

Chancellor Blackwell's Objective

Chancellor Gordon Blackwell has come in for unjustified criticism as a result of his speech to the Woman's College student body in the wake of the lunch counter sit-downs which almost reached an explosive point here last month.

Chancellor Blackwell has been charged in some quarters with interfering with students' freedom of thought and expression.

The text of his remarks, which received unexpected attention when Governor Hodges referred to it and revealed that copies had been sent to heads of other state educational institutions, made it quite clear that the chancellor was not attempting to interfere with or curb such basic freedoms.

He was on sound ground, in our opinion, when he urged Woman's College students to refrain from participation in public demonstrations which might lead to violence. The two dime stores, where the movement originated and where mass demonstrations occurred, had suddenly closed when local authorities, in close touch with the situation, feared for the worst. The entire community realized the danger.

It was after this development that Chancellor Blackwell urged W. C. students to keep out of public demonstrations or stay away from areas where they might not only be endangered but where their presence might increase tension and

contribute to the emotionalism and atmosphere out of which violence might grow.

Their presence was not forbidden and no discipline was suggested. The chancellor did feel that it was his responsibility to stress the danger and to urge that students, for whom the college is responsible in the eyes of their parents, stay away from trouble, potential trouble and risk of violence which was much nearer than many people, particularly outsiders, realized. He had a responsibility to meet, and he met it.

Chancellor Blackwell's record speaks for itself. Woman's College has several Negro students who were accepted with no ado and integrated into campus life and activities. He was also a leader in re-establishing communications between white and Negro leaders and bringing about negotiations and establishment of the Mayor's Commission. This body is earnestly trying to solve a delicate community problem and can be credited with the peace which has ruled in Greensboro while many other Southern and even North Carolina cities have been beset by violence.

Chancellor Blackwell's speech has been given the wrong twist; it was aimed not at interference with student freedom but at preserving the peace, keeping W. C. students out of danger and aiding a rapprochement which was sorely needed.