

Chapel, Friday Morning, November 20, 1925

Robert H. Wright, President.

Our state has established, so far as it scheme is concerned, perhaps the very best scheme that is adopted by any state in this Union. That is, for equal training and equal experience, the teachers are given equal pay, whether they teach the first grade or the senior year in high schools, and whether they be men or whether they be women. The sex question does not enter into it. Equal pay for equal training means that the teacher who has talent to be a first grade teacher can find just as big returns in dollars and cents, as well as in service, in the first grade as she can find anywhere in the whole scheme, and what is true of the first grade is true with reference to every grade of work in the public school. We need in this state to train the teachers who are to begin the children more than we need to train any other one group of teachers. Now, this does not mean that you ought to go into the first grade. It means that you ought to go into the public school system where you can do the greatest service. But it does mean that the state owes it to the childhood of North Carolina to see to it that there are enough teachers trained to put one who knows how in every school room in North Carolina.

There has been a movement on foot now for about five years to get the state of North Carolina to build other normal schools -- two year institutions that will train teachers for grade work, and we have not yet been able to persuade a single legislature that that is a necessary part of our scheme. Last year, according to a report made by the Greensboro News, after sending out a questionnaire, there were 2,000 high school boys and girls, and most of them were girls, who applied for admission to colleges in North Carolina and who were refused admittance because there was not room for them. We know that some of these applied at two or three places. There probably was a thousand of them who did not go to school who wanted to go. Let's divide that by two and

say there were only five hundred. It would cost the state of North Carolina just about one million dollars to build a good two year normal school that would accomodate five hundred people. We needed it last year. There were five hundred last year who stayed at home and taught school, and are teaching school this year, working as clerks, perhaps in the five and ten cent stores, or just staying at home waiting, who wanted to go on and prepare themselves for life's work, and who could not go because old North Carolina had not done her part.

We want to put a campaign on in this state through the teaching people and prospective teachers that will bring the truth home to the people so that another legislature will start a building program for normal schools that will train teachers enough to meet the needs in North Carolina and it will take about five more. We could not spend five million dollars of public funds in any other way in this old state that would give us as great a return as five millions put into the building of normal schools.

In 1923-24 the people, by special taxation, bond issues, etc., spent enough money in public school house construction in North Carolina to build six five thousand dollar school rooms for every day in the year, including Sundays. The year preceding the normal schools of North Carolina turned out 182 teachers and 141 of these went into the school rooms. In other words, we trained one-half of a teacher a day, and we built six good school rooms a day. That is, we put up twelve school rooms for every teacher we trained. Now we must have school houses; but a school house will not educate the child. The school house, at best, is nothing but a work shop, a place for the teacher and the child to meet to do the thing that we call education. We may spend millions, and we are doing that, in school house construction and in transportation, but that will not educate our children. We must train teachers if we want to educate the childhood of this state. It is the most important thing before the people of North Carolina today. Ample training of teachers for the public schools is the greatest public service

the people of North Carolina could render to the childhood of this state.