

November 9th. 1967

“Hemsworth Grammar School is at the end of its existence,” said Mr. R. W. Hamilton at the school’s 46th Annual Speech Day yesterday. Mr. Hamilton, who was giving his last report before his retirement at the end of this year, said that next September the school would cease to be, and its place would be taken by a new kind of school. “It is my earnest hope,” he said, “that the best of the grammar school will live on to enrich the life of the new school and that the opportunities the new school will afford all its pupils will, for all of them, be no less good than those offered to the pupils of the grammar school.” Mr. Hamilton said that in last year’s report he said that the changes, the difficulties in staffing and accommodation would be as nothing compared with the upheaval that lay ahead, but they need not be dismayed. They had a splendid staff and an efficient and helpful administration at their divisional office. The future could be every bit as bright as the past, and if all concerned played their part, it would be. “The events of the year just passed have vindicated what I said a year ago,” he went on, “From September to December 1966 school affairs were fairly normal. But from January to July 1967, school life became increasingly abnormal. The architect had warned us that school life would be almost intolerable. He was right! So much so that the Education Authority agreed to our closing the school for the summer vacation a week earlier than usual.” At the moment working in the school had become a little easier but they were still subject to sudden and unexpected moves which made life still difficult. They could, however, see, if only dimly, the end of disorganisation in the existing buildings. Next term ought to see them relieved of most of the upset, and that would make teaching and learning easier. Their thoughts, however, would inevitably be concerned with the great re-organisation scheduled for next September.

The school had 835 pupils in September 1966, of whom 116 were in the 6th Form. This year the number was 838, the 6th Form containing 138. Many of them were repeating their “O” Level studies because their performance in June was by no means adequate for the career they wanted. As a concession to their increasing maturity they had been included in the 6th Form. “It is,” said Mr. Hamilton, “a welcome sign that so many of them are anxious to continue their studies, but they must realise that the mere fact of being in the 6th Form will not bring them success. That they will only achieve by hard work and serious determined attention to their studies.”

Mr. Hamilton said that 162 pupils left during the year, for the following destinations:

Universities	12
Colleges of Education	16
Further Education	15
Other Schools	27
Employment	34
Not Known	56.

In June 1967, 25 candidates were examined under C.S.E. auspices and there were:

48 Grade 1
58 Grade 2
53 Grade 3
36 Grade 4
18 Grade 5 passes.

The average number of Grade 1 passes per pupil was 1.9.

At the “O” Level of the G.C.E. exam, there were 105 candidates who between them had 517 passes, an average of 4.9 per pupil. At the “A” Level there were 39 candidates with 86 passes, an average of 2.2 per pupil.

“Last Year,” said Mr. Hamilton, “my comment on exam results was that there were too many candidates with less than four passes. The shocking working conditions in the school from almost January to July gives some excuse for those who this year got less than four. Staff and pupils, however, deserve the highest praise for what is a really splendid performance when the almost intolerable situation is taken into account.”

Referring to the Parent/Teachers’ Association, Mr. Hamilton said every year it became more and more clear that those children whose parents kept in touch with the school gained far more than those whose parents never went near. Through Parent/Teacher meetings there was benefit for all, and the greater number of parents who went, the greater was the number of pupils who profited. Mr. Hamilton expressed the hope that the Old Hilmians cricket section would continue to flourish. “It is an excellent thing when staff and former pupils meet and play games together,” he added.

Re-organisation of all education in the Hemsworth district was now well under way, said Mr. Hamilton. The physical expansion of their own buildings was taking shape. The date of the changeover was still September 1968, but his own feeling was that they could still not be certain of the exact date. Great efforts were being made and all hoped that the dead-line will be met. “It will be good if it does happen as planned,” said Mr. Hamilton. “The air of uncertainty has been with us too long. Everybody will feel a sense of relief when the changeover actually takes place. Problems of course will abound. Nevertheless, the goodwill of all concerned, and determination on the part of the administrators and staff to make the new system at least as good as the old, will undoubtedly go a long way to solve those problems. Prodigious these will have to be to ensure this. All the signs are that this will be forthcoming.” Stating that this was his last report, Mr. Hamilton expressed his thanks for all the help he had been given. “I will not pretend there have never been moments of stress and difficulty,” he said, “but through all the years, I have been sustained by the knowledge that friendships and goodwill were being extended to me by those whom I have tried to serve.” The pupils, many of

