Theodore Bilbo Memorial Services

Before Joint Session of Legislature

February 9, 1949

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
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Title: Theodore Bilbo Memorial Services Before Joint Session of Legislature, February 9, 1949

00:00-00:30: [Noise and garbled talk]

ANNOUNCER: This is Rebel WRBC, Jackson [inaudible]

00:36-00:55: [Roaring noise]

ANNOUNCER: It is my pleasure to present the Honorable Sam Lumpkin, Lieutenant Governor of the state of Mississippi who will preside over [inaudible]. Governor Lumpkin.

LUMPKIN: [inaudible], members of the joint session. The Reverend E. W. Nix, pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Bogalusa, Louisiana, will ask the invocation.

NIX: Almighty God, our most gracious Father in heaven, humbly we come into Thy presence today as we come to honor one of Mississippi's most noble sons and a personal friend, not only to us ourselves, not only to those who sit upon this platform, but to friends [inaudible] everyone who is here assembled throughout the state, also, and the nation. We want to thank Thee, Lord Jesus, for this great statesman, for his noble life, for his principles of live that filled his heart throughout the great career that he lived and served his faith and this nation and God. We thank Thee for the honor we have today, as we stand here in his memory, to praise the name of our God for his great life. We pray that the ideals and [inaudible] that filled his heart and ambition of life shall continue as the years come and go to live and control in a measure the thinking and the motivation of the hearts of the people of this noble state. We thank Thee that it was our personal privilege to know him and to be intimately associated with him through many years of his unique career. Today, as this legislature assembles together in his honor, we pray that Thou shall bless, not only in this hour but in the busy days ahead of them, in all their deliberation. We want to thank Thee for the noble Governor of our state and for the things that he has done and that he is doing to uphold the principles of real American democracy, those same principles that filled the heart of our noble statesman whose memory we honor today. God bless the Governor and all of his associates, and may the measures now being put forth to maintain the principles of real democracy that have come so near to passing from our nation be revived and carried forward in the months ahead. Bless us in this assembly now, and bless every heart that's concerned and make this occasion one that will glorify the name of Christ for it is in His blessed name we ask these blessings, Amen.

LUMPKIN: Now I ask Dr. I. E. Rouse, President of Mississippi's Woman College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to read the scripture.

ROUSE: [inaudible] to read the scripture for this occasion, only one passage has

subjected its [path] as quite appropriate. [inaudible] background. As a sophomore in Mississippi College [inaudible] Governor Bilbo asked me to dinner. [inaudible] he said to me these words of his abiding conviction, that nothing is settled until it is settled right, and that, ultimately, a person's success turns upon the basis of one's personal integrity and divine disposition. [inaudible] as a Representative to this House, I heard him [inaudible] criticism of his [inaudible] in which he gave verbatim [true] the 37th Psalm. I'd like to read the first six verses of the 37th Psalm. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt Thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

LUMPKIN: At this time, the chorus of Mississippi College at Clinton, Mississippi will favor us with a hymn, 'In the Land Where We Never Grow Old'.

09:12-15:04 [Song]

LUMPKIN: The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Pearl River, Representative [Stewart] for a motion.

[STEWART]: Mr. President, I wish to call up joint resolution number one and make the usual motion.

LUMPKIN: The chair recognizes the Honorable [Roman] Thomas [Kelly] who will read the resolution.

[KELLY]: Whereas the Honorable Theodore G. Bilbo on the 21st day of August, 1947, departed this life during the interval of his third successive term as United States Senator from the state of Mississippi and whereas serving Mississippi as a member of her State Senate as her Lieutenant Governor, twice as her Governor, and for more than two terms as her Representative in the Senate of the United States Congress. Senator Bilbo, for half a century was an influential factor in the political and economic life and development of Mississippi. Whereas Senator Bilbo, throughout his tenure in public office, consistently was a champion of the right and freedom of the individual, was a zealous and persistent advocate of government only within the limits of constitutional authority granted by the people to the states and the union and to the end of his career when the angel of death beckoned and he lay down his armor was a veteran for the sovereignty, autonomy and independent dignity of the state and of the principle of local self government upon which alone the union [ultimately] may survive as the embodiment of a free, powerful and [inaudible] nation. And whereas, during the administration of

