

REMARKS BY WALTER PETTISS
OCTOBER 12, 1976
SPARTANBURG ROTARY CLUB

GENTLEMEN, IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO APPEAR BEFORE GROUPS SUCH AS THE SPARTANBURG ROTARY CLUB TO GIVE YOU SOME OF MY IMPRESSIONS ON THE OPERATION OF OUR STATE GOVERNMENT.

I PREFACE MY REMARK BY WARNING YOU THAT I AM NOT A POLITICIAN, NEITHER AM I A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR. ~~I AM A GRADUATE OF HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL AND WAS FORMERLY EMPLOYED BY DEERING MILLIKEN.~~

I WAS THRUST, SOMEWHAT HESITANTLY, INTO THE ARENA OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS WHEN GOVERNOR EDWARDS WAS ELECTED GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA. I HAVE FOUND THE TRANSITION TO BE REWARDING, FRUSTRATING, HUMOROUS AT TIMES AND SAD AT TIMES. THE PROBLEMS THAT WE FACE IN STATE GOVERNMENT ARE NOT TOO DIFFERENT FROM THE WORK-A-DAY PROBLEMS FACED BY ANY LARGE CORPORATION.


ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AS YOU KNOW GOVERNOR EDWARDS IS THE FIRST REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN MORE THAN 100 YEARS. HE HAS COMPILED A RECORD OF UNSURPASSED EXCELLENCE AND BROUGHT FISCAL INTEGRITY TO ALL LEVELS OF STATE GOVERNMENT SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN JANUARY OF 1975.

HIS MAIN GOAL WAS TO INSTITUTE SOUND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AT ALL LEVELS OF STATE GOVERNMENT. HIS RECORD OF OPENNESS AND INTEGRITY HAS SERVED AS A VIABLE EXAMPLE TO ALL PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES.

DURING HIS FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE HE LED THE FIGHT FOR TIGHTER CONTROLS ON STATE MOTOR VEHICLE MANAGEMENT WHICH SAVED SOUTH CAROLINIANS 1.7 MILLION DOLLARS.

SOUTH CAROLINA HAS HISTORICALLY WITNESSED A 10 PERCENT PLUS GROWTH TREND IN THE NUMBER OF STATE EMPLOYEES. GOVERNOR EDWARDS SET ABOUT TO TIGHTEN PERSONNEL POLICIES AND AT THE SAME TIME IMPLEMENTED A HIRING FREEZE. THIS IMPROVED PHILOSOPHY SAVED YOU AND I 6.3 MILLION DOLLARS IN TAXES.




HE WAS ONE OF THE FORERUNNERS IN THE FIGHT FOR THE ADOPTION OF A HOME RULE BILL WHICH GIVES THE VOTERS OF EACH COUNTY A REAL SAY IN THE TYPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT THEY HAVE. GOVERNOR EDWARDS GUIDED THROUGH AN 8 PERCENT ACROSS THE BOARD BUDGET CUT WHICH REDUCED THE '75-'76 BUDGET REQUEST BY OVER 92 MILLION DOLLARS. FOR FISCAL YEAR '76-'77 HE CONTINUED A TIGHT RESTRAIN POLICY REDUCING AGENCY REQUEST BY MORE THAN 197 MILLION DOLLARS.

HE CALLED FOR THE MERGER AND RECONFIGURATION OF THE TELEPHONE SYSTEM IN ADDITION TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE CENTREX SYSTEM. THESE TWO MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS REDUCED THIS UTILITY COST BY MORE THAN \$100,000 ANNUALLY. HE CALLED FOR AND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNIQUES AT A SAVINGS OF 2.8 MILLION TAX DOLLARS.

HE JOINED THE NATIONAL CONCERN FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION AND LED THE WAY FOR \$70,000 ANNUAL REDUCTION IN ELECTRICAL ENERGY AND GAS CONSUMPTION.

IN KEEPING WITH HIS PHILOSOPHY OF THE BEST GOVERNMENT IS THE LEAST GOVERNMENT HE CALLED FOR THE PROCESS OF THE AGENCY REVIEW. DURING THIS REVIEW PROCESS MORE THAN ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLARS WAS SAVED WITH A REDUCTION IN THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS. OBVIOUSLY, GOVERNOR EDWARDS HAS OVERCOME MANY UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES AS HE CONTINUES HIS THRUST FOR PHYSICAL INTEGRITY. IN 1965 THE STATE BUDGET WAS \$241,000,000, BY 1976 IT HAD BEEN PUSHED OVER THE 1 BILLION DOLLAR MARK. DURING THE SAME PERIOD IN TIME THE RANKS OF STATE EMPLOYEES MUSHROOMED FROM 22,788 TO AN ESTIMATED 52,000. IN 1975 WHEN HE ASSUMED OFFICE NO ONE IN STATE GOVERNMENT COULD DETERMINE THE EXACT NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES OR THE TOTAL PAYROLL. THIS SITUATION WAS REMEDIED BY DIRECT ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR. AN ACCOUNTING AND CROSS REFERENCE SYSTEM WITH THE BUDGET AND CONTROL BOARD HAS NOW BEEN IMPLEMENTED.



