Address

THE PROMISE AND PROSPECT OF THE SOUTH

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First of all, I want to express appreciation that the Oklahoma Academy of Science is featuring so important and composite a problem as that of southern regional development and national achievement. It is heartening to know that such a body of scientists are councilling together on the range and methods for scientific study, in which new reaches in cooperation between physical scientists and social scientists may be attained in a living laboratory of great promise. This assures possibilities of not only focusing upon the development of regional excellence and the integration of the region into the national economy, but also upon universal methods of science in the attacking of our several problems. It seems to me that this approach of unified and coordinated effort is of the greatest importance in these days when so many movements tend to label, purge, and draw up the people in lines of conflict.

I

By way of preview and definition to our discussion of the promise and prospect of the South, I should like to begin with a series of assumptions which will constitute the general premise upon which our conclusions will be based.

The first assumption is that the civilization which we strive to develop for the South will be found in a much more nearly balanced economy than that which we now have, and that such a balanced economy can be adequately defined and practically measured in terms of attainable ends.

A second assumption is that it is possible, on the basis of present information and of additional researches to be undertaken, to estimate the measures of difference between the regional economy which we now have and the future economy which will approximate balance and equilibrium between and among our several fundamental aspects of life and labor.

Having appraised the major deficiencies, we assume that our next task is to answer the question: What will it take to bridge this distance between what is and that which is realistically desirable and possible and what are next steps?

Then, having answered this question within the framework of the principal phases of economic activity, we must ask one other question, namely, how can we develop and acquire the resources and the capacities essential for the greater realization of the inherent wealth of the South and for bridging this chasm of distance between the superabundance of physical and human resources as potentialities and the actualities of technical deficiencies in their development and of waste in their use?

Now the asking of these questions and the attempt to answer them is so far from being an indictment of the South that it may rather be likened unto a broad premise of great promise, in which through the discovery of truth and the realistic facing of facts we may arrive at reasonable conclusions and workable plans.

That is, such questions and their answers assume the proportions not only of a comprehensive and practical program of inquiry and development, but also of high motivation and education for a great and virile people. There is lack neither of reality nor of patriotism in understanding and interpreting a great region in terms of these inquiries, restated more simply, namely:

What is it that we desire for the region and the nation?

What is it that we now have?

How far is this present economy short of what we most want?

What will it take to supplement what we have?

How may we obtain what it takes to do the job?

In the light of these objectives, it seems fair to assume that the sensitiveness of the South to such inquiries is unreasonable and, therefore, will not continue to handicap justifiable efforts. For progress toward the desired ends cannot be made without an understanding of fundamental needs and the will and motivation for the attainment of skills, training, and equipment, and acquirement of resources, and the development of economic opportunity for our large and growing population.

There are certain other assumptions that are basic to our general premises. One is that the specifications for this balanced economy are to be found within the framework of American democracy. We know, of course, that other systems are proposed for the reordering of our economy, but these are not basic to our present premises.

Another important assumption is that our balanced economy assumes as much balance, equilibrium, and integration as possible in the total national picture as opposed to our sometime separateness and sectionalism, which manifestly succeeds neither for the South nor the nation. As such it is a testing ground for American regionalism which seeks strength in diversity, unity in integration.

Once again, our assumptions with reference to a time period within which our premises or recommendations will be valid must be relatively specific. We want to know the answers to our questions in terms of promise and prospect for 1950. This is true not only because it seems clear that if the South has not reshaped its economy by that time there will be irretrievable loss both to the region and the nation, but because major needs and procedures appropriate within this time period may be outmoded beyond the turn of the mid-century. And because this would seem to be the shortest practical period for the first reaches of a long-time development.

Finally, there is one other general assumption, and that is that the promise of the South must rest on the twofold basis of conserving, developing, and utilizing both our natural wealth and our human wealth. This means that the development of our natural wealth and capital wealth must assume adequate employment for our millions of young and virile people to the end that higher standards of living and consumption may be reflected in an economy of equilibrium between the land and the people.