Senator Bilbo in the state of Mississippi, there was [inaudible] the creation of [inaudible] institutions and governmental systems for the advancement of the welfare of the people that stand as lasting monuments to his genius, his patriotism and his loyalty to the interests of the people he loved and served. And whereas, the grateful memory of Senator Bilbo's accomplishments for the public good and the steadfastness with which he fought against unconstitutional infringements upon the sovereignty of the state that cannot be dismissed by the [inaudible] of political and [inaudible] critics. Now, therefore, be it resolved by the legislature of the state of Mississippi acting herein in joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives that there be and hereby [inaudible] the gratitude of the state for the good that Senator Bilbo accomplished on the behalf of her people, for the fight that he waged against all odds and for all personal sacrifice and resistance of the unconstitutional invasions of her sovereignty and that there be and hereby is expressed a sense of bereavement that affectionately is felt in the hearts of Mississippians over his departure from this earth. Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution officially certified by the clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate of the Legislature of the state of Mississippi be transmitted to the Honorable James Eastland and the Honorable John Stennis, United States Senators from the state of Mississippi, with the request that this legislature by appropriate procedure be presented by them to the Senate of the United States Congress.

LUMPKIN: Members of the joint session, you have heard the reading of the resolution. The question is under motion of the gentlemen from Pearl River. So we adopt this resolution by unanimous [rising] vote of the joint session. So many as favor stand. Alright, be seated. Those who are opposed. A unanimous vote. The resolution has been adopted. Members of the joint session, it is now my privilege and pleasure to present to you the Honorable B. [Friend], one of the closest friends that Senator Bilbo ever had in his life. Mr. [Friend]

[FRIEND] Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Mississippi legislature, and friends. I come to this solemn occasion with a deep sense of grief in the loss of our friend, the late Senator Theodore G. Bilbo. And, yet, I come with an abiding sense of joy that I was permitted to walk with him and to talk with him and to know him intimately, the man the people of Mississippi honored more than any other statesman living or dead. Senator Bilbo spent his entire life fighting for Mississippi and for the South. And, in the latter years, he sounded the alarm and gave the clarion call to arms to uphold the institutions of the South and to preserve those ideals that called him to fight against those [inaudible] forces which are, at present, causing all of us so much concern. We are, at present, aroused more than at any time since Reconstruction days, but we are no more aroused now than Senator Bilbo was aroused for many of the latter years of his life. Somehow I think that we had a sense of security during the past years in the knowledge that

the great and fighting heart of Senator Bilbo and his storehouse of knowledge and his ready tongue and sharp wit stood between us and any encroachment upon our inherent rights. During my intimate association with Senator Bilbo, I found out his secret of success. He had sterling qualities few men attain. First, he was honest. Second, he was unselfish. Third, he was the best informed man it was ever my pleasure to know, and above all, fourth, he loved people. Senator Bilbo was most happy when the crowd around him was the largest. Once, during a hectic campaign when I became vexed at some of Senator Bilbo's constituents, he said to me, "[Vernon], you must learn to like people as you find them. Life is too short to try to make people over to suit your tastes." This piece of homespun philosophy has been worth much to me since that day. Senator Bilbo, in his greatness, loved the people as he found them. Senator Bilbo was an ardent Baptist, but those of other denominations and faiths appreciated his greatness evidenced by this statement from the editor of the Southern Layman, Methodist Layman, from which I quote. "Theodore G. Bilbo, to his friends in Mississippi it is a trite saying to the effect that if a man makes no enemies he makes no friends. Bilbo made more enemies than he did friends, and that is to his credit for he made the enemies in his tireless effort for the good of the Southland so dear to his heart. This paper first won Bilbo's friendship when it published a two-page denunciation of the infamous FEPC bill and praised the magnificent and successful fight he made to keep it from being made law in 1945 by a sympathetic Congress encouraged by a sympathetic President. If Senator Bilbo had rendered no further service to his state and the entire Southland than that, his name deserves to be revered, and we congratulate Mississippi for honoring his memory. One other brief reference to the good done by this man. No other public servant has done more to prevent the ever-growing tendency towards mongrelization of the two races in the South than did Theodore G. Bilbo. We honor him for the good he did, and we honor the people who are to honor him in Jackson, Mississippi on February ninth." Signed the Southern Methodist Layman by John A. [Manget], editor. The white race has lost its greatest champion. The South has lost one of its greatest statesmen. We have lost one of our greatest friends. We have lost the great heart of Mississippi. The heat of his spirit struck warm through all lands for he loved such as showed themselves men of [their hands]. In love as in hate, being [home to the] [inaudible], when our world isn't any kinder now our great heart has passed. [Hard] school by a [inaudible] power, yet most humble in mind, where [inaudible] that he was by advantage mankind. [inaudible] the servant, loved the master, rare comrade, sure guide, for our world isn't any safer now a great heart has died. Let those who would handle make sure they can wield his far-reaching sword and his close-guarding shield, for those who must journey henceforward alone have need of stout convoy now a great heart is gone.

