ANNUAL MESSAGE
OF
Ransome J. Williams
GOVERNOR
To the General Assembly
of South Carolina
Regular Session, Beginning January 9, 1945
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TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and members of the General Assembly, I realize the great responsibilities that are placed within our hands in this session of the Legislature, but in the midst of this great war, we must shoulder these responsibilities with the same courage which is characteristic of our Armed Forces on the battlefronts of the world today. While our men and women are sacrificing their lives to bring victory to our nation, we must strive continually on the homefront to produce the necessary materials and equipment with which to win this war. South Carolina has met every challenge of this war crisis. Our State has over-subscribed every war bond issue. We have over-subscribed to the War Fund Campaign which has aided suffering humanity and our Armed Forces. Labor is producing the necessary war materials and both capital and labor are conscious of the great tasks that lie before them. Our State Departments are cooperating with the Legislative and Judicial branches of our Government, and because of this unity, we are steadily marching together to bring about a progressive and victorious nation.

Our financial condition is one of prosperity unequaled in the history of our State. I feel sure that the Legislature realizes the seriousness of the times, and I am certain that it will finish its work as soon as possible for I see no need for any unnecessary new legislation. Even though a big surplus is in our State Treasury, we are living in abnormal times. Our income tax has increased over 350 per cent, but at the close of the war, this will necessarily fall off: We must, in our legislative program, keep before us the postwar days when our income will not be near as great as it is today. With our hearts and minds centered upon the war effort, I am sure the business of the State of South
Carolina will be carried forward, and we will work together for the best interests of our State.

Education:

In our educational program we must expand our State Colleges, including Clemson, the University of South Carolina, The Citadel, Winthrop, the Medical College of Charleston, the State College at Orangeburg. This must be done in order that our returning service men and women and all our boys and girls may have an opportunity to be educated in this State. Our Colleges must give to our boys and girls the choice of professions and scientific trainings. Our citizens should not be compelled to leave the State of South Carolina in order to receive higher education in various professions. The Opportunity Schools should be developed in every section of the State so that the returning soldier who is not educationally qualified for the G. I. Bill may finish high school so that he may enter College.

Law Enforcement

It is entirely impossible for the Governor of South Carolina with about forty Constables to bring about complete law enforcement for the State. I might say for instance, many cities have as many as one hundred or more policemen. This is a great contrast with the number of Constables to police the entire State. I am therefore calling upon all the Sheriffs and Mayors and other law enforcement Agencies to bring about an all out law enforcement.

Liquor Law

It is my opinion that with the full cooperation of the Governor's Office, the Tax Commission, the Wholesale and Retail Liquor dealers and citizens of the State, the present liquor law can be made to work satisfactorily.

I do wish to direct your thoughts in particular to the following suggested amendments:

1. Provide that no retail licenses should be issued to individuals who have not been registered electors in the county of application for license for a period of at least one year prior to the date of application.
2. Limit licenses to one store for each individual and prohibit any licensed retail dealer or members of his family from having any interest whatsoever in any other licensed store whether retail or wholesale.

3. Prohibit the issuance of State retail licenses to any parties owning Federal wholesale licenses and provide that the acceptance by a retail license dealer of a Federal wholesale license would automatically revoke the State retail license.

4. Establish by proper legislation a reasonable quota system guaranteeing to each county in the State a pro rata and reasonable supply of all brands of liquor sold in the State and assigning each county quota to each licensed retailer on a reasonable basis.

In my opinion the foregoing amendments and such others as you gentlemen may determine in your study of this important matter together with the strict enforcement of the law by the Governor's Office and the Tax Commission will bring about a great improvement in the administration of the laws permitting the sale of intoxicating beverages in this State through a licensed system.

**Industrial Relations**

There is much overlapping in various Boards and Commissions in our State. I am therefore recommending that some of our commissions be combined and I refer you to the Report of the Preparedness for Peace Commission which has some thoughtful recommendations. The Industrial Commission law should be so amended that Insurance rates should not be charged citizens of South Carolina at higher than that charged by our neighboring States.

**Old Age Pensions**

I call upon the Legislature to bring about adequate pensions for aged people, for the disabled and dependent children, for the blind, and for those otherwise handicapped. The General Assembly should ask the National Congress for a direct grant of funds for the South Carolina State Welfare Department instead of allocating funds to our State on a matching basis.
Corporation Tax

When the three mill Corporation tax was placed on the Corporations of our State, the income from other sources was very small. It was tentatively agreed among the members of the Free Conference Committee at that time that whenever the State was financially able to do so, the State would decrease this tax on our Corporations, therefore, in view of the income which the State now has, I suggest to the Legislature that it take one mill from the Corporation tax. This would induce industries to come into our State and would help in our employment program.

Forestry

Forestry as a State function in South Carolina had its inception 14 years ago with the passage of the Act creating the State Commission of Forestry. Progress had been excellent, but with the present demands of war on the resources of our forests, it is vitally necessary that this phase of State work be pushed to the maximum.

Whereas only slightly more than half of our counties have organized forest fire protection, it is urgent that every county in the State be protected from fire. This step can and should be taken without further delay.

And not only must our forests be protected from fire, but they must be so managed by the individual owners that a continuous and maximum production therefrom is realized. The greatly increased quantities of our timber being used at the present time to help win the war, make it all the more necessary that this product be properly harvested. In addition, every idle acre in the State, not suited to the production of agricultural crops, should be planted with trees at the earliest opportunity.