THE REGIONAL HOSPITAL CONCEPT IS FAST BECOMING A REALITY WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF MCCLOUD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN FLORENCE PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. WHEN THIS FACILITY IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC EVERY SOUTH CAROLINIAN WILL BE WITHIN LESS THAN AN HOUR'S DRIVE-TIME TO A MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY. IN ADDITION, ALL OF THE REGIONAL HOSPITALS ARE SERVING AS TEACHING INSTITUTIONS FOR LOCAL PROFESSIONALS.

IN 1975 GOVERNOR EDWARDS APPOINTED A TASK FORCE COMMITTEE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCIAL EQUALIZATION. THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO A FINANCIAL EQUALIZATION BILL WHICH GOES BEFORE THE STATE LEGISLATURE IN JANUARY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS BILL IS TO EQUALIZE PROPERTY TAXES IN THE VARIOUS SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND EQUALIZE A DOLLAR PER PUPIL RATIO. GOVERNOR EDWARDS IS VERY CONCERNED AS HE SEES MORE AREAS OF STATE GOVERNMENT WHICH CAN AND SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

ELECTION ANALYSIS

THIS BEING AN ELECTION YEAR OUR THOUGHTS NATURALLY TURN TO THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTORIAL PROCESS. I'D LIKE TO SPEND JUST A FEW MOMENTS WITH YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

SINCE 1904 THE NUMBER OF VOTERS PARTICIPATING IN AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS HAS BEEN DECLINING. THE DECLINE HAS BEEN ERRATIC WITH SOME YEARS RECORDING TURNOUTS AS GREAT AS 65 PERCENT AND OTHERS AS LOW AS 49 PERCENT. AT NO TIME, HOWEVER, HAS THE AMERICAN POPULAS TURNED OUT TO VOTE AS IT DID BETWEEN 1840 AND 1900, WHEN AN AVERAGE OF 77 PERCENT OF THOSE AMERICANS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS DID SO.

WITHIN THE LAST TWO DECADES MORE AMERICANS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS THAN IN THE ELECTIONS OF THE 1930'S

AND 1940'S. THIS IS QUITE CONTRARY TO WHAT WE COMMONLY HEAR ABOUT THE POOR TURNOUTS AT THE POLLS. IN ADDITION, STATISTICS SHOW THAT SINCE 1930 A SUBSTANTIALLY LARGER NUMBER OF VOTERS COME TO THE POLLS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS WHEN A PRESIDENT IS BEING ELECTED THAN DO WHEN ONLY CONGRESSIONAL SEATS ARE AT STAKE. ON THE AVERAGE, A LARGER PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS OF NON-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEARS DURING 1950 AND 1960 THAN DURING THE 1930'S AND 1940'S. THIS SUGGESTS THAT VOTER INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION MAY BE ON THE UPSWING OR AT LEAST RELATIVELY STABLE AND SLIGHTLY OVER 60 PERCENT. THE 1972 ELECTIONS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN A FLUKE IN TERMS OF TRENDS FOR 1970 DUE TO THE TWO CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT.

AGE HAS LITTLE BEARING ON WHO DID AND DIDN'T VOTE IN COMPARING 1968 AND 1972 ELECTIONS. ALL BRACKETS RECORDED 5 TO 6 PERCENT DROPS IN '72 EXCEPT THE 18 TO 20 YEAR OLDS WHERE PARTICIPATION GREW SUBSTANTIALLY DUE TO THE 26TH AMENDMENT. NEARLY HALF OF ALL THE BLACKS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN 1972 DID NOT DO SO AS COMPARED TO ONLY ABOUT 36 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL WHITE VOTERS.

NON-PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IS GROWING MORE RAPIDLY IN THE SOUTH THAN IN THE NORTH OR WEST. THE SOUTH LED IN NON-VOTERS IN 1968 AND IN 1972 INCREASED ITS LEAD OVER THE NORTH AND WEST.

VOTING PERCENTAGES IN METROPOLITAN AND NON-METROPOLITAN AREAS WERE NEARLY IDENTICAL IN 1968, BUT IN 1972 VOTING IN NON-METROPOLITAN AREAS DECLINED MUCH MORE SHARPLY THAN VOTING IN URBAN AREAS.

ALMOST HALF OF UNEMPLOYED AMERICANS DID NOT VOTE IN EITHER 1968 OR 1972. EMPLOYED AMERICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOTE COMPARING 1968 TO 1972. IN 1968 OVER 70 PERCENT OF THOSE EMPLOYED VOTED AND IN 1972 ONLY 66 PERCENT VOTED.

THE MORE EDUCATED A VOTER IS, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO CAST HIS BALLOT IN ELECTIONS. WE ARE TOLD VOTER PARTICIPATION DECLINES ONLY SLIGHTLY AMONG PERSONS HAVING MORE THAN TWELVE YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPARING THE LAST TWO MAJOR ELECTIONS. PERSONS HAVING TWELVE YEARS OR LESS EDUCATION DECLINE FROM THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN A RANGE OF 7 TO 9 PERCENT BASED ON THEIR PARTICIPATION.