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Conference Summary - Florida's Future in the Space Age

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HON. FRED O. DICKINSON

Fred O. Dickinson, Jr. is a graduate of Stetson University and has become a successful trial lawyer and attorney-at-law in West Palm Beach. He received the Allen Morris award as the outstanding first-termer in the Florida House of Representatives. He served in the State Senate as well. In 1957 the Florida Jaycees selected him as one of the five outstanding young men of Florida. He has recently been appointed by the Governor as Chairman of the "Florida Council of 100". He has been most active in youth and civic affairs in the state.

FLORIDA'S FUTURE IN THE SPACE AGE

During the past year and a half as Chairman of THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100, we have, through our Scientific and Technical Higher Education Committee, made extensive studies on the needs of higher education as Florida walks through the door of America's Space. Our work in the fields of attracting new industry into the state and co-ordinating our effort with State and Federal agencies, Boards, Bureaus and Commissions entitles us, I believe, to speak with some authority on the importance of improving an already fine university system.

From the work we have done, it is obvious to us that Florida's greatest deterrent to being even more effective in expanding existing industry and attracting more is the lack of sufficient higher education facilities especially designed to work with industries directly or indirectly related to science research and development in the Space Age. With the advent of activity now in progress at Cape Canaveral, this is Florida's golden opportunity to stand tall and move with vigor and vision in the field of higher education as co-partners with business and the industrial complex of Florida.

Last year the Department of Defense let approximately Six Billion Dollars in contracts for research and development. Of this amount Florida received Six Million Dollars, or one-tenth of one percent. Last year over a Billion Dollars was let in contracts for research and development to non-profit research corporations. Insofar as I can ascertain none of this money was spent in our state. Recently the Atomic Energy Commission let one contract with Stanford University for One Hundred Fourteen Million Dollars for the construction of an atomic accelerator. This one project should provide permanent employment for a minimum of 750 employees. These are but several examples of the literally hundreds of opportunities which will be opened to Florida to strengthen and spread our economic base in the field of business and industrial growth if we move now to improve higher education in Florida.

I want to make it explicitly clear that I am extremely proud of the tremendous, and indeed almost unbelievable, progress already made in higher education in this state since the end of World War II. We have been plagued with growth problems at the student demand level far in excess of the total state growth rate. Our permanent out of state growth today exceeds 3100 new persons each week. Our colleges and universities are operating at full capacity and the individual classroom load of our professors and instructors is at a maximum. There are but two other states in America whose growth rate over the past five years in total percentage have exceeded ours, and in most fields Florida has outstripped her 49 sister states in overall economic development. Nevertheless, if we look realistically at the problems now confronting us in higher education, we must be prepared to lend material assistance to the political leadership of our state, and most especially, the members of the Florida Legislature, as they constantly endeavor to answer the needs of higher education in this peninsular empire. We must now move faster because of the tremendous opportunity which now presents itself in view of America's determination to take and maintain the leadership in the field of outer space in all of its various and almost limitless ramifications. In this area as it relates to higher education we should lead America.

In business, aside from the advantages of educating our own and contributing to the gross total effort by America in higher education, we have personal economic reasons to continue to work for the improvement of higher education. From the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research, we have learned that per capita earnings have increased in every area of Florida where higher education and industrial development moved together. In 1950 the per capita earnings of Orange County were only 2.6% of the total earnings per capita-wise in Dade County. Ten years later, however, in 1960, Orange County, with the development of the Martin Company and others, represented over 106% of the total income per capita in Dade County. In other words, in 1950 the Orange County per capita income was about \$400 per person less than Dade County, and now the Orange County per capita income is about \$150 per person more.

I could cite similar per capita earning examples where new industries have aided the economy of their areas in Alachua, Brevard, Escambia, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Leon, and many others. The point simply is that where industry moves with an opportunity to be aided by more and improved education, the economic outlook immediately improves and with lasting and long range favorable effect on the total economy of Florida. Business, therefore, has a personal and vital stake in all that is done for the improvement of Florida's higher educational institutions.

May I give you several facts and figures which Governor Brown of California on Meet The Press on October 14, 1962, related: One of the members of the panel asked him: "California is now getting 25% of all of the Defense Department expenditures and 41% of all expenditures for Research and Development. Do you not think it is unfair for California to get a percentage that is so much larger than any other state receives?" To this Governor Brown replied: "We have an area of wonderful climate; we have an area where people want to come to live; we have for many years devoted the largest part of our budget to higher education; and we have more brains, ability and talent than any other place in America." He further stated: "The industrial effort today is so complex and so complicated that it can only come to those areas which provide that talent and ability. We have it in California and we are dedicated to provide even more of it in the future. We are entitled to be rewarded for what we have created." Governor Brown could have added that civilian type industry in the scientific and technical field has poured into California at an even greater rate than governmental contracts, because of these same factors.

