

Fifth Annual Speech Day November 10th 1926

The Hippodrome was once again the venue for the ceremony, with the following dignitaries in attendance. County Alderman G. Price, J.P. (Chairman of the Governors) presided, supported by the Bishop of Wakefield and the following Governors: Mrs. L. Garstang, Mrs. A. Schorah, Mrs. Guest, Mrs. Councillor Dooley, Councillors J. Potts, E. Beaumont and Jasper Smith, Mr. A. G. Jenkinson (Headmaster), and Mr. C. L. Crossley (Clerk to the Governors). There was a large attendance of parents.

Chairman's Speech

School Improvements

Ald. Price opened his speech by announcing that the number of children at the school had increased since the previous year from 224 to 287. He went on to announce that 25 out of 26 children had passed their School Certificates, with 12 reaching Matriculation standard, and with three distinctions. This was ample proof that the school was a great success, and justified all the money spent on its creation. Since the previous Speech Day, the science classrooms had been completed and fitted with modern equipment, and the new Gymnasium and Assembly Hall were expected to be ready early in 1927. On previous occasions, little had been mentioned about the playing grounds, which had been allowed to get into a poor condition, but the appointment of an additional gardener (Mr. Wycherley) had effected a considerable improvement. The numbers of school dinners provided had increased with the numbers of pupils in attendance, and continued to provide value for money.

Financial Struggles

Since the opening of the school, the provision of finances to cover the continual expenses of running such an establishment had resulted in many struggles for Ald. Price within the Finance Committee of the County Council. He continually pressed for improvements, and when the new gymnasium was completed, he promised to campaign for more classroom accommodation. He concluded by insisting that these continual improvements would result in the school's being known, "throughout the length and breadth of the country as one of the great seats of learning."

The Headmaster's Report

The Headmaster, in his annual report, said that during the past year, in numbers, in efficiency, in attainments, in development, and in the many kinds of school pursuits, there had been a greater advance than in any year since the school opened in November, 1921. There were now 287 pupils (145 boys and 142 girls) as compared with 225 last year. Two forms had been added, one a commercial class for those in the last year who were not intending to take the school certificate. Botany had been introduced for girls, as an alternative to Chemistry. Needlework was taught to all forms except VI, and Domestic Science to Forms IVc, IIIa and b, IIa, IIb, IIc, the work (cooking, laundry work and hygiene) covering a two years course. The Commercial Course included Shorthand, Typewriting, Commercial Arithmetic, Commercial Geography, Civics, History, English, Art, French, Science, Woodwork, Needlework and Domestic Science. It was hoped that a course of this kind would, to some extent, meet the needs of those who were to leave school at 16. All those who possibly could aim at obtaining the School Certificate should do so because it was accepted now as a necessary qualification for entry to many professions. It was intended to represent the standard which any normal boy or girl might be expected to reach at the age of 16 or 17, without undue specialisation.

At the last examination a normal form of 26 pupils entered and 25 obtained certificates. He acknowledged the industry and keen interest which every teacher had brought to bear upon the work of this examination, and congratulated them on the very pleasing results. What was particularly satisfactory was that 12 candidates reached matriculation standard and three obtained distinctions. The rest of the school had the usual annual examinations in July. The reports of these examinations were generally satisfactory. Work in school was still hampered by insufficient classroom accommodation. The new science block was opened at the beginning of the previous term, and the rooms were in constant use, but seeing that the school, when completed, was intended to accommodate 300, and that there were now 287 pupils, it would be understood that conditions were difficult. The Gymnasium Hall was expected to be ready in January and would be a very welcome addition. It would provide a covered place for physical training, and as a hall for assembly it would meet "a long-felt want."

In games and other recreations a good record had been maintained. The Rugby team played 12 matches, of which four were won, one drawn, and seven lost, 171 points against 195, but they were playing the first teams of other schools for the first time. The girls played only three matches (hockey/tennis?) owing to bad weather and won one and lost two. The boys played 14 cricket matches, of which they won nine and lost five.

The headmaster concluded by paying a tribute to the staff for their loyalty and efficiency, and to the Governors for their sympathy and co-operation.

The Bishop of Wakefield's Address

The Value and Dangers of Education

The Bishop of Wakefield praised the West Riding County Council as a generous supporter of education in general, and particularly Hemsworth Secondary School. He reminded everyone of the enormous progress which had been made in education in the United Kingdom. Education was the way in which any civilised country ensured its proper place in the world in the next generation. The boys and girls at Hemsworth were obtaining a training which would enable them, if it were used properly, to be real leaders in their own circles, and some of them, he hoped, in wider circles. In the old days education was the privilege of the few, and the concern of still fewer, and it was not until the beginning of the previous century that children of the working classes began to be educated. Education was now becoming the interest of everybody. This was a good thing, but there was one danger in education becoming the interest of everybody, and that was, that they might overload those whose duty it was to look after education. There was a tendency just now to pass legislation which was heaping fresh duties on the authorities responsible for education. If they were not careful the authorities would not have time to think, and the moment that took place, the character of the child would be "rolled up flat". He had a lurking fear, sometimes, that in our improved systems of education we might possibly

be not turning out the same distinctive characters as in the old days. The schoolmasters and mistresses were quite alive to this, and he would like to see the Governors encourage them, as at Hemsworth, so that they might experiment and think for themselves. We are getting more and more to see that large classes and uniform methods would, if not carefully watched, turn out a uniform pattern of child and keep down those who might show distinctive points. He hoped the parents would make sacrifices to keep the boys and girls at school, for if they kept a child that was doing well at school as long as they could they would never regret it.

The prizes and certificates were distributed by Mrs. Lucy Garstang, and a comprehensive vote of thanks was given on the proposition of Mrs. Alice Schorah (vice-chairman of the Governors), seconded by Mrs. Guest.

During the afternoon the following programme was given:

School Choir

Part songs, "Beauty and Truth" (Coleridge-Taylor), "Aspiration" (Elgar), "My love dwelt in a northern land" (Elgar), "The Londonderry Air" (arr. by T. le Cras), "From the green heart of the waters" (Coleridge-Taylor).

Violin solos by Miss I. Purdon, A.R.C.M.

"Herje Kati" (Hubay), "Viennese Waltz" (Gaertner-Kreisler), and "The Bee" (Schubert)

Songs by Miss M. Morgan-Jones

"Ave Maria" (Bach-Gounod), "Hindu Song" (Rimsky-Korsakov), and "Cradle Song" (Kreisler).

A French play, "Chez la Modiste," was given by May Bull, Molly Price and Maisie Thorne. There was also an English play, "The Dear Departed" (Houghton), by Kathleen Thompson, Emma Bate, A. Garbett, R. V. Williams, Laura Austin and H. Parsons.