

Speech Day 1940

Speech Day, usually held in November, was cancelled owing to the war. In its place an informal ceremony was arranged when the prizes usually presented at Speech Day were given to the successful students. The ceremony took place in the school hall, and only pupils, staff and Governors were present. County Councillor A. Flavell J.P., chairman of the Governors, presided, supported by Mrs. Flavell, who presented the prizes, Mrs. W. K. Price, Mrs. Guest, The Rev. A. E. Duckett, Coun. A. Richards (Governors), and Mr. R. W. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton said it had been impossible to hold Speech Day, and he expressed his regret that owing to lack of accommodation he had been unable to invite parents to the prize distribution.

The chairman expressed regret that it had not been possible to hold Speech Day owing to the war, and said the Governors had to consider not only the possibility of an air raid while the function was in progress, with the lives of 600 or 700 persons at stake, but the difficulty of parents and friends coming from all parts of the district and having to return home in the black-out, with its risks. That prize distribution was the next best thing to Speech Day. The school, he said, had suffered not only from the war but from the weather. The headmaster and staff, with the co-operation of the Governors, had done what they thought was best in the interests of the school under war conditions. They closed the school until the West Riding County Council had made provision by way of trenches for the safety of the students and staff in air raids. After further consultations they decided as a temporary measure, to use the cellars as shelters, and then requested the higher forms - students who would be expected to prepare themselves for examination for the School Certificate - to attend school. This was carried on with success, but when the shelters were nearing completion the Governors requested the whole of the students to attend school. Now they were in their normal stride with the exception of illness. The headmaster had had a rough time owing to illness of staff, one member of whom, or more, had been off duty throughout the winter. Notwithstanding this setback there would, he was sure, be a determination to recover the lost ground.

Coun. Flavell urged the students to take advantage of the facilities which the school had provided for them outside the ordinary lessons. The outstanding of these, apart from sports, were music and debating. He appealed to children to become members of the school orchestra, which would help to raise the status of the school, and of the debating society, which, he said, would be of inestimable value in assisting them to take their part in the world's work. Who knew, he asked, but that he was speaking to some future Prime Minister or member of the Cabinet, MP or councillors? The society would help them, whatever position they were called upon to fill, to take their corner in any company and be a credit to the school. The Chairman referred to applications by parents for children to leave the school before they were 16 years of age, and strongly discouraged them. The Governors, he said, were anxious for the future of every student. There had been several applications to leave before they had reached 16, despite the fact that every parent or guardian had signed an agreement for the child to remain at school until that age. Included in the agreement was a penalty clause that parents must pay nine guineas if they withdraw children before 16. Owing to so many parents withdrawing children, the Governors had felt compelled to write to various companies and trade unions asking them to co-operate with them by not employing students in the midst of their education. Many pupils, after completing their school life, had found themselves without jobs, which had been filled by children with fewer educational attainments, and he appealed to employers to get in touch with the headmaster, who could fix them up with students able to fill posts.

Much had been written and said about national fitness during the last twelve months, concluded the Chairman. We ought not to have to wait for war before the nation considered national fitness. Every child should be given the means of keeping physically and mentally fit. Education was continually helping to form public opinion and character. Education without a good character was a complete failure in the long run. If we could, as a nation, attain the combination of a good education and good character, we would not only reform, but transform the world. The person who was able to combat evil forces was the one with a good background, namely a good character. Scorn thrown to, or thrown at the person with a good background was like water running off a duck's back.

The Rev. A. E. Duckett moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman and Mrs. Flavell, and paid a tribute to the devotion to the school shown by Coun. Flavell. He added that the children were not at school primarily to get through examinations, although they were important, nor to get honours on the sports field, which were not to be despised, but to be taught how to think deeply. Mrs. Guest seconded.

Mrs. Flavell distributed the prizes, and she was presented with a bouquet by Beryl Townsend, the Head Girl.

In addition to Higher School Certificates, School Certificates, and Royal Society of Arts Shorthand Certificates, the following special prizes were presented:

A.G. Jenkinson Memorial Latin Prize and Prize for Reading
M.A. Griffiths Memorial French Prize
Latin
Domestic Science
Reading
General Information
Form Prizes

Star Prize
General Progress
Kubo Art Medal

G. H. Jowett
Elsie Smith
J. E. Walker and Margaret E. Bevan
Eunice D. Senior and Celia A. Wiggins
Ethel Hodgson, Christine Batty, Doreen Lawton, N. Barnsley, K. Hardy, I. Stocks, P. Idle
A.G. Wilson
R. Benford, Betty Gill, A. O'Hara, R. Jowitt, K. Metcalfe, J. W. Thompson, A. Chapman, M. Nicholson, H. Garbett, H. Parker, I. Ventom, G. Wilson
I. Weaver
B. Fletcher and N. Jacques
Joan Milner

The following "House" trophies were presented:

Sports, House Challenge and Rugby Cups
Arts, Hockey and Swimming Cups

B. Eyre and McAllister (Price House)
Beryl Townsend and Mellor (Talbot House).