

CAMBERWELL HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS' AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

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LET'S FACE IT!

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association on 18th November, a panel of speakers discussed four aspects of education, under the general title: *Let's Face It!* Space is too limited to reproduce the full text of their talks, but some of the main points made are included in the following excerpts:

The Aims of Education (Mr. E. K. Horwood)

"We want our children to become willing participants in the adventure of education. We want them to have a desire to learn and a delight in learning. We want them to realise their capacities to the full and to develop into well-integrated personalities, with a real understanding of and a balanced attitude to the world in which they are set. In wanting these things, we are making enormous demands of their schools and their teachers. I doubt whether we would be prepared to ask of ourselves the qualities we implicitly require of the teaching profession when we set them such a task as I have outlined. There are, I imagine, as many angels among teachers as there are saints among parents. With some understanding of what we want from education, we may be clearer in our own minds as to the need for a proper physical setting in which this process can be pursued, and for suitable conditions and facilities for those teachers whose task it is to follow these aims."

The Organisation of Education (Mr. H. Halstead)

"Victoria's centralized education system has varying effects. It does ensure uniform standards throughout the state, both scholastically and in buildings and equipment, so that poorer or isolated communities are not at a serious disadvantage. On the other hand, experimentation and innovation are comparatively rare, there is a considerable and disruptive turnover in staff, and the very small amount of local autonomy results in comparatively little local interest in schools . . . Local bodies, like Parents' and Friends' Associations, have no power and very little glory, although it is of interest to note that the Minister of Education, in recent public statements, obviously thinks of Advisory Councils as representing parents."

Some Shortcomings of the Present System (Mr. J. Wright)

"I would like to read you a brief quotation from an address given to the Victorian Institute for Educational Research in 1959: 'The necessity for specialist rooms for the teaching of the sciences, arts and crafts, woodwork and metalwork and domestic arts subjects, commercial subjects and music, and for a library to be used solely as a library, cannot be emphasised too strongly. A gymnasium and an assembly hall are also essential, as are counselling rooms and offices. In other words, the headmaster cannot organise effectively for the proper educational welfare of his pupils without adequate accommodation and equipment, as well as a competent staff.'

"The speaker was Mr. A. McDonell, at that time Assistant Director and now Director of Education. A quick check at Camberwell shows that we are short of building accommodation, facilities and ground area. With an enrolment this year of about 840, and some 22 classrooms, the average number of students per class is about 38. Educational experts recommend about 25 in secondary school classes. We have two science rooms, neither of which is adequate for a class of nearly 40. Each has to serve as both classroom and laboratory, and in any case, we need four science rooms. The gymnasium, built largely as a result of parents' efforts, is limited in usefulness because it is small and especially because the roof is too low. We have no assembly hall. Our total ground area is about 5½ acres, although the High Schools Regulations specify an area of approximately 10 acres and newer schools have in the vicinity of 15 acres . . .

" . . . Looking a bit deeper, we find other shortcomings less obvious but no less serious. Because we have large classes, teachers are kept more than busy merely keeping up with the routine presentation of the syllabus. There is only limited scope for contact between teachers and parents. Extra-curricular activities can only be arranged by teachers prepared to make heroic efforts. Overall teacher shortage also means that there is little provision for student counselling, or for other specialised activities such as research into new teaching methods, development of new teaching aids, and psychological work with problem children. Curiously enough, the best teachers often don't teach. As a teacher climbs up the promotion ladder, he becomes more and more involved in

administration and has less and less time for teaching. If he becomes a head teacher or principal, he becomes an accountant, a clerk, an office manager, a telephonist, a messenger boy, and is still expected to be leader in educational thought and an inspirer of students and parents.

"As has been pointed out, centralised control of education has some unfortunate consequences. Only rarely can a teacher get promotion without moving to another school. About one quarter of the staff at Camberwell changes at the end of each year. This year, 16 teachers are leaving, some to take promotion, others resigning, and some to resume university courses. Centralised control also means that parents are a long way from those who make important decisions about their children's education, and misunderstandings can easily arise . . .

