

£201,000 SCHOOL TOO POSH?

Official opening of new 'Palace of Plastic . . .'

WHICH is the best school in Tottenham? Well, the newest of them all, officially opened last week, is the £201,000 Markfield Secondary School, near Stamford Hill, of which one of its pupils said, "I don't like this school—it's too posh."

Servants of the public

THREE Mayors, together with public officials and voluntary workers from Wood Green, Tottenham and Edmonton, were entertained to lunch by the insurance profession at the Regal Rooms, Edmonton, on Tuesday. It was the annual luncheon of the local committees of the Industrial Life Offices.

The chairman, Mr. A. Moore, said in their work as insurance men they were serving the public. No one had a more intimate contact with the problems of all classes of the community.

Proposing the toast of the Life Offices, Mr. Howard S. Watts, former Edmonton Borough Treasurer, and President of Edmonton Rotary Club, spoke of the difficulties of collecting insurance premiums. Some 10 million homes were visited each year. In his early days in local government he used to collect rates, but rate collectors were not regarded as friends like the insurance agents.

PROMPT SERVICE

Mr. R. S. Jackson, a member of the local committee, said: "There are not many families who have not had occasion to call on the insurance man as someone who can help them and give them prompt service in times of loss and distress.

"Since we sat down to this luncheon I estimate that some £45,000 has been handed over to the public in the form of claims upon industrial life insurance policies," he said.

Welcoming the guests, Mr. R. A. Holland, another committee member, commented: "We are happy to see the evidence of prosperity about us—the new shops, flats, factories, houses and schools. Life is more comfortable now for most of us."

The Mayor of Edmonton (Ald. J. Reid) said the happiness and prosperity of the people were dependent on the preservation of peace, and he earnestly hoped that they could look forward to a future in which they could help people to lead a fuller and richer life.

Ald. H. W. Turner (Mayor of Tottenham) recalled that insurance played an important part in his younger days—his father was an insurance agent—and the Mayor of Wood Green (Cr. A. C. Partridge) said that during the depression he also acted as an insurance collector.

The pupil's remark was reported by the Headmaster, Mr. M. A. Langdell, at the opening ceremony—and very "posh" the new school is. There, the 600 boys and girls can get a grounding in all the normal school subjects, but can also learn how to dig a garden, repair a motor car, make a kitchen table, cook a chicken, build a boat, do the weekly washing, and a hundred other practical things.

It is a huge school—a palace of bright plastic, glass and aluminium, choc-a-bloc with all the latest and best equipment.

And if the school is "posh" then so are the pupils; you will not see ragged blue jeans and sloppy jumpers, but neatly-creased grey flannels, "official" blazers and bright new "old school ties."

Ald. W. R. M. Chambers, chairman of Middlesex County Council, inaugurated the opening ceremony and introduced Ald. J. W. A. Billam, chairman of Middlesex Education Committee, who welcomed the guests, including Sir Fred Messer, M.P. for Tottenham, representatives of Tottenham Council and Education Committee, Mrs. F. Long, J.P., chairman of Edmonton Education Committee, officers of education services at county and national level, pupils, staff and parents.

Ald. Billam said that since the war 171 new school departments had been set up, providing 64,600 new places. Developments to existing schools involved opening a further 45 new departments, providing 7,800 places. Two other new schools were being built in the county to provide 2,000 more places.

"We are providing for the bulge," he explained.

Mr. Michael Stewart, M.P., an ex-schoolmaster, officially opened and named the school.

NOT JUST A BUILDING

Mr. Stewart thought children may wonder at the peculiar habit of grown-ups of "opening" a school which had been in use for 18 months, and "naming" it, despite the fact that the name was already in current use.

A school was not just a building with people in it. Before a school could be created the staff and pupils had to get to know each other and reach a good standard of work.

PIONEERING

He stressed the importance of good school buildings that could provide a wide variety of courses. Most people, when asked the purpose of education, would answer that it fitted them for earning a living. That was a good sensible reason, but people did not spend their whole lives working.

Education should make children grow up to fully developed human beings, capable of mak-

ing sensible judgments. Mathematics was not only useful in a job but was needed in order to manage one's own accounts and to understand the nation's problems.

Pupils read poetry and learnt English literature in school, not just because their future jobs may call for a good letter-writer, but in order that they could find their way about in the world of words.

PIONEERING

Ald. Mrs. A. F. Remington, Chairman of Tottenham Education Committee, who proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Stewart, spoke of the achievements of Tottenham in pioneering educational developments.

The building of new schools showed that life was going to go on despite atom-bomb threats.

Lady Morrison, deputy Mayor of Tottenham, seconded.

During the opening ceremony the school orchestra and choir entertained with an ambitious programme that even included works by Beethoven. Visitors later went on a tour of the building.

A four-form entry school, Markfield took just over two years to build and was completed for the Autumn term of 1956. The adjacent old school is still used as an annexe and the entire school will have nearly 1,000 pupils in 1960.

The school aims to provide a sound, broad and varied education with special provision for those staying on after 15, including preliminary training in office, arts and technical and practical skills.

Provision is also made for the pupils remaining at school to take the G.C.E. at Ordinary level and to give a comprehensive background of experience in arts, crafts, drama, dancing and music.

FOUR ACRES

Planned to make the best use of its four acres, it has a four-floor building for science, crafts, domestic subjects and horticulture. There is also a single-storey building housing a dining hall, two main halls with a stage, kitchen, gymnasium and staff rooms.

There are playgrounds and tennis-courts and adjacent pitches for field games. Cost per place was £243.

Relied too much on telephone