

December 6, 1928

I want to say a word to you this morning about a fire that occurred in our state yesterday. Doubtless some of you have seen an account of it already. The main building of Louisburg College was destroyed. Louisburg College was just putting on a program to enlarge their equipment. Some of the girls lost practically everything they carried with them.

I want to speak to you about that because it has been our purpose in building this college to make it as fire proof as possible with the funds at our disposal. When this college was first started they had no idea of building a fire proof building. The result is that this building is not safe from fire. The other buildings have been made practically fire proof. I am speaking of it because if this building should be burned we would have to close school just as Louisburg College has had to do.

When we put in the new picture machine we had to put in these new lights. Some of the wiring on this stage has to be watched particularly. For three Legislatures preceding the one that is to meet in January I have been before these Legislatures begging them to fire proof this building. All of our records are in here and I have been asking them to make this building fire proof or give us another building that will be fire proof where we can keep the records. That is in our request for the next General Assembly. I am going to insist that it be done but in the meantime let me ask you to be careful especially in this building.

Taking the new dormitories you could not burn those buildings, I do not believe you could. They are fire proof to all practical purposes. The student body is absolutely safe but I just want to warn you to be

careful. For every year or every other year some college in North Carolina has a serious fire. I do not want this college to have another fire. We had one once, we burned our kitchen and dining room and the cause of that was faulty construction. There is no fire in this or in the dormitories except gas in the laboratories and the danger from electrical wiring. Mr. Cannady, the state electrical inspector, has given his permission to let us use the lights on the stage provided we cut them all off at once when we are thru. I do not want you to put too much inflammable material on the stage in this building where we have to keep the records. I do not want you to get the wrong idea but I want you to do your part to take care of this building. This is practically the only building on the campus where there is any danger.

Someone said the other day that he wished it would burn down but I said let us get the records out first. But I told him I could not be a party to any such talk. Of course, he was only joking. The state of North Carolina is not doing its duty in leaving such a building for the students to use.

Help us to see that there is nothing left around this stage that would in any way cause this building to catch fire. It has caught fire once but we got it out. You know the whole history of this college is in the records which are in this building. Every student who has ever attended college here is on record in this building. All the records we can we store down stairs in the vault. Of course, those would not be burned.

Now from the experience of those people at Louisburg let us be a little more careful. I do not think you have been careless but we do not want what happened at Louisburg to happen here. Every fire means a loss to someone. Of course, you say we have insurance but in every fire someone

loses. North Carolina's fire record for the last quarter is the best it has been for a number of years. We want our college to be safe. We want you to help us in every way you possibly can.

I know you are going to have a good time tonight and those that come tomorrow night also. I am sure these young women are going to give you a good time. You know I would much rather have a bouquet now than when everyone else is "saying it with flowers". Flowers which rest on the grave are not appreciated very much by those who rest in the grave. Let's give these girls a bouquet now. Let's come "Smiling Thru".

---Robert H. Wright, President