LUMPKIN: The chair now recognizes Senator [inaudible] [Evans] from Gulfport who

was a very close friend of Senator Bilbo. Senator [Evans].

[EVANS]: Mr. President and ladies and gentlemen of the joint assembly. Few times in my life have I ever apologized for my inability in speaking on public or professional matters. However, upon this occasion, I must admit my total inability to do justice to the life and memory of my late and lamented friend, Theodore G. Bilbo. I truthfully say to you that this is the first time in my life that I have ever attempted to speak on the life and character of a departed friend. And I would not attempt to do so on this occasion except that I was chosen for my long and personal relationship with the late Senator. I first knew Theodore G. Bilbo as the Governor of Mississippi from the years of 1916 to 1920, and I watched with keen interest his efforts and his vision for the betterment of the people of Mississippi. My next [inaudible] in relationship with the late Senator was that of a private citizen and as the editor of a state-circulated newspaper. And, again, I followed with keen interest the things and principles he advocated for the freedom of man and for the good and glory of God. I knew him best, again, when he rose from private citizen to become the Governor for the second time of the great state of Mississippi. It fell my lot to be one of his advisors and leaders in this old and familiar House of Representatives, and, again, I watched his great intellect, his big heart and his [inaudible] vision beg and plead and advocate so many measures and institutions for the benefit of the masses of Mississippi. I watched Theodore Bilbo go from the Governor's office back into private life where he retired to his dream house amid the poplars and the pines at Poplarville. Here he underwent possibly the worst and most trying period of his private life. Due to the economic drains and hardships, he lost his dream house so dear to him. But nothing seemed ever to deter Theodore G. Bilbo in his long and hard fight in his public and private life. Nothing seemed ever to embitter him. In all my long association with him I never heard him utter any complaint with reference to any of his hardships. His great adversities did not disturb him, but, in his great faith, he took on renewed determination. I next saw and knew him in the city of Washington, where, in his embarrassment, he had been forced to accept a minor and [insecure] position with the government. It was here in this adversity that the man, Bilbo, climbed to a higher peak and saw a greater vision and a further horizon. He saw the abuses and encroachments of the federal government upon the states' rights and the destruction and the usurpation of local self-government. And a new opportunity was open to him. With his great power of speech and persuasion and his matchless record as a public servant, he returned to Mississippi to place his cause before his people. And it lifted from him from the humiliating experience of a minor employee and gave him a commission to sit as a United States Senator from Mississippi. To which position he was twice elected afterwards and held until his tragic death. It was here that I had occasion in my professional life to associate with the distinguished Senator on numerous occasions, and it was here that I learned of his [inaudible] love for the people of Mississippi. Theodore G.

