

DEMOCRATIC PARTY SPEECH

I know of no honor that could please me more than the privilege of standing before you tonight as a fellow North Carolinian and Democrat. As we pause here for a moment to plan ahead for the fall elections, I am reminded of a similar scene that took place some six years ago.

At that time I had the pleasure of introducing Governor Scott, then campaigning for Lieutenant Governor, to a Democratic rally much like this one. My remarks expressed the immense pride that I felt at being associated with such an outstanding group of Democrats, and I looked forward with eagerness to the challenge that lay before us.

Many things have changed since that night in 1963: Lieutenant Governor-candidate Scott is now Governor of our great State, and I myself have progressed from the State Senate to the Office of Attorney General. During this time my sense of pride in the Democratic Party has never faltered, and my faith in our Party to meet the challenge of the future has

increased day by day.

And so tonight, as we look forward to the elections that are less than two months away, let us address ourselves to the future and its challenge to the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party, in our State and in our nation, is facing one of the greatest challenges in its history. At a time when our nation is being torn by strife and tensions, at a time when bold leadership and new ideas are being demanded, the Democratic Party, always the symbol of boldness and innovation, was swept aside in the last Presidential election. And that Party, the Party of the common people, did not carry a single Southern State in that election, save Texas. That is not good news.

Looking at North Carolina, we see that we are no longer a one-party State. We went Republican in the 1968 Presidential election, and the Republican gubernatorial candidate attracted an alarming percentage of the electorate. Why?

Obviously, as more registered Republicans are attracted to our State by industry and by our expanding

economy, the strength of their party increases. And with increasing strength, they can offer a better selection of candidates and programs, who are able to attract not only the Republican vote but the votes of Democrats who are thinking twice about their own party.

Vast numbers of people who normally consider themselves adherents of one party are becoming increasingly willing to vote for one or more candidates of another party, come election day. This growing independence of voters has been proven by every election since my childhood, and it now poses a threat to the Democratic Party in our State. Party regulars and candidates who want to be elected must win and hold their allies and supporters among the independent voters as well as within their own party.

So we see that in order for the Democratic Party to continue its role of progressive leadership in North Carolina we must attack on three fronts: First, we must attract those members of our own party who feel the urge to stray to the Republican ranks; second, we must attract those Republicans who would do the same thing; and third,

we must attract those independent voters who feel free to support the candidate who offers them the best choice of programs.

Clearly the next question is, what can the Democratic Party offer the people of North Carolina in order to enlist their support? There are some who would say that the best way to encourage friends and neighbors to vote the Democratic ticket is to follow the techniques often used by the Republican Party, that of blasting the opposition and pointing up their failures and their weaknesses.

But the great tradition of the Democratic Party is optimistic progressivism, not pessimistic criticism. And in that tradition, we should not simply criticize the opposition for what they are or are not; instead, we should offer North Carolinians a Party whose record of service and concern for democracy and for the common people has been glorious and unsurpassed.

North Carolina Democrats are not, and never have been, part of what President Nixon calls the "great, silent majority." Democrats recognize the danger inherent in a silent majority, and they want no part of it.

They know that in the 1930's a silent majority in Germany and in Italy supported the demagoguery of Hitler and Mussolini. And they know that in our country, a silent majority--or rather a few silent minorities--assented to slavery, rascism, and social injustice.

Rather, the Democratic Party is great because it has always spoken out against the silence of implied consent, because it recognizes that lawful dissent and the right to disagree are the very cornerstones of our democratic way of life. And out of this progressive activism have come the programs for which the Democratic Party is remembered.

It was the Democratic Party of Thomas Jefferson that advocated public education through the University level for all men.

It was the Democratic Party of Andrew Jackson that fought against bank monopolies and big business interests on behalf of the common man.

It was the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt that brought us the New Deal, Social Security, the

minimum wage law, the Rural Electrification Administration, the Federal Housing Administration, the GI Bill, soil conservation, bank deposit insurance, and the farm programs that saved our nation from collapse during the 1930's.

It was the Democratic Party of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson that offered us the New Frontier, an unemployment rate that dropped from 7 percent to 3 percent in a few short years, legislation to combat social injustice, public health and education programs; that launched a nine-year endeavor taking us to the moon; and that brought us out of a recession and into eight years of prosperity, a claim that President Nixon would be hard pressed to make.

As Senator Ralph Scott has said, we are a great nation because Democrats have always been concerned, because they have acted while Republican dynasties of wealth and power have been content to sit back in the ranks of a silent minority.

