

Plea For Higher School Leaving Age

Vice-Chancellor Of University Stresses Education's Importance To Democracies



LARGE CROWD PRESENT AT DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL'S ANNUAL SPEECH NIGHT

THE general verdict of the whole democratic world is to push the school-leaving age forward so that young people remain at school until, on the average, they are 16 years old," declared Mr J. G. Medley, M.A., Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University, in making a strong plea to parents to give their children all the schooling possible, at the Dandenong High School's Annual Speech Night on Tuesday evening.

Money spent on education, he said, was the best possible investment they could make, and parents should make almost any sacrifices to see that their children received a good education. More and more in a world of fierce competition, it was becoming impossible for uneducated people to succeed. Democracy depended on education for its survival.

In his review of the year's activities, the Headmaster, Mr J. L. Griffiths, B.A., Dip.Ed., stressed the urgent need for extensions to the school to accommodate the growing number of pupils.

The Boomerang Theatre was packed for the special occasion, and at the conclusion of the presentations, an enjoyable concert was presented by the pupils.

Warmly welcoming visitors and Mr J. D. G. Medley, M.A., Mr F. A. Singleton, J.P., who presided, said that the annual speech night was a fitting climax to a fruitful year. There were among them that night many who had been associated with the school since its inception and, with the pupils, they considered Dandenong High School was second to none in the State. (Applause). In paying a tribute to the headmaster, Mr J. L. Griffiths, the chairman said that they could not have found a more efficient, a more genial or more painstaking man for the position than Mr Griffiths. (Applause).

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"To those of you who are leaving the school this year to go out into the world," concluded Mr Singleton, "I would say this: 'Don't be afraid to stand up to the principles you learned at school.' If you do that, then your schooling will have been well worthwhile." (Applause).

HEADMASTER'S REPORT

Mr J. L. Griffiths, B.A., Dip. Ed., gave the following comprehensive review of the year's activities:—

The school enrolment continues to increase, the total number being this year 420, a further increase of 30 over

increase, the total number being this year 420, a further increase of 30 over that of last year. It is gratifying to note that this increase is due almost entirely to the increased number remaining at school to undertake the course for the Leaving Certificate. More than 40 pupils took this course during the current year—a record for the school.

NEED FOR EXTENSIONS

There is urgent need for extensions to the present buildings in order to accommodate the anticipated further increase in enrolment next year—an other science laboratory, a second art room, and a library are particularly required.

Last year, I expressed regret that a greater number of girls did not avail themselves of the course in Home Arts and Crafts. This is an excellent course for girls who are not desirous of proceeding either to professions or a business career, and the necessarily small classes are an added advantage.

At the public examinations in December 1938, and February, 1939, 71 gained the Intermediate Certificate, and 11 gained the Leaving Certificate—all but one of these latter pupils qualifying for Matriculation.

A BIG STEP

This year the school has been approved for the Leaving Certificate as well as the Intermediate Certificate, and the work has benefited as a result. The consequent modification of the examination system that this has rendered possible has considerably extended the school working year, and I am satisfied that the standard of the work generally has improved greatly. Two new subjects—Mathematics III and Chemistry—were added to those available at the Leaving stage, and next year it is hoped to add Latin and probably European History to the number, thus giving a range of 13 subjects at this stage. Domestic Science will be added at the Intermediate stage in order to give girls who have completed the Proficiency Certificate in Home Arts and

Proficiency Certificate in Home Arts and Crafts an opportunity of obtaining the Intermediate Certificate, to qualify them to undertake Diploma courses at the Emily Macpherson College of Domestic Economy.

During the year, definite progress has been made in the necessarily slow process of learning to view examinations in their true perspective. They are not to be regarded as the chief end and aim of a proper educational system, and there is definite evidence that pupils have more and more come to feel that what they are studying is of definite value apart from the examination success it may give at the same time. Such a viewpoint necessarily ensures better work in examinations, especially if the right type of examination is evolved. We are, I believe, making steady progress in this direction.

The school library has again been considerably extended, and during the coming year, it is intended that all classes, including those doing Leaving Certificate, shall spend at least one free reading period in the library each week. This system has already been in force up to and including Intermediate Certificate forms with encouraging results.

This year, we have again had recourse to various efforts to raise much needed funds for school improvements. The school entertainment held in August returned £18, verandah stalls and socials yielded £45, while the amount raised by the fete in November was £49. The contributions to the School Improvement Fund have been £50. £50 was spent in providing half the cost of 100 new lockers, and £22 was spent in laying down a concrete and bitumen cricket pitch in the school oval. We also spent £13/13/ in buying original water colors for the Art Room; while expenditure on the library amounted to £65.

The Dandenong Municipal Council recently agreed to purchase two acres of land at a cost of £500, to be made available to the school for girl's sport at a nominal rental. I wish to express the

school for girls sport at a nominal rental. I wish to express the sincere appreciation of all connected with the school at this very fine action, which will greatly assist in providing much needed sporting facilities for the girls.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

In sport, the school has had a most successful year. The boys were undefeated in their section in both cricket and football, while the girls' senior hockey team, after being undefeated in its section, went on to win the premiership of the Metropolitan High Schools Sports Association, defeating the University High School in the final. At the combined High School Sports, the boys won the aggregate for their section, the girls taking second place to Hampton High School. Our own sports meeting in October was most successful, Mr McPhee again generously providing his microphone for our use. The school owes him a debt of gratitude for his continued generosity and assistance, which was further demonstrated on the occasion of the fête, when he installed a flood light, lent to us by the State Electricity Commission.

