

CHAPEL - April 23, 1927. RHW

I am not going to talk but just about three or four minutes. I had the pleasure yesterday of attending a county commencement at the city of Beaufort where there were thousands of people. Carteret County is one of the few counties of North Carolina that has a county-wide eight months school term, and I was very much pleased to learn that the average daily attendance in a county like Carteret without good roads, in fact some of the roads are simply terrible, during the school term of eight months is much better than the daily attendance was when they had a six months school term. Those schools which conducted a six months school term last year are making a much better record this year in attendance and in school work on the basis of eight months than they did with a six months term. I want to tell you that because one of the arguments that people are using all over North Carolina against the eight months school term is that the children cannot go, but wherever it is put into effect they not only can go, but they do go. They attend; certainly in this county the attendance is better; the daily attendance is better, and there is a reason for that. I did not make this inquiry about Carteret County. I am not talking about teachers who were there last year and are not there this year because I do not know, but as a rule where you have an eight months school term you get better teachers and the children realize that the school is really worth while, and the children and the parents make more effort to attend school with good teachers than with inefficient teachers. You cannot fool people long. You cannot do it. They will find it out.

The commencement yesterday was quite an interesting one. Many of the things they had there were similar to the things they had here, but I was very much interested in one phase. They called a group of children that had been selected by contest in the different schools in the county and handed to them a picture and said, "Take this picture and look at it and then make up an oral statement about it, and use correct English". They gave then twenty or thirty minutes because the same picture had to be passed around to a number of children, and then they called these children up one at a time and asked each one to make his statement about the picture. Those little folks (and I tell you it was a hard thing to do) came up

before that auditorium packed with people, standing in the aisles and all around the sides, crowded in the doors, some people talking, as folks will do, but when a little child came out on the stage everybody got quiet. That made it harder, much more difficult. They stood there and made statements about that picture, and I did not hear but one grammatical error from the number of children who came. I got to thinking about them and it made me go back to my own life's experience, and, you know, I was practically through college before I could do what those children did yesterday. The schools in that county are certainly doing good work for those children, and it was a real pleasure to me to be there and see it. I did not get very much pleasure out of speaking. I did not talk but a little while because the wind was blowing and there were at least 2000 people standing out in the open, and I was supposed to speak so they could all hear me and that is a hard task, but the interest the people are showing in their children, - in the education of their children, young women, is most hopeful.

The number of nice things that were said to me about students, people who had been students here, - well, it just made me feel good all over, but I want you to realize that you are going out from here into a state where the people are interested in good schools and they are going to give you their whole-hearted support. I believe the state is looking in the right direction with reference to the education of its children, and you are going out as home missionaries to work in this field.