

NEW SCHOOL

Saturday's Opening Ceremony at Stocksbridge

Parents who attended the official opening of Stocksbridge County Infants' School on Saturday heard how the County Council had concentrated since the war on infants' schools and then how there were insufficient places in grammar schools to accommodate all who passed.

Presiding, County Ald. J. Fuller Smith, Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee said, like the Committee, he rejoiced with them that at last they had got a new school at Stocksbridge. "But I thought you were carrying your rejoicing a little too far when I got involved in a procession (Garden Village Gala procession). It is the first occasion when we have had a school opened with a brass band and fancy dress. Yet probably it would have been justified by you because you have waited a long time for this one and we hope you will not wait so long for the next one which is to come in the district"

"We don't know whether you have a parent teacher association in the school, if you haven't I hope you will form one because it is your school; you will pay for it and your children will come to it and it is only sensible that you should take an interest in it. The headmistress, I am sure, will co-operate in not only a parent teacher association, but when ever anyone feels like approaching her. In the West Riding we are proud of our

infants' schools and the Chief Education Officer (Mr. A. B. Clegg) has wisely, since the war, concentrated on infant schools."

After all that was where children got their grounding and it was very essential they should start in the right surroundings. During the next three years they would be spending over £4 million on new schools that would be absorbing new populations and it was doubtful whether many of the old schools would be replaced in that period. It was possible that if prosperity continued some change of policy might be made and they would be able to replace some of the old schools.

Introducing the school opener, Sir Thomas Tomlinson, Ald. Fuller Smith described him as a man with a very fine record of public service. Sir Thomas Tomlinson said "I want to rejoice with you in Stocksbridge because you have got a new school, I have learned in my experience to rejoice with those that rejoice and mourn with those that mourn".

All could not have their own way but he felt they were doing the best by making provision where the need was the greatest.

In the last three years they had opened 16 schools of a similar type to the new Stocksbridge School. The children in the birth rate "bulge" were getting to the age when they would have to pass through the secondary modern or grammar schools and therefore they would have to make provision for quite a number of places.

Of 20,000 children sitting for the grammar school entrance examination in March, many who were not successful had brain power to go higher but had not the opportunity. That was the

difficulty that faced all the education authorities. What could they do to alter it because education was constantly widening and widening?

What was the basis of good citizenship? Surely the basis was our religious education.

"One of the things I like about our schools is that the children get a sense of responsibility and can face things as they go ahead. It is in your hands and you can make it a greater school if you take an interest in it"

Mr. H. Thickett, Chairman of Stocksbridge County Managers, thanked Sir Thomas and Ald. Fuller Smith and coupled with it similar sentiments to all who had made a contribution to the school building. He said that when they were asked as local managers to say who they would like to open the school the decision was unanimous that the person should be Sir Thomas Tomlinson. One of the compensations for being on the Divisional Executive was that the membership of that body allowed him to be associated with a man of such sterling worth as Sir Thomas. He was a man who carried into his daily life the spirit of Christianity. As for Ald. Fuller Smith it went without saying that a man prepared to act as chairman of the County Education Committee had more than his share of fortitude and sense of public duty.

Seconding the motion County Councillor Mrs. Green said it was the most beautiful infants' school she had ever seen. Mrs. Green mentioned the singing of the choir of 37 boys and girls aged 6 to 7 years under Miss S. Whitehead with Miss L. Hoyle as accompanist. "Would not Dr. Robertshaw have rejoiced to see and hear this choir?" she added.

Buttonholes were presented to Sir Thomas and Ald. Fuller Smith by Melvyn Smith and Alan Kaye. Elizabeth Watkins handed a bouquet for Sir Thomas to take back with him to Lady Tomlinson.

Among the invited guests were Mr. H.G. McGhee, M.P, and Mrs McGhee, Counc. J.P. Holling, Chairman of Stocksbridge U.D.C. and Mrs Holling, and past and present head teachers of the district, who mingled with members of the County Education Committee, Wharnccliffe Divisional Executive and Stocksbridge County Managers.

Miss A.W. Briggs, who was first appointed Headmistress 14 years ago has come over with her scholars from the school in Shay House Lane which is now being used for two schools - Junior and Secondary - as against the previous three. But there are still two temporary classrooms filled there with infant scholars, as the new school which has been based on future population only provided six classrooms and accommodation for 240 pupils. The new school is on a sloping site alongside Pot House Lane and siting difficulties made it necessary to place the building where best use could be made of the levels and existing services.

The two groups of classrooms radiate from the assembly hall and there are kitchen, staff rooms, heating chamber and ancillary stores. The assembly hall is used for movement and dining and the school meals are served from a well equipped kitchen situated above the heating chamber. All classrooms receive maximum light and good ventilation and are complete with fitted stores. Colour has been used in a lively manner in selected areas, especially in the assembly hall and entrance

hall where contemporary wallpapers are used. Construction generally is of cavity brickwork on normal concrete foundations.

Metal windows are set in painted timber sub-frames and internal sills are finished with Formica to make cleaning easy. The roof is of two-inch stramit on timber joints and is covered with three layers of green mineral surfaced felt. The use of Vee-jointed insulation boards provides a smooth internal ceiling finish.

Steelwork is confined to intermediate supports in classrooms and in the assembly hall. The assembly hall roof construction is of a patent type supported upon steel members. Internally walls are plastered and decorated in emulsion paint or wallpaper. Classroom, corridor and entrance hall floors are of thermoplastic tiles, oak wood blocks are used for the assembly hall.

The preparation and layout of the grounds proved difficult owing to the rocky nature of the subsoil and the excavation necessitated by the building. Much work was concentrated on the grounds just prior to the opening and the sowing down of grass and lawn areas is almost complete and planting will be undertaken in the autumn. The original walls on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site were demolished to provide for road widening and the new wall on the eastern boundary was built from salvage stone.

Contractors were Messrs. W. Marlow and Sons of Sheffield.
