

1931



Tenth Annual Speech Day, Wednesday October 21st 1931

The chief speaker at this annual event held at the Hippodrome was Mr. A.E. Morgan, M.A., Principal of the University College of Hull, who gave a notable address upon loyalty and the need for an educated democracy. There was a large attendance, and Ald. G. Price, J.P., chairman of the Governors, presided, supported by Mr. Morgan, Mr. A. G. Jenkinson, M.A., (headmaster), Mrs. Guest, Mrs. Blackmore, Mrs. Garstang, Mrs. Dooley, Mrs. Schorah, Capt. L. Hallam, Messrs. J. Dunleavy, W. Exley, and C. E. Jagger (Governors).

Fine School Record

The Chairman said that in the ten years of its existence the school had made a history and record second to none in the whole of the north of England. Its development had been watched with great interest, and it had accomplished a fine record by the devoted attention of the headmaster and staff, the governors, and the public and parents. The young students who were leaving the colleges and universities, ready to take a hand in the affairs of the world, were a credit to the school. Last year the number of pupils increased from 410 to 420, comprising 385 holders of County Minor Scholarships, three Holgate Trust scholarships, one South Elmsall Pretoria Club scholarship, and 81 fee paying scholars. Economy was being urged strongly upon them, but the Governors could be relied upon to do all in their power to ensure that efficiency was not sacrificed to achieve that end. At a meeting of that description it would be wrong of him to take advantage of the political situation and the Economy Bill confronting the West Riding County Council, and he would satisfy himself in assuring parents that the Governors would do their utmost to see that efficiency was not impaired by the "cuts". The success of the school was a tribute to all taking part in its administration. He hoped that the tenth "Speech Day" would see the beginning of further developments and a new history, until they were satisfied that the school was second to none, and that there would be built up a centre of education which would be a blessing to the future lives of the students.

Headmaster's Report

A Difficult Year

Mr. Jenkinson stated that the past year had been difficult in the matter of organisation and administration owing to the increasing numbers and the restricted accommodation. Many forms had no classrooms, and the overcrowding of classes militated against orderly management and effective teaching. This state of things was bound to be accentuated during the coming year by the increase of numbers to 420, and until the new extension was completed they could not hope for any improvement in this respect. In one particular, however, they were better off than at this time the previous year: the new dining hall was opened in May, and 330 dinners were served every day at one sitting and under comfortable conditions. The metalwork shop had also been extended according to plan and afforded temporary relief; when the machinery was installed it would provide the means of a thorough training in practical engineering.

Careers

Mr. Jenkinson wished to impress upon parents that the careers master and careers mistress, Mr. Austin and Miss Shortridge, explored the various avenues of possible employment for those leaving the school, and were always ready to give career advice. The trouble was that their advice was not sought early or often enough, and sometimes opportunities were thus lost. He appealed to parents to make their plans in good time. Every boy or girl should come to some decision as to a career when the age of 15 was reached. He also impressed upon

them that teaching was not a career suitable or advisable for all. He urged parents rather to consider the various branches of the Civil Service, R.A.F. apprenticeships for boys, boy artificerships in the Navy, farming in Canada under various Empire migration schemes, apprenticeships with industrial firms, enlistment in military or naval bands for boys who were musical, and for girls domestic science, pharmacy, nursing and nursery nursing, in all of which there were good openings and an interesting and useful field of work.

A Suggested Reform

"In my last report," he continued, "I questioned the advisability of passing on pupils of 14 and 15 years of age from central or senior elementary schools to a secondary school, because of the difficulty of placing the scholars in a form suitable to their age". One girl who had already passed the School Certification examination was able to be placed in the Vth. Form and passed again last July with distinction in History and good marks in other subjects though she just failed to obtain matriculation. She had now progressed to the Leeds Domestic Science training College. Of the others, four held high positions and two rather low positions in their forms; two boys had had double moves, but they were still all considerably over the average ages of their forms, and are not likely to reach the School Certificate standard at the age of 17. However, he noted that the county authority was aware of the anomalies which these transfers involved, and in order to rectify them, would now review pupils at the age of 12 or 13, instead of 14 or 15 as then was the practice.

The question of transfers from one type of school to another involved a consideration of the curriculum of the various schools. Education was meant to be continuous, and the different types of school, primary, post-primary, middle, secondary were being steadily brought into line. Why then should not the curriculum be continuous? Why should not Algebra and Geometry, General Science, and French be begun in primary and post-primary schools? The chief difficulty about late transfers would then disappear, because those transferred would be able to take their place in suitable forms in a secondary school. He hoped that a reform of this nature in our educational system would engage the attention of the administrative authorities.