Now let us look to the Democratic Party in North Carolina and see what it has done for the people.

Just before the turn of the century, during the last Republican administration in this State, my mother, a young girl of just twelve years, was working in the Caraleigh Cotton Mills in Raleigh, rather than attending school where she should have been. From the mid-1890's, when the Republicans gained control of the Legislature, bills were introduced into almost every session to limit the hours of work for women and children. Fearing the slightest beginning of government regulation and neglecting human needs and suffering, the Republicans defeated every important labor bill until the Democrats regained power in 1900. Slowly the humanitarian forces in the Democratic Party succeeded, step by step, in regulating child labor in industry. They made a modest beginning in the law of 1903, urged by Governor Aycock, which prohibited the employment of children under twelve and placed a maximum of sixty-six work-hours per week on those under eighteen.

Thus began an era of enlightened and aggressive leadership in North Carolina under the Democratic Party. Governor Aycock believed that free public schools, supported by the taxes of all citizens, should be open and available to every child. Under his leadership almost 4000

schoolhouses were built and equipped, teachers' salaries were raised, and several institutions of higher learning, including Appalachian State and East Carolina Teachers' Colleges, were founded.

It was the Democratic Party, during the administration of Governor Aycock, that took our children from the factories and placed them in the classrooms. And under the continued leadership of Governors Ehringhaus, Hoey, Broughton, Scott, Hodges, and Sanford, North Carolina now ranks among the top in educational opportunities provided for our children. Today, when the Governors of Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Texas present their educational programs to the legislators of their states, we can take satisfaction in knowing that all of them have been to North Carolina to observe our education system.

It was the Democratic Party that has seen the need throughout the years for a responsive, modern system of higher education. Built on the foundations of the first State-supported university in the nation, the Consolidated University of North Carolina has developed into the most comprehensive system of higher learning

in the South, offering the best educational opportunities to the greatest number of people.

North Carolina is continually working to improve its colleges and universities. The creation of the Regional University system in recent years by Democratic Legislatures has improved both the quality and the scope of North Carolina's higher education opportunities. And the fifty-unit system of community colleges and technical institutes, with a 1970 enrollment of over 300,000 students, has placed the opportunity for higher learning and vocational education within the reach of many of our State's young people who could not otherwise have attended college, filling the gap between high school and the four-year university.

It was the Democratic Party that recognized that the economic and social progress of North Carolina depended on the development of a state-supported network of improved highways. Thus it was under the administration of Cameron Morrison, known as the "good roads Governor," that our State began its road building program. Today North Carolina has the largest system of roads under State control in the United States, with over 73,500

miles of State supported roads. The system totals 11,500 miles longer than the highways of South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia combined. Currently, top priority is being given to an east-west four-lane highway to connect the mountains and the coast. And with all this development, North Carolina still does not maintain one toll road in the entire highway system. The Democrats have indeed made our State the "Good Roads State."

Finally, it was the Democratic Party that encouraged and developed the humanitarian institutions in North Carolina. Beginning with the school for the deaf, founded in 1845, and the State Hospital for the mentally ill, founded in 1858, our State has developed a comprehensive program of services offered to our less fortunate citizens. Today the Department of Mental Health maintains four regional mental health institutions and three Alcoholic Rehabilitation Centers, which at the same time laying the foundations for extensive service through community mental health centers.

Other services are offered to the citizens of our State through the Commission for the Blind, the

Department of Juvenile Correction, the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, the Governor's Coordinating Council on the Aging, the Board of Health, and the Department of Social Services. Clearly, under the dynamic leadership of the Democratic Party, the services offered by State government have kept rapid pace with the needs of the people.

However, we really need to look no further than the last session of the General Assembly to see what Democrats have done for North Carolina.

The teachers in our State-supported universities received pay raises last year averaging eight per cent, to be followed by another eight percent raise this year. Public school teachers received pay raises last year averaging ten percent, to be followed by a similar raise this year.

State employees received a pay raise this year averaging ten percent, to be followed by a two percent across-the-board raise for 1971-72.

As a result of the efforts of Democratic legislators, the 1969 Legislature laid the foundations

for a system of state-supported kindergartens. Last December eight demonstration centers in kindergarten and early childhood education went into operation, and more centers are promised for the future.

Last January another new educational program, occupational exploration in the middle grades, was begun in over sixteen school units in North Carolina.

Concerned about the rising crime rate and recognizing the need to provide better law enforcement in the State, Democrats in 1969 doubled the funds allotted to the State Bureau of Investigation, thereby allowing the SBI to double its manpower. The State Highway Patrol was given \$1.6 million to increase its personnel and to purchase and equip new automobiles. And funds were appropriated to establish a State-wide Police Information Network, aimed at rapid transmission of information among law enforcement agencies across the State.

