

1952

Mr. Chairman, Sir Stanley Rous, Ladies and Gentlemen -

Another break with the established custom of King Edward VII School is occurring this evening. We are holding our Speech Day outside the School on strange ground. I must say that for my part it is with a tinge of regret, since I feel strongly that this most important function of all in the School Year ought to be within the School walls. Unfortunately, the Assembly Hall at School now barely houses the Staff and boys. Last year when I enjoyed, or rather endured, my first Speech Day at King Edward VII School, I was shocked at the number of boys and parents who had to be excluded for lack of room. So we have moved into more commodious quarters, though even to-day there are a number of parents who were too late to obtain seats. That, and that alone, is the reason for the change of plan.

There is sometimes a tendency among Headmasters on Prize Days to air their views on Education. I often envy their courage, but you usually find they are Headmasters of Independent Schools and run little risk. It is dangerous for the mere worker to express views or opinions; those are reserved for the idealists or theorists in high places, the experts so far removed from the actual field of work that they cannot be wrong. He would, however, be a brave man in facing this assembly who could lecture you on Education. There are so many concerned with it. The boys who endure it every day, the parents who suffer from it every night, the many who are

intimately connected with it as teachers, in Schools or University, the officials, the committee members and those who not coming in any of these categories once suffered from it. So I do not propose to embark on wings of theory or attempt to set headlines ablaze; it will be difficult, nay impossible, to find a message in my meanderings.

The programme bills this turn (item) as Headmaster's Report and to that I now proceed. Yet when one tries to summarize a year's work and events, the result seems almost insignificant, when one thinks of the pressure and pace of school life through the year, when a breathing space or time to stand still and take stock is an impossibility.

A number of changes in organization had to be effected to meet the demands of the new examination set-up. We have still to see what the real effect will be when we take the 'A' Level Examination in 1953. I think last year was a very heavy one for boys in our Specialist Fifths, corresponding to the old Transitus. They were still carrying for examination purposes subjects which would normally have been reduced in content and at the same time trying to lay the foundations of their advanced work. On the whole, however, they did quite well in their 'O' Level work, in fact rather better than I had expected. Our planners have now, of course, allowed a chink in their armour; there is to be a concession with safeguards in the age limit clause. It is only a chink, but perhaps with constant hammering it may become a hole. I hope so.

There was a large entry for 'O' Level Subjects varying from people taking only one subject still needed for University entry up to people taking nine subjects. It is quite impossible now to compare results, since entries for particular subjects are bound to vary considerably. There were roughly three categories of people taking the 'O' Level Examinations - those needing odd subjects for specific reasons, those in the first year of specialization who took three, four or five subjects, and those who had done a general course for five years, who took six, seven or eight subjects., usually boys who intended to leave without proceeding to the 'A' Level. Statistics are therefore quite meaningless. In the old School Certificate days, when everyone took a number of common subjects, there was a possibility of comparison of one year with another, of one subject with another, but now that is not possible. Most of the best scientists will not take Science at 'O' Level for example, so the picture is a distorted one, and similarly with other subjects.

I can, however, say that results were quite satisfactory at 'O' Level. There were some definitely good performances from boys in the Fifth General Classes and in subjects which were taken by large numbers - English Language, French, Elementary Mathematics.

At the 'A' Level results were in most cases very sound and some subjects showed definite improvements over last year. Here again entries vary; most boys taking the examination for the first time take three subjects, but some who have already passed

and stay on for Scholarships' purposes change their subjects and take only one or two. The situation here is, of course, still very much like the old Higher Certificate. Our candidates did well in obtaining 8 State Scholarships - 3 in Mathematics, 2 in Science, 1 French and German, 1 History, 1 Classics - and we were very pleased with this result; it made an oasis in a rather barren year. 21 Education Committee University Scholarships were also gained on the Advanced Examination

In the field of Scholarships last year we came down from our previous year's fine performance and almost set an all time low record for King Edward VII School. Indeed the old men who left the year before have already wagged their heads at the decline which set in. We were saved from complete extinction by Ogden's Minor Scholarship in Mathematics, and Turner's Exhibition in French and Spanish at Cambridge, Heathcote's Exhibition in Classics at Oxford. Lamb and Binks obtained Exhibitions at Durham in German and French and Mathematics, while Hallas secured a Scholarship for Engineering at Loughborough College. Several boys obtained Commonerships on the Scholarship Examinations. I think competition for Scholarships and places has been steadily increasing over the past years until it has now reached a level where it will remain. It is hard going, and the flowery path of dalliance will not lead to success.