Examination Results

Mr. Jenkinson said that the examination results were on the whole satisfactory, though owing to the difficult conditions under which teaching was carried on at the time, and the lower age of the candidates, the number of passes in the School Certificate was smaller than last year. At Leeds University in the Final Honours examination of the History School, Adelaide Branford and E. John Barker obtained good positions in the second class. Philip Bull at Leeds, Stanley Hawkesworth and James Keenan at Manchester had also obtained B.Sc. pass degrees. They were the first pupils from the school to complete a course for a degree at a university, and they were congratulated on their success.

Scheme of Work

The scheme of work in the school remained unaltered, though, if the accommodation had permitted, the number of forms would have been increased. Some re-arrangement of the upper school forms would be necessary next year, owing to the small number of those taking the commercial course as compared with the other two courses. It was becoming clear that there would have to be differentiation between matriculation and non-matriculation pupils. The value of a matriculation certificate had grown out of all proportion in recent years in the eye of employers and the general public. A matriculation certificate was required principally for admission to a university or training college, for admission to banks, and for some other professions which demanded a fairly high all-round academic qualification. For many branches of industry and business, a School Certificate showing credits in the specific subjects necessary for that particular industry or business would be a more reasonable proposition. Many an employer accepted a matriculation or School Certificate as a satisfactory qualification without any reference to the subjects in which credits were obtained. They should get away from the idea that a School Certificate of any kind was an adequate qualification for a position. The present tendency in secondary schools was to see the required standard for entrance to a university as being the only standard that counted as having real educational value. This tendency was due to the confusion of matriculation and school certificate, and to the demand of school authorities for matriculation results as evidence of a school's successful work. Some years previously, the Board of Education

published a circular by which secondary schools were required to enter whole forms only, and not individual pupils, for the School Certificate examination. Now this restriction had been removed, with the result that many schools by entering only their best candidates, naturally secured better matriculation results. At Hemsworth they had always adhered to the Board's original instructions, only entering whole forms for the School Certificate examination.

If he were invited to suggest a reform of the examination system he would divorce matriculation from the School Certificate, and he would diminish the value attached to a School certificate, as such, while increasing the value attached to credits in the various subjects, by giving to every candidate a certificate on which would be shown the passes obtained. Any girl or boy applying for a situation would then have a record to produce from which an employer could see at a glance what the applicant's qualifications were. Some reform was certainly necessary and these suggestions might help to focus attention more directly on the whole question.

[This policy was finally adopted nationally in 1937]

School Activities

Referring to various activities of the school, Mr. Jenkinson said that instruments were still wanted for the school orchestra, and he believed they were as much a part of the necessary equipment of a school of that kind as typewriters, or sewing machines, or paint-boxes. At present, due to the present financial difficulties, all equipment had to be reduced, but he hoped when normal supplies were resumed that the claims of music would not be neglected. From the vocational point of view a school orchestra was important, because any boy who could play a wind instrument had a good career open to him.

To every member of the staff he expressed his thanks and appreciation for their willingness and loyal co-operation, often at the cost of much personal inconvenience and at the sacrifices of leisure time. In spite of criticism from outsiders with regard to teachers' salaries, it was the spirit animating teachers which really counted and by which the value of a teaching staff was to be estimated. If judged by that standard the school was well served.

Ald. Price and Mr. Guest

"In this, the tenth year of the school's existence," concluded Mr. Jenkinson, "I wish to offer my particular thanks to Ald. G. Price, chairman of the Governors, for the help which he has given to the school and to me all through the ten years. Other Governors have come and gone, but Mr. Price, I am glad to say, has remained. We have had in him and our present governing body, supporters who could be relied on to back the school for all they were worth, and to maintain an active interest in all its concerns.

It is with great regret that I have to record the death after a long illness, of Mr. John Guest, M.P., who was one of the original Governors of this school. Even when failing health had compelled him to sever his official connection with the school, he maintained a lively interest in its progress and welfare, and I have cause to remember with gratitude his friendly kindness and generosity. His name has been perpetuated in one of the school "Houses," which by a coincidence won the cup last year."

The prizes were presented by Mrs. Blackmore, vice-chairman of the Governors, who was handed a bouquet by Phyllis Stoker, head girl of the school.

The University Habit

Mr. Morgan, who received a book from the headmaster as a memento of the occasion, said that some people were cynical of "speech days", but it was useful for a school to gather in public at least once a year and take a reckoning of what it had done, and to assess the future.