Our State Parks are something of which we are justly proud. Most of these 17 Parks, so distributed over the State, that, one of them is within 50 miles of the home of any resident, offering places of rest and relaxation to the people of the State. They are particularly important during these war years when travel is so restricted and our people are in need of recreational facilities nearer home. It is my earnest desire that the facilities of the Parks be increased to the extent that every man, woman,
and child in the State may be able to enjoy them to the fullest extent.

**Labor**

Labor in our State is to be commended for the excellent way in which the transition from peace time to war production has been accomplished. Since 1941 the annual manufactured products have doubled from 500 million to over a billion dollars with only a 20 per cent increase in our numbers of laborers. This has been accomplished by the workers accepting larger work loads and working longer daily hours and greater number days per week.

Our workers have shown their patriotism by accomplishing this great change with less friction than any other state in the nation. I am happy to report that during the past six months not a single day has been lost due to work stoppage. This shows a high state of cooperation between employer and employee and should attract other industries to our State.

Some changes are needed to more adequately protect workers. We need a minimum wage and hour law, to assure workers of a living wage, to protect efficient employers against unfair wage-cutting. The Federal Wage and Hour Law should be administered by our Labor Department to avoid confusion and duplication of Inspections and Instructions. An Industrial Health Division should be set up in the Labor Department to more adequately protect the workers.

**Highways**

The 1944 Highway Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President on December 20, 1944. This Act provides for the largest allotment of Federal aid for highway construction ever passed by a single Act of Congress. Under the provisions of this Act, South Carolina will be allotted approximately $6,200,000.00 annually for highway construction for the first three post war years. It will be necessary for the State to provide a like amount of money to match this Federal aid.

The limit authorized by law is $62,300,000.00 but the actual net debt as of January 1, 1945 was $51,750,763.67. The Highway Department has been operating on a plan whereby the bonded debt has been gradually reduced. When gasoline ration-
ing has been lifted, the revenue coming in to the Highway Department from gasoline tax will increase; making it possible to finance this large construction program without increasing the amount of the debt now authorized by law.

Under the 1944 Highway Act, Federal aid will be available for construction of highways in municipalities. These Federal funds will have to be matched with State funds. The present State Law prohibits the Highway Department from spending more than $200,000.00 within municipalities of 2,500 population or more. In order to take full advantage of Federal aid that will be available for constructing highways through municipalities, this limitation should be removed so that the Highway Department will have an opportunity to construct much needed highways through congested areas in municipalities.

Under our present law, transients and construction companies coming into our State to establish business for a short period are compelled after ten days to register motor vehicles and pay the year or half year fee, therefore, I would recommend that the law be amended so as to allow these transients and construction companies to pay a reasonable fee for the privilege of using our roads for a limited time.

On June 30, 1945 the South Carolina Drivers' License expires. Many of our citizens will be in the Armed Forces at this time; either in camps or in foreign countries. It would be impossible for many of them to renew their licenses at this time. I therefore recommend a joint resolution to permit them to operate motor vehicles under their present license for a reasonable length of time after their discharge from the Armed Forces.

I recommend that the Highway Commissioners be appointed by the Governor on the advice and consent of the Senate or amend the law so that a Commissioner can be elected to succeed himself. We lose some very fine men because of the present law.

\textit{Agriculture}

I am glad of this opportunity to commend the farmers for their accomplishments in producing record crops during these years when our Armed Forces are fighting in the four corners of the globe.
In spite of shortages of labor, machinery and in some cases fertilizer, the farmers of South Carolina did a better job than many of the most optimistic expected. Food and fiber produced by the growers of this State have contributed materially to the great fight for freedom. Our foodstuffs are necessary for victory and for these we must thank our farmers.

South Carolina is still largely an agricultural State and agriculture is and perhaps always will be the foundation upon which rests the economic and social life of our people.

It is with feelings of definite satisfaction that I note the trend of farmers to organize and to take an active part in working out their own destinies.

The tobacco farmers of the great Pee Dee have perfected a strong organization and The Farmers Grange and Federated Farm Bureaus are now being very active working for the interests of agriculture.

I cannot too strongly urge that farmers join recognized agricultural organization because right now is the time to make plans for a post war economy and the most progressive farmers are already considering and thinking about what kind of agriculture we will have after the war.

One of the greatest problems facing agriculture in the post war period will be that of profitably marketing crops. It is true war needs and increased civilian consumption have eliminated many of the marketing problems temporarily, but I am of the opinion that these problems are just lying dormant and will rise again. This is not a new problem but one that has been with us since commercial agriculture came into existence in this State. It is true something has been done and is being done but there is still much room for improvement and I hope the farm organizations, State and Federal agencies, business people and others will give much thought to marketing and will lend their aid in helping improve systems and facilities for the proper and profitable distribution of the products of our soil.

There are many other problems that will present themselves but I have not the time to discuss them now. However, I do want to again congratulate our farmers for the part they are playing in winning the war and I feel confident they will do any equally good job in 1945.
Aeronautics

Immediately following the cessation of hostilities in this present war, aviation will develop to a great extent. Here in South Carolina we have a number of fine air fields placed here by the United States Army Air Forces, and I feel sure that the Federal Government will make grants to develop aviation in this section of the country. I would therefore ask the General Assembly to cooperate with the Aeronautics Commission and its able director, so that we may take advantage of Post war aviation.

In closing may I say again that you have my hearty cooperation in any legislation which will lead to a fuller development of our State and to the interest and welfare of our citizenship. May God give us the wisdom to perform the responsibilities and tasks that lie before us and may we at all times work for the common good of all mankind.

Respectfully yours,

RANSOME J. WILLIAMS,
Governor.