

ON THE RECORD AND CHALLENGES OF THE DEMOCRATIC
PARTY IN NORTH CAROLINA

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I will not begin to tell you how pleased I am to have this chance to come to Catawba County tonight and visit with this group of Democrats - to meet with so many good friends who during the years and especially during the last several months have been so kind to me. It is refreshing, it is relaxing, it is truly a real pleasure to be with you.

This has been a difficult week for those of us privileged to serve in high offices in state government. You are aware of the unrest on some of our university campuses and the situation which now exists. And I am sure you share the resolve which I have and which your Governor has expressed that regardless of cause or motivation, the law will be enforced and that no place within our state will become a sanctuary for persons who willfully break the law, commit violent and provocative acts, and run roughshod over the rights of others.

I want to quote Justice Abe Fortas who has said:

"Let me first be clear about a fundamental proposition. The motive of civil disobedience, whatever its type, does not confer immunity for law violation. Especially if the civil disobedience involves violence or a breach of public order prohibited by statute or ordinance, it is the state's duty to arrest the dissident. If he is properly arrested, charged and convicted, he should be punished by fine or imprisonment, or both, in accordance with the provisions of law, unless the law is invalid.

"He may be motivated by the highest moral principals. He may be passionately inspired. He may, indeed, be right in the eyes of history or morality or philosophy. These are not controlling. It is the State's duty to arrest and punish those who violate the laws designed to protect private safety and public order."

I think this states clearly the position of myself, and I believe, the position of the Governor. The law shall be enforced, order shall be maintained, and we shall continue to work to ensure that in North Carolina there is justice for all our people.

"Just as we expect the government to be bound by all the laws, ~~under the~~ so each individual is bound by all the laws under the Constitution. He cannot pick and choose. He cannot substitute his own judgment or passion, however noble, for the rules of law." (Fortas)

I will not dwell longer on this particular matter because I know you are committed to the principal of the "rule of law." I know that you as good Democrats, as concerned North Carolinians and responsible citizens of a Democratic nation believe with me that "obedience to law is the only path to freedom." This is a Democratic principal, and it is by no means a new principal.

And my theme tonight is not a new one for I want to talk with you for a few minutes about good politics - about winning politics - and the key factor I believe is "good government."

That North Carolina Democrats have been in control of our state government for over 69 years proves many things but the real truth behind this long grasp on the reins of state government is that good government is good politics - good government is winning politics.

Good government is nothing new to the Democratic Party.

We look with pride to the past. The vanguard of Democratic leadership in this State and Nation beginning with Jefferson, Jackson, Wilson, Aycock, Roosevelt, Kennedy and Scott, to name a few, is but an indication of our glorious past.

That such a group is sparking with talent becomes especially evident when compared with the "honor roll" of the opposition.

There is certainly little in the history of the opposition to indicate a glorious past, a willingness to act on behalf of the people - there is in fact little there to be proud of.

But we Democrats have been criticized for dwelling upon the past so I will try not to open myself to that criticism tonight.

It would be easy for us as North Carolina Democrats to rely on the laurels of the past asserting simply that we have good government and that alone is enough.

But unless we realize that good government requires a constant search for better government, we will soon be the "outs."

North Carolina Democrats faced a hard and crucial test in the past General Election. Faced with the charge that "its time for a change", it would have been easy for our gubernatorial candidate to stand pat and defend 68 years of sound, progressive government and to stubbornly cling to the view that our party had solved all of North Carolina's problems. This would have been an easy trap to fall into.

Bob Scott was not taken in.

He told our people in every section of the state, "Yes, we have good government, but government that can be made better, government that can become more responsive to the needs of all our citizens." He was not content to rest on a glorious and successful past.

This refusal to stand on the past, to challenge the ways we have ourselves made almost sacred, is, in and of itself, good government.

And failure to adapt government to the changing needs of the public can spell doom for the party in power.

It can spell defeat because it is not good government. Good government is good politics because it constantly searches for better solutions to old problems; new solutions for new problems; and the end of costly practices which are not in the best interests of the people.

The simple facts are these. We can no longer win elections because of Aycock's educational crusade, because of Morrison's courthouse-to-courthouse road system, because of McLean's competent and foresighted financial planning, because of Gardner's educational planning, because of Broughton's concern with mental illness, or because of Kerr Scott's farm-to-market roads.

But we will win elections because of Bob Scott's willingness to face up to the realities of the 1970's, because of Edwin Lanier's concern with rising insurance costs, because of Frank Crane's crusade for improved working conditions, and because a Democratic controlled Legislature did not fear to find non-partisan solutions to hot political problems. We will ^{win} elections because of these things for the simple reason that these matters with which North Carolina Democrats concern themselves are the essence of good government.

~~Let us then no longer fear to face the questions which we thought had been resolved long ago.~~

These concerns are not new to North Carolina Democrats. These were the concerns of Democratic Governors from Aycock to Moore. I simply say that we cannot give good government by being content with the concern of Aycock and Moore. Rather, these must be the concerns of Scott, Taylor, and Vaughn, and yes the concern of every Democrat in North Carolina today. And I believe they are.

Let us not fear to admit mistakes, to boast of the past while improving on it, to admit that better solutions are available for old problems, and to face up to the fact that the party position of 1949 might no longer be responsive to what the citizens of 1969 deserve and demand.

I believe that the Democratic Party will meet the challenges of the future. I believe this because this is our heritage.

In education we need only be reminded that Bickett was not content to rest upon the achievements of Aycock, that Gardner did not fail to improve the programs of Bickett, that Cherry proposed new educational programs to replace the seemingly far-sighted approach of Gardner, and that Terry Sanford

gave meaning to a New Day in education because he did not fear to point out that his Democratic predecessors had not gone far enough. And now Bob Scott says we must go even further.