Bilbo served his 12 years in the Senate colored with great glory and great honor, but the fact that he was taken away from his thousands of friends made his stay in Washington as a Senator, I would say, almost unhappy. His friends were not there in the morning, and they were not there in the evening to laugh and talk and discuss things with him. And the fact that they were not there destroyed much of the glory and the glamour of this great office for him. I saw Theodore G. Bilbo rise from an obscure Senator to one of the most outstanding and famous characters in the Senate. His great mind, when he grew to be a real giant that he was, was forever preaching and battling for the rights of states and for the right of local self-government. And, in his zeal to preach the purity of the Caucasian and the Negro races and to make the white man greater and the negro man greater, he was misunderstood and accused by the slimy demagogues of the East and North of preaching and practicing racial hatred. And I finally saw this giant wounded, and his accusers did not then and have not now produced any evidence of any impropriety on his part. And I saw them [inaudible], and I saw him slap them back and he walked away alone and unafraid as a wounded lion to lick the wounds of hypocrisy and misrepresentations which had been inflicted on him. Due to the tragedy of malignancy, he was forced to return to the dream house and, in a hospital in New Orleans on the 21st of August…21st day of August, he surrendered to the call of his maker. Today we cannot tear aside the veil of the future and look into the things that be beyond mortality, but, wherever that place is which may be reserved for the gallant and the good, for the loyal and the devoted, for the able and brilliant public servant, there abides the spirit of Theodore Gilmore Bilbo.

LUMPKIN: Now it's the chairs privilege and pleasure to present to you Miss Evelyn Gandy, the lady from Forest, who Representative Gandy represents Forest County in the House of Representatives. A great friend of the late Senator Bilbo [inaudible] one of the secretaries and was with him a lot of the time and helped him prepare and write his last works. The lady from Forest.

GANDY: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the joint assembly, fellow Mississippians. I am not unaware of the grave responsibility which now rests upon my shoulders in speaking on behalf of the House of Representatives at these memorial services for the late and lamented Senator Bilbo. When the Senator lost the battle for his life on the 21st of August, this nation lost one of her outstanding statesmen. The South lost her greatest champion, her most courageous fighter. Mississippi lost her most distinguished son, and I lost my greatest and dearest friend. It was my privilege to be in Washington with Senator Bilbo for almost four years. I was there when he was leading the fight in the United States Senate. I was with him when he fought the picket lines, the radical, communistic forces of the North and East which were determined to persecute him for political reasons, because he successfully led the fight in the Senate in behalf of the South. Throughout the years and until the day of his death Senator Bilbo

had the consolation of knowing that his home people remained loyal to him. For 28 years he served the people of Mississippi in public office, a record unmatched, unsurpassed, unexcelled in the history of Mississippi. In one of his memorable speeches he said, “The people of Mississippi have honored me far beyond my just [deserve]. In my darkest hours as I have struggled with my political enemies, I have always been sustained, encouraged and [inaudible], not only by my faith in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, but with the consciousness that the great, honest body of right-thinking Mississippians were with me and would stand by me though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death just so long as I was right. And, in appreciation of their goodness, loyalty, friendship and support, God knows that I have worked in season and out of season to protect the interests of the people of my state. It is true that I have made mistakes. No one is perfect. But, God being my helper, they were mistakes of judgment and not of the heart.” That was Senator Bilbo’s political creed, and his record of public service has been written upon the pages of history for all posterity to read and evaluate. The gentleman from Pearl River has been laid to rest yonder beneath the pines of South Mississippi and in the shadow of the Juniper Grove church that he loved so well. He has gone from our midst, yet, he lives. There is no death. The stars go down to rise on some other shore and bright in heaven’s jeweled crown they shine forevermore. He is not dead. He has but passed beyond the mists that blind us here into the new And larger life of that [inaudible] the dear immortal spirits tread. For all the boundless universe is life. There are no dead. The Senator lives in that beautiful home beyond the grave where there is no pain, no suffering, no heartbreak, no disappointment. And he lives here in the hearts of thousands upon thousands of loyal, patriotic Mississippians who loved him. Monuments will be erected. Books will be written as a tribute to his memory. But these will be secondary, because he will forever live in his record of public service to the people of this state and nation. He will continue to live in the institutions which he planned and established and for which he is primarily responsible. Mississippi Southern College in Hattiesburg, the feebleminded home at Ellisville, the tubercular sanatorium at Magee, Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield, the Industrial Training School at Columbia, the Charity Hospital at Laurel. Institutions were the lives of thousands upon thousands of the poor, unfortunate citizens of this state have been, and are now being, saved bear his name. He was the champion of the average people of this state, and, from the year 1907 through 1947, over a period of some 40 years, his record has been written upon the pages of our history. He served long and well. He fought the good fight, and he kept the faith. Those of us who were so closely associated with him during his last years so fully realize the greatness of his character. When outside forces attacked him so cruelly and unjustly, when he was abused and sacrificed and persecuted upon the altar of southern tradition, he never once complained. But, rather, he continued to fight his accusers with all the strength at his command. And, when he was forced to enter the

