

Chapel, February 14, 1931

-- President Wright

Scripture lesson: 8 verses from the 119th Psalm

It is one of our objects in Chapel to see if we can't help the students to get a world view, a more perfect conception of the situation that we are to train children to grow up and fit themselves into. If you have not read President Hoover's Lincoln Day speech I hope you will read it, because he has touched upon some of the vital problems that confront us, not only as a nation but as individual states. We might call the speech in a sense a speech in favor of state rights, or we might call it a discourse that deals with one of the fundamental problems that confront us as a people. I think that address is really one of the masterpieces of our day, especially the thought side of it, and I hope you will read it. It shows that the Chief Executive of this nation realizes some of the dangers that are confronting us as a people, and that is a most wholesome sign.

Human civilization has advanced, if you look at it from the standpoint of philosophy by what is sometimes termed the pendulum swing ^{from} of individualism on the one hand to centralization on the other. We people in this state and also in the nation are today in the midst of an era in which the pendulum is swinging very far toward the centralization idea. No longer do we allow any great problem to come before us that we do not take it at once to the Government. We are asking the Government to relieve the farm situation. Manufacturers for a number of years have been asking the Government to relieve the manufacturing situation. We have had an unprecedented period of drought in this country that has produced a situation such as has never confronted us

before. All of these so-called calamities--they might be put under that general heading--have been met by individual effort and met by some other than government action. We at once went to the Congress of the United States in this case, asking Congress to relieve the situation. The Red Cross organization in this country usually meets such situations and they asked people to give ten million dollars that they might meet the situation and then the Congress of the United States took over the situation--and handicapped the Red Cross.

I am taking that example just to illustrate to you what I have in mind. This is not the Federal Government's job. It belongs to these organizations that have been formed in our nation, and it is a bad thing to run to the Government with all our troubles. If we keep on centralizing in our Government we will find ourselves building up in America a Super-state and when that comes the individual will cease to count and when the individual ceases to count and ceases to feel his responsibility then we are destroying the very essence of human character and if we destroy character in this republic of ours we have torn down our Government. We say all kinds of unkind things about the Russian Government. Very, very few people in this country think the form of Government found in Russia a desirable type of Government and yet we are headed in the same direction. In Russia the state is the supreme thing; they have built up a super-state--on Soviet form, but a super-state, nevertheless-- and we people are headed toward the same thing; headed toward a super-state that will deprive the individual of his responsibility and when that is done the pendulum will certainly swing the other way and what turn it will take no man can tell, but it will not be a desirable thing.

The thing for us to realize in this country, and I hope you, as teachers, will get to the children, is that the Government is not THE Government, but it is OUR Government, and that I have a responsibility as a citizen to do my part

as an individual. If there is human power enough in this nation it will be well if we can check this trend to center everything in the state and national capitals. It is essential, young folks, if we are to continue to have a genuine republic. The pendulum has gone so far that we no longer have anything like the liberty that properly belongs in a republic. I want you to view these things from this standpoint and realize the situation that confronts us and teach children that they have individual responsibility and the safety of our Government depends upon the highest possible character. Build character that will create within the individual the highest possible sense of responsibility, for that is essential in a republic.