

Twenty First Speech Day

The 21st annual speech day was held at the Hemsworth Hippodrome on Wednesday, and it was fitting that the school's first headmaster, Mr. A. G. Jenkinson, who retired five years ago and is now living at Oxford, should have the honour of distributing the prizes. A large attendance of past and present pupils and parents gave him a great welcome. Ald. A. Flavell J.P., Chairman of the Governors, presided, supported by Mr. R. W. Hamilton (Headmaster), Mr. Jenkinson, and other Governors. The Chairman recalled that this school was opened 21 years ago that day - November 18th. 1921, and said much of the credit for its foundation went to the late Ald. G. Price. The work of Mr. Jenkinson had stood the test of time and his influence had never left the school. The school started with 96 pupils, drawn from 15 parishes, and today there were almost 500. The people were justly proud of the school's progress. Many students had passed through the colleges and universities and were occupying important positions. The Chairman said he had sympathy with elementary school teachers who had an impossible task in dealing with classes of from 40 to 50 children. No class should have more than 25 or 30 pupils. If this were achieved the children would have a better education and be more fitted to enter the grammar and technical schools. He was looking forward to the time when grammar schools would be free to all children with ability, and they would be able to pass on to college or university with financial assistance. On completing their education, students should be able to begin their career free from financial commitments. They would then be in a position to more than repay the country for their education by the service they were capable of rendering. Reform was overdue, and the war had taught the nation a lesson, that the present system of education was out of date. The demand for technical knowledge was greater than the supply.

Headmaster's Report

The Headmaster stressed in his report the importance of pupils concentrating on schoolwork rather than youth movement activities. In a word of caution to parents, he said he rejoiced when pupils found time to take part in outside organisations, for it was good to know that they were playing a part in the social life of young people. He stressed, however, that success in their school was of the first importance both to their country and to themselves. A pupil who got his school certificate or higher school certificate was a better asset to the nation than one who gave up a lot of time to youth activities and failed to pass his examinations. If the pupils could do both, and many of them did, all honour to them; they were giving that extra effort demanded of all who were capable of it in order to defend our way of life. But there were some who could not afford to sacrifice the time from their studies. Such pupils were told by him they needed to restrict their out-of-school activities, and he wanted both them and their parents to take consolation from the fact that in concentrating on their school work they were doing a job of national importance. It might not be as spectacular or satisfying as wearing the uniform of one of the pre-Service units, but the nation needed trained brains as well as trained brawn, and all the Services regarded the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate as standards of attainment eminently desirable in their recruits. Hence his advice to pupils: "If you can manage it, without detriment to your studies, you ought to help your country by joining a pre-Service unit, but success in your school career comes before everything, both for your own good and that of your country." In the school, pupils had all the training and all those interests available which the youth movement sought to promote among children who had been denied a secondary education. If the school leaving age were raised to 16 and secondary education made available to all, he dared to prophesy that the problems of Youth Councils everywhere would be solved. Pupils in secondary schools needed no outside organisations to cater for their leisure hours. Homework, school activities and their own interests roused by the stimulus of school life were quite sufficient for them.

Paying a tribute to Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Hamilton said he laid the foundations of a school of which he could be proud. Not many men were fortunate enough to have the honour of starting a school. It was a high honour, but it was also a grave responsibility. The Governors of those days, some of whom were still with them, did an excellent job when they appointed him. Mr. Hamilton also congratulated the Chairman on his appointment as a County Alderman and said the school owed him much for the work he had put in on its behalf. Mr. Hamilton reported that in the school were 249 girls and 243 boys, the total of 492 - an increase on the year before. This had meant an increase in the staff which now numbered 24 - 12 mistresses and 12 masters. The examination results continued at a high level. Seven candidates took the Higher School Certificate and five passed, while 43 of the 47 who sat for the School Certificate were successful. During the year First Aid was added to the curriculum, pupils from Forms V and VI voluntarily undertaking this course. Every one of them obtained the certificate. The school continued to support efforts directly connected with the war. It raised £28 for its comforts fund, and he appealed for the name and home address of any Old Hilman in the Forces. For National Savings the school raised £513/2s/6d, and in addition contributed over £150 to national charities and sent clothing for the use of blitzed families. They had their own war-time garden and salvage campaign. The idea of service was ever before the eyes of the pupils.

Addressing himself to parents of future pupils, the headmaster said that last July he had to disappoint several parents who wanted to send their children to the school. The children were too old. The right age for entry into a grammar school was between 10 and 11. It was difficult for older children to get into the routine of things.

He mentioned that he had the names of 300 Old Hilmans serving with the Forces, of whom nine had given their lives. He concluded by declaring that it was an honour to be the Headmaster of the school, which was a potent force in education.

Mr. Jenkinson, after presenting the prizes, spoke in reminiscent vein of the early days of the school, and the difficulties caused by inadequate accommodation. During the last few years the school had had rather a troubled existence and had had to face difficulties which had proved a good test of its soundness and stability. A heavy burden of responsibility had fallen on his successor and he congratulated him on the energy and resourcefulness with which he tackled his task. It was no small thing for a young man in his first headship to be called upon to grapple with the various problems and increased activities which the advent of war had introduced. Mr. Hamilton had proved himself equal to the task, and he wished him continued success.

"That day was a great day", said Mr. Jenkinson, not only for himself but for the boys and girls, who might well be proud of being members of the school. The years he spent as headmaster brought him much happiness and many friends. Early memories

served to throw into bold relief the school as it was today, with its fine equipment and many activities, full complement of staff, and proud record of honours and success gained by pupils in the universities and elsewhere. These were stern and difficult times and he reminded the children that efficiency and tolerance were of particular importance.

Mr. Jenkinson was presented with a book by Marjorie Duckworth, Head Girl. A vote of thanks to Mr. Jenkinson was moved by Mrs. Guest, seconded by County Councillor J. Potts J.P. (Governors), and supported by Mr. P.C. Crossland (Senior Master). The ceremony was followed by a musical programme by the scholars under the direction of Miss F. W. Townsend, the accompanist being Mr. J. D. Hamilton and J. Maw.