



School News

In this, the first issue of an enlarged "Novocastrian," we hope to arouse greater interest in Newcastle High School than has been evinced latterly. It is a happy augury that so much success has been met with in securing advertisements from citizens of Newcastle and district! We trust that the arrangement of the advertisements will give every satisfaction and that all students and parents will endeavor to prove to the advertisers that they are getting value for their money.

* * * *

The matter of greatest importance to the High School community is the building of new High Schools—one for boys and one for girls. It is now more than eight months since Mr. T. D. Mutch, Minister for Education, made a definite promise that the schools would be built. It is understood that the Newcastle City Council is prepared to facilitate the handing over of an area of seven acres of National Park for the purpose of constructing thereon the Newcastle Boys' High School. It is understood, also, that detailed plans and specifications have been prepared, and that the only obstacle in the way of erecting the buildings is the lack of money. We feel that every reader of the "Novocastrian" is with us in saying that the £70,000 required for the construction of these buildings—twenty years overdue—should be allocated out of the first money that becomes available for the construction of new school buildings. But we go further, and express amazement that the public of the Newcastle district should have remained mute on this subject for so long a period.

* * * *

It is high time that a High School Parents and Citizens' Association was formed with a view to furthering the interests of the High Schools. We suggest that small branches of such an association could be formed in each of the suburbs, and that representatives from each branch could come together every three months and work for the good of the school.

* * * *

There has lately been a feeble attempt to organise a newspaper controversy as to the advisability of allowing the City Council to alienate seven acres of park land for the purpose of building the Boys' High School. The great mass of the interested public, however, are quite prepared to see this land (which is at present partly swamp) made over to the Education Department for such a laudable purpose. They realise that it is up to the local community to at least find the land when the Minister is prepared to spend so much money on buildings and equip-

ment. The site already in possession of the Department adjacent to the park land mentioned above cost £6000, and the Girls High School is to be built on this section.

* * * *

The site of the new schools could not be more satisfactory from two points of view—its central situation and its proximity to playing areas. When the schools become an actuality, magnificent provision can be made for games within view of the school itself. The site is only eight chains from the Bank Corner, which is a tram section; it is handy to Honeysuckle Railway Station, and within easy reach of Merewether and Glebe trams. Moreover, it is in the centre of the Hamilton Garden Suburb. It is more than likely that flower beds and lawns will have a place in the “lay-out” of the grounds. The Department has already followed this practice in the case of High Schools in Sydney.

* * * *

When one ponders over the unsuitability of the present buildings for school purposes, one wonders how the esprit de corps of the school is as fine as it is.

* * * *

The present enrolment of the school is 540—the third largest High School in the State. Only the Sydney Girls' High and Fort-street have larger enrolments. There are 15 classes and 14 class rooms. In addition, there is one practical science room that can satisfactorily accommodate 24 students. As every class, with the exception of Fifth Year, has 38 or more students, the inadequacy of the science arrangements needs no further comment. It must be remembered, too, that physics, chemistry and geology are taught. In most of the High Schools there are rarely more than two sciences taught, and there are mostly two practical science rooms.

* * * *

The growth of the school in the matter of enrolment is interesting. It opened as a High School in 1906 with 84 students and three teachers. In 1912, when the High Schools were reorganised, there were 283 students with 18 teachers. Now, with 540 students there are only 25 teachers, some of whom are part-time teachers. This indicates how large the classes are at present in comparison with the figures for 1912.

* * * *

Mr. C. R. Smith, M.A., was the first headmaster (1906-15). Then Mr. W. Williams, B.A. (1915-19), Mr. C. G. Saxby, B.A. (1920-24), and Mr. F. McMullen (1925, May, 1926). Mr. Smith is now living in retirement at Willoughby. Mr. Williams is headmaster at North Sydney Boys' High School; Mr. Saxby is headmaster at Sydney High School, and Mr. McMullen is head at Technical High School, Paddington.