"... These deficiencies cannot be remedied without the diversion of resources from other things that have been considered more important up to now. Whether this is done or not and how it is done depends on the thinking and actions of many people. But although there are others in the picture, the immediate future depends very much on what we, the parents of the children at the centre of the problem, think and do."

Our Responsibilities as Parents

(Mr. T. Hogan)

"A student's progress depends to a great extent on home influences and on the standard of the school he attends. Parents can help the school, and thereby the student, in many important ways. In so doing they have the satisfaction of knowing that they are not only helping their own children but are benefiting the whole community at the same time.

"By displaying an interest in school affairs and a readiness to help, parents can have a great influence on the morale both of students and staff. The knowledge that parents are really interested acts as a stimulus to teachers, whereas parent apathy is deeply discouraging. Morale in the student is an attitude of mind, dependent on the conviction that study is worth-while, and on confidence in the school and its teachers. The prestige of the school affects student attitudes, but obviously the students equally affect the prestige of the school. There is an inter-dependence. The parent's part is to raise the standard of student behaviour and appearance by making their children conscious of the importance of such things.

"In more direct ways, parents may help by using a skill, manual or mental effort in the interests of the school to improve surroundings, facilities and services. They must exercise the right, indeed the duty, of every citizen to influence our representatives in parliament to provide a better deal for education. Finally, they can contribute financially towards the requirements of the school.

"It is not suggested that we take over any of the normal commitments of the Government—in fact, we must actively resist any such move—but we

must face the fact that every Government has insisted, in the most adamant fashion, that they cannot provide all the requirements of a full education because such a task is beyond their financial resources.

"Whether this is true or not, it is certain that the policy is in force. We must try to change it, but in the meantime meet some of the expenses ourselves rather than let our children suffer an inadequate education. No-one would question the need for a library in every school, but no books are provided unless parents pay half the cost. Even then a most inadequate subsidy is given, so that in fact most of the cost is borne by parents. Assembly halls are provided only if the parents contribute one quarter of the costs. The subsidy system is used as a measure of parent interest, and also as a means of inducing parent participation in school affairs. It appears to be a firm policy at the moment that assistance to a school will be proportional to the desire of the parents concerned for a high standard of education for their children, and the measure of this is their willingness to pay part of the cost of some items.

"This gives us a choice of either contributing to school funds or else letting our children suffer an inferior type of education. This, to my mind, is no choice at all, and if we agree that some contribution is necessary, then surely all parents should do so—not just the few who have to bear a double burden by paying the share of others."

NOTES FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Staff

Next year will again, unfortunately, bring many staff changes. Mr. O'Brien, Miss Taylor, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Brooke, Mr. Wade and Mr. Petrie have received well merited promotions to other schools, and we congratulate them on their advancement. Mr. Hart, Mr. McCallum and Mrs. Haslam are transferring, Miss Falder and Miss Clarke are resuming their University courses, and Mr. Rich, Mr. Galt, Mrs. Jellie and Mr. and Mrs. Dawkins are resigning from the Department. We thank them all for their whole-hearted services to the school, which, in several cases, have extended over many years. Congratulations are also extended to Mr. Gibb and Mrs. Crooks who have received promotion within the school.

Mr. Rhodes, the present Headmaster of Glen Waverley High School, has been appointed to the newly created position of Vice-Principal and will take up his duties at the beginning of next year.

Enrolments for 1964

Approximately 80 new pupils will be admitted to Form I and approximately 80 to Form III in 1964. At the beginning of this year it was possible to accommodate only about two-thirds of those seeking admission to Form I and admissions to Form III had also to be restricted. The new schools at Wattle Park and Kew are providing some

relief to the pressure on our school and have made possible some revision of zones. When the intake at Form III level diminishes, as is expected to be the case, a larger Form I intake will be practicable.

Increase in School Leaving Age

From 4th February 1964, the school leaving age will rise from fourteen to fifteen years. It is not anticipated that this will result in an appreciable increase in our school population as the number of pupils who leave on reaching the age of fourteen is very small. However, the increasing demand for higher educational qualifications for entry into many fields of employment is of significance in increasing the number of pupils in the senior forms, as pupils who might otherwise have left at an earlier age are remaining at school for a longer period.