Many various reasons have been put forward for our dearth of Major Awards, but I think the chief contributory factor is the

two years of National Service. Several boys last year would have been quite certain of awards had they continued their efforts, but they were satisfied with a place and an Education Committee University Scholarship. This saved an extra year for them, and with two years of life at an important stage being lost anyhow, they have a definite argument on their side.

Some organizational changes were introduced last year mainly in the construction of Classes, which were no longer based on A, B, C, D grades, but rather on subjects for time-table convenience or inconvenience. The Remove Forms disappeared. More options were available in the Modern Studies Courses, which have broken up some of the rigidity of selection.

We suffered from much Staff illness last year and lost in December a Master taking Sixth Form Physics, who was not replaced during the year. This latter factor had a serious effect on our Science Candidates as it led to only two Classes of quite abnormal size for Physics in the Sixth Form.

I think we can be quite reasonably satisfied with our general examination results last year apart from the Scholarship field and we look to our candidates this year to restore the former prowess of King Edward VII School in this domain.

School Games and Athletics were well to the fore last year. Three afternoons for games instead of two broke up the games to more manageable numbers. True it upset Housemasters, but they are always a very conservative body. The extension of the Playing Field space

to Castle Dyke enabled some parts of Whiteley Woods to be fit for Cricket in the summer and definitely lessened the dangers always present in that mountainous part by dispersing the players. We have been most grateful for these extra facilities.

The First Eleven at Football had a successful and busy season, winning 18 and drawing 2 out of 27 matches played. We are much indebted to Mr. Wallis for the time and energy he gave to them. They set up a record for the number of goals scored collectively and Goddard set up an individual record.

The Second Eleven, under the general charge of Mr. Harper, did very well, only losing one match in 14.

The Third Eleven have some difficulty in obtaining fixtures and did not manage too well, with 6 defeats out of 9 games.

Under 15, 14, 13 Elevens had very even results.

As is usual during the two terms, there were quite a number of cancellations due to weather.

Rugby Football was introduced for the Fifth and Sixth Forms with the acquisition of the pitches at Castle Dyke. It had some keen and enthusiastic followers and a reasonable fixture list has been made for this year. It is hoped to widen the scope in time, but the lack of proper facilities at Castle Dyke is a handicap to matches with visitors. There is still a little quiet opposition in some quarters to be coped with. A school of our size should well be able to run both games and it is to the benefit of boys, particularly those who leave the town, to have a knowledge of both games.

In Cricket the First Eleven was one of the best teams for

some years and their Captain, M. H. Thornton, was a tower of strength.

The Second Eleven had a fair season, Third Eleven, Under-15 won all their matches, unfortunately not many in number, and the Under-14 had quite a satisfactory record.

The Cross-Country Team won all its nine matches with other schools and were second in a four school contest with Manchester Grammar School, Bolton School, Urmston Grammar School. In the Northern Schools Cross-Country Championship we fell to 8th place. It is whispered that this was because there were no hills on the course.

The Standard Sports were revived last year and proved useful as training for the full Athletic Sports. These were reorganized to meet the new games arrangements and proved very effective with an increased number of events. Field events showed a notable improvement. The final day was a delightful one and marked by Goddard's record long jump of 22'2".

Tennis was firmly established as an alternative summer game and the two teams had a very successful season.

Swimming was again maintained at a good level, though the Swimming Team suffered a defeat, breaking their run of fourteen years of victory. Several boys took part in important events outside the School. Life-saving Classes continued to achieve good results. New events were introduced into the Swimming Sports, which were held in the evening. This change of time produced a very good attendance, but many people were unfortunately excluded owing to lack of room. Four new records were set up.

The Summer Term is all too short usually, being broken into badly by the arrangement of the Public Examinations, which extend for an unnecessarily long period.

In addition to the regular School Games, a number of enthusiasts run a Badminton Club, and there was a much reduced Fives Competition. I should like to see more interest taken in Fives and hope that this can be established in due course.

It can be seen that we are fully active in the world of sport, and I cannot fail to express my warmest thanks to Masters who give freely of their time to coaching, refereeing and umpiring. Their efforts are very much appreciated.

School Societies maintained their full activity. The Modern Language Society provided a most interesting and varied programme for its members. The International Discussion Group continued to welcome visiting speakers and tax them with awkward questions. The Chess Club maintained itself through the enthusiasm of its adherents; we should like to see more people joining this. The Scientific Society continued its activities, as did the Student Christian Movement Group.

