

October 27, 1928

This week I have had the privilege of attending a conference of the college executives of the colleges for white people in North Carolina. All of the colleges in North Carolina for whites have organized into what is known as the North Carolina College Conference. These meetings are attended by the executive officers and one or more delegates from the teaching staff or officers and annually they meet together to see if they cannot work out some of the problems in order to give you people the best kind of college education.

It is through these conferences that the state department of public instruction working with committees of the conference have worked out and put in operation the certification scheme for teachers. The idea is that this combined body knows better than any other body of educators in the state what is best to do for the education of our state.

This conference has worked out a scheme for standardizing colleges, senior colleges, junior colleges, senior teachers colleges, and junior teachers colleges and have had the requirements printed and a copy in the possession of every college in our state. Then annually they have an inspection made of the institutions either by sending someone to the institution or by sending out a questionnaire to find out whether the colleges are living up to the standards set by the state conference. I happen to be on the committee to go over that kind of work. We found that in some cases that they are not living up to the standard and in others that they are living beyond the standard. In that way, I believe the colleges of North Carolina are together working for a common cause.



I thought it would be of interest to you to know that the people working in these institutions of higher learning are working with a very definite purpose of giving to the young women and young men in North Carolina the best college educational opportunity. They work on every phase of college work such as the kind of laboratories you should have to carry on laboratory work, the rules and regulations that control athletic contests, the number of hours a teacher should teach and the number of pupils a teacher should have. They even took up the matter of how much a teachers should be paid, but they have not passed on that question but they have passed on the question of the training and qualifications necessary for a teacher to be an efficient college teacher. In other words, the college people of North Carolina are really and truly intensely interested in giving the youth of our state the best educational opportunities possible.

I was on another committee of this conference that dealt with how much tuition you should pay, how much it costs the college to give a boy or girl a year's education in a given institution.

We had a number of rather prominent people at the conference. The President of the General Education Board was there and made a speech. We discussed a number of questions that were of keen interest to the college executives and of vital interest to the teaching staff. And for the first time in the history of the conference there was a unanimous agreement on most questions. You, young women, will be interested to know that repeatedly the answer to a particular problem was to get good teachers.

The proper relation between the college courses of study and the high school courses of study was discussed. The high schools have been saying you have got to take what we turn out and the colleges have been saying you have got to teach the boys and girls what we want them taught. We had always heard before that the reason pupils fail in the high schools



was that they were not properly taught in the grades and the reason they failed in college was because they were not properly taught in high school. But this year for the first time both sides admitted their faults. The colleges said we are going to start where you leave off and we are going to put our very best teachers down there to teach those Freshmen. The whole conference seemed to me to be together in the one purpose to do what was best for the youth of our state. And all of us realized that the best teachers possible are what the grades, the high schools, and the colleges need. Of course, with all of that there will be some folks who will fail, there will be some who go to college just to say in later life, "I am an alumnus of such an institution." There will be some who go to college just to have a good time. One of the requirements of this type is that he should have a Rolls Royce or a Packard to ride to his meals and, of course, he goes everywhere else in that car. The colleges with this type to deal with are beginning to say no student cars will be allowed on our campus. That question, however, was not brought up at this conference.

The conference is doing its very best to see that you, the college girl and the college boy, are getting the best possible in education. And, young friends, I believe it is a token of great things in an educational way for our state. There was not the least semblance of the old conferences in North Carolina of the church supported schools and the state supported schools. It was not a question of who supported you but what can we, the colleges, do for the youth of our state. You know, I felt when I left the conference and thought over all that had taken place, that I am glad to be a member of such an organization with a spirit of service, no contentions, no disputes, but a disposition to work out problems for the best interest of the youth of our state. It means a great thing for the boys and girls of North Carolina.

---Robert H. Wright, President