

CHAPEL, March 15, 1933

-- President Wright

Scripture lesson: March VI, Verses 52 through the chapter.

I want to tell you about two things that have taken place, current events of considerable interest to us. The president of the United States a few days ago recommended to Congress that they pass a bill allowing people to have beer and light wines and any other kind of drinks that can be manufactured within the limits of our constitution. The question of repealing the Turlington law, which is the law that makes this state ~~prohibitionist~~ ^{dry}, was brought up in our legislature and voted down. In other words, our state is not following the recommendation of the President. According to the poll conducted by the Literary Digest North Carolina and Kansas are the two states that showed themselves dry. The others, according to this poll, went wet--very wet.

The Governor's recommendation with reference to public education is something that has never been done. The address, or recommendations, of the Governor to the General Assembly will be revolutionary if enacted into legislation. He took one position that is very unusual. He recommended to the General Assembly of North Carolina that they appropriate sufficient money (I do not believe the amount he sets aside is sufficient, but he recommends an amount which is supposed to be sufficient) to operate the schools of North Carolina for eight months. That is unusual. We have had people in the legislature, and our ~~great~~ ^{state} superintendent also, who for a number of years have been doing all they knew how to do to get the state to support an eight months school term. In order to get the state to operate an eight months school term the Governor recommends that all special tax districts virtually be eliminated so far as special school funds are concerned. He recommends that the eight months school term apply to all schools in the state, and that no school in the state be allowed to operate longer than eight months. That is where he is going to have the fight with schools. There are two theories with reference to the development of public educational systems in the state. One theory is that

the state under its constitution is required to operate a school, that is the schools of the state, for six months. Legislative enactment can make this seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven or twelve months. There is nothing in the constitution to limit the months that the schools may operate but the constitution does limit the number of months they are required to operate. In other words, the state must operate the schools for six months. The program in education has unquestionably been enlarged in North Carolina by allowing certain sections in our state, special tax districts, etc., by vote of the people themselves, to supplement the state funds and carry on the schools longer than six months and add certain subjects the state has not provided a teacher for. Progress has been made by allowing people to go beyond state operation of schools. Anyone who studies it knows this is unquestionably true. That is the way we have progressed with public education in North Carolina. One community will begin by operating a school eight or nine months; others will say, we should have and want to have as good schools as they, if they can pay for them so can we, we will make our school as good as the best. In that way section after section all over the state has built up its schools. Here comes a theory that says the state will have an eight months school and nobody, ~~no town~~, will be allowed to have more, that the children in the poorest section of the state will have as good educational opportunity as the children in the largest city and richest community in North Carolina. Opportunities will be just the same, whether you think it good enough or not, the school in the richest community will be run just like the one in the poorest. In other words, the governor's position is a leveling down process. If what he recommends is adopted there is no need to have ambition for your children because the law will set a limit to what you can do. That is the wrong theory.

Do not think that I am fighting the Governor of North Carolina. He has been a friend of education. He introduced the first bill in the legislature to create this institution, or rather an institution like this, for his bill wasn't passed. But people do not advance by having stones pressed over them, and being told they

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can't grow. His theory, in my opinion, is wrong. We go up and up and up by being allowed to carry on.