

FRESHMAN MEETING, Sept. 19, 1933

Talk, President Robert H. Wright

It does my soul good to see our North Carolina boys and girls show a determination to equip themselves in the best way possible to meet the responsibilities of life. It gives me great pleasure to see so many of you here. I hope you all get homesick, because I hope you think enough of your homes to miss them, but I hope you all have backbone enough to stay and make good. I believe you have come with a determination to get the most possible out of your year here. I am not going to tell you the multitude of things you must do, because you won't remember them all. I am going to suggest a few things to you. The State of North Carolina spent money to build this institution to train teachers for the public schools of our state--that is its sole purpose. The State makes an annual appropriation, and at one time this appropriation was more than twice as much as it is for the next two years. Until last year all those who signed an agreement to teach didn't have to pay tuition, but the last General Assembly said that every college in the state must charge tuition, the amount of tuition to be fixed by the Board of Trustees. Our Board of Trustees reduced quarterly fees \$4.50. Of the \$80.50 which you now pay \$12.50 is tuition, and people who come to college here no longer sign the agreement to teach. This means that students living in the state can come for <sup>less</sup> \$13.50/per college year than they could a year ago. Although you no longer sign an agreement to teach, due to this change in the law, the purpose of the college is in no way changed. The Board of Trustees reduced fees because they realized the financial condition of our people, and they were determined that East Carolina Teachers College should give the very best possible opportunities at the very smallest possible cost to the individual student.

This institution is A grade college in every sense of the word, and is so rated by every accrediting agency. This means that its rating is the same



as that of any other college or university in the state, and its graduates are admitted without an examination to do graduate work in any college or university.

The institution is organized on a definite schedule. You will find in the Austin Building a daily program machine. In the Library you will find a clock, which was given the college by one of the graduating classes, which has on its face one of the school's slogans, "On Time Every Time". That is one of the school's slogans, and it is one of the objectives of attending college. Did you ever think of the value of having a daily program, a term schedule extending into a life program, with a life schedule? It means that you will live an ordered life, a life according to a definite program, and if you have a definite program you must have a definite purpose. This brings dependability and truthfulness into one's life, and helps to build character. Dr. Laughinghouse, physician at the college at one time, said a definite program enabled him to send back to the state "at least two tons more girl" than he received in the fall.

You are interested, of course, in what you are to take. You are coming to a teachers college that offers various courses, and this is the time for you to decide what is best for you, if you haven't already decided. This college offers work to train teachers of almost all subjects except commercial. The college is organized to train teachers of all grades, from the first through the eleventh, and of all subjects, English, Mathematics, Science, etc., taught in the high schools in the state. (The additional year now offered equips one to teach in college.) The first thing for you to determine is just where your talent lies. Some of you already know very definitely. Those who do not know should talk with your advisers and teachers. You can change at the end of this quarter if you find that you are in the wrong field. A great many students who find themselves weak in subject matter decide to be primary teachers. If you do not have the ability to do the other work you can't teach little children. Don't get the idea that the lower grades call for or permit a lower grade of work.



The State of North Carolina has worked out its salary schedule--it is low now, we all know, but that can't be helped. Teachers are paid not for the grades they teach, but for their training and experience, and there is no state in the Union that has a better scheme than North Carolina. Other states have better salaries, but the plan of payment is as nearly perfect in our state as it can be made. I heard a prospective teacher say she didn't want the first grade, that she wanted something higher than that, something that called for more ability. I told her that if that was her idea the first grade was just a little higher than she would ever be able to reach. There is no nobler work on earth than teaching the little fellow who comes from the home of his mother and father for the first time, than leading him into the ways of knowing. Give the child the right start and God alone knows the heights he may reach. The State of North Carolina realized that the responsibility of the first grade teacher is as great as that of any other teacher, and will give the same pay for it.

I had the Placement Bureau make a study on the 17th of the month, and we find that there is a larger demand for teachers of first grade than any other. We have placed this year 52 Primary; 49 Grammar Grade; and 28 High School and Grammar Grade teachers. In other words, the demand for trained primary/teachers is much greater in North Carolina today than the demand for high school teachers. This is especially true with reference to women. There is a demand in the high schools for men teachers. Secretary of the Placement Bureau tells me she thinks we can place every man who comes here and graduates, especially if he can coach athletics. We have had more calls for men who can coach athletics and teach high school subjects than we could fill.

There is a demand for people who can play the piano and conduct music programs in the public schools. If you take piano and take all the public school music offered here, you will be able to take charge of the music work in any public school.



Another demand has been for high school teachers who can coach girls' basket ball. If I can ever find money enough, I am going to put in the work that will enable us to meet this demand for coaches, both men and women.

This year is going to mean to you just what you make it. You will get out of it just what you put in it. Your college is anxious to throw around you an environment that will enable you to do the best possible year's work. If you are here for anything but work, my advice to you is to take the next bus home, because this place is for people who want to improve themselves.