

Speech Day 1922



The Hippodrome Picture House was booked for November 29th 1922 by Ald. Gabriel Price and Mr. Percy Beaumont for the ceremony to take place in the afternoon, as the hall would be otherwise engaged in the evening (showing its feature films?).

The headlines describing the Speech Day in the local papers in December 1922 were as follows....

HEMSWORTH SECONDARY SCHOOL'S "WONDERFUL YEAR"

HIGH COMPLIMENTS TO STAFF

THE BROAD HIGHWAY TO UNIVERSITY

Those present at the ceremony included the following:-

Ald. G. Price J.P. chairman of the School Governors.

Mesdames Schorah, Salisbury, Guest and Garstang and Messrs. Cressey, Potts, Little, Jasper Smith and E. Beaumont, all members of the Governing Board.

Miss Cordeux of Brierley

Mr. J.H. Hallam, director of Higher Education in the West Riding,

Mr. Percy Beaumont, clerk to the governors.

Mr. C.L. Crossley, clerk to the District Education Sub-Committee

Messrs. E. Talbot and R.N. Penlington, members of the County Council

Parents and friends of the school.

The School Choir opened the proceedings with the following part-songs;

Brahms' "Slumbering deep the ocean lies," and Boyce's "Spring is Come."

The girls performed two country dances, and then Ald. Price made his opening remarks from the chair.

Referring to the regrettable increase in the fees during the year, he pointed out that the Governors had been forced into that situation, and were relieved to find that very few pupils had been withdrawn as a result of this measure. He was glad to observe that the importance of the school was being recognised, and said that he believed that it would nurture the talents of some of the best scholars in the country. For a long time the mining areas had not been adequately served as far as Secondary Education was concerned, and the Hemsworth Secondary School would be a blessing to the district. In thanking the Staff, he expressed his admiration for their talents, saying he could foresee a very successful future for their school. In conclusion he offered to Mr. Talbot the thanks of the district for his valuable assistance in the creation of the school.

The Headmaster's Report

Mr. Jenkinson stated that much had been accomplished over the previous twelve months, and the future looked promising. Opened on Nov 8th 1921 with 101 pupils, 25 of whom were County Minor scholars, the school now stood at 140, 71 boys and 69 girls, 41 of whom received scholarships or grants.

What Use is Latin?

Digressing from his report, the head wanted to say something about the subject of Latin in school. He knew that many parents thought that Latin was a useless subject.

"Now most parents will agree", he continued, "that what they want for their children in sending them to a secondary school is a good practical education. But by 'practical' what is it they mean? I am afraid in many cases the parent understands by 'practical' subjects those which

will enable a boy or girl to become a wage-earner quickly, but to adopt this interpretation is to miss the real meaning of education. If we only teach subjects which have an immediate cash return we shall simply turn out low grade machines doing low grade work. As a writer said: "The liftman would work his switch no worse if he were quite illiterate, and no better if he were a doctor of science. It is not as a liftman he is worth educating, but as a man."

"A 'practical' education rightly understood then," went on the headmaster, "means an education which will fit a child for the conduct of life, train it to live interestedly and intelligently, to understand things and to know what is good and what is bad, and Latin plays its part equally with other subjects. It is true that many will forget most of the Latin they will learn and the few will carry it further. That is not the point. Mathematics and Chemistry are not taught with a view to turning out accomplished mathematicians or scientists. A boy cannot sell the knowledge of geography and history acquired at the school, but that does not mean the time spent on these subjects is wasted. The child has been taught something that trains the mind, awakens latent powers and shows them how, by labour, to acquire knowledge. And if you ask me 'why can't all this be done without Latin?' the answer is two-fold: Firstly, because out of 100,000 words in the English language, no less than 60,000 are of Latin origin; secondly, Latin, by its logical precision, helps towards a habit of clear thought and expression in a way no other subject does. A teacher who did not teach Latin said: 'Latin must be kept in schools because it is the greatest training that the boy or girl can go through.' The average child's mind is a pig-sty; the child has to be taught what connected thinking is, and Latin is the only instrument that will do that. I am not going to throw over Latin for anything in the world."

