

SYDNEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND
— GRAMMAR SCHOOL. —

THE HEADMASTER'S +
REPORT AT THE + +
ANNUAL SPEECH DAY.

Reprinted from *Forchdearer*, September, 1905.

Sydney Church of England
Grammar School.



The Headmaster's Report
at the
Annual Speech Day,

September 24th, 1908.

(Reprint from *Torchbearer*.)

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—

With great pleasure and much appreciation of your kindness in coming, we welcome your Excellency. By coming to-day you have afforded another illustration of the way in which your Excellency is always prepared to sacrifice personal comfort to what you conceive to be your duty, and to help in a cause which you believe to be advantageous to the welfare of the State. The putting of duty first is a difficult lesson to learn for all, and your example in this respect has been so manifestly powerful that it causes us the deepest regret that its active influence is so soon to be lost to us. That your Excellency may have your reward in the enjoyment of many years of quiet peace and rest after your strenuous life, must be the desire of us all.

From among the number of those who have always been present with us on these occasions, we miss with much regret one who, from the School's earliest days, was its staunch friend and helper, as a member of the Council and for some years its Treasurer—Mr. Uther. Himself a man to whom might be applied that fine old-fashioned word God-fearing, he was ever zealous in the cause of religious education, and for many years presented a prize for Church Catechism, believing, as he often said, that no better foundations for instruction in duty to God and man could be laid down than are there contained. By his will, Mr. Uther bequeathed a sum of money to provide for the continuance of this prize.

Before proceeding with my Report, I desire to express my appreciation of the faithful and efficient manner in which Mr. Corfe, ably seconded by Mrs. Corfe, carried through the difficult task of

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administrator during my absence; also of the loyalty displayed by the Staff, boys and parents, in the support accorded him. Mr. Coche's difficulties were increased by the breaking down in health of our much-valued colleague, Mr. Linton; but thanks to the devotion of the Staff—and especially of Mr. Pulling and Mr. Harris—his work was carried on with vigour, and the School owes them a debt of gratitude for willingly taking an extra burden upon their shoulders. With much thankfulness we welcomed Mr. Linton back at the beginning of the year restored by his rest, and able to resume his invaluable services to the School. I also wish to record my gratitude to the School Council for granting me a long leave last year. The strain of the previous years had been considerable, and rest and change became necessary—more, perhaps, on Mrs. Hodges' account than my own—and I am happy to say the desired end was achieved. Although the holiday was in every way a success, it was with feelings of great pleasure that we found ourselves again in the old School, where our hearts' interests are centred.

Those of us who have charge of secondary education realise that we have for some time been moving in the direction of reform in our system. There is a certain amount of discontent respecting our lack of organisation and standards, more or less well-founded. Mr. Board, the Under-Secretary for Education, has brought forward once more the matter of forming an Educational Council, and his recommendations have during the past week been considered by a large number of teachers in the higher schools. I am unable in this Report to say much about the subject, but I think the movement is in the right direction, and that an authority should exist for the supervising of secondary education, and for the registration of teachers and schools. Mr. Board would have for the Council a body composed of representatives of his Department, the University, and the Schools. An alternative scheme suggests the forming within the University of a new Faculty of Education, under a Professor, and would place secondary education in its hands. For testing and inspection purposes this plan seems to present fewer difficulties than the other, but it includes no organisation for registration. Some compromise between the two schemes seems to be desirable.

The University examinations have recently been attacked with some violence in our newspapers, but I am not aware that the critics have suggested in their place any system which would serve as an equally strong stimulus to effort on the part of our pupils. In the seductive atmosphere of Sydney we can spare no stimuli. It is true that these examinations impose an amount of restraint upon our curriculum, but it is to be feared that a go-as-you-please policy would soon degenerate into

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hobby-riding. If a "leaving certificate" could be substituted for some of the many tests for which boys require special preparation, our hands would certainly be freer. But this remark applies more particularly to our upper forms. Up to the age when the junior is usually taken—15 to 16—much specialisation is undesirable, and the subjects of study "imposed" on us by the University are those necessary for the foundation of a liberal education, an end we are bound to keep in view; and had we complete control of our programme, I do not know which of these subjects we could exclude, nor how it would be possible, with the limited number of hours at our disposal, to include others.

The School has been thoroughly examined twice during the year, and our prizes have been awarded partly upon the results.