hospital in New Orleans and there was sufferings the pains of death itself, still his thoughts were not of himself. But he talked of returning to his post of duty. He talked of going back to Washington to claim the seat in the United States Senate to which the people of this sovereign state had elected him. He was a brave and gallant fighter until the very last. Until God, in His infinite wisdom, called him home. He was a man of action, of great determination. His political life was colorful, eventful and often stormy. His countless friends marveled in his triumphs and always found him to be honest, loyal and faithful. In fighting those who opposed him, he asked no [quarter], and he gave no [quarter]. And even those who disagreed with him respected his ability and admired his courage. He was a great campaigner, a great orator, a great man. In his public life he was sensational, forceful, dynamic, the [inaudible] of Mississippi politics. In his private life he was kind and considerate, affectionately devoted to those who were near and dear to his heart. He was a religious man, a faithful member of the Baptist church. To the best of my knowledge, Senator Bilbo is the only man in public life in the history of this nation who left the church and parsonage which were built through his efforts and which stand today as a memorial to him. He was a Jeffersonian democrat, a true American who loved the South. Speaking from this very stand in a joint assembly in 1944, he said, "I love the South. I love her and, long ago, have dedicated and consecrated my life and my services to her glory and her welfare." We shall not forget Senator Bilbo's last fight. And the battle which he carried on so long, so gallantly and so courageously in behalf of the South will be carried on. And at this crucial day and hour, when our way of life is again on trial, I know of nothing which would please the Senator more than to have us join him in that pledge. He would want us at this time to once again dedicate and consecrate our lives and our services to the protection, preservation, and perpetuation to the ideals, customs and traditions which we hold so dear. Yes, Senator Bilbo loved the South. He loved Mississippi, and the people of this state honored him as they have never honored another son. He was State Senator, Lieutenant Governor, twice Governor, three times United States Senator, a record of public service which will forever stand as a tribute to his name. His accomplishments have been indelibly written upon the pages of our history, and the name of Senator Theodore G. Bilbo will be remembered by the people of this state just so long as there is a Mississippi.

LUMPKIN: The chair now recognizes the distinguished and brilliant lawyer, the close, personal friend and the personal attorney of Senator Bilbo. No man was more loyal to Senator Bilbo than the Honorable Forrest Jackson.

JACKSON: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen of the Senate and the House of Representatives of Mississippi, friends and fellow Mississippians. Leaves have their time to fall, flowers to wither at the north wind's breath, stars to set. But thou hast all seasons for thine own, O death. As it must to all men, death came to Theodore Gilmore Bilbo shortly after noon on

August 21, 1947, at Foundation Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana. Thus ended a unique career. Thus closed a noble battle. Thus concluded a life dedicated for nearly 40 years to the public service as champion of the cause of the common men and women of Mississippi and of this nation. We pause, now, to drop the sympathetic tear, to give honor and praise to this matchless Mississippian, this determined protector of southern traditions, noble statesman, faithful friend, Bilbo the builder, Bilbo the dreamer, the stormy portrayer of Mississippi politics since 1907, State Senator, Lieutenant Governor, twice Governor and thrice United States Senator. No other Mississippian has held so many public honors at the hands of a grateful commonwealth electorate. He bore all these honors well and for the general public good. Before briefly discussing some of the outstanding achievements and accomplishments of Senator Bilbo as a public servant, permit me to express my deep personal appreciation for this privilege of appearing here on this memorial occasion. Most of you who hear me could accomplish this honor more eloquently and with better results and greater good I'm sure. None, however, was closer in his confidence or knew him more intimately through all the ups and downs of personal and political life for the last 35 years of Senator Bilbo's career. We were together through it all to the end. Like all men, he was not altogether perfect. We, as friends, however, may rejoice in his real achievements for the common good. We, as friends, may drape the gracious mantle of loving charity about his human foibles. We, as Mississippians, may cherish the memory of one who was a public servant regardless of personal consequences, was determined to the last in the fight for what he believed to be right for the most people and for the preservation of our principles, traditions and customs. Our way of life, if you please, for posterity. Take him for all in all. We shall not soon look upon his life again. If there should be one word that would express the character of Theodore G. Bilbo, it would be determination. He determined to have an education. He determined to dedicate his training and ability in the public service, in politics, if you please. He determined to push his program for the people regardless of opposition or criticism and of any misunderstanding of his purposes. The great Napoleon once said, "The truest wisdom, in general, is a resolute determination." It was in this resolute determination impelled by untiring energy and enthusiastic zeal that, as a son of poor pioneer Mississippians, Theodore G. Bilbo obtained an unusual education. He was born October 13, 1877 at Juniper Grove, five miles south of Poplarville in Pearl River County, Mississippi. At 15, he entered the public school at Poplarville in the third grade. In four years, he finished the complete grammar grade and high school course of that school. The following year, and from 1897 to 1900, he attended the University of Nashville Peabody College. While there he worked as a [inaudible] on the railroad and ran a [inaudible] agency to pay the expenses of an education. From 1900 to 1905, he taught in the public schools. The next three years he studied at the University of Michigan and at Vanderbilt University completing his training for the practice of law. He was a student of history

