

President Wright  
Chapel  
January 6, 1927

*(It was a clear bright day)*

I am delighted to see you back here and to see such a bright prospect for 1927. I am pleased that you had such a good time Christmas, and I know you have had it. I can tell that by looking at you. I am sorry there were about fifty of you who took your books home. They didn't do you any good and now you have to pay for them. You know we have to pay for what we get. I sincerely hope Santa Claus (and I believe in Santa Claus ) was real good to you. I hope you hung up your stockings and that you got all you could take care of and then some. I know when you got home your father and mother were glad to see you, and I suspect some one else was -- your younger brother. It is great to be able to get to college and do those things that people do in college that help the individual better to fit herself, or, if it is a boy, himself, for the work that he is going to do in life. It is getting to be almost a privilege in North Carolina to get into college.

We are having a most interesting thing taking place in our state, starting yesterday. It comes to us every two years and you want to read the newspapers every day and see what is being done in Raleigh. The Governor of our State delivered his message to the legislature last evening. It is printed in full in this morning's paper, and he puts education down as the great fundamental thing in our government. I am glad to see the Governor of the state take that position. He did not come out for an eight months school term; maybe he will do that later when his commission decide what they think ought to be done. They have not made a report and will not make it before the middle of January. He says that those institutions in the state that are training teachers need to be helped so they can supply the schools of North Carolina with well trained teachers. In other words, he came out in favor of training teachers for the public schools and high schools of North Carolina, and I was very much pleased to see him take that position.



You ought to watch the different measures that are of interest to you as they are introduced in the legislature, and as they go through the legislature. That is one of the finest ways in the world to study government. You have your opportunity now, it will not come to you again, probably for two years, to make a real genuine first-hand study of how the government of the state is operated, and I am going to ask you, not as one of your classroom duties, but as one of your civic obligations, to keep up with what is going on in the legislature. You young women, some of you, are old enough to vote since they don't make you swear that you are twenty-one before you vote. They make the boys swear they are twenty-one before they vote. I believe they don't make you do that. Man has found that it isn't safe to question the age of a woman. I suspect that there are one or two in college who are twenty-one. Whether you are that age or whether you are slowly, very slowly, approaching the age of 21; and you know before Aycock died, he said there wasn't a woman in North Carolina who was over 18, because he looked over the United States census and did not find a one who was over 18, and so if you are 18, it won't be long before you are 21 and you can vote. You are going to be called on to express your opinion at the polls. You are going to be called on to exercise the privilege of suffrage, and it is a privilege, not a right. Now is your time to get prepared for that civic duty and this year is your best time to study government in North Carolina, and the next sixty days is the best time in this year, because you see the law-making body in operation. I really wish you could all go to Raleigh and see the legislature in session. It is really worth the trip to Raleigh, because you see what is going on. Are we going to persuade this General Assembly to recommend a constitutional amendment fixing an eight months school term as a minimum school term in North Carolina, or are we going to let this legislature pass, leaving that for two years hence? In a large measure that depends upon the folks back home. It depends upon you and



upon me and the other people. Are we going to convince this body of law makers that is ~~the~~ right thing to do to give the people a chance to vote as to whether or not they want their children to go to school eight months or just six? We cannot educate the children of North Carolina with a six months term, we simply cannot do it. Some of you young women are having trouble with your work in college now because you were not given the right kind of opportunity when you were in the grades and high school. And there were some who fell by the wayside last term and are not here this term simply because they were not given a chance in the grades and in high school. That kind of thing hurts me. It goes right to the quick. About forty-seven per cent of North Carolina boys and girls outside of special chartered schools are not given the chance to make good, because peradventure we say we are not able to support an eight months school term. That is just one of the questions that is before us in this legislature and I want you young women to keep up with this legislature and see that they do the right thing, the thing that will help to make this a better and a greater state. We are living in one of the greatest states of the Union and we are living in the richest country on the face of the earth. And yet, we have a multitude of people who are crying, "We are too poor to educate our children". We are just not properly interested. Do you know a man anywhere who is too poor to buy a Ford. Did you ever hear a man say, "I cannot afford a Ford". They are very few. There are thousands upon thousands of people who can pay an amount equivalent to what it would cost to educate their children for moonshine liquor, but they are too poor to give their children a chance. It is that type that we have to fight as well as the person who has an abundance of wealth and no children, and who says, "It isn't right to tax me to educate John's children."

But I didn't intend to talk to you on that subject this morning. I hope 1927 will not bring to you everything you want because when you get all you



want you are ready for the undertaker, but I hope 1927 will bring you enough to keep you stimulated to want more and to strive to go forward that you may make the most possible out of your young lives. And I sincerely hope each of you had a happy Christmas, and I hope you haven't brought us any souvenirs like whooping cough, small pox and measles.