

On Saturday morning, June 25, President Robert H. Wright spoke to the students attending the summer school of East Carolina Teachers College. He did not use notes. Following is a stenographic report of what he said:

It is a genuine pleasure for me to see you in school here because it means so much to you and to the children of North Carolina. This is the one institution in the state that does not cut its summer school ^{into terms} ~~in~~ two so as to provide for those who want to come for just a little while to renew their certificates; it is the one institution in North Carolina that does the same kind of work in the summer time that it does any other time. Your coming here means to me that you are striving not only to renew your certificates, but to renew yourselves and to advance yourselves professionally. The time will soon come, in my judgment, when the person who holds an elementary certificate is not going to get a job; the time is soon coming in our state when the requirements for certification are going to be raised. They have recently raised the requirements for those who teach in the high schools. They no longer issue high school certificates, class C. You people are working in the right direction, and I want to commend you most heartily for it.

Your college, our college, is offering a new course beginning with next year. Probably this course will be offered at the next summer term. The course will enable you to prepare yourselves to teach and also to be elementary school principals. You will find this course of study outlined on pages 37 and 38 of the last issue of our catalog. I am mentioning this to you this morning in the hope that you will begin to shape your course so as to meet the necessary requirements and thus help advance the cause of public education in our state.

I want to talk to you just a few minutes this morning about another thing that is to me most important. We are living in a republic. It is a government of the people. Advancing civilization has been marked by the pendulum swing from centralization to decentralization, from absolute monarchy to democracy in

government. When the pendulum swings just as far the other way as possible that gives us what is known as an absolute monarchy, a government of the few selected people with power to make laws and enforce them. Rome was a republic and then became a monarchy and Caesar ruled, and that kind of a government lead to a Nero. Our people who came to the shores of American left Europe because they did not like the form of government they had. They did not have a clear concept of what we call ^a republic. They came here that they might have political freedom, and they established [^] a government in America. I am not going through the history of it, but it was finally established as a republic. This is the type of government that is dependent upon the intelligence of the citizenship of the country. Whenever a country has an intelligent citizenship it can become a republic. If the great mass of the people are ignorant, then the intelligent people must govern. The hope, therefore, of our government is dependent upon universal education. There is no question about that. Now, if the people are properly educated, trained in good citizenship, given to understand the kind of government we have and the individual responsibility in that kind of a government, then we can retain a republic.

The serious thing with us today is that there is a tendency, nation wide, to shift responsibility of the individual to the elected officers, to concentrate the government into the hands of those who are chosen as the officers of the government. There is something wrong with the farmers, and instead of trying to correct the wrong as individuals they go to Washington to have it straightened out. There is something wrong with a particular kind of manufacturing industry, and instead of righting the wrong they go to Washington and ask that they put a tariff on the particular manufactured commodity. There is something wrong with the county government in North Carolina, so we enact a law centralizing the county government. There is something wrong with the state government, so we enact a law still further centralizing the state government. This is true all over the nation. We are taking away from the individual and giving to the selected few an enormous amount of power. All over the nation the pendulum swings from all of us to a few of us, and this is drawing us away from a republic. I am talking to you about this this

morning not because I have any complaint to make with any of the laws. It is not any particular law that I have in mind. It is not North Carolina alone I am thinking about. It is the nation. We people in this country are headed away from a republic and toward a monarchy, and we had just as well realize the truth. The schools are in part responsible for it. We have run our schools in many cases as absolute monarchies, and we have trained the children up with that kind of idea in the schools. Is it not natural that they should carry the same idea into government?

I am talking about these things because, fellow teachers, they are fundamental to the republic in which we live, and you and I, the teachers of North Carolina and the teachers of America, are the people who are going to correct this if it is to be corrected. We must give more consideration to the individual. In this particular college we have held that in mind. Maybe you did not know it, but the schedule that is made for the operation of this college next year was not made in my office, but a representative of the students was called into conference with the college, and we worked out when the fall term should begin and when it should end, and so on. We have a spring holiday. The idea came into the office from the studentbody. We take the students into council with the management of the college in order that we may teach democracy, in order that this particular college may be a democratic organization. In the regular college year we have a student government association. They had a most interesting time last spring trying to elect their president. I have forgotten how many votes they took, but they took quite a number. The student government association makes the rules and regulations governing the studentbody. Why do they do that? Because this is a democracy and we want to teach democracy in the schools. To be sure, it would not be a democracy unless the teaching and administrative staff had something to say about it, and so we have a committee working with the students. It is not the students alone; it is not the teachers and officers alone; it is the combination working together, and it makes a true democracy.

I want you as you go back into the state to teach next year to carry with

you the idea of helping to develop each individual as an individual so as to make that particular individual a real active factor in the government of the state and the nation.

The person who says, "What is the use in voting?", that person does not have the spirit of democracy at all. It is your business to vote; it is an obligation; it is a requirement in a republic. "O, it won't change the election". It may, but whether it does or whether it does not, it helps to develop in you the spirit of democracy.

This democratic government that we have in America has already developed the highest type of citizenship the world has ever know. I made up my mind not to say anything about Lindberg, but I am. He is a typical young American. As a Frenchman expressed it, "He pushed the impossible just a little farther". It is the spirit of democracy that developed the type of man that would undertake what was considered impossible and accomplish it, and "push the impossible a little farther". This was done by a person raised in a democracy. I take my hat off to the young man because he did it for the love of flying and not that he might get money for himself. He is a typical American.

The spirit of democracy will undertake the thing that the world says cannot be done and will go ahead and do it. The tendency today is away from that, and it is the duty of the school to bring us back and to see that every child everywhere in this old state of ours and in the nation is allowed to develop his individuality and his personality.

It is a great privilege to be a school teacher if you have the vision of a republic and are willing to make the sacrifice that you may live in the lives of those you teach.