In swimming and life saving, the school achieved a record by winning a number of trophies awarded by the Royal Life Saving Society.

These included the Treadwell Shield, and a pennant for the premiership of Victoria, this being the first occasion on which a High School has won this coveted trophy.

Other trophies included the Henley Cup for Secondary Schools, the Council Cup for Resuscitation, and the Wilma Yarborough Lewis Excellence Cup for the best women's and girls' clubs. Miss Broughton is to be congratulated on the success that her enthusiasm and interest in this section of school activity has won.

The garden, as usual, has flourished under the enthusiastic and untiring efforts of Mr C. Wines.

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STAFF CHANGES

I regret that we are losing two valued members of the staff in Miss Banks and Mr Rice. Miss Banks has been in charge of the commercial side of the school for a number of years, and the excellence of her work is widely known, not only in the school but among those who have employed girls trained by her. Mr Rice's services will be greatly missed, particularly in connection with the boys' physical culture, in which department he has displayed keen enthusiasm. Both of these teachers leave us to obtain well-merited promotion, and our best wishes for future success go with them. Miss Tobias and Mr Treadwell, who have been temporarily attached to the school staff, are also leaving at the end of the year. They, too, have rendered very fine services to the school, and we wish them the success that their work has merited.

In conclusion, I wish to express my very deep appreciation of the manner in which the staff has co-operated in a most successful year's work. They have been unflinching in their efforts to advance the interests of the pupils, and to their skill and enthusiasm is due the very high standard of work which resulted in the school being approved under the Class A system for Leaving Certificate.

Dandenong is particularly fortunate in the staff that is attached to the school. Few schools have a staff as highly qualified, both academically and professionally.

I have again to thank the members of the advisory Council for their interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the school.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

The Vice-Chancellor then presented Honour Certificates to the successful pupils, congratulating them on their achievements.

Mildred Carpenter and Max Old-

Mildred Carpenter and Max Oldmeadow, the two captains, received the A.N.A. Cup on behalf of Orchid, champion House in the athletic field this year.

Bound copies of "The Gate," the school's magazine, were also presented to the editors Mildred Carpenter and Kenneth Griffiths.

Beautiful bouquets of roses were presented to Mrs Griffiths, Miss Broughton (head-mistress), and Mrs Medley by Betty Platt, Mary Ferguson and Betty Powlesland.

Mr E. C. Butler and Cr A. W. Bowman, members of the Advisory Council, moved a vote of thanks to Mr Medley for the honor he had paid the school in attending to make the presentations.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS

Responding to the vote, which was carried by acclamation, the Vice-Chancellor expressed appreciation of the privilege accorded him, and also congratulated Mr Griffiths on his excellent report.

The University which he represented that evening, proceeded Mr Medley, had 4500 students and was the place in which the higher education of the State was carried on. It was his job and his pleasure to do all he could to help forward education at all times. He was interested in seeing that young people generally got the education best suited to them, and as much of it as possible.

"Controversy A Good Sign"

All the talk, the writings and arguments which had occurred recently about education were a good sign, for it meant that everybody was beginning to take education seriously—and rightly so, for it was one of the most important things in any democracy. The State insisted that every citizen be educated, for unless they were, democracy could not survive.

The question arose: When to stop? How long was education to go on? It all depended on what they were aiming at. Certain professions de-

manded higher education than others, but the general tendency of all democracies was to push the school-leaving age forward until young people stayed at school until they were 16, or even 17 and 18. That was the verdict of all democratic countries. Some people asked, "Why? What good is all this further education?" Only experience can teach, they said. In the past that question was rather difficult to answer; today it was much easier. He would give the answer in two stages, and tell them why their children should stay at school until they were 16 if it was at all possible to keep them there. Past educational methods had been rather rough and ready—of the hit or miss type—but all that had changed over the last 30 or 40 years.

People now were beginning to realise that money spent on education was the best possible investment they could make, and methods of education were improving every day.

Education Essential To Success

To achieve success on the land or in business today, a person must be educated. It was becoming impossible for uneducated people to succeed—by uneducated he meant those who had left school before their education was really complete. It was the quality of mind that education produced, that mattered, and they could only get that quality of mind by allowing the mind leisure to absorb the things that counted.

The struggle in the world today was essentially a struggle between two points of view—one holding that the individual counted and the other that he did not—one declaring that citizens should have freedom of education, the other endeavoring to mould them to a pattern.

Democracy could only survive by seeing that every individual was the best possible person, not only bodily but intellectually. In the war of today, it was brain power, not man-

today, it was brain power, not manpower, that was going to count, and more so when the work of rehabilitation started at the close of the struggle.

Make Any Sacrifice

An easy and obvious way to give their children a chance, continued the speaker, was to see that they did not stop their education before they needed to. He suggested that as far as possible they should let their children complete their courses at the Dandenong High School—and make almost any sacrifice to do it.

Although there might seem to be difficulties in the way, he urged them not to abandon the possibility of sending clever children on to the University. It might be difficult to do, but the game was well worth-while.

It was the duty of parents to see that their children got as much as they possibly could of the education best suited to them, and he knew that the education they received at the Dandenong High School was the best education of its kind that they could get in Victoria. (Applause).

A splendid concert program, provided by the pupils, concluded a memorable night.

SCHOOL RE-OPENS ON FEBRUARY 6th.

The school will re-open on February 6th, 1940. The head-master (Mr J. L. Griffiths) will be in attendance at the school on February 5th.