

SCHOOL BOY SPEAKERS

EMPIRE DAY AT THE BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL.

At the Boys' High School yesterday, according to custom, the whole Empire Day ceremony was carried out by the boys. A boy presided, boys made the speeches of the day, and boys contributed vocal and instrumental items. It was a moving ceremony.

The captain of the school, Dudley Thrift, presided at the celebrations and expressed, on behalf of the boys, their appreciation of the privilege of being allowed to celebrate Empire Day in their own way.

In outlining the significance of the day, he said that British people enjoyed a freedom of thought and speech such as is possible under no other flag and that on Empire Day, we were reminded that the freedom we enjoyed depended upon keeping alive the spirit of brotherhood in the Empire. All the States and Dominions had a common bond of interest, and that was the secret of their happiness. Britain stood champion of the weak and oppressed, and while justice was her impulse and her guide so should she live and flourish. The speaker called attention to the life of the Great Queen, whose birthday it was, the mother of her people, and who made firm the foundations of Empire upon the basis of justice, peace, contentment, and left behind her a race animated by the high ideals she inspired.

Frank Evans, the vice-captain, took as his subject, "Sport in the Empire." Unity on which the strength of the Empire stood was also the essence of success in sport. He reminded his hearers of their football teams and of the spirit of unselfish team work essential to harmonious working and complete success. He instanced the qualities that healthily sport developed in the character of the growing boy and showed him those qualities were at the bottom of all public spirited movements. He called upon his hearers in all they did to remember, the inspiring words of Newbolt, "Play up! Play up! and play the game."

"The spirit of Empire in the school," was the subject of Douglas Wright. Other things than charity he said begin at home, and most notable of these was the spirit of service. The warriors and statesmen of tomorrow are the schoolboys of to-day, and in the class room, the playing field, in association with public service in the school, there were ample opportunities to develop the sense of citizenship so necessary in an Empire like ours. The boy who did his bit at school was not found wanting when the call came to higher service, as the School Honour Roll bore witness. Though senior boys had more opportunities to show by their deeds, the school spirit working within them, the juniors could find ways and means, did they but look. A good school boy the speaker declared made a good citizen, a number of good citizens a stable Empire. Let them then be Empire builders within the school, let them look to their honour and prestige as citizens of a proud and grand old school, let them remember the words they had just sung, "There's room at the top. En Avant."

Lewis Outteridge a lower-school boy traced in outline, the history of Empires, the Greek, Roman, Assyrian, and Babylonian showed how the British Empire developing had evolved something entirely new, a Commonwealth of nations bound by ties of mutual respect, by ties of devotion, to the ideals that had been expressed step by step in England's struggle for freedom, justice and right. The British flag was not the symbol of servitude, but the words of Veronica Mason.

"It stands as it has always stood. For honour, duty, brotherhood. For love and truth and might. And we will live and die that evermore our flag shall fly for God and King and Right."

J. Audet chose as his subject,

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"The Empire Spirit in Literature." The speaker compared English literature to a great tree rooted in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Chaucer, and growing through the centuries into a mighty tree, whose branches were Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Dr. Johnson, the great Victorians, and modern writers like Kipling and Conrad. The sap of this great tree was the spirit of our people; and the men who gave expression to that spirit were Empire-builders. In our own "Maggie" our little Empire was being reflected, and among those who contributed to it were some who one day would be Empire-builders, too.

It was Harold Butler's task to explain "Australia's relation to the rest of the Empire." The day had for Australians a special significance. Before 1914 Australia was a mere name, in 1919 she took a very proud place in the Commonwealth of Nations, for, in the time of crisis she had placed duty to the Empire first. We celebrated Empire Day not in the spirit of jingoism, rejoicing over the discomfiture of our enemies, but as an opportunity to express our thanks for the freedom we enjoy and the unity that makes it possible. Through that liberty of action we enjoyed—that freedom in the bond of Empire, Australia was leading the Empire in social and economic reform; and in that way doing her duty nobly and well.

One of the ablest speeches of the day was that of Hugh J. Price, on "The Poetry of Empire." Love is the life of man, he said. We love our homes where first we began to learn what life is, the well-remembered scenes and hearts that beat high then. In a broader life our love for local things becomes a love of country, and it becomes a noble thing, instinct with self-sacrifice.

"Along the street there comes
"A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
"A flash of colour beneath the sky,
"Hats off! the flag is passing by."
Our hearts bound high with manly pride. We forget the sordid things of earth for this is our noble season. Through the mist of the centuries we saw Saxon freedom and Norman chivalry uniting in a pure stream, broadening out until it tapped the stones of time and flowed over the years—the spirit of the British people for—

"Of old freedom on the height,
"Then stepped she down through town and field;
"To mingle with the human race,
"Then step by step to man revealed
"The fullness of her face."

"Some might think that the speaker thought only of England; but did we not belong to the same race, have the same sovereign, the same bond of fellowship and common interest. A British banner, he concluded, is not a badge of servitude, but a charter of the rights, common to all human souls.

"We must be free or die, who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake: the faith and morals hold that Milton held; in everything we are sprung of earth's first blood, have tilles manifold."

At the conclusion of the ceremony the headmaster, Mr. C. H. Christmas, said that the longer his association with the school the prouder he became of it. As he listened to the speeches, he could not help thinking what a grand thing it was to be headmaster of such a grand old school, and he felt sure that his audience also must be proud to belong to it, and would join him in congratulating all concerned. In conclusion he asked his audience to regard Empire Day as a day of remembrance and reconsecration.

Mr. Keller (deputy headmaster) warmly congratulated the boys, and urged them to remember that the word Empire meant control and apply it to themselves.

Interspersed between the speeches were songs by the school, and items by K. Donnellan, Ian McKenzie, W. Morris, and W. Maudsley.