In the area of human relations, our State has made great strides in low-income housing development. The budget of the Good Neighbor Council has tripled in the last year. And the new Department of Local Affairs

is providing direct assistance to local municipalities.

But in spite of the outstanding role that the Democratic Party has played in the development of North Carolina, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels and reflect on the dedication of our fathers and our grandfathers. For if we continue to focus our attention on the party of the past, we will soon become just that-- a party of the past, buried in the annals of history.

Indeed it would be contrary to everything the Democratic Party has ever stood for, contrary to the ideals of Jefferson and Jackson, Roosevelt and Kennedy, if we allow ourselves to stagnate in the glorification of what the Party has been.

Democrats have always been progressive, dynamic, imaginative, anxious to respond to the demands of the people for change and progress. As State Democratic Executive Committee Chairman Chuck Barbour has said, "the Democratic Party is the best and strongest vehicle for providing the bold and imaginative leadership the times require and the people of North Carolina need and will support."

We have heard a great deal recently about the term "relevance," especially from those involved in the academic world. It seems that everyone, following the lead of our college students, is seeking concepts and institutions that do more than just adhere to tradition and formality, that are relevant and applicable to our rapidly changing world. I believe that the Democratic Party is an institution that can adapt to our tumultuous times; indeed, we must adapt, for our Party's sake as well as for the sake of North Carolinians.

We need to offer programs that will convince our talented young people to remain and work for the good of North Carolina, rather than migrating to other states, as has been the trend in recent years.

We must meet the challenges of agriculture if we are to ensure the livelihood of our farm population and meet the needs of our expanding society.

We need to meet the challenges of the rapidly increasing migration to the cities and all of the associated problems that are becoming a reality to so many North Carolina municipalities.

We must attract more and better industries, including the mushrooming research and development industry, in order to ensure the development of our State's economy. Governor Hodges set the groundwork in this area with such concepts as the Research Triangle, but there is still much to be done.

The name of the game in politics today is innovation and participation. Our Party must be creative and inventive enough to inspire new ideas to meet these new problems.

And how can we achieve this inspiration? Through increased participation, by involving everybody we can in the affairs of the Party. The Democratic Party has already made great strides in this area, especially concerning participation of our youth. But we must go further. We must involve women in the decisions of the party. We must offer programs to attract participation of our black citizens.

Everybody who is concerned about the problems and needs of North Carolina and its people ought to get involved in the Democratic Party. Because the Democratic Party is the place to translate concern about

North Carolina's needs and problems into action to meet those needs and solve those problems.

You know, I saw an interesting billboard on the streets of Raleigh just the other day. It pictured a long-haired, bearded youth waving the peace sign and riding away on a motorcycle labeled "N. C. Democratic Platform," leaving an older man and woman waving sadly goodbye. The caption read, "You are not leaving the Democratic Party--it has left you."

Needless to say, the advertisement was sponsored by the Republican Party. It has always amazed me how the Republicans never cease to use emotional labels and demogoguery to appeal to voters. But the North Carolina Democratic Party has always put its faith and confidence in the good sense and good judgment of the people of North Carolina, as Chuck Barbour has said so many times before. And I feel sure that North Carolinians will continue to put their faith and confidence in the Democratic Party, and not succumb to phony political labels.

But a more important lesson from this billboard was asserted by Vice President Humphrey in an address

to the Democratic National Committee after the last election: "Our Republican friends try to catch up with the past. Our quality is that we chart the tomorrows."

With all that the Democratic Party has been in the past, with all that we have done for the people of North Carolina, with all that we are doing now to involve concerned North Carolinians and to offer viable programs for the betterment of our State, we cannot afford to relax and become complacent. We cannot afford to sit back and simply react to each crisis, as our Republican friends would have us do. We must look ahead and plan for the future; we must "chart the tomorrows."

As Democrats in North Carolina, we have a job to do. We must meet the challenges of the present, and we must plan the challenges of the future. We must make our State a better place for both present and future generations of Tar Heels.

The struggle began many years ago, when the Democratic Party first pulled the State up by its bootstraps into an era of progress and enlightenment.

Standing strong in our conviction, facing squarely the problems of the future, let us bring North Carolina the bold and imaginative leadership necessary to meet the needs of the people. Let us work together to make the decade of the Seventies the greatest in the history of our State, and let us begin with the 1970 elections.

Thank you.