This record is no exception. In the fields of mental health, highways, higher education, and public welfare, Democrats have not been content to rest on the past, but have challenged our citizens to the utmost of their capacities. This challenge to the past - these programs each for their day were good politics because they were good government.

How easy it would have been for Bob Scott to tell his fellow citizens: "all is well for you have been governed by good government for 68 years." Instead, he laid the foundation for good government by facing up to the simple fact that we have many problems to solve. Our Governor put it this way:

"Our local governments are in need of help.
Let us strengthen their hand.

"Businessmen and industrial leaders must be assured of stability in government, conditions suitable for expansion of investment, and a firm belief in the free enterprise system. They shall have it.

"Labor must be provided job opportunities with good wages and working conditions. We must keep our economic growth rate at a high level to provide these opportunities.

"The early settlers described our state as 'the goodliest land under the cope of heaven.' To the great majority it is. But we still have too many poor, too many hungry, too many unskilled, too many hopeless. We have not done enough for our physically and mentally handicapped citizens. We must redouble our attacks on these conditions."

How thankful I am - how proud I am that North Carolina Democrats led by Bob Scott have not been content to rest upon the laurels of the past. They realize that past programs are not the answer for today; and they placed before the General Assembly a program to meet the challenges of the 1970's ...

by strengthening programs for industrial and vocational training

by improving the conditions now existing in our system of public education

by linking each and every section of North Carolina together with first-rate highways, bridges and ferries.

by developing new and vital sources of income for farmers and fishermen by increasing research and supporting cooperative systems.

by improving existing working conditions for the thousands of North Carolinians who earn their way by the sweat of the brow

By these means and many others, our Democratic Party is practicing good government.

Thus far, I have devoted my remarks primarily to the record and challenges of the Democratic Party on a state level.

But I would be remiss to you and to myself if I did not pay homage to the leaders of our national government for whom this dinner is named; more importantly to the manner in which our party has been faithful throughout the years to their legacy.

Thomas Jefferson is remembered for many things - he founded the University of Virginia, he authored the nation's first Bill of Rights, he served as our first Secretary of State. But the vision that led him to acquire the Louisiana Territory as a testament of his faith in the bold future of a struggling Union and as proof of his visions for our future greatness, impels that we hold sacred his meaning. When John Kennedy decided an American would be the first man on the moon and when Bob Scott decreed that North Carolina would begin to act for the Twenty-First Century, Tom Jefferson, I have no doubt, looked down with favor upon them. For the Twentieth Century faith of these young Democratic leaders was in the best Jeffersonian traditions.

Andrew Jackson, that bold and fearless North Carolinian, entered the White House the hero of the common man. It was Andrew Jackson who did battle with those of the 1830's who sought over his strong objections to remove government from the responses of the people.

I like to think that Andrew Jackson was the first public official to be interested in what we call today "consumer protection." For it was he who fought powerful national monopolies on the ground that they would run roughshod over the largest segment of the citizenry. And so as I have begun to place the full force of my office and the prestige of the State of North Carolina behind efforts to protect our citizens from fraudulent selling schemes, to ensure representation of the consuming public in rate hearings, and to guarantee competitive bidding for state contracts, I would like to think that I am acting in the best Jacksonian traditions.

And we should not forget that it was not until a Democratic President, Lyndon B. Johnson, took the bull by the horns that a "Truth in Packaging Bill" and a "Truth in Lending Bill" was enacted into law.

What we are attempting to do in North Carolina by the establishment of a Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's office and what a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress sought to do by the enactment of the bills I have referred to does not signal a new era of thought in our Party.

It signals instead a re-dedication to those Jacksonian principles on which our glorious past was built. But more than it signifies our firm resolve to hold true to the ideals of good government recognizing that inaction in the past must never be a bar to needed steps for progress in the present.

We as Democrats can go further than Jefferson and Jackson.

We look with pride on Grover Cleveland who ended corruption in government begun by post-Civil War Republican administration and who restored to the people a trust in the principles of our Democratic system.

We stand tall with our fellow Democrat Woodrow Wilson whose vision of world peace inspired his countrymen as it inspires us today.

And no gathering of Democrats would be complete without a reference to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In this prosperity of the 60's let us never forget the hunger and unemployment in this land when Roosevelt took office. Let us never

forget the regeneration of the American spirit which he inspired. But more than that let us remember the homes he lighted with the Rural Electrification Authority, the savings of a lifetime he guaranteed with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the inner spirit that he kept alive among a people who stood in fear.

Harry Truman added to this great Democratic tradition leading the Free World in its fight against world communism. Think back, if you will, of his "give'em hell" campaign in 1948 and the simple straight-forward manner we all admired. And, it was this same Harry Truman who Richard Nixon branded a traitor.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, taken from us at his zenith by the cruel bullet of an assassin, symbolized the youth, vigor and determination of our ageless Party. He inspired our young people and created new national pride and spirit.

Lyndon Johnson typified the compassion and understanding that is the creed of the Democratic Party. His concern for the underprivileged and the underachievers will reserve for him a special place in our history.

This is the tradition of the Democratic Party in North Carolina and the Nation.

It is a tradition of faith in the people who comprise our society and of this basic value to the accomplishment of all good aims.

Yet above all is a tradition of good government - government unwilling to rest upon the laurels of the past, government willing to grapple with solutions to old problems and government that seeks the highest good from all mankind.

This government - this good government - did not occur by happenstance or fate. It occurred because our Democratic forebearers labored long and hard in the political vineyards of the day, never forgetting that the role of government is to challenge and lead, and not to dictate.

We can do our State and our Nation no greater service than to continue this tradition of the Democratic Party.

Let our presence here tonight stand as a symbol of our dedication to the principles of good government.