

Anglo-Chinese Government Schools

annual prize distribution

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The scholars attending the Anglo-Chinese Government Schools in the Yaumati district were in gala costume today for the annual prize distribution. The function was of particular interest because His Excellency Sir Matthew Nathan had agreed to preside at the formal opening of the new Yaumati School, in addition to distributing prizes to the successful students. Three Anglo-Chinese schools were represented, and the new schoolroom was crowded. There was a large attendance of visitors, including several ladies interested in the schools. Among those present were Mr. E. A. Irving, Inspector of Schools; Brother Sylvester, Director of St. Joseph's College; Mr. G. Piercy, headmaster of Diocesan Boys' School; Mr. Ho Tung, one of the school's leading patrons, and many others. After a recitation entitled "The Choice of Trades," in which half a dozen of the younger boys took part, the headmasters' reports were presented.

Mr. Win. Curwen, headmaster of the Yaumati Government School, read his annual report as follows: "Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, in presenting this my third annual report on the work of this school, I hope I may be allowed the privilege of classifying this prize distribution as an auspicious occasion for the peninsula of Kowloon, seeing it partakes of the nature of a double function. It celebrates, first, the opening of the New Government School for the education of Chinese youths in English ideas. Secondly, it is the first distribution of prizes to Chinese scholars in a Government School on the peninsula of Kowloon by His Excellency the Governor of the Colony. Since my last report, the staff has been increased by the appointment of two additional assistant Chinese masters. The work of my entire staff has been performed in an exceedingly satisfactory manner.

The fees have increased from \$1,200 to \$1,800, and the average daily attendance has risen from 84 to 95, representing an increase in fees of 50 percent and in attendance of 15 percent. This, I believe, can be considered evidence of a desire on the part of Chinese parents and guardians for a sound and thorough English education in Kowloon and the district.

Hygiene has been added to our syllabus during the past year, although the boys presented by this school failed so unexpectedly in the team examination—a failure largely due to the superior abilities of their opponents. Some of these

competitors were English, others were Portuguese, and in either case, they were boys with a more ready command of fluent English than native boys could reasonably be expected to have. My impression, when this competition was established, was that it was intended solely to encourage the study of hygiene by the Chinese youths who attend our schools, and not to encourage the study of that science among the English children of the Colony, who have the elementary principles of this science preached and instilled into them daily, either by word or deed. As you are aware, I reported very favorably on the teaching of history in my last report, and my further impression is that it can be taught, although I am very sorry to say the experiment must now terminate, owing to the reorganization scheme.

Under this scheme, we have to eliminate history from our curriculum because the upper classes are to be abolished. In doing away with these classes, I am not fully convinced that the right course is being adopted. In saying this, I do not wish to be thought cantankerous, but the end and aim of the District Schools cannot altogether be looked upon as feeders of Queen's College, as the greater majority of pupils who attend our schools do so with a desire to qualify for positions in firms at salaries ranging from \$25 to \$40 per month, and the education given at our schools is ample for that purpose. I have personally inquired into every case in which a boy has left this school from the upper class to discover their destination and work. The result is that 16 boys have left from the upper classes, and of them, four have gone to Queen's College. One cannot be traced. The remaining are working in various situations, for example, the H.K. & S. Bank, Telegraph Co., Hung Hom Docks, etc.

Football has been commenced, but the results are not yet commensurate with the energy expended by the boys. About twelve months ago, the boys had not seen a football, much less a match, and consequently, great achievements in that branch of sport cannot be expected. During the coming year, I look forward to our team winning a few fixtures, which under past conditions was improbable."