them men and women now, with families of their own, had amply repaid his efforts on their behalf by their own successes in life. From his Boards of Governors he had received sympathy, help and support in all his endeavours. He thanked the staff and added "Whatever worthy of praise had been accomplished during my headship just could not have been done without the loyal support, vigour, drive and energy of the staff." Mr. Hamilton closed by saying, "I take my leave of you, confident that my colleagues will do their utmost to make a success of the new order of things."

The guests of honour were Professor W. Eastwood of Sheffield University, an old boy of the school and Mrs. Eastwood. Mr. Hamilton said that in September 1934 there came to the school an 11 year old boy named Wilfred Eastwood. "Little did he think in those days that one day he would become a Governor of this school, and even be invited as Guest of Honour at the school's speech day," he added. "The school has many distinguished sons and daughters in all walks of life and in many parts of the world. It is not often we have the opportunity to see them and thank them for their share in upholding the good name of the school."

"It is the end of an era." said Councillor H. Cooper, chairman of the Governors, when he presided at the 46th Annual speech day of Hemsworth Grammar School on Wednesday. Councillor Cooper said that when they met next year the school would be no more and they would have in its place a new Comprehensive High School. While they regretted the passing of an old friend they looked forward to what the new order of things would have to offer to the new generations of children. They were also losing the headmaster, Mr. R. W. Hamilton, who was retiring at the end of next month. The school had been fortunate in having had only two headmasters in its 46 year existence and had been equally lucky in the calibre of the two men. Mr. Hamilton had left his mark on many students who had passed through the school (laughter), and they had much for which to thank him. He wished him a long and happy retirement and hoped he would be able to pay return visits to the school at various functions. Councillor Cooper said that Mrs. Hamilton had played a big part in the school's life and in the education field in general. She had been a teacher at Grimethorpe and had always supported her husband in his work.

The Head Girl (Christine Stephens) said that despite the inconvenience caused by building work the pupils had adapted themselves very well to the school's work. She thanked Mr. Hamilton and hoped that in spite of the fact that the school was undergoing great changes the pupils would keep the honourable name of Hemsworth well and truly on the map. The Head Boy (John Covell) said they had great hopes for the new sports hall, which would enable the athletes to train indoors. He thanked the headmaster and staff for all they had done and said they had to endure appalling conditions. The pupils had battled bravely against the conditions and deserved to be congratulated. In Mr. Hamilton they were losing a fine headmaster.

After his wife had distributed the prizes and certificates, Professor Eastwood, Deputy Dean to the Faculty of Engineering at Sheffield University, who is an old boy of the school, said that in the late 1930s if two or three boys got to university it was a very good year. There was a great deal of poverty in the area in those days, but the greatest was the poverty of ambition amongst the local people, so few of whom realised the opportunities which a school like Hemsworth had to offer. He hoped parents would dispense with any idea they might have of allowing their children to leave school early. The school had a splendid science record, said Prof. Eastwood and he did not know of another in which pupils had obtained three Distinctions in Maths. The number of people taking "A" Levels in the country was going down and scientists and technologists would become smaller in number, which was something the country could not afford. He advised the pupils to make the best use of their talents. Countless generations of students owed an enormous amount to Mr. Hamilton, to whom he extended his own thanks.

Proposing a vote of thanks, County Councillor Mrs. D. Kenningham, vice-chair of the Governors, said she was not sorry it was no longer going to be a grammar school, because she was one who advocated a change to Comprehensive Education, but she was sorry they would be losing Mr. Hamilton. She hoped parents would see that their children continued their education and reached "O" Level. Seconding, Mr. R.F. Williams paid tribute to the pupils on the results they had attained. The staff, who had been working under a terrific strain during the year, had been very loyal, he added.