"An examination held at the end of the summer term on all subjects revealed one general weakness - the inability to express clearly and concisely what was in the mind. The idea was there, but could not be produced on paper. The same criticism appeared in the reports of the different subjects - 'lack of expression,' 'no clearness of thought,' and so on. It is obvious that there are many muddled heads with plenty of good ideas in them. It is the study of Latin which will help largely to secure the clearness of expression needed."

Activities in School

Satisfactory developments had been made in games, but the need for hard play-grounds was great. There was hope that a covered building for 'drill' would be included in the proposed plans for extensions, and this large space would also be needed for the assembling of the school, as there was no room large enough for that at present. Mr. Jenkinson believed that school assemblies were the expression of the corporate being of the school. Take that away, and the soul is destroyed - the child becomes an irresponsible unit with no sense of unselfishness or self-sacrifice.

Other thriving activities included Country and Morris Dancing; Sports; Scouting; Gardening; The School Choir, (which was to compete at the Pontefract Music Festival the following April); Reading in the well-stocked library, and a Drama Company. A School Magazine was to be launched during the next term, and lantern lectures begun.

The efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Manning in providing the excellent school dinners were much appreciated, and Mr. Jenkinson doubted whether any other schoolchildren were fed better or more cheaply.

The House system worked well, with competition for the Talbot Cup arousing great keenness. The Head maintained that the success of any school rested on its pupils and staff. Pupils must give their honest effort and concentration of energy, and staff their efficient teaching and loyal service.

"Labor Ipse Voluntas"

"Find pleasure in the work itself" was the school motto suggested by the headmaster at the 1922 Speech Day. He made the comment that he was lucky to have colleagues who readily and with enthusiasm co-operated with his every wish. They were all united in their aims, with no friction, and he failed to understand the criticisms sometimes levelled at secondary teachers concerning the work they did. At his school, the teachers could be found voluntarily working late into the evening and deserved credit for that.

Mr. Talbot's Address

The progress of the scholars was praised by Mr. Talbot, who had formally opened the school in the ceremony of the previous November. He confided that he had attended the Speech Day in order to look for progress, and he was delighted to have found it. The good spirit in school and the attitudes of both pupils and staff satisfied him that the parents of the district could entrust their children to the care of that school with confidence.

A hope was expressed that the more well-to-do people of the Hemsworth district - people like colliery owners and public bodies - would consider founding (and funding) scholarships so that the brightest brains in the area would have the chance to develop even though their parents' means were not enough to allow this. The idea of many young people travelling along a 'highway' from school to University was now more likely to be the case in the Hemsworth area.

Mr. Talbot closed his speech by expressing the following wish. The "grand idea" behind education was that life should be made worth living, and that the younger generation should be given the wider outlook and knowledge of how leisure time could be better used than it was at the present. It would be a fine thing if they could teach that to everyone.

The Presentation of the Prizes

ENGLISH: Form IV, Hetty Littlewood, III, Olga Kirkham, II, Alice Scott, I, Wright W.H.

MATHEMATICS: Form IV, Freda Swaine, III, Barker E.J. II, Florence Hodgson, I, Wright W.H.

FRENCH: Form IV, Hetty Littlewood, III, Stother R.N. II, Kathleen Thompson.

LATIN: Form IV, Lilian Dykes, III, Barker E.J.

HISTORY: Form IV, Lilian Dykes, III, Barker E.J. II, Florence Hodgson, I, Keenan J.

GEOGRAPHY: Form IV, Lilian Dykes, III, Lee C.V. II, Thorpe S. I, Wright W.H.

SINGING: Webster R. and Schorah T.G.

ART: Dixon H. and Lee C.V.

SCRIPTURE: Form IV, Freda Swaine, III, * Barker E.J. Dooley W.L. and Fearnside E. bracketed, II, Margaret Foster, I, * Wright W.H.- Mollie Price

GREATEST GENERAL PROGRESS: Glenn J. and Lizzie Leman

"STAR PRIZE": Wright W.

HOUSE CHALLENGE CUP: Talbot House 392 points; Holgate 384.25 points.

Talbot House Captains: Winnie Walsh and Harry Crossley.