

**TRANSFERRED SCHOOLS.****HARMONY IN EDINBURGH.****NEW R.C. SCHOOL OPENED.**

St JOHN'S Roman Catholic School, Hamilton Terrace, Portobello, was formally opened yesterday by Bailie Allan, Chairman of Edinburgh Education Authority. Mr G. W. Tait, S.S.C., Vice-Chairman of the Authority, presided at the opening ceremony in the school hall, and the platform party included members of the Authority and Mr John Stewart, S.S.C., Executive Officer. There was a large attendance of parents and pupils.

Several apologies for absence, including letters from Sir John Gilmour, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Dr George Macdonald, secretary of the Scottish Education Department, were read by Mr F. J. Trotter, S.S.C., Deputy Executive Officer.

The Chairman said that in Edinburgh they had striven to administer the Education Act in all fairness and without bias of any description.

Mr Wm. Taylor, Convener of Property and Works Committee, said the site of the school and recreation ground extended to nearly 9 acres. The school premises and playgrounds occupied about 2 acres of the site, and the recreation ground, for this and other schools of the district, the remaining 7 acres. The main school block was a two-storey building with the following accommodation:—Twelve classrooms for 600 pupils (50 pupils in each), central hall or gymnasium, with dressingrooms, staffrooms, medical inspection room, &c. The elevations of the building were designed on clean, broad, substantial lines after the character of the Edinburgh Adams architecture. Built of brick, harled with a special white finish, and relieved by facings of a special concrete, the building cost about £26,000.

**RELIGION AND EDUCATION.**

Bailie Allan said this was an eventful day in the history of education in Edinburgh, and the Education Authority desired to mark the memorable occasion with some ceremonial celebration. This was the first new school in Edinburgh erected by the Education Authority since the Roman Catholic schools were transferred after the passing of the Education Act, 1918; but, of course, many alterations in existing buildings had been made and improvements effected in equipment. He was gratified to know that various educationists had referred to the fact that Edinburgh had risen to the powers conferred and duties laid upon them by the statute which brought these schools under public control, and by which the pupils of these schools were entitled to the same facilities as the children of other schools under the Education Authority's management. (Applause.) He was particularly glad to learn that the chairman of the London County Council and now the chairman of the London Education Committee had expressed the opinion that the Edinburgh Authority had fulfilled in an admirable degree the duties laid upon Scottish Education Authorities with regard to the transferred schools. In the past philosophers had discussed, with great insight into human needs, the comparative value of intellectual, moral, and physical education, and passed under review many considerations with the object of endeavouring to decide what knowledge was of most worth, and, indeed, these were problems which educationists must ever have in front of them; but in man's innermost soul there was a deep-seated conviction expressed in the simple words of the sage, Thomas Carlyle, that "a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him." It was the unseen and spiritual in him that determined the outward and actual.

**CATHOLICITY OF SPIRIT.**

Religion could not be divorced from education; "knowledge may be a development of the logical or other handicraft faculty, inward or outward, but is no culture of the soul of man." It was a thousand pities that religion should occasion difficulties, but it did. In England they read that there were schools to-day which would receive the attention of certain philanthropic societies if they were used as stables; and Sir George Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education in England, in his report for 1925, just published, referred to the fact that no fewer than 664 schools in that country had been classified by the Board's inspectors as "unsuitable for continued recognition and incapable of improvement," and there were many more that ought to be condemned if the children were to have a fair chance to cultivate a sound mind in a sound body. These conditions were mainly due to a dual control, and in many cases difficulties in regard to religious education prevented a remedy. The uppermost feeling in his mind that day was one of profound thankfulness that in Edinburgh they had carried out with complete harmony the administration of their statutory duties and powers relating to the transferred schools, and that they had as a body faced all the problems of these schools with a catholicity of spirit which had for its sole object the educational benefit of the child. (Applause.) He acknowledged with gratitude the fair-mindedness of his Roman Catholic colleagues on the Education Authority in putting forward claims for expenditure on and in these schools, and he thought these claims had been met in a reasonable way. (Applause.)

**THE 1918 ACT.**

It might be a suitable occasion for indulging in a brief retrospect regarding the reasons for transfer of the voluntary schools, and considering whether the objects of the Legislature had been approximately fulfilled. Mr Robert Munro, then Secretary for Scotland, now Lord Alness, in moving the second reading of the Education (Scotland) Bill in June 1918, said that the Roman Catholic community had stood outside the public school system ever since its inception in 1872; that they had chosen rather, while paying as rate-payers their share in the expense of providing and maintaining schools which they never or rarely used, to provide and maintain at their own expense their own separate schools for the use of their children. The consequences were that, in spite of straining every resource open to them to the utmost to meet the double burden, their separate schools were, generally speaking, inferior as regarded building and equipment, the teachers were zealous but poorly paid, their provision of secondary schools was totally inadequate, and the educational outlook of the masses of their children was unduly narrowing. The Bill proposed, and the Act supplied, the remedy, which was to bring these and other separate denominational schools into the public school system, and, while providing for their maintenance at the public expense, to subject them to the control of the Local Authority in the same way as other public schools, with adequate guarantees, of course, for the maintenance of their distinctive religious instruction. He thought that in Edinburgh they might fairly claim that, as regarded building and equipment, the Roman Catholic scholars had had an adequate share of the expenditure of the Authority in the general building programme; their teachers had had their salaries raised to the general standard, and had been remunerated adequately for their work. The consequence of better school environment for the children, and of having teachers free from harassing financial worries, must surely have made a vast improvement in the chances of a good education for Roman Catholic children. (Applause.)

**LOOKING AHEAD.**

In this building of St John's Roman Catholic School they had not only made adequate provision for present needs, but in its ample accommodation they had had foresight for the future. It was a handsome edifice, and did great credit to the architects, Messrs Reid & Forbes, and to the various contractors who executed the work. (Applause.) In the new school every provision would be made to carry out the latest regulations of the Scottish Education Department and the Authority, so that the children might have the opportunity of being adequately equipped for after-life. Children residing in the vicinity would be in a position to gain at this school of their district what was known as the "day school certificate (lower)," which was granted on the successful completion of a two years' course; and, if they desired to obtain the "day school certificate (higher)," which was the reward for the successful completion of a three years' course, they would have the opportunity of being transferred to a Roman Catholic intermediate school known as "St Anthony's," in Lochend Road.

Mrs Ross, Convener of the Day Schools Committee, made a brief statement regarding the curriculum which the children in the school would follow.

The Rev. Monsignor Milroy, as representing Bishop Graham, conveyed to the Education Authority his and their deep appreciation of all the Authority had done for the Catholic body in Edinburgh. He referred to the generous manner in which the Authority had discharged the duties imposed upon them by the Act of 1918. They had had a most fortunate experience, and he had long coveted the opportunity of making public recognition of the generous treatment they had received at the hands of the Education Authority. (Applause.) Not merely the letter but the spirit of the law had been recognised. (Applause.)

Presentations were made to Bailie and Mrs Allan by the chairman.