

Opening of a new Public School

(By our own correspondent)

Visitors to Addiewell will have seen during the last year to the north of the village a building in course of erection on a commanding site on the opposite side of the road from the toll-house. This building, the new Junior School, is now completed, and was formally opened on Monday last.

The classrooms

The erection is of brick, with a substantial stone wall enclosing the grounds and out-buildings; inside, it is all that could be desired, nothing being apparently wanting that could add to the comfort and health of both pupils and teachers. The ventilating apparatus is perfect, and the lighting arranged on the very best principle. The large rooms are two in number; the principal one, which is intended for the younger children, has about one-third of its space fitted with a seated gallery, while the other, which is meant for more advanced pupils, has a gallery at either end, fitted with very convenient desks. In the middle of this room is a partition with folding glass doors, which open fully one-half the width of the room, so that it can be used as one or two rooms as found necessary. Then there is the mistress' room, the cap and cloak rooms, lavatories, etc, etc.

Altogether the new school is highly creditable to the taste of the Board and to the skill of the architect, Mr Wilson, 2 Queen Street, Edinburgh, with whom the members of the Board express themselves as highly pleased for the attention he has bestowed on the work during its progress.

The school has space for 235 children, and cost the very moderate sum of £1,276 3s 2d, or £5 8s 8d per scholar.

The opening ceremony

At half-past ten, the time fixed for the opening ceremony, there were present of the Parish School Board – Mr Alex. Smith, of Muirhouse (chairman); Mr Wm. McCutcheon, manager, Addiewell Works; Mr Wm Graham, Meadowhead; Mr Wm Byars, farmer, Baads Mill; Mr Alex. Martin, West Calder; and Mr J. Mungle jun. (clerk), West Calder. There were also present Mr Wm. Robb, Mr Jas. Davidson, Mr G. Raeburn, Mr T. Bruce of the Educational Association; and Mr P. Cosgrove.

The children having been marched into the building in regular and orderly Indian file, by Mr Watson, head teacher, and Miss Robertson and her assistants, and having taken their places on the gallery seats, Mr Smith, chairman of the School Board, addressing the children, congratulated them on the occasion of their entering on possession of the new premises. He hoped that the good reports hitherto received of Addiewell School would continue; of this he had not the least doubt; they had done well in the past, had gained the very highest grants that could be expected and under the able management of their excellent head-master, Mr Watson, and his highly efficient staff, there was no fear of the future. The board had every reason to be proud of those schools, and so had provided for their comfort this beautiful building in which they were met for the first time to-day. The members of the School Board were certainly entitled to some credit for the spirit displayed by them in the erection of these schools, and if he were not so closely connected with them he would feel bound to say more on that point. He would take this opportunity of thanking the Educational Association Committee, some of the members of which were there that day, for the very valuable services rendered by them to the educational interest of the district, services beneficial to children, parents, teachers, School Board, and ratepayers. It was an undoubted fact that but for this association a much larger sum

would have to be levied for educational purposes. In conclusion, he hoped the children would exert themselves, attend to their lessons, and be obedient to their teachers, and he had to announce to them that the board had granted them a half holiday in honour of the opening of their school.

The children rewarded Mr Smith at the close of his address with a very hearty cheer.

Mr Wm. Robb as chairman of the Educational Association thanked Mr Smith for his reference to their services, which he was afraid Mr Smith overrated. It was certain, however, that that association had done some good; one thing it did do, it simplified the labours for the compulsory officer. This was a very interesting day for Addiewell, the most interesting it had seen for a long time. It was a most important day for the interests of education. He was happy to be able to say that, although paying the school-fees of over one thousand children of Young's Co.'s workmen, they never had any complaints against any of the teachers. With Mr Watson they had always transacted their business most satisfactorily.

Mr Watson, in the name of himself and staff, thanked the School Board for the new premises; as for the children, he would let them speak for themselves.

None of the young people being apparently anxious to make a speech, they expressed their thanks by three cheers, the last being a *thumper*.

Juvenile Songs

After Messrs Smith and Robb had spoken, Miss Robertson took her stand fronting the children, when a whole series of juvenile songs were sung in a manner which showed that the discipline of the school was perfect. Not an eye wandered from watching her every action. It was a pleasing sight, all the little ones anxious to please, in which we are sure they were successful. The opening of the school was certainly a very interesting ceremony. May they one and all be happy and healthy in their new quarters.

The contractors were:- Mason work – A. Mitchell & Sons, West Calder; joiner work – James Lindsay, Forth; slater work – Wm Darrie, Glasgow; plaster work; R. Jamieson, West Calder; plumber work – W. Waddell, Wishaw.

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