Because these states have not moved in this field Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Wisconsin have lost serious ground in obtaining defense contracts. TIME magazine on August 10, 1962, stated in part:

"Already some of the areas losing ground are beginning to get the message. In the Chicago area, Northwestern University and Illinois Institute of Technology are both planning new research centers. In Pittsburg, six institutions are teamed up to project a huge education center with a by-section devoted to research. Both cities hope to lure talent as well as keep it. Politicians have begun to catch up: both Michigan's Governor John Swainson and Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley have trekked to the White House to protest the slighting of their regions."

Defense Secretary McNamara has told Michigan that they are losing defense business because of their failure to support their universities. U. S. News and World Report on August 20th of this year says in effect that the nation's arsenals of World War II are failing to get their share of existing contracts in defense and space. I say to you this is true because they have failed in the field of advancing higher education.

Florida is approximately 58,000 square miles large. We are larger in area

than many of the sovereign nations and we are second to none in our overall percentage on growth. Today we are approximately 22% physically developed with untold billions of dollars worth of natural resources yet untapped. Our 33,000 lakes and abundance of the purest underground drinking water in the world, and thousands of miles of Gulf and Atlantic coast line, and the boundless blessings with which we are by nature endowed, gives us the natural advantages for more growth and economic development than any other area three times our size on the North American Continent. Yet, with all of this, as you can see from the figures relating to California, we could indeed find ourselves in an economic crisis should we fail now to build strength by taking concrete and positive measures to improve and develop higher education in this state.

While I am primarily concerned in these remarks with our existing state universities, let me say to you that we on THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 have not ignored our private colleges and universities. We are at this time working with them in what proposes to be a dynamic program to aid and assist them with all of the instruments at our command because their stake and contribution to Florida's educational future is no less than that of our sprawling state university system. We must have healthy and recognized private institutions in our state.

In the over 2,000 contacts made by THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 in the past year and a half with out of state industrial leaders, we have been confronted on almost each occasion with the question about when Florida would provide more advanced and additional higher education, especially in the fields relating to engineering, design, inter-planetary and lunar trajectory research, and, in fact, all fields of advanced study and research relating to science. Our universities need additional capital facilities, assistance in attracting more outstanding professors, and almost immeasurable assistance in new and advanced scientific facilities, much of which may and should be obtained through assistance by private industry as we move to improve in this field.

THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 has recommended a Scientific and Technical Information Center which should be a part of the higher educational complex of this state. Today Russia is employing over 30,000 people in such a center, which is not automated. Florida should take the lead now and establish a fully automated Technical and Scientific Information Center which would, among other things, attract to this state the finest scientific minds of the free world. Almost 70% of the time now spent by American and Florida scientists is in trying to locate existing information ascertained from current studies and research throughout America simply because it is not funneled and classified at one place and in one institution from which all may seek and receive technical information. This must be done if our nation is to take and hold world leadership in the Space Age.

THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 is in a position to give meaningful and material assistance to our state in seeking funds from private endowments, industries, foundations, NASA, and others, to assist us financially in improving higher education and establishing such a scientific and technical education center. In fact, in the entire field of higher education, I believe there never has been a group whose research has been more extensive and dedicated in this field than the Technical Higher Education Committee of this COUNCIL. This Committee has at its fingertips information which it has obtained from institutions and industries all over America and it is available for all who wish to see it.

I understand another study which the Governor and the Board of Control has authorized will be made available for assistance and guidance to our educators and political leaders prior to the convening of the 1963 session of the legislature. I think this is very commendable since those who serve in public life, and especially in the legislative branch, desire and need all of the information which can be made

available to them as they deliberate on the ultimate decisions relating to higher education at the state university level.

I am so enthused about this independent study that I will request THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 at its November 2nd meeting in Tampa, Florida, to consider a resolution of endorsement for such a study and give it their 100% support. Furthermore, I hope the COUNCIL members from various areas of the state will contact leaders in communities so that committees may be formed to assist in financing this study. If properly done from an objective, unbiased and unprejudiced standpoint by outstanding and able educators, it could well provide the groundwork for Florida to take its most important step in higher education. Such a study should point up with far more persuasiveness the message that I bring you today of the importance and urgency of Florida moving rapidly in order that we take advantage of our opportunities in the field of research, construction and industry now that the space door has been opened unto Florida.

I have made several references to the Florida legislature because I so completely understand the tremendous problems with which they are confronted during a regular session. The 1963 session will be no exception to this. They will make the final decision as to what will be done in Florida insofar as the state is concerned. This is as it should be and we owe to them our assistance and support in every way possible as they meet the needs of a changing Florida in the Space Age.

Education and business then, if Florida's education is to progress, must join together if our educational institutions are to serve Florida and America in the Space Age, as they are capable of doing. In the overall picture, Florida, along with her sister states, is engaged in a battle of the minds with Russia and her satellites, who are now spending approximately 70% of their total budgets toward educating a select few, especially in the fields of science and technology in their attempts to overcome the power and might of America.

We are the greatest and most powerful nation in the history of the world. Our greatest strength comes from our sense of moral values and our faith in divine providence. A part of this strength, however, is how we utilize our God-given faculties and abilities. To this end there is but one course and that is in the improvement of education at every level and of particular interest to us today for the further development of higher education because this indeed is Florida's path to greatness.