Basic to these assumptions are yet two others. First, that it must be a self-evident truth that the desired ends to be attained must rest upon the sound foundation of more scientific equipment and skills with better trained personnel and, second, that the South now appears to be more highly motivated and more capable of successful achievements than ever before in its history. This motivation and capacity are reflected in its leaders and its institutions and in the possible framework of a broader cooperative arrange-

ment between states and regions, and between regions and national government.

II

What then, returning to our first assumption, are the attainable measures and ends of a balanced regional economy for the South? The answer is, of course, that balance and equilibrium must be defined and attained in terms of multiple measures. There will be, first of all, a better equilibrium between agriculture and industry, between rural life and urban civilization. This is contrary to both the cult of agrarianism which would have too much agriculture and to the sweeping trend toward megalopolitan culture which would negate the great fundamentals of land use and value in an enduring civilization. We, therefore, subscribe to the basic American and southern tenets that a continuous reintegration of agrarian culture in American life is basic to that balanced economy so much desired. We have pointed out often that this means that equilibrium between and among the various major parts of American life to which greater agriculture and a richer agrarian culture would contribute. It is not only that land is still the base of our American wealth. It is not only that the seed bed of the nation's population must continue to be in rural America and therefore the quality of future America is conditioned by the quality of our rural culture. It is not only that the spirit and genius of early America was grounded in a vital agrarian culture, the nature of our laws and institutions assuming a continuity of such fundamentals. It is all of this and more. It is a matter of essential equilibrium and balance between agrarian and industrial culture, between country life and city activities, between physical resources and technology, between machines and men. It is, therefore, essentially a problem of progress and survival.

Now this equilibrium and balance is of peculiar importance to the South for two reasons. Manifestly, it works both ways. On the one hand, the South may well be the best testing ground for the reconstruction of agricultural economy and the integration of agrarian culture in American life because of the essential rural nature of its resources and culture. Yet, in the South manifestly the first need for a balanced economy is for more industry not only for achieving a better equilibrium between and among the several occupations and income sources, but also for the strengthening of this very agrarian culture which so much clamors for rebuilding. Thus, keeping in mind our essential problem of a large and rapidly multiplying population and the essential character and richness of the South's agricultural potentialities, we come to ask some such question as this: How many additional industries of what sort will succeed in giving employment to how many additional workers, who in turn will relieve the rural areas of how much surplus labor and at the same time provide purchasing power ample to support how many agricultural workers remaining on the farm? This question, of course, must be asked intelligently and realistically in perspective to different localities, to available raw materials for industry, and to the possibilities of new types of industry, and for new types of products, such as are implied in the Farm Chemurgic Movement. The question must be answered also in relation to new programs of home consumption of commodities, to interregional situations, and to international factors. And, of course, the question and answers must somehow be in realistic relation to the availability of capital, of trained leaders, and of skilled workers, about which we shall have more to say presently.

Yet a fundamental and more specialized aspect of this balanced economy is that of a balanced agriculture, often considered the most important of southern economic problems. In their objectives of *achieving a balanced*

agriculture, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration people have called balanced agriculture the long-time goal of national policy, in which they assume two major areas of balance. First, there must be balance between the production of the farmers, fields, and the consumption of their product, and, second, there must be balance between the income of farmers and the income of their neighbors in the cities and towns. Now for the South, a balanced agriculture means this, as we have already indicated, but it means much that is more specific. It means a balance between the cash crops and the use crops; it means a balance between land destroying crops and land conservation crops; it means a balance between planted crops and livestock; it means a balance between land ownership and farm tenancy; and between the whole land system, credit and colonial economy inherent in the cotton economy of the South. Other and more detailed aspects will be reviewed in our discussion of measures of difference between the present economy and the more balanced economy desired.