Mr. Young Hee, headmaster of the Watsai District Government School, presented his annual report, saying: "Your Excellency, Mr. Irving, ladies and gentlemen, it is with much pleasure that I present my annual report. On January 1, 1905, there were 98 names on the school roll. During the year, there were 104 applications for admission. Of these, 90 were enrolled (the remaining 14 failed to pass the required test in Chinese), bringing the total number on the books up to 188. From various causes, 49 left, and of these: (a) 1 was dismissed for theft; (b) 3 secured appointments on the teaching staff of the district schools; (c) 1 secured the position of student interpreter; (d) a large proportion entered Queen's College; and (e) several found situations with local commercial firms. The

number on the roll at the end of the year was 139. The school has been open for 228 days, and the average daily attendance was 140.08, which is considerably higher than any previous year. The fees collected amount to \$2,346, which is an increase of \$758 upon last year's revenue, and I believe that the school is now in a most flourishing condition. There have been a number of changes in the staff due to promotions, and at the present time, it consists of myself and five assistants. The recommendation made by the Inspector of Schools in his last annual report on the 'notes of lessons' has been carried out satisfactorily, and the assistants now keep all 'notes' in suitable books. The substitution of the Geographical for the Orient Readers is, in my opinion, a great success. Hygiene has been consistently taught throughout the year, and the boys have applied themselves with much energy to a most useful branch of study. The team which took part in the shield contest secured fourth place, which is most creditable, considering the schools against which it had to compete. The usual mid-term and final examinations were held, the individual results of which have been duly notified to the boys' guardians.

The Inspector of Schools had paid several visits for the purpose of testing the progress of the School, and speaking generally the results are most satisfactory. Mathematics, the English subjects, and hygiene appear to the best advantage, especially in the junior classes; translation is exceedingly good. Possessing a profound knowledge of Chinese literature, I take great interest in the teaching of this subject, and the results are most gratifying.

The school has on several occasions been visited by teachers from some of the Grant-in-Aid schools in the Colony and by representatives sent out by the educational authorities of the Philippines for the express purpose of studying the methods of teaching English in the district schools. The Normal Class has been held at my school (under the supervision of the district headmaster) on Saturday mornings, when the assistant teachers have been instructed in modern teaching methods. The lessons and criticisms cannot fail to have had a most beneficial effect.

At the Prize Distribution last year, we had the honor of receiving a football from Your Excellency. This has stimulated great enthusiasm among the boys in that manly sport, and great interest is being taken in the School Football League matches. They have played 8 games, losing 2 and winning 6. During the present year, I hope to instruct in physical drill and gymnastics.

Mr. Morris, headmaster of the Saiyingpun District School, read his report as follows:

"Your Excellency, Mr. Irving, ladies and gentlemen – I have much pleasure in presenting my report for the period during which I have had the honor to occupy the post of headmaster of the Saiyingpun District School. My tenure of office has been from the end of June. At the commencement of the summer vacation, I submitted a report on the unsatisfactory condition in which I found the school. The staff consists of 3 Anglo-Chinese assistants, a vernacular master, and myself. The number in attendance throughout the year has been very poor, the highest monthly average being 49 and the lowest 35, while the average for the year is only 44; 3 boys have made perfect attendance. The fees collected have consequently been small, amounting to \$745. After the New Year holiday, I hope that the numbers will increase considerably. Upon the general result of the work, there has been steady and constant progress, and I have every reason to believe that the school is now in a satisfactory state of efficiency. I have, with the consent of the inspector of schools, tried several innovations, which have been unqualified successes. They have included launch trips, walking excursions, swimming, and drawing. On resuming school after the summer vacation, the early hours of the school meetings were continued (with an extension to make a school day of 5.5 hours), and a series of excursions were arranged on suitable afternoons. These numbered about 30, and they have included the most important factories and the chief places of interest in the Colony. They have been well attended by both teachers and pupils, and I feel confident that the boys have derived much benefit both mentally and physically, as well as morally. During the excursions, specimens were collected, and these have gone to swell the contents of a museum of objects, which has been further augmented by presentations of most useful and valuable cases of specimens from different English manufacturing firms. Drawing has been taught for the first time, and the syllabus has included freehand geometry and brushwork. Whilst recognizing the fact that one of the chief aims of the district school is to teach the boys to speak and write correct English, I think that the hour per week devoted to drawing has not been misspent but has more than amply compensated for the extra work incurred. The boys have made great progress and have done very good work, particularly with their brushes. During the summer months, bathing parties were arranged, and the boys were taught swimming, many becoming quite proficient in the art. I think that the initiation of an inter-schools contest in swimming, on somewhat similar lines to the Football and Hygiene Competitions but with more restrictions so as to place the weaker schools on a more equal footing, would give a great impetus to a most useful, healthy, and popular exercise. I would here remark that in the football contest, the school has not done well, losing 6 and

