

October 20, 1928

We had some visitors with us yesterday as well as the Board of Trustees. We had visitors from New York. I was fortunate enough to be sitting at the table with some of these people and they were very much pleased with the way you folks fared and very much impressed with the personnel of the college. One of the older members said to me, "You have so many pretty girls and they behave so well," and I said, "To be sure they are North Carolina girls and they always behave."

That set me to thinking again and I just want to tell you this morning the thing I have said several times to people away from the college, I do believe we have the finest student body in college this year that we have ever had. The spirit of cooperation, of working together, that you are showing is in my judgment in keeping with the times in which we live. To be sure we cannot get away from the individual responsibility, to be sure every individual has to do his part, otherwise the body as a whole suffers. St. Paul spoke of that in two or three epistles he wrote to the churches. When I was in college and I do remember a few things about when I was there, the President would say, "We want the hearty cooperation of the student body." I did not understand then all the true worth meant by that statement but I do understand it now. The executive of a college can tell very quickly when the authorities have the cooperation of everyone. There was another teacher that taught philosophy that gave me something that I have pondered over ever since. He said that human progress is advanced by the pendulum swing from individualism to centralization. I do not know if that means a thing to you but if you had taken a course under Dr. Horace Williams you would understand

it.

The longer I live in this world the more I am convinced that civilization has been advanced in this world by the absolving of individualism into group activity. Back in the earlier civilization of the world the individual was supreme. We see that in the Bible when Lot selected a certain section and his brother another that they might feed their flock. We see it in the middle ages in the castles with the lords going out to war against each other. The individual was the dominant factor but as the world became more and more populated the individuals found that they had to live together. Finally the king became absolute monarch. The individual was absolved in the state and when these old kings were asked who was the state they answered, "I am the state." There the pendulum swing had reached the extreme point of centralization. Then we see a time when people went the other way. People crossed the Atlantic and said, "We will have no king, we will govern ourselves. First the states were organized without any centralized government then they began to united into the republic that you and I live in. In this republic that you and I live in today there is today a strong tendency to centralize but there is also a struggle to save the individual as well as to bring about the centralization that is necessary for the best welfare of the individual. We see now greater centralization than we have ever had, we see it today in North Carolina in the consolidated schools. But in all of this centralization that is taking place the people of America are still striving to give the individual his freedom. If we get the necessary amount of centralization for efficiency and yet keep the freedom of the individual that is what we want. Then we are reaching in my judgment the wisest possible course. It will carry with it all the effectiveness of a centralized government and will destroy

none of the initiative and the individual freedom in the government.

There, young friends, that is what we are trying to give you in this college. You are working with us, you are helping to do it. We have a few regulations that have to be kept so that the group can work together. We have certain laws that all have to conform to but these laws in this college and in this state are only those that are necessary. When people live close together they cannot possibly do the things that they can do when they live far apart. We must surrender some of our individual rights for the common good. For instance, here is a girl that owns a brass band (of course, this is an extreme case) well she could have that brass band playing at 11 o'clock at night in the dormitory one night but she couldn't keep that up but if she lived away out in the country by herself she could play all night if she wished.

So we must have a few regulations, we must surrender some of our freedom for the common good but at the same time we want to keep that individualism that helps each human being to work out for himself his own destiny, to establish a goal and go to it if he has the physical and mental capacity to go to it. That is what a republic means to me. A government of the people, a government by the people, a government for the people. The people themselves making the government, the people themselves executing their common laws but it is all being worked out for the individual. It is a bringing together of the two great forces in the human family that is making the civilization of today what it is. That is the thing we are trying to work out here and you are helping to work out for yourself.

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