

SOUTHGATE COUNTY SCHOOL

THE HEADMASTER'S REPORT

DECEMBER PRIZE GIVINGS 1945.

Mr. Chairman,

This is the first time that you have presided here as Chairman of our Governing Body, and in that capacity I offer you a cordial welcome on behalf of the school. Your acceptance of the chairmanship of the Southgate Education Committee gives all the residents in this borough even greater cause to be thankful to you for all the public service you so ably render on their behalf. Next a word of welcome to our chief guests, Sir John and Lady Catlow. The Chairmanship of the Middlesex County Council Education Committee is a high office of great responsibility, and we are fortunate in having with us this afternoon the present distinguished and able holder of that office.

Then I should like to pay a tribute to the previous headmaster, Mr. Everard. After sixteen years of successful service as headmaster here, Mr. Everard retired last Easter. The meeting at which presentations were made to him could leave him in no doubt as to the high esteem in which he was held by all of us and the success which crowned his efforts. The school was fortunate in its first two headmasters and since I served under both I can plead no lack of example. Mr. Everard seemed to have an idea that retirement was closely associated with bowls and Bournemouth, but others thought otherwise and he is now a member of the Southgate Education Committee, a position he is well fitted to hold. We wish him many years of happy and fruitful retirement.

Lastly I would like to refer to the first senior mistress this school had, Miss Barham. In the early days her work and influence were no small factor in establishing the school on the best and surest foundations, and we are pleased to have her with us this afternoon.

Now let me proceed to some account of my stewardship.

Numbers. We commenced this term with 590 pupils - 305 boys and 285 girls, so that to quote from a former report when our numbers were 50 fewer, "the problem of overcrowding is still with us". For this I accept responsibility, for it is my intention to continue the Barnado policy of the ever open door announced by my predecessor two years ago, and refuse no qualified applicant until

further admissions a re impossible. Last spring a largernumber of children than usual qua lified for admission to a secondary grammar school, and I admitted four forms of first year pupils instead of the usual three. Other children returning from evacuation have been found places, while a t the <sup>top</sup> ~~other~~ end of the school the sixth forms are again large. There are 105 pupils in our post-first certificate forms, 64 in first year sixth forms, and 41 in second year sixth forms. Here I would draw the attention of parents to one of our several sixth form courses, namely that section of the commerce form which includes shorthand, typewriting and accounting in its curriculum. Those pupils - and this applies to more girls than boys - those pupils who wish to follow a secretarial career and need these subjects can obtain a useful starting knowledge of them by staying the whole year of the course. They should stay the whole year and not leave after the first or second term before they ha ve mastered the theory of the shorthand or acquired a working skill in typewriting.

Examination Results. During the year 110 pupils were entered for the University of London General School Examination. Of these 90 passed and 48 also qualified for exemption from matriculation.

For the Higher School examination, 25 entered and 24 passed. In addition 5 candidates obtained exemption from Intermediate Arts and 10 from Intermediate Science. These tota ls of 24 Higher School Certificates and 15 Intermediate exemptions are the highest we have ever obtained.

Two of our pupils won State Bursaries. Ian Collier who obtained the mark "good" in all four subjects of the Higher School examina tion was awarded a State Bursary in engineering and is now a student at the Imperial College and Ronald Heacock who obtained two "good" marks and two passes was awarded a State Bursary in Fuel technology, tenable at Birmingham University.

Pamela Latter who obtained distinction in Geography and "good" in the other three subjects entered for a scholarship at University College Nottingham and also at University College, Leicester. She was offered a scholarship of £30 a year for three years by both these colleges and elected to go to Nottingham

You will see from your programme that 31 of the pupils who left last year proceeded to institutions for full-time further education to equip themselves for a variety of careers. This number, 31, is also I think a record.

Sports and Games. All the games of the school are in a healthy and vigorous condition. The first cricket eleven lost only one match, its best performance being a win over a side of colts of the Southgate Cricket Club. The second eleven did even better, going through the season without defeat. The junior cricket teams showed skill and enthusiasm which promise well for the future.