In the Senior University Examination last November, three candidates were successful in passing the higher Matriculation, and in March five passed in Division A and one in Division B. At the recent Junior Examination our results were remarkably good. The number of candidates, 36, was a large increase on any previous entry; all, with one exception, took up the six subjects for Matriculation A, and as a seventh subject, History or Science; 34 obtained certificates, with an average pass in six subjects, and Powell brought us the medals for English and Science and seven first classes. As the entries for English were more numerous than for any other subject, 1,231, this must be regarded as a high testimonial to our teaching of the mother tongue. Nor was Powell's a case of one boy happening to be especially good, for almost all did well. It is only fair to Mr. Hall, who is responsible for this part of the work, to give the English record, in which 32 passed, with eight A's and medal, 18 B's, and six C's. In Physics we were represented by 11 boys, who took five A's and medal, five B's, and one C. These results were obtained without a single lesson being given to any boy outside the regular school lessons in these subjects. I draw attention to these facts because such successes are often set down to special coaching and cramming, and I wish also to demonstrate that we cannot be accused of neglecting either English or Science, subjects which are falsely supposed to be treated in Schools like this, with a certain amount of indifference.

SCHOLARSHIPS.

The following elections to Scholarships have been made during the year—Senior Scholarship, Boyce i. and Pulling i.; Council's Junior Scholarship for boys in the School, Pulling ii.; for boys not at the School, Dixon. Regg was elected to the Exhibition for Sons of Clergy, on the nomination of the Archbishop. No candidate presented himself from the Church Primary Schools for the

Scholarship set apart for their benefit. I have pointed out before that our Scholarships are provided entirely from the School Funds at a cost of about £300 a year. It is an excellent use of money, but it is badly wanted for other purposes, and I trust that in time this burden will become lighter by the founding of Scholarships by the wealthy members of the community. I have recently received a very generous gift of £200 from a friend, who gave it under the condition that he remains anonymous, to start a Bursary Fund for those who could not come here without assistance or for those whose parents might not be able to keep them here without it. He believes that others who could help will realise the great boon that such a fund would confer, and trusts that a considerable addition may be made to his donation by those who think with him. I wish I could feel more sanguine of the effect of this appeal, but although magnificent bequests and gifts have been made to the University, our Schools have received scarcely any endowment, and the gift I have just announced is the first of the kind in the twenty years' life of the School.

CADET CORPS.

A feature of the year has been the inauguration of a Cadet Corps. I found on my return that the military authorities had removed all the obstacles which made us hesitate in the past, and I issued a circular to ascertain the views of the parents, and met with a hearty response. In May, 100 cadets were enrolled, and our 1st Company was gazetted as G Co. of the 3rd Battalion of Senior Cadets. Since that time many more have joined, and we hope next term to have two full companies. Captain Pulling and Mr. Harris and Mr. Wilsbire have devoted much time and trouble to organising the Corps, and thanks to their efforts and to the enthusiasm of the boys themselves, we were able to put in an appearance at the review held during the visit of the American Fleet, in company with the rest of the battalion formed entirely of the Great Public Schools, and gained some compliments for our marching and turn-out. We had had various difficulties to contend with, such as uniforms not forthcoming from the contractors till the last moment and three weeks' wet weather, when parades were impossible. On the other hand, we have had much cause for encouragement. With his reply to the original circular, Mr. Barton Dibbs sent a cheque for shooting prizes, and this was followed by the gift of a magnificent Challenge Shield for annual competition among our own Corps, from Mr. Venour Nathan, an Old Boy. The Council, too, have given all assistance in their power, and have voted a sum for the erection of an armoury, miniature range, and offices. This building is now in course of erection, and will be ready next term. The distance from Randwick Range is a drawback to our shooting practice, and as yet

we have been supplied only with carbines for drill purposes. We have, however, obtained a loan of a few rifles with which to begin target practice, and a team can now visit the range on Saturday mornings. There can be no doubt that if the Cadet work is continued in the Great Public Schools with the same thoroughness and enthusiasm with which it has been begun, it will prove a lasting benefit not only to the boys who have been members of Senior Cadets, but to the Commonwealth. We have had to face some difficulties with regard to the interference of parades with work-time and with other sports, but so great a benefit is worth some sacrifice, and I think we have reduced the losses to a minimum by a slight readjustment of work on one day in the week.

At the end of last term we lost an old servant of the School by the resignation of Mr. McKay, who has done valuable service in various offices, and latterly as School Clerk. Failing eyesight compelled him to retire, and so another of the links with the opening years of the School has been broken. All generations of boys will sympathise with their old friend in his affliction, and miss him regretfully when they look for him in his place. The vacancy caused by his retirement has been filled by Sergeant-Major Cooke Russell, who after being trained in the Scots' Guards, and having had many years' experience of active service with Lord Kitchener in Egypt and South Africa, had charge of Senior Cadets in Queensland. He has been of great service in assisting the officers in the instruction of the Corps.

CHAPEL.

