Tenth Anniversary of RAEBURN PARK SCHOOL

A Tribute by I.F.M.

RAEBURN PARK School celebrates its tenth anniversary on 3rd May and surely few private educational establishments could tell so remarkable a story of success over such a short period.

The school was started by a group of senior officials of the Singapore Harbour Board on very sound lines with the principal object of providing educational facilities for the children of their executive officers. In order to fill the school, vacancies were offered to children of parents not employed by the Harbour Board and the school rapidly grew to its maximum capacity of 210 pupils.

After six years, the management of the school was transferred to a private company formed by the British European Association. The transfer was effected smoothly and the school has continued to prosper under its changed management.

We have been very fortunate in the choice of the directors of the school company as, so often, a perfectly normal and sensible group of people on being elected to such a position finds itself miraculously gifted with specialist knowledge on subjects in which they have neither training nor experience — when this subject concerns the future of our children the result can be nothing less than catastrophic. A great measure of the continued success of our school has, I believe, been due to a laudable lack of interference on the educational side by our directors, who have been content to leave this to Mrs. M. M. Mackay and her highly qualified team of teachers.

As parents we can only judge a school at second hand and we form our opinions from three sources:

(a) Our children.
(b) Other people’s opinions.
(c) Personal observation.

Examining Raeburn Park School from these angles I would comment:

(a) My three children and those of my friends all love school and certainly know a great deal more than I did at the same age.
(b) The fact that the school has a long waiting list for new entrants is tribute enough to itself, but I did recently receive an unsolicited compliment when I went to see the headmistress of a large school in Scotland. We were discussing the entry of my daughter into her school and she remarked that she liked to test children from