The first football eleven also had a good season, losing seven only out of the 22 matches played. There are frequently five football matches on Saturday mornings and the strong section just now seems to be the under 13½.

The first hockey team played 16 matches and lost 3 only, while the second hockey eleven went through the season without defeat. The two tennis teams between them won 11 out of 15 matches, and the two netball teams won 21 out of 24 games played.

We have difficulty in obtaining equipment for games and this has become acute in the case of the boys' football for which football boots are almost unobtainable. We effect secondhand sales whenever possible, but the supply is far below our needs. If any of you have football boots not in use but which have some wear left in them, we shall be very glad to have them.

With the cessation of hostilities we were able to hold our Athletic Sports and Swimming Sports in the summer. On both occasions we were fortunate with the weather and the athletic sports brought a large attendance of parents and friends.

Societies. The Dramatic Society produced in March Shakespeare's "The Tempest" and earned the praises of its critics. As a result of the performance £44 was added to our Memorial Scholarship Fund. This society is now rehearsing Thackeray's "The Rose and the Ring" for production at the end of next term, and I hope that parents and friends will again support us by their attendance.

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The Discussion Society continues. Speakers have given addresses and the members have held discussions on topics of current interest.

The Orchestral Society. After a period of depression in the war years, the orchestra has increased its numbers and it will be performing later in this afternoon's programme. Let me again urge parents to encourage their musical offspring to learn to play a musical instrument and join the school orchestra in its weekly practices. We have a number of instruments which are the property of the school, but which we will lend to pupils for the duration of their school life on condition that they get proper tuition.

The Art Club is in a flourishing condition.

The Chess Club was among the war casualties but it has now started again and has a full membership. Two new societies have come into being:-

One is a Musical Society which has two sections each meeting fortnightly; one for listening and study, the other for singing.

The other is a Junior Dramatic Society open to the second and third forms.

National Savings are collected each week. A special effort was made during National Savings Week in September and £1101 was raised but enthusiasm has since waned. More of our children should bring in their savings regularly week by week. Many of them have pocket money on what seems to me to be a very generous scale and I suggest that parents should guide the children into the habit of regular saving. By so doing public service is combined with personal advantage.

Harvest Camp. A party of girls again undertook to do some harvesting and over 50 girls spent from one to four weeks in the neighbourhood of Marlow, Bucks. The girls won the praise and thanks of the farmers for whom they worked and also I understand made a most favourable impression on the younger men of the district - neither of which surprises me.

With the cessation of hostilities, educational visits again became possible. After the summer examinations a party of fifth form scholars went to see the Roman remains near St. Albans.

About the same time, a revival of the visit of second forms to Whipsnade was proposed. At once the 3rd and 4th forms made it known that they had not been to Whipsnade, with the result that more than 300 children in relays had a day's excursion to Whipsnade, and all returned the same day.

The largest outing was organized when permission was given to go to the cinema in school time and nearly 500 children saw the Henry the Fifth film.

Staff. There have been several changes on the staff in the past year. Miss Cavey after an all too short stay resigned on account of ill-health. Mrs. Fawcett resigned for domestic reasons. Mrs. Richards who at some inconvenience to herself returned for two terms to help us in an emergency finally left us in July. Miss Rowe has moved to a senior post at Worthing, Miss Smith, after 35 years service retired from teaching in July. All Miss Smith's work has been characterised by a high conception of duty and an ever present willingness and readiness to render service to the community and in these respects has been an example to us all, staff and pupils alike. We thank her for what she has done and for what she has been, and wish her a happy retirement.

Of our four masters in the forces, one is now demobilised, and a few weeks ago we welcomed back after five years in the Royal Engineers, the Art Master, Mr. Toplis. Miss Lingwood the temporary art mistress who has given us such excellent service is going to Willesden County School.

The new members of the staff are Miss Tofield for girls' physical training and games, Miss Carver as senior biology mistress, Miss Hyde for French, Miss Kai for mathematics, Mr. Clamp for Chemistry, Mr. Pratt for Biology, while Mr. Baggarley the part-time music master has been appointed full time for music and religious instruction. To all these newcomers we wish many years of happy and satisfying service.