It is just two years since we initiated our effort to build a School Chapel, and I wish I could report more progress in raising the funds necessary for the purpose. Our appeal to the friends of the School received a fairly liberal response, but in a foundation as young as ours, there are not many of our members in a position to subscribe large sums, and we must therefore look for assistance to others who have the means and the will to give it. Our present position is that we have adopted a plan to carry out which will require £3,500, and we see our way to about £2,000. It seems pitiable that in a School of this kind, a religious foundation of a great Church, suitable provision for worship should be long delayed for the lack of one or two thousand pounds. Public prayer and worship are an integral and essential part of the educational ideal at which we aim, and our present arrangements make reverence and reality in worship very difficult of attainment. The value of the Chapel and its services was very strongly brought home to me in England, when I had the privilege of being present on several occasions at Public School services, especially at Rugby. Many Old Boys were present on the Sunday following Speech Day, in the Chapel where Dr. Arnold was buried. The

memorials to him and to many famous old Rugbeians on its walls must, independently of the prayers, hymns, and sermons, and all associations of the place, have a powerful and stirring influence on all who habitually worship there, not less than on those who find themselves back again, as I did, after many years' absence. Some lines of Whittier on "The State" which I recently came across express aptly the co-ordination that exists between the School work and the religious exercises—

"The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free strong minds and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold and grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.
She heeds not sceptics' puny hands
While near the School the Chapel stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigots' rule
While near her Chapel stands the School."

Next year we complete our second decade, and it would be a very proper form of celebration to lay the foundation-stone of our Chapel, and I trust that by the kindness and generosity of some of our wealthier citizens we may be able to accomplish this.

RECREATION AND GAMES.

Time does not admit of more than a passing reference to other activities in which progress might be chronicled. The Debating Society has flourished under Mr. Hales' direction, and a Junior Society initiated by Mr. Harris and confined to boys in the Lower School has already settled many important questions of State. There is no better test of a School's vitality than the continued interest and loyalty displayed towards it by those who have been its pupils and who still recognise their membership after leaving. The Old Boys' Union, thanks largely to the zeal of Mr. Davies and the Secretary, Mr. A. B. S. White, with increased numbers and life membership, has given constant support and help in all possible ways.

Empire Day was celebrated with enthusiasm, and marked by a noble address by Professor MacCallum, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, as also to the Vicar-General for preaching at our Anniversary Service.

There is a matter of especial interest to the boys, "and grown-ups too," which must not be omitted in this Report. I am aware that some people think that games occupy too much attention in School life. As regards the world at large, to many of us, the present attitude towards sports must appear to be one of exaggeration almost amounting to mania. Games, instead of being valuable means for building up character and manliness as well as physical power, have become an end in themselves. But with us they are regulated by an Association of Schoolmasters, and no extra time is given to them without the sanction of the Association, with the approval of the Headmasters, and as evidence that a healthy condition of equilibrium exists among us here at the present

time, I should like to point out how many boys most conspicuous in games are our best workers in School.

We entered the Cricket Competition as the former year's champions, and although we had an excellent team, we lost our pride of place, and fell to third in the list.

I remember your Excellency telling us on the occasion of your last visit that your favourite game at Marlborough was football, and you advised the boys to pursue the game enthusiastically. At that time we were about at the bottom of the list, with no tradition of victory. You will be pleased to hear, Sir, that during the past season our team has not been defeated in any match, and in the Schools Competition we have won the Shield, scoring 21 points to the next 16, and the Cup graciously offered by your Excellency for the Football Competition. It will be an additional pleasure to the Captain to receive it from the donor's hands.

The credit of this performance is mainly due to the excellent coaching of Mr. Mackay and to the institution by him of Colour Competitions for junior boys, in which he considers the backbone of our football lies. Mr. Mackay has also been responsible for the boating, and with similar success. In one of the finest races ever witnessed on the river, against crews considered by competent judges to be the best the Schools have ever produced, our boat secured the trophy in the Schools Championship. We are under great obligation to our old friend Mr. Allan Ramsay for this victory, and as an acknowledgment of his services to the rowing for many years, the Old Boys of the School joined us in presenting him with a gold chronometer on the occasion of the School Concert in June.

In concluding my Report, I think that I may be allowed the opinion that there has been evidence of good effort on the part of the boys in work and play during the year under review.

We have received the same amount of generous support from friends as in past years, for which I tender sincerest thanks.

I rejoice to see so many parents present to-day, and value their interest and co-operation in our work more than I can express. I would venture to implore them to bring up their boys at home ever to put duty before pleasure. There are occasions when absence from School and remission of work is granted for reasons I cannot recognise as sufficient, and it is thus that a slack view with regard to duty may be fostered, though perhaps unconsciously.

To the Staff I am under an ever-increasing debt of gratitude for willing help in all directions, which I can never repay, and, finally, I once again thank your Excellency for coming to distribute our prizes, and by so doing adding the weight of your influence in the great cause of education.