drawing 2 of the 8 matches played. It is extremely difficult to get a team of any merit where the numbers are so small. It was from this same cause that the school was unable to compete in the Hygiene shield contest. In the advanced course, one of the boys secured 13th place. This subject has been further supplemented by means of experimental science and physiology lessons where they arise 'naturally' from a study of the textbook. During the current year, I hope to include physical drill in the curriculum. Another recitation was given – Antony's address from "Julius Caesar" – by one of the Chinese boys, and the prizes were then distributed."

His Excellency the Governor said: "The erection of the building where we are assembled today for the first time is mainly due to the generosity of Mr. Ho Tung, whom I am glad to see with us today (applause). Mr. Ho Tung consented, at the request of the Government of Hong Kong, that the school, which is lower down Robinson Road and which was built at his expense, should be maintained for European British children, instead of, as he had originally intended, being maintained for children of all nationalities. He made it a condition of his consent that an equally good school should be provided for the Chinese boys of Yau Ma Tei, and this building has been erected in part fulfillment of that condition. I do not think the Yau Ma Tei boys have lost by the substitution of this building for the other. It is certainly as good a schoolhouse and has the additional advantage of a big playground; and also it is more central and conveniently situated for residents in Yau Ma Tei. It is, like the other school on the Robinson Road, on the 100-foot road that will eventually go from Tsat Sit Mui to the old Kowloon frontier. We propose at once to make the part of the road immediately in front of this house and to the north, and later on to cut through the hill in order to join up with the present termination of the road with the Chinese theatre. So that you may understand the position – not only the geographical position of the school which I have explained, but also its position in the general scheme of Government education – I propose to give you a few facts with regard to the scheme. There are altogether 81 Government and Government-aided schools in the Colony, and the average attendance, which is, of course, very much lower than the total numbers on the roll, is about 5,000. Of this number, about one-third are trained in the eleven Government schools. By far the most important of these is Queen's College, where an average of over 1,000 boys are instructed every day. Next after Queen's College come the three principal Anglo-Chinese Schools, the boys of which are here assembled this morning. One of these schools is at Wanchai, the other is at Sai Ying Pun, on the west side of Victoria, and the third is here at Yau Ma Tei." Then there are other Anglo-Chinese schools at Tung Lung Chow in Victoria, at Aberdeen on the the south-west side of the island of Hong Kong and Yun Leng, the principal market town on the west side of the New Territory. There

is also a vernacular school at Shek Ho, on the south-east side of the island, which I hope will eventually become an Anglo-Chinese school. Furthermore, we are going to start an Anglo-Chinese school at Taipo, the market town on the east side of the New Territory, this year. For special purposes, there is an Anglo-Indian school in Victoria. Additionally, there is the Victoria School for British boys and children, and the Kowloon School for British girls and children. Finally, mainly for Chinese girls, there is the Belilios School in Victoria, with its English and vernacular sections.

I do not propose to increase the number of these schools, but I hope that we shall be able to add to their extent and efficiency. In order to carry out this idea, we propose, in the first place, to start evening continuation classes at Queen's College. We have also commenced to raise the general standard of that establishment by doing away with its lowest classes and making the three principal Anglo-Chinese Schools feeders for Queen's College. It seemed to me there was a waste of teaching power having higher standards in these Anglo-Chinese schools, with only one or two boys in each class who would do better if they had the stimulus of the real competition which they have in the higher classes of Queen's College. I trust that in the future, Dr. Bateson Wright's best scholars will be those who have come through the hands of Mr. Young Hee, Mr. Curwen, and Mr. Morris.