New Societies which came into being were the Photographic Club which is well patronised and deserves better facilities; the History Society formed for the Middle School; the Craft and Construction Club, whose members devote themselves to the most useful and valuable purpose of doing odd jobs for the School; finally the Music Club. This functions as Senior and Junior Sections and some excellent mid-day concerts were given as well as



gramophone programmes.

School Music had one of its most successful years; the Concert was unanimously considered one of the most enjoyable given; the Carol Service in Ranmoor Church was impressive, and a splendid performance of Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus" was given in this hall. Music is a potent influence and it is good to realise its standing in the School. I hope parents will encourage their sons to learn some of the instruments we have available in order to take their place in the Orchestra later. We owe a special debt to Mr. Barnes for the time and energy he devotes to our Choir and Orchestra.

The three School Scout Troops maintained their numbers and activities.

Mr. Watling added "Desert Highway" to his list of dramatic productions, with a small but able cast.

A number of visits were arranged to factories, works, plays and places of interest.. Among these were a visit to our adopted ship "Hector" when in dock at Liverpool, and a party visit to Champery, Switzerland.

Our link with the German School at Cologne continues very successfully and a satisfactory number of exchanges were arranged. The French link matured more slowly, but two exchanges were made and now everything is well in hand. We hope that parents will support us by accepting a number of exchanges this year.

School functions were held as usual: the annual Armistice Day Service was observed, and the Rev. B. S. O'Gorman gave the address. The Commemoration Service was held at School on a

weekday evening and drew a large number of parents and friends. The Preacher was an Old Boy, Canon H. E. W. Turner, Lightfoot Professor of Divinity in the University of Durham. Speech Day was a memorable occasion, when Admiral Sir Denis Boyd was our guest. The Final Assembly of the Year brought more parents of leaving pupils on a last visit to the School, and Alderman Sir Harold Jackson distributed Trophies and addressed the School.

The School Library is in process of transformation. The gift mentioned last year is not yet complete, but we hope for its completion before the end of the present School Year. We were very pleased to receive some handsome gifts to the Library from leaving boys and their parents. We welcome this gesture and give our sincere thanks to the donors.

One other welcome matter is beginning to approach a little nearer - the possibility of extensions to our present building. We hope to see within the next two years some important additions - laboratories and workshops with a new Art Room and Classrooms. Biology, Art and Woodwork are at present carried on under difficult conditions and these will benefit considerably by the new plans.

From my rather lengthy catalogue of our various doings, I think parents can see that there is ample scope for boys to take part in the life of the School and to gain from it. Work, games and societies can well fill a boy's time, and some of our most active members must find it difficult to fit in all they do. They look at me with hurt surprise when I ask what they do with their spare time; this somewhat inane question being provoked by University

questionnaires on would-be entrants.

There remains the more difficult aspect of School to deal with - that of character development, a difficult one in a large school where ordinary routine more than fills the day. We have, as most all large communities, our misfits, the people who give nothing and get little for being with us. Few but present. It is essential that we should all try to maintain our standards; the School has a fine record; it must be kept. Politeness, pride of appearance, a high standard of conduct in public, good manners, good taste must be kept. There is still a slipshod attitude in the many things left as a bad legacy from the war - the couldn't care less attitude. We are told so often that we now live in the age of the common man, a rather dreary note. I should like to feel that more of our community were striving to be uncommon men; it is worth it. To be an individual and not a mere member of a herd is highly desirable. It is only by trying to give the best in everything that we shall develop these and by constant correction and example on the part of Masters and parents. There is much to combat to-day.

In conclusion I want to give my best thanks to the Masters who have worked hard in and out of School and whose untiring efforts keep the busy school life going. During the year we lost the services of Mr. Kiely, Mr. Barnett, Mr. Adey and Mr. Moore, who moved to other schools, Mr. Fraser who has taken up an appointment with an international organization in New York, and Miss Knight who has moved to Oxford. Miss Knight had rendered the School excellent

service over a period of years and we miss her valuable help not only in the classroom but in the Orchestra and dramatic work. We appreciated their work and contributions to school life while they were with us and wish them well in the future.

I must thank also the various boy officials - games secretaries and captains, House officials, Society Secretaries and Prefects, who do their parts so loyally and so well. I reserve special thanks for D. A. Charles, last year's Head Prefect, who was the most helpful Head Boy I have met in twelve years of Headmastering, and whose quiet efficiency and sense of humour I greatly appreciated.

My thanks are due also to the Chairman of the Governors for his interest in the School.