

Hodges Defends Chancellor Blackwell

[Richardson Fund grants announced. Front Page.]

Greensboro Daily News Raleigh Bureau

RALEIGH, March 24 — Gov. Hodges today defended the chancellor of Woman's College against charges he was interfering with freedom of speech by students. Chancellor Gordon Blackwell last month cautioned students not to become involved in protests against lunch-counter segregation. At the time, Hodges endorsed Blackwell's comments and said he had sent copies to the heads of other state colleges. At his news conference today,

the governor was asked about criticism that Blackwell was restricting student freedoms.

"Basically I'm not disturbed by what they say," Hodges said. "We have no desire in the world to restrict freedom of speech . . . Keep in mind that you're talking to young people.

The governor described Blackwell as a man who "would reach out for freedom" and said the chancellor was urging students to seek "a sense of responsibility."

Hodges declined to give his opinion on whether he thought stores should provide lunch-counter service to Negroes if merchandise is sold to them in other department stores.

"If I thought it would do any good to say it, I would," Hodges commented. "But I don't think it would help . . ."

Discussing other matters, Hodges predicted that public school teachers will get a 5 per cent pay increase which was contingent on state revenue being adequate.

State's Economy

He said it was "entirely possible" that the state's economy will continue to grow at a rate which will permit expansion of

government services without higher taxes.

When a reporter observed that Hodges' name had been mentioned as a possible successor to Dr. Hollis Edens as president of Duke University, the governor said, "I'm flattered that it's been mentioned. I hadn't heard about it."

PROFESSORS URGE HODGES TO RECONSIDER

RALEIGH, March 24 (AP) — A group of State College professors today urged Gov. Hodges to reconsider a stand he has taken with respect to students at state supported educational institutions participating in lunch-counter demonstrations.

The professors said it was "particularly unfortunate" that efforts had been made to curb the students' "freedom of choice of action" or their "exercise of such chosen choice."

The professors, members of the Executive Committee of the State College Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, referred to the governor's action in endorsing a speech Chancellor Gordon W. Blackwell delivered to the Woman's College student body.

Blackwell said the college "should never tell you what stand you should take on controversial issues." He also reminded them that "on and off the campus you represent this institution, your actions bring credit or discredit to the college."

He asked the students to "weigh carefully" their actions and advised them to "refrain from any public demonstration in connection with the issue now before the community."

Hodges defended Blackwell by saying the chancellor did not try to prevent the students from taking positions.