I see no reason why we should not be able to raise the other Anglo-Chinese schools – those on the south of the island and in the New Territories – to the same level as the three principal ones, so that they also shall be feeders of Queen's College. In the Anglo-Indian school, I think there is room for considerable development. I know that with regard to the British schools, Mr. Williams and Mr. James are doing their utmost to push them on. At Belilios School, Mrs. Bateman's successor has fine work in front of her in training the future mothers of the Colony.

I thought that these general remarks on education in the Colony would be more interesting to you, ladies and gentlemen, than any detailed criticism of the head-masters' reports which have been read. With regard to those reports, as to the work of the boys, I have only to add that I think much has been done in the past year by Mr. Curwen, and Mr. Young Hee, and Mr. Morris has made an excellent start in his school. I give my school prize on this occasion to the head boy of the New Yaumati School.

I have now to express my thanks and the thanks of the Government to Mr. Ho Tung, and to declare the Yaumati School open.

Mr. Curwen moved a vote of thanks to His Excellency for presiding, and scholars gave three lusty cheers for the Governor.

The prize list of the New Yaumati School is as follows:

- * **Class III:** Yeung King-tak, Wong Wai-in.
- * **Class IV:** Fan U-sam, Yeung Ki-chau, An Hing-tsu, Ysung Ki-sut.
- * **Class V:** Tang Po-cho, Pang Fa-i, Leung Fuk-hing, Lo Kam-kau.
- * **Class VI:** Ip Yik-kang, Li Fuk, Wong Ping, Leung Kwok-tai.
- * **Class VII:** Wan Loi-yau, Lo San-fat, Lin Man-ying, Mak Kwai-pan, Wong Fat.
- * **Class VIII:** Mok Yak-lam, Tsag Pak-tsoi, Chau Shin-hin, Shifn Hu-chu, Ng In-sai.

The prize list of Wanchai School is as follows:

- * **Class II:** Shin Chung-sang, To Moi-sang, Wong Li-kwang.
- * **Class IV:** Fok Tung, Yam Ming, Fung Ying-lam.
- * **Class V:** Wong Kin-cheong, Un Chau-tong.
- * **Class VI:** Lo U-fan, Li Ming-tak, Chiu Ki-tsing.
- * **Class VII:** Wong Man-kwong, Lo Yuk-luen, Lo Ho-ching.
- * **Class VIII:** Ip Kam-cheong, Lo loa-kan, Leung Fuk-chun, and To Chuen (equal).

* **Special Prizes:**

- * Hygiene: Chiu Kitsing (Class VI)
- * English Colloquial: Li Ho-ling (Class VIII)
- * Exemplary Conduct and Diligence: Sun Chiu-lai (Class VIII), U Hang-on (Class VII)
- * Full Attendance: Wong Man-kwong (Class VII), Leung Kam-wing (Class VII), Ng Tai-chiu (Class VIII), Chung Iutong (Class VIII), Ng Yuk-lin (Class VIII)

The prize list of Sai Ying Pun School is as follows:

- * ****Class III:**** Lau King-ting, Wong Man-pui, Chung Kam-tsüa.
- * ****Class IV:**** Un Chun-wa, Chan Wai-tsz, Ip Tin-shang.
- * ****Class VI:**** Ching lu-chung, Cháu Chi-cheung.
- * ****Class VII:**** Ho Mak-lam, Chang fu-wa, Li Chung-hang, Lai Tsz-man.
- * ****Class VIII:**** Un Po, Li Yan-kun, Lo Ping-chan.
- * ****Special Prize for Attendance:**** Mak Kam-fat.