Second Year Matriculation Students

Pupils who are at present enrolled in the Matriculation form and who desire to return next year, should attend at the school on either Monday 3rd or Tuesday 4th February, for approval of their second year courses. Under the new regulations which come into operation this year, candidates must pass in four subjects, including English Expression, at one sitting in order to pass the Matriculation examination. Candidates who present in at least four subjects, including English Expression, and who pass or obtain honours in at least three of those subjects may pass the examination "by compensation", provided their performance in the examination as a whole is sufficiently meritorious.

Re-Opening of School

The school will re-open for the new school year on Tuesday, 4th February, 1964, but pupils will not attend until the following day, Wednesday, 5th February.

SPORTING NEWS

The inter-House athletics competition was this year won by Macarthur House. We were the host school at the Central Division Athletics Meeting and our boys marked the occasion by a very good performance, securing places in almost every event and finishing well up in the final placings. The girls' teams also gained a number of places. We extend congratulations to Pat Richardson, who gained Inter-State honours and created a new South Australian record in the Women's Junior Javelin event.

Several boys gained intra-State and inter-State honours this year in sport. Chris Robb won the Australian Junior Men's High and Springboard Diving Championships, and the Victorian Under-16 Junior Gymnastic Championship.

Michael Jenkins gained second place in the same event, while Ray Ellis gained third place in the Victorian Men's C Grade Gymnastic Championship. Colin Shugg (Victorian Junior Surf Champion) and Martin Novak represented Victoria at

the Australian Surf Championship Carnival, and Rodney Guy gained a place in an inter-State javelin event.

THE WORK OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

During this past term, the Advisory Council has been primarily concerned with discussions and plans for a major building project at Camberwell High School. As was mentioned in earlier bulletins, the Education Department agree that substantial extra facilities are required at the school, but due to the very limited ground area available, the Council has been concerned to ensure that maximum facilities are provided without encroaching upon the very limited playing area. It was also hoped that provision might be made for an Assembly Hall either included in, or associated with, the new building.

Discussions with PWD architects and Buildings Officers of the Education Department are still going on, and there is every indication that a substantial new block will be erected fairly soon. The Council considers that an Assembly Hall is a necessity and should be planned simultaneously with the new block, so that the whole of the additions might be in harmony. With this in mind, the possibility of forming a co-operative to finance the school's share of the cost is being investigated, and application is being made for the maximum building grant available. The grant available for Assembly Halls was recently increased from £1 for £1 to £3 for £1. Parents will be kept fully informed of developments and will be invited to co-operate. In order to foster such co-operation between the Council and parents, it is proposed to distribute at the beginning of each year to each family a report on the Advisory Council's activity for the year past and an outline of its plans for the future.

Plans for a retaining wall and spectator terraces along the eastern boundary of the oval have been held up by numerous amendments to the specifications. These have finally been submitted to the PWD and arrangements have been made, in anticipation of approval, for the purchase of some of the stonework material to be used. When completed, this terracing will improve access to the oval and gymnasium from the present basket ball court area, and provide spectator accommodation when sports are being played on the oval.

During this term Mr. J. G. Beanland, who has been Treasurer of the Advisory Council or some years, resigned upon his retirement. Mr. Beanland has been a member of the Council for eight years, and for the latter six of these filled the office of Honorary Treasurer. His advice, not only on finance but on all matters concerning the school, and his very real interest in the school's development, have been of great benefit to us. His position as Treasurer has been filled by Mr. K. Noldt.

PARENTS' AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

During third term, the first function of interest was a Parent-Teacher Evening for the Junior School, held on September 16th. We would like to express our thanks to those members of staff who gave their time on this occasion. Many parents were able to find answers to individual problems of progress and to make easier the path leading to the final examinations.

Two social functions, a card evening at the home of Mrs. Janosi on September 14th, and a visit to the National Gallery of Victoria on September 20th, were well attended and greatly enjoyed by all those taking part.

New ground was broken at the Annual General Meeting on November 18th, when a panel of speakers discussed: The Aims of Education; The Organisation and Administration of Education in Victoria; Some Shortcomings of the Present System, and Our Responsibilities as Parents. Extracts from these addresses are reproduced elsewhere in this Bulletin, but it is not possible to summarise the lively discussion which followed. It is to be regretted that more parents did not attend this stimulating evening.