and of human nature. In 1908, he was elected State Senator and served from 1908 to 1912 through the famous secret caucus of 1910 second session when the Honorable LeRoy Percy was elected United States Senator by the State Senate over former Governor James K Vardaman. In 1911 Theo G. Bilbo ran for Lieutenant Governor and was elected Governor…and was elected serving with great distinction. Four years later he was elected Governor of Mississippi and was inaugurated on January 18, 1916. In his first administration as Governor of Mississippi, there were many major accomplishments for the progress of the people of Mississippi. Among these were the erection of the Charity Hospital at Laurel, the building of the sanatorium near Magee for the treatment of tuberculosis, the Industrial Training School at Columbia, the Mississippi Southern College at Hattiesburg, the creation of the Mississippi State Tax Commission, the creation of the Board of Legal Examiners, the creation of your State Highway Commission, the control of Texas fever ticks for the protection of the cattle industry in Mississippi, the restoration of the Old Capitol Building, the purchase of another state farm at Lambert, Mississippi for the price of $134,000 and, before the end of that administration, it was appraised at worth more than $1 million to the people of Mississippi, the relief of Confederate veterans, the provisions for equitable distribution of the educational funds and efforts to eradicate adult illiteracy in Mississippi, the projection of plans for the Home for the Feebleminded at Ellisville, and the creation of the Mississippi Plant Board for the protection of farmers, nurserymen, and [truck] growers of this state. From 1920 to 1927, he practiced law with offices in Poplarville in partnership with Judge W. A. Shipman who was later an Assistant Attorney General of this state. In this period, he was unsuccessful in his efforts to be elected to Congress and Governor for a second term. However, in 1927, he was overwhelmingly elected Governor taking office in January, despite opposition from one House of the legislature that was not in agreement with him politically, Governor Bilbo accomplished several outstanding things in this second administration for the people of Mississippi. Among these were the completion of the State Hospital at Whitfield, the completion of the Feebleminded Home at Ellisville, the enlargement of the tubercular sanatorium near Magee, the groundwork for the sales tax enactment, and the groundwork for our present paved highway system. Succeeding administrations have put into effect several recommendations made during this second term of Governor Bilbo, such as the two percent sales tax for a balanced budget, free textbooks for schoolchildren and our splendid network of improved and paved highways. From 1934 until his death, Theodore G. Bilbo was duly…was the duly elected United States Senator from Mississippi. As a United States Senator, he was ever true to his trust in that high and noble office. He sponsored and worked for much progressive and worthwhile legislation for the people. One particular measure, perhaps, stands out above the others. That was the creation of four great agricultural regional research laboratories at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at Peoria,