So much for the past. What of the future? Principles for the educational system of the future have been crystallised into the new Education Act, which has awakened both hopes and fears. Without enlarging on either the hopes or the fears, I should like to

say this. When re-modelling a structure it is often advisable to retain in the new the best features of the old, and I think it is not out of place to say to some present day writers and speakers on education, that there was some education in this country before the act of 1944 and some of it was very good. One department of education which was and is good, which has been weighed in the balance and not found wanting, is secondary grammar school education. It is a poor tradesman who does not believe in his wares and I believe in mine, and to use some words of the Foreign Secretary I think we may sing our own song a bit. During the war, in fact during the two wars, the engineers, technicians and research scientists, administrators of this England of ours proved to be second to none in the world, and in large numbers they came up through our grammar schools. Fighting is now over and reconstruction must commence. Prosperity cannot be provided by the State but must be worked for and won, and all departments of national life will need the best men and women they can get, not only the first rate but also teams of the second rate, to bring all their ability, skill, enterprise, perseverance and not least idealism to bear on the problems that beset us, and from the grammar schools they must continue to come. Given a high standard of staffing with adequate equipment and accommodation, the grammar schools will make the same contribution to the calls of construction as they did to the claims of war.

Another point. There is to be more equality of opportunity, we are told. There has been a large measure of equality of opportunity in Southgate for years. For some years now, every child of the right age who has reached the standard required for admission to a grammar school has been found a place in such a school, in one of our two Southgate schools or in a similar school easily accessible in a neighbouring borough. If financial aid is needed for the children to continue in these schools, such aid is available under the scheme of the Middlesex Education Authority. Clothing grants, travelling expenses, free dinners can be claimed. One type of maintenance grant is available in cases of need from 14 to 16 years of age, another

after 16 and then later boys and girls who have proved their suitability are eligible for senior awards to assist them at University or Technical colleges. The Priscilla Ingram Trust is also helpful with grants, and our own Scholarship Fund from which grants have been made to five pupils this year is available for the same purpose. As far as I am aware, no pupil of this school this year, qualifying for higher education and wishing to proceed to it, has been denied this education solely for lack of funds. The chances of a budding Newton or Faraday not getting an opportunity to flower are now in Southgate I think remote, and for this, credit is due to the Middlesex Education Authority.

Whatever the outcome of the Act, it is to be hoped - I may say expected - that the grammar school, aware of its history of achievement but modifying its curriculum and methods to suit new needs and ideas, continuing its tradition of scholarship and culture, and retaining the same spirit will be established if possible more firmly than before in our educational system, and hold a high place in the nation's esteem.

To conclude I wish to thank all who work so loyally and effectively with me here. My grateful appreciation goes to the senior mistress, Miss Jeans, and the senior master, Mr. Knowles, on whose able services, ready co-operation and wise counsel I can always rely; to all the teaching staff for all their services both in the classroom and out of it, the latter of which makes no small claim on their time and energy; to our most helpful and efficient secretary, Mrs. Long, whose value I gladly acknowledge; to Miss Dowsett who continues her voluntary assistance in the secretarial department; to the caretaker, Mr. Horrex for his readiness to be helpful; to his wife, Mrs. Horrex, whose service as cook merits high praise; and to one other whom I know only as "Mary". She has just completed 25 years service as one of the woman cleaners and as such she has been exemplary. Neither bomb nor blast, barrage nor blackout, ever stopped Mary from getting here before 7 a.m. and getting her classrooms ready for our use. To one and all my thanks.

A few weeks ago I heard a speaker liken the new education act to a prescription composed of medicines which were

unobtainable. Be that as it may, new institutions, like much needed extensions and improvements to old ones, cannot spring up in a night and the present generation of children must be educated with existing facilities.

I look forward to the continued co-operation of all concerned with the running of this place - teachers, parents, administrators - in the interests of the boys and girls committed to our charge in this the Southgate County School.

December 1945.