfortunately we have done more talking than acting. In only a few communities of the State, notably Greenville, has industry really come forward.

The whole State owes much to Greenville and the rest of the Piedmont for the leadership you have taken and the example you are setting of the importance of balancing industrial and agricultural economy. [South Carolina will never take its proper place economically in the nation until there is a general balance between agriculture and industry.

Such a balance is necessary to bring the level of per capita income in line with that of other and more prosperous states. We will continue to be backward in many respects until we do accomplish higher standards of earning power. Did you know that the per capita income in South Carolina is only \$354 as against the national average of \$693, or only approximately one-half of the national average? The average wage paid in South Carolina is only \$796 a year as against \$1,361 for the nation as a whole. Our average wages are the lowest of any State in the United States!

Will we continue to allow such conditions to prevail? Can we continue to boast that we are a great State when our people earn only half as much as those of the average State? That means that our workers have to work two hours to get as much as workers in other states earn in one 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 South Carolina. For example, per capita retail sales in South Carolina average only \$175 a year as compared with the national average of \$319. Two thirds of the working people of this State make less than \$1,500 a year.

It is on the farms that our State reaches its depths. The farm income per capita is only \$126 a year as against \$500 for the nation. This is appalling when we consider the fact that 40 per cent of South Carolina's population makes its living on farms while the national average is only 18 per cent.

I could go on for a long time citing figures which are equally as depressing. Take the matter of public education. Only one state-- Louisiana--ranks above us in illiteracy. Speaking plainly, this means that we are next to the most ignorant State in the union, and I think that this is a subject on which we should speak plainly. We should be ashamed of it, of course, but the longer we remain silent about it, the longer it will take our people to wake up to the fact that something has got to be done -- something big and worthwhile.

Let's talk some more about education. Hear this: 35 per cent of our people, twenty-five years old, have less than five years of schooling. The national average on this is $13 \frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Only 8 per cent of our population finished high school. The national average is 14 per cent.

Now we come to the most shameful of all statistics on education: the average salary of a school teacher in South Carolina in 1941, the last year for which comparative figures were available, was \$743 per year as against the national average of \$1,441. Again we are only a half-way 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 our relative pay is any higher than it was in 1941.

It is alarmingly significant that a total of 15 per cent of the draftees in South Carolina were rejected due to a lack of education, this in spite of the fact that the armed services were seeking men desperately.

And speaking of draftees, we come to another subject which should command the attention of every thoughtful citizen -- public health.

✓ (3) 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 larger, more numerous and better equipped hospitals and clinics. Our doctors have long emphasized this need. Let me make it clear, here and now, that I am and will continue to be unalterably opposed to socialized medicine. No greater calamity could beset our people.

With more and larger hospitals, 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.

I want to repeat that 33 per cent of our draftees were rejected as being physically unfit. You must remember that draftees were young men in the prime of their lives. If 33 per cent of them were physically unfit, I would hate to think what the percentages would be in other age groups.

Now let's talk a little bit on the credit side of our State. We do have many fine things about which to boast. We have a wonderful climate, plenty of living space, fertile soil, great forests, fine streams with extensive water power potentialities, first class harbors on our coast, and many other natural resources.

We have not yet, however, taken full advantage of these assets. We know that it took many years for the State and the rest of the South to recover from the ravages of the War Between the States and the period of Reconstruction. We still have some of the inequities which were born then, such as discriminatory railroad rates, but we are ready to develop in a real way if we only wake up to our opportunities and seize them. ⁽⁴⁾ [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, lumber 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. South Carolina 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. South Carolina 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 South Carolina. *These matters challenge us.*

Lots of small industries are needed in South Carolina. They should be so distributed as to give farm people work, as agriculture and industry go hand in hand. It is up to our local and State governments to do everything they can to increase industrial development, which means more payrolls for the workers, profit for the owners, and revenue for the government.

Our present State taxes, although not perfect, are very favorable toward industry. They compare satisfactorily with tax schedules of our competitive states, but every year in the Legislature unreasonable bills are introduced. These rarely get far, but they are a constant source of fright to industry, and they give the State a bad reputation throughout the country.

Never again should South Carolina let it be said that it is a State of low wages and low living standards. These are synonymous with poverty. There is no reason for or sense in economic differentials between this State and any other State in the union. Until we obliterate these differences in standards, we will have people who are uneducated, unhealthy and suffering. Such conditions should no longer exist where there is so much to offer if we put forth the energy and enthusiasm which are necessary.

I think that the future of agriculture depends largely upon mechanization, diversification, electrification and good roads. The immediate future will bring the new machines which are needed on the farms. While good progress already has been made in diversification, much more emphasis is essential to real agricultural prosperity. I hope that the time is not far away when electricity will be available for every farmer.

We must have government of the finest type if we expect to accomplish real progress. In recent years several separate studies have been made of State government. It was found in every study that there is a deplorable over-lapping of agencies, bureaus and commissions, which not only impairs efficiency, but costs the taxpayers enormous sums of money. One report showed that the State government has 109 agencies, including boards and commissions. It recommended that much better results could be obtained by reducing this total from 109 to forty-nine. In other words, we have, according to this study, more than twice as many agencies and boards as are needed.

I do not say that complete government reorganization could or should be attempted over-night, but I do say that we should start at once to bring it about on a sensible and efficient basis.

I take hope in the knowledge that South Carolina steadily will advance into better hands. Our young people are showing much greater interest in affairs of the State. This is especially true of the returning veterans. I expect them to be a powerful and constructive force

for a better South Carolina. Most of the 200,000 men and women who were in the service have traveled far and seen many things. They have mingled with peoples of every part of the world. Their perspectives have been greatly broadened. I will guarantee that they will not want South Carolina to remain at the bottom of the list in anything.

In Greenville we are about as far away from the coast of South Carolina as we can be and still be within the State, but I would like to make a strong plea in behalf of the development of the ports of Charleston, Georgetown and Beaufort. Few states are blessed with such fine harbors, and the world from now on is going to be even closer together commercially than ever before. There already is and will continue to be a tremendous demand abroad for all kinds of American products. These will have to be sent out in ships. Extensive new port facilities were constructed along our coast to help in shipping war supplies abroad. These now are under control of the new State Ports Authority, and for the first time in history, the United States has the greatest Merchant Marine in the world. This means that if South Carolina acts as it should to support the Ports Authority there is no limit to the amount of commerce which can be developed for our ports.

The people of the Piedmont should be as zealous for the development of the coastal section as they are in their own progress because the stronger the whole State is, the stronger each section will be.

Sectional differences within the State have virtually been eliminated. They should be wiped out altogether. What we need is a united front to bring ourselves up to a position where we will be second to none in any respect.

We have failed to appreciate the possibilities of the tourist business and recreation. We have mountains, fine beaches, and other blessings of nature to show off to visitors. These should be better

advertised. Our State parks have gotten off to a very encouraging start. The war slowed up the program with so many men and women gone to the armed forces, those at home working overtime in war production, and gasoline rationed; but they are flourishing now as never before. This program should be extended and improved.

And now in closing, please let me thank you again for the opportunity of being with you today. Groups of your kind can do much toward bringing about the happy and prosperous conditions which are within our reach. Keep insisting on the things which are good for South Carolina and our people, and be ever on the alert against those things which are not for the best interests of our State and people.