Illinois, at San Francisco, California, and at New Orleans, Louisiana. The laboratory at Peoria is said to have been responsible for the discovery of a [inaudible] method for the wholesale manufacture of penicillin that has saved the lives of tens of thousands of people all over the world and is still called the wonder drug. As a United States Senator, he became the champion of the best interests of the toiling masses, the so-called average man and woman. Particularly was he foremost in the fight for the protection and preservation of the principles, customs and traditions of very section of the nation, but, more particularly, this Southland of ours. When the threat was no more than a cloud the size of a man's hand on the horizon, he saw and recognized the dangers. Without mincing words, he pointed out the possibilities, and, for his resolute determination, to Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization, the title of his book favoring racial segregation he was made the brunt of [interruption in tape] who refused to understand our problems or who do not care about the results of amalgamation of the races in America. In the midst of this fight for what Senator Bilbo believed to be the cause of every right-thinking American, he was stricken with dreaded cancer. It took its toll of his strength and brought on his departure from the great adventure last August. He is survived by his daughter, Jesse Forrest Bilbo, who is here, and his son, Colonel Theodore G. Bilbo, Jr. He sleeps the last sleep at Juniper Grove Cemetery near his dream house and the Juniper Grove Baptist Church. Our friend gone before to that unknown and silent shore. Shall we not meet as heretofore some lovely summer morning? Thus, with resolute determination, Theodore Gilmore Bilbo, from 1908 to August 1947, with vision and clear thinking of almost prophetic foresight has fought the battles for the progress, welfare and happiness of the average man and woman of this state and of this nation. His determination was effectuated by prompt attention to every request. He answered friend or foe with some kind of response. He believed in the political principle that, while the light holds out to burn, the vilest sinner might return. He did not give and he did not ask any [quarter] in political fight. He enjoyed publicity and often said to the newspaper reporters that he cared not what they wrote just so long as he was not ignored by them. His labor of love was the building of the Juniper Grove Baptist Church and parsonage and his own last residence nearby, the dream house. He was always dreaming and building, not so much for his own enjoyment, but that others might have greater opportunities in his home community, in his state, and throughout his nation. On our last trip together from Washington in January 1947, when his seating was wrongfully delayed, at his suggestion we drove by a cemetery at Cleveland, Tennessee. He pointed out a stately and beautiful marble mausoleum. It is the pattern for one that is to contain his ashes until that great getting up morning when the trumpets shall sound. Even in the face of death, he dreamed and built for the future. He enjoyed, perhaps, more close, faithful and loyal friends from every walk and station of life than any other man in our time. On the other extreme, he had as many bitter personal and political enemies as any

political character in Mississippi in the last 75 years. This resulted very greatly in the fact that he always took a position and a positive stand on every public issue that was presented. He was no fence-straddler, and he was never afraid to speak his convictions on any subject. In the many political campaigns in which the man, Bilbo, participated, he spoke for more than an hour from four to eight times a day and to as many different audiences. He was proud of his strength and endurance and never failed to meet and fill every speaking engagement whether the crowd was large or small. He said to me at one time that he went to speak one night with only three present, an old lady and two men. He went ahead and spoke for an hour and forty minutes while the rain poured outside. When the votes were counted in that box, he had carried all but three of the 143 in that box. He was past master in the art of [inaudible] in debate. He never seemed to lack for the proper word or expression to convey his ideas and ideals. Those who opposed him politically marveled at his ability to gather and hold great crowds who heard him gladly. Senator Bilbo was an excellent parliamentarian. He could use all of the tricks of the trade. His use of the filibuster often contributed to the defeat of those measures that he felt would be detrimental to the South and to the nation. Beginning January 30, 1946, and continuing at intervals through February 7, 1946, Senator Bilbo, in the United States Senate, defended the practice of the filibuster and opposed [inaudible]. He demonstrated that, in every instance in the history of the Senate, the use of the filibuster had been justified by subsequent developments. He showed in this debate that, but for the use of the filibuster, many proposals detrimental to the best interest of the republic would have been enacted. As the years pass, we shall more perfectly understand and evaluate his worth as a real statesman. He was thinking ahead of his time. He was building for the future. He was truly skilled in public affairs and the art of government. His passion was the preservation of what we know as the American way of life. This was that unique Mississippian, our late, lamented United States Senator, our friend, Theodore…

END OF RECORDING

SPEAKERS

Gandy, Evelyn

Jackson, Forrest

Kelly, Thomas

Lumpkin, Sam

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