

Speech Day 1941

The twentieth Annual Speech Day was held at Hemsworth Hippodrome on Wednesday afternoon. County Coun. A. Flavell J.P. (Chairman of the Governors) presided, supported by Air Commodore J.A. Chamier, Commandant of the Air Training Corps, who presented prizes and certificates numbering about 190, Mr. R. W. Hamilton, and Governors. The Chairman said the school was opened in 1921, and had made good progress. They had a staff second to none in the West Riding, and whilst several members were in the forces, others, including the Headmaster were devoting much of their time to the local squadron of the Air Training Corps. Since the opening of the school, 458 students had passed the School Certificate examination, 187 had matriculated, 140 had gone forward to training colleges, and 75 had entered Universities - a large proportion having obtained honours degrees.

Headmaster's Report

The School's contribution to the war effort figured largely in the Headmaster's annual report. He made special reference to the Hemsworth & District Squadron of the Air Training Corps, in the formation of which, he said, the school took the initiative. Mr. Hamilton said that in many Secondary Schools A.T.C. units were for members only. There were arguments for the course, but he believed that in a struggle such as we were engaged in, unity between all sections of the people, and more especially our youth, was essential if we were to win the war. In this area, at any rate, membership was open to all boys, no matter what schools they had attended, and he had no regrets for the step. From the beginning every male member of the staff volunteered to lend a hand. Though not all were called upon, most of the officers were members of the staff, and all of them willingly devoted their time to the welfare of the Squadron.

Mr. Hamilton said the school had been doing its bit for the national cause. During the last year it raised £350 from weekly collections by the children, and in war weapons week saved £2,325/19s/6d. During the summer campaign it raised £96. The number of members last year was 162. The present number was 180. In addition the school contributed to a comforts fund. Last year it raised £69/7s/3d, which included a gift of £5 from the Old Hilmians. Useful articles of all kinds had been made and sent to hospitals. Over 200 gifts in the form of gloves and scarves had been sent to old students in the Forces. Parcels of knitted comforts have also been sent to the Merchant Navy. When Liverpool and Glasgow suffered from air raids over a hundred babies' garments were knitted and despatched to those places. Articles of clothing of all kinds, over 2,000 in all, had been collected and sent to blitzed areas. Throughout the year the school had also sent sums of money to various charities, both national and local, the total contribution being £45. Some old pupils were prisoners of war. The present pupils subscribed to a "Prisoners of War Fund", and sent approximately 10 shillings every week to the Red Cross to provide a parcel for one or other of them. The school had done a little in the "Grow More Food" campaign, having ploughed up an acre of the playing field and set potatoes, cabbages and cauliflowers. More than 234 Old Hilmians were serving with the Forces. Their war effort had still one more phase. The school offered its engineering facilities to the Government in June 1940, and three weeks later began training men and women to work in munition factories. Day and night shifts were worked, and two qualified instructors, directed by Mr. Waters, the Engineering Master, were responsible for the training. Their product was so good that an aeroplane factory had offered to take all their trainees as fast as they could turn them out. "This working at double pressure", he remarked, "has been accomplished only by much sacrifice on the part of the staff, nearly every member of which has at least one extra job of national importance. I would not say that we like it, but we realise that Hitler must be beaten, and so far, our share has been to double up our hours of work."

The Headmaster said that on October 1st. there were 453 pupils at the school, compared with 429 a year before. The examination results of last July were well above the average for the whole country. Successes included a County Major Scholarship, two Junior Technological Scholarships, a Junior Art Scholarship, and a County Women's Scholarship for Physical Training. Three State Bursaries in Science had been awarded.

After presenting the prizes, Air Commodore Chamier related some exciting experiences of the last war, when he was a member of the Air Force, and stressed the importance of the training they received at school. "Anything you learn in school, and anything that may happen to you after school, may have a tremendous effect on your lives, if you only seize the opportunities as they occur", he said.

A book was presented to Air Commodore Chamier.

The students of Holgate House presented a special cup to Annie Brammer for having accomplished the unique feat of winning the Junior Victrix Ludorum three years in succession. A musical programme was given by the scholars.