An opportunity was taken at the Annual Meeting to make a small presentation to Mr. J. Lewis, who has received promotion and is leaving Camberwell this year. Mr. Lewis has always given an enormous amount of his time and energies in facilitating arrangements for Association functions, and we wish him all the best in his new post. On the same occasion, a tribute was paid to Mr. R. D. Key, the retiring President, under whose capable direction the Association has made substantial progress in the past three years.

Office bearers and committee members for 1964, elected at the Annual General Meeting, are listed below, with their phone numbers. We hope to make 1964 an outstanding year for the Association, and with the prospect of a major building programme ahead, the co-operation of every parent will be needed. One immediate token of this would be membership of the Association, the subscription to which is 3/- per person or 5/- per family. This may be sent to the Treasurer, Mr. K. Noldt, 32 Brinsley Road, East Camberwell, or to the School.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS, 1964

President: Mr. B. Pettigrew (83-8391)

Vice-Presidents: Mrs. H. Ewart (83-5737)

Mrs. L. Robb (83-8208)

Mr. H. Halstead (29-7226)

Secretary: Mr. H. Messer (83-7339).

Treasurer: Mr. K. Noldt (82-4542)

Committee: Mr. R. D. Key (83-7048), Mr. & Mrs. K. Horwood (83-4946), Mr. H. Peowrie (28-1638), Mr. T. Hogan (81-1487), Mr. J. Wright (82-2173), Dr. W. Savige (83-7034), Mr. D. Barton (82-6545), Mr. R. S. Harper (29-4550), Mr. W. McKenzie (29-1534), Mr. J. Reeves (83-2498), Mr. & Mrs. I. Maddock (83-5088), Mr. I. Proctor (83-9154).

Old Students' Representative: Mr. G. Shaw (83-7037)

Women's Auxiliary Representative: Mrs. V. Noldt (82-4542)

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

The fifth year of the Women's Auxiliary has been marked by the very happy and informal atmosphere which prevailed at our gatherings. During this past term, our regular monthly meetings have included:

September 25th: Talk on Home Decor.

October 23rd: Mr. McLeod, of the Psychology and Guidance Branch of the Education Dept., gave one of the best and most informative talks mothers have been privileged to hear. By request, we are arranging to have Mr. McLeod visit us again early next year.

November 27th: At this, our last regular meeting, our special guests, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews and Miss McMillan, were tendered our appreciation for their co-operation throughout the year. Members enjoyed exchanging small Xmas parcels.

In addition to our regular programme, there were many special activities to keep us busy. On October 4th, a Sweets and Drinks Stall was conducted at the Inter-House Sports Meeting, and afternoon tea was provided for Staff and guests. As Camberwell High School was host school for the Central Division Athletic Sports at Olympic Park on October 15th, the Auxiliary provided a buffet luncheon, morning and afternoon tea to officials and staff of participating schools. October 31st was the day of a most successful Mini-Fete at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Key, which resulted in more than £145 being raised towards funds. On November 13th, the traditional buffet luncheon for Matriculation students was provided to mark their last day at school. To facilitate catering for this and other functions, the Auxiliary has acquired eight trestle tables and extra cutlery. These proved a great boon when setting up the luncheon and assisted greatly towards the success of one of the happiest of our gatherings. November 20th brought a morning of relaxation at the Hawthorn Bowl, where members enjoyed both the bowling and the tuition offered them. Mothers of incoming first and third form students were entertained at afternoon tea on November 22nd and December 6th, and brisk business was conducted in the sale of second-hand uniforms on both days. Our final function for the year was an afternoon tea tendered to the staff on December 13th to mark our appreciation of their work during the year.

From all this it can be seen that this has indeed been a very busy term. That we have had such a successful year is due largely to the untiring efforts of a most enthusiastic band of mothers, and the President and committee would like to take this opportunity of thanking all members for their co-operation.

New members are always welcome at our meetings, which are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month, at 1.45 p.m. at the Highfield Methodist Church Hall. The first meeting for 1964 will be on Wednesday, 26th February.