[Arthur Eustace Morgan was a professor of English for many years, first at Exeter and then at Sheffield, and taught in vacation courses in various American Universities. During the 1914-18 War he served as an officer in the Royal Artillery. He was the first Principal of University College, Hull from 1926 to 1935, and then Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University in Montreal. He lectured widely on literary and educational subjects in the UK, America and Canada, and wrote a number of books chiefly on Drama, of which 'Tendencies of Modern

English Drama' became a standard work. In 1938 he was commissioned by King George's Jubilee Trust to survey the whole field of adolescent activities, and the results published in 'The Needs of Youth' are the fullest and most authoritative study of the subject, thereafter influencing the subsequent national policy for youth. He was Commissioner for the Durham and Tyneside Special Area, and after the outbreak of the Second World War, he took charge of the Ministry of Information in the Northern Region.]

Mr. Morgan was particularly pleased to be present, because Mr. Jenkinson and himself had worked near each other in Devon and Cornwall, and had both come to Yorkshire to till the great educational field to which they had both dedicated their lives. In Hull it had been felt that a new university college gave them cause not only for congratulation but also for an attempt to focus on their aims. University education had grown remarkably in the last century. A hundred years ago there were only two universities in England and Wales. Since then there had developed a solidarity of university feeling and sympathy throughout the country, whereby the training of the youth of England for the highest work which the nation needed to be done for it was possible. There could be no such thing as competition between universities any more than there could be between schools. They worked together, strengthening each other. He was certain that in the next generation or two, more universities would be needed before the country was saturated. The growth of universities increased the habit of going to them, and instead of depleting the number attending them it added to the total.

Loyalty and Truth

On "speech days" was concentrated the spirit of school loyalty, which alone gave flavour and real quality to the life of a school. Loyalties were hard things to face - and yet they were the glory of life. Loyalties caused tragedies and gave strength. It was only when loyalties were imperfect that they caused tragedies. Loyalty was truth. None of them could achieve absolute truth in this erring world, but they could approach to it more and more according to the strenuousness of their struggle for it. Was there anything more important than truth? Why did they go to school? To be educated. What did education mean? It meant fitting them in every respect so that they could take their part in life. A good and sound system of education should equip everyone with the ability to find truth, and to recognise truth when it was found. How frequently they were led aside by a misconception! How often difficulties arose through a lack of understanding! They were, in fact, so uneducated that they were always jumping to conclusions instead of examining the situation carefully. The real test of democracy - which was on its test in this generation - was that people, in the widest sense of the term, could see the truth. No people could govern themselves unless they had wisdom. An uneducated democracy was a contradiction of terms. Self government by the people was possible only where they had education. This was a testing time for democracy. In many parts of the world people were throwing it over, and it was being replaced by dictatorships and oligarchies. English men believed in it and were struggling to make it effective. Young people were going to carry on the work of ensuring that the principle of government of the people by the people, for the people, was a practical way of managing the affairs of human beings. He believed that this and the next generation would show that those who launched democracy were right. To do that they had to be free from misconceptions. How often they were carried away by words and judgments without knowing the facts! They should be careful before they jumped to conclusions that all the data were at their disposal.

Clear Thinking

If there were three things, continued Mr. Morgan, that education should give, they were how to read, write, and speak accurately. If they could read accurately they could understand what other people had said. The bulk of the wisdom of humanity was stored in books. They were the treasury of the wisdom of the ages, and also of such wisdom as the present age had achieved. In order to read they must understand the meaning of words. They had a great means of propagating truth by being able to write and say what they wanted to say, so that other people could understand it. It was a vain delusion that they could think clearly but could not express themselves. To think clearly was essential for the understanding of truth and its conveyance to other people. That, to his mind, was the central function of education. They should strengthen their loyalty to their school and to the societies to which they belonged, but in the end it came back to loyalty to oneself, which meant nothing unless it was based on a real apprehension of truth. They should not be afraid to recognise the good qualities in

themselves. It was not humility, but a form of vanity, to pretend that they did not recognise it. He hoped the second decade of the school would be as prosperous as the first they had just completed.

Mrs. Blackmore and Mr. Morgan were thanked on the motion of Capt. L. Hallam, seconded by Mrs. Schorah, and supported by Mrs. Dooley. Mrs. Blackmore replied and asked for the usual day's holiday for the pupils, which was granted. On the motion of Mr. W. Exley, seconded by Capt. Hallam, a vote of thanks was given to the chairman.

A programme of music was given under the conductorship of Miss Phyllis E.M. Wright, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., Kathleen Perry, and Lois Harris as accompanists. Part songs were given by the school choir, violin solos by Eva Harris, instrumentals by Eva Harris, Nuttall, Pattison, and Harry Walker, and songs by Miss Wright.