There is, too, a third major phase of this projected balanced economy that is of the greatest significance to southern development. This is a better equilibrium and balance as between the agricultural and industrial workers, on the one hand, and that other key group comprehended in social and public services, in skills and technology, in organization and management, and in the professions, index and security for a stable and progressive economy of production and distribution. Within this framework also will be found the factors of transportation and markets and distribution of goods and involving many important differentials in freight rates, tariffs, and other handicaps which militate against a well balanced economy.

Inherent in a balanced culture economy is a fourth aspect which is also especially important to the South. This is a better balance and equilibrium between its resources, its capital wealth and its fiscal policies and expenditures for institutions and the public weal. This, again, works both ways, for undoubtedly at the present time the South is handicapped with the burden of spending too large a ratio of its wealth for the development of its human resources as compared with that of developing its physical resources, and at the same time the product of these expenditures is out of balance with a well rounded civilization. The logical implication, then, is that only through the increase of capital and skills in the development of its natural resources can the twofold balance be attained. The long catalogue of cultural deficiencies so commonly listed in reality have their basis primarily in fiscal affairs and, therefore, are essentially both creature and creator of an unbalanced economy.

There is finally the ever-present area of unbalance as found in the bi-racial economy. There is no gainsaying the elemental importance to the region, in every phase of its economy, of an increasingly better balance between the white race and the Negro race—basic to any optimum economic development of the region.

III

Now there are two ways in which we may emphasize the need and promise of a better balanced economy. One is to catalogue the deficiencies and imbalance and the other is to point to practical examples of how such an economic and cultural balance may be illustrated. Now the deficiencies have been presented in so many recent ways that it would seem to be presumptuous to catalogue them here. Specifically, the President's committee *Report on Economic Conditions of the South* has done the job very well. In our own summary, we have often pointed out fundamental lack of balance as reflected in our superabundance of physical and human re-

sources and alongside their misuse and waste and our deficiencies in capital, technological, and institutional wealth, and pointing out how, if we could attain excellence in science and skills we might translate our national resources into capital wealth which in turn could be utilized for the development of our institutions which in turn would again enrich our people and their culture.

That this can be done is exemplified in many examples of subregions and areas in the South, which we have studied as living laboratories for research and planning, and showing that it is possible to have a balanced population between and among rural and urban, rural-farm and village, and between the three great occupational groups, the agricultural and extractive, the business and commercial, and the social and distributive.

The cataloguing of deficiencies, however, has already been featured enough to justify our proceeding at once to our new inquiry as to what it will take to meet the needs of the situation. If we over simplify the problem, I should point to a sevenfold objective, four of which we must discuss in our last division, namely, how to get what it takes to do the job. These four are, first, the acquirement of more capital; second, the reconstruction of our economy on the lower brackets of agricultural production, third, the strengthening of centers of science, research, and university leadership; and, fourth, a realistic program of cooperation between the physical sciences and the social sciences. The other three objectives appear, however, to be especially important in the answer to our question as to what we must have and what we must do to succeed. For our assumption seems justified that the South hasn't a ghost of a chance to attain these maximum desired ends unless and until it can train its millions of youth and equip them adequately to develop these great resources and social institutions; and until it can, at the same time, provide work, opportunities, skills, financial and cultural rewards to the end that not only its great mass of people may be well employed, but that the greater number of its leaders and highest educated folk may remain within its borders. How to do this: that is the question.

The three immediate tasks are, first, the education and motivation of the young people of the South, and, at the same time, the adult population of the region in the meaning and significance and importance of work, of high standards of living, of housing, of skill; in the meaning of the nature and value of natural resources, of land and water, and flora and fauna, and all that long catalogue of natural wealth in which the South excels, and in the training of the emotions. This is a field in which, strangely and unbelievably, there is almost an absence of major programs of education and practice, thus leaving millions of youth without any sense of the power and glory of a great region, whose wealth may be developed and made synonymous with welfare. While this is to some degree a plain problem of ignorance and incompetence, it is apparently the result of neglect and default rather than intention. This is a problem primarily for the common and secondary schools, but one in which the universities and colleges and state departments of education must cooperate.

The second problem is one perhaps more difficult, and one that must be developed at the same time and in co-ordination with the first. This is the problem of setting up a new and expanded framework of occupational opportunity in the South and the insuring of provisions for industry, commerce, agriculture, professions, social and distributive services, adequate to support the education and motivation of the schools towards a new realism of work and standards, of wealth and welfare. We have enumerated

types of such expanding opportunities in new large industries, such as may come from the development of forestry, paper pulp industries, in new reaches in home building programs, new industries in air-cooling techniques, development of steel industries competent to give the South its millions of rods of adequate fencing, the expansion of the South's special industries in food and feed processes, refrigeration, development of farm and commercial products from fibers, a partial supplementing of its millions of units of deficit in dairy and poultry products, and the whole extraordinary developing field of science in the service of agriculture. The range of the practical possibilities here could be illustrated in hundreds of ways. One is to recall Secretary Wallace's statement that he had driven many thousands of miles throughout most of the southern states, and rarely, if ever, had he seen a decent fence; or again to envisage the astronomical figures necessary for even an approximation to the building and reconstruction of southern rural homes; or of the almost astronomical number of units of cotton manufacture needed to give the millions of farms and farm tenants adequate margin in living and comfort with clothes and home equipment; as well as similar unmet needs for equipment on the farm and in village through rural electrification, various types of cooperative endeavor, and the extension and expansion of better management and practices. It is a matured conclusion from years and years of study and social research that the development of such expanded programs of opportunity is the first essential if the South is to reward the quest of its youth for bread with bread instead of stones; with fish, instead of a serpent. This is a task of the upper brackets of education and science, of the universities and colleges and research agencies; of the state and city educational departments, of cooperative industrial and commercial research, and above all, of a certain boldness and adventure in the investment of capital, in faith in the outcome, and in cooperative regional planning.

The third task follows naturally in the wake of these others, namely, the actual training of the youth of the South in terms of skills, of vocational education, of guidance; the increase and realistic application of science and scientific laboratories of social science and educational leadership, and, above all, in a revivification of the development of agrarian culture in the South. This is a joint program between and among all institutions of education and of leadership, beginning with the public schools and extending through the higher brackets of universities, technical schools, agricultural colleges, and of state, county, and city administrative systems.

IV

We come finally to point to ways of acquiring resources and capacities for such achievement as we have indicated. And the first essential for each and every objective is more wealth. We suggest five sources from which this wealth may be available. This first, of course, is through an improved agriculture and industry, such as are seen now emerging; through increased income, better lands and greater values, new and old industries working more effectively. This is the normal, gradually evolving task of the South. A second source is the increasing investment by southerners of their funds in southern projects and industry in contradistinction to the prevailing procedure of outside investments. This implies, of course, the obligation of the South to make such investments secure and profitable. A third source may be in the similar inducement of northern and western capital to invest in the South. This implies a twofold obligation. One is the same as for southern capital, namely, making of the South a culture and an economy calculated to insure stability and safety of investments. The other has to do with the hazards of absentee ownership and control of farms, industries, and workers. A fourth source of

great importance is found in federal funds for cooperative public works and public services and for equalizing opportunity and for seeking parity in agriculture. It should be emphasized, of course, that the issue of federal equalization is a national one, applying to all regions and by no means to the South alone, although the South would apparently be a large beneficiary. And further, that the issue is not a new one, since the practice is well established in such avenues as agriculture, road building, public health, social security, federal relief, public works administration, works progress administration, and many other activities of the Federal government. Let us look at the situation from the national viewpoint. The South, being a creditor region, sends most of its money elsewhere and the surplus wealth of the nation is in nowise available within the home border of the Southern States. The South is poor and partly for this reason. But the South does contribute millions of dollars to the rest of the nation, not only in its trade but also in its internal revenue payments to the Federal Government, one single state, for instance, paying more than twenty times what it gets back. But more than this, the South furnishes to the nation millions of workers and replacement people for the cities and for industry and commerce and the professions. The South must educate these people, and even with their inadequate education it is an expensive proposition, so that the total cost and value of these people reaches into billions of dollars.

The South has contributed since 1900 nearly four million people to the other regions of the nation, and these people have not only carried with them their education and some of their heritage, but they have worked for the rest of the nation during the time of their highest productivity. Thus, the cost is not only in their equipment, but in what they take away from the South and what they might contribute to the development of the region had they remained. The nation, therefore, from any point of view, owes something more to the region.

From still another viewpoint, the problem is pre-eminently a national one. It is generally agreed among all population experts that the South will continue to be the seed bed of the nation's population and will provide the surplus people for many years to come. To this extent, therefore, the character of the people of the nation will depend upon the character of the people of the South. In the present economy it is not possible for the South to provide facilities equal to that of the rest of the nation, and, therefore, to give equal educational opportunity to all of its children. This problem, therefore, is not only one of democracy and equal opportunity as a national philosophy, but such an equal opportunity penalizes the whole nation through the media of these interstate migrations. The fifth source of additional wealth is found in the grants and endowments which the national foundations may make to scientific research, to university leadership, and to experimental efforts within the areas basic to the balanced economy.

Now the most important contributions here would appear to be in the strengthening of university centers, which is our sixth task, since the evidence seems overwhelming that there can be no adequate culture in the South without the reconstruction of its agriculture and that, if the regions would support adequately the institutions and tools of science and learning, the future of its economics and government would be safe. This assumes a trained leadership and research programs adequate to evolve policies for such fundamentals as population and social-industrial relationships.

The seventh task appears to be in the nature of a corollary to the strengthening of centers of science and research and training of leadership, namely, new reaches in the cooperation and coordination of physical

sciences with the social sciences to the end that there may be the development of a great civilization in harmony with its natural and cultural heritage. In the South, there is apparent everywhere extraordinary opportunity for this sort of scientific achievement because of the new momentum which the South is attaining in the development of its physical sciences and in the implementation of its social sciences.

Within the field of the physical sciences, opportunities are extraordinary. What chemistry and bio-chemistry can do toward the development and utilization of the superabundance of resources in the South is literally immeasurable. The catalogue will extend all the way from the wide range of farm chemurgic possibilities to that of the discovery of new processes for peculiarly appropriate regional industries, and especially in the field of diet and the utilization of the South's great climate the opportunities appear almost unlimited.

There are many other fields, such as plant genetics and the extraordinary potential for the discovery and adaptation of new plants through line breeding of seeds and flora in general to make the South a sort of garden spot of the world. Still more particularly the South would appear to afford perhaps the best field for plant and animal ecology that could be found in the nation, the emphasis being not merely on the technical studies and methodological approaches to scientific classification, but especially in answer to the question, what is the optimum adaptation of land and plants and animals in the development of a great region? What is the best that can be done and should be done under given conditions in different regions and in different subregions?

We assume, of course, the extraordinary contributions of physics and mathematics and other phases of the biological studies and of the extraordinary reaches of agricultural science, chemistry of soils, technology of engineering, conservation, farm management, animal husbandry, agronomy, and the long catalogue of scientific approaches, in which such extraordinary progress is being made.

Now it must be clear that these are basic to the promise and prospect of the South in the next period of development. It is also clear, however, that, as has been pointed out by a recent study of the Social Science Research Council, the proportion of research in the social sciences to total researches in the physical sciences is extraordinarily small. Yet the great needs of the world at the present time seem to be for social research even more than for physical research. The report continues: "These demand, and would in all probability richly reward, the same detached scientific study that has been given to chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, and their subdivisions and applications in a hundred endowed or otherwise supported laboratories by thousands of trained and devoted investigators."

Toward the attainment of all these ends a fundamental contribution could be made in the encouragement and support of a Southern Council on Regional Development which, focussing upon the four major areas of need and tension, namely *agricultural development and conservation, economic development and security, race development and relations,* and *public administration and public policy,* would utilize the researches of universities and would implement the whole broad field of regional development toward a balanced economy.