

REFLECTIONS ON 1914

The 25th Speech Day in the School's history took place on 26 June 1914, the second occasion it had been held in the middle of the year rather than at the end of the academic year. The policy of having Speech Day at this time was to last until 1938, the year that the long standing Headmaster, P.F.Rowland, retired. Attending the 1914 Speech Day were Tom Foley MLA, the father of the School's first girl student Mary Foley, and Dr Anton Brienl, a scientist who was to play an important role in the establishment of a tropical research institution in Townsville.

Speech Day was undoubtedly the most important occasion in the school year. Not only did it give the Headmaster the opportunity to outline his ideas and philosophy but it also allowed him to report on the academic, sporting and cultural achievements of the School. The cultural achievements were displayed on Speech Day by the choir, language students and those interested in drama. In 1914, a French play *Les Deux Sourds* written by Moinaux and Act 2 of Shakespeare's *Henry V* were performed. These were followed by poems in German and from Virgil's *Aeneid* [in Latin].

The two main speakers at the function were the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Judge C.Jameson, and the Headmaster. Both men concentrated on what Mr Rowland said were important changes revolutionising Queensland education. The changes involved the government establishing high schools in both small towns and big cities in the State. In doing so the importance of the Grammar Schools as the only institutions offering a secondary education was being challenged. Neither man was against the establishment of high schools but Judge Jameson did state he hoped that the "discipline of school life and the participation in school sports should not be forgotten as a natural factor in the moulding of character."

While welcoming the improvements in education, Mr Rowland did speak on issues concerning him. One was the fact that while scholarships were to be made to all eligible students passing the State School examinations he argued that a system which he termed "being cruel to be kind" should be fostered. In saying this Mr Rowland argued that not all students would be suited to secondary education and that after one year, schools should be given the power to ask students not coping to leave. This, in turn, would free a large part of the education budget for other educational matters. Mr Rowland was also concerned that too many scholarships were being awarded to students from the South. In saying that he quoted that of the 368 successful candidates in 1913 only 29 came from the North. Further to this Mr Rowland argued that the North was disadvantaged by the lack of competent teachers. He put this down to the "tyranny of distance" a term later used by Geoffrey Blainey, one of Australia's foremost historians. To overcome this disadvantage Mr Rowland suggested that at least one-sixth of the scholarships offered be reserved for the North.



H.H. MARKS - 1915

In his speech Mr Rowland was particularly proud of the growth in school numbers, there being a record forty-three boarders enrolled. He was also proud of the fact that at the end of the 1913 Junior Examinations the School had nineteen students achieve success, once again a record for the School. Four of the students achieving a Junior Examination went on to enlist in the AIF during the Great War, i.e. H.H.Marks, A.E.Schmidt, R.O.White and O.S.Johnson. Schmidt was to be awarded the Military Medal at age twenty while Marks was tragically killed in France on 1 September 1918. His father was Captain Marks, a local entity who also helped in the development of cadets at the School. Judge Jameson was also to suffer a family tragedy when his son C.C.Jameson was killed in 1917.

Mr Rowland was also proud that R.Lanskey became the first Grammar student to be awarded the Thallon Medal. The award was given to a son of a railway worker achieving the best results at the Junior Examination. In his speech Mr Rowland also quoted from Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S.Pinafore* as he was proud two students had been given cadetships, Charles Baxter-Tyrie to the British Navy and O.McMahon to the then fledgling Australian Navy. Mr Rowland then commented that he was looking forward to them both becoming admirals and by 1945 presenting the prizes at Speech Day. Mr Rowland died in 1944 not knowing that McMahon had served in both World Wars, rising to the rank of commander and being awarded an OBE for his service during World War II. Three other students present on that occasion were to play a role in the history of the School. R.P.Rheuben donated a sum of money to the School in the early 1990s and the Science Building is named after him. C.Bingham became a prominent author and journalist and the Colin Bingham Literary Prize at our Junior School is named in his honour. C.Davidson was a multiple prize winner and served in both Wars winning a military OBE. After World War II he entered politics and became a minister in the Menzies government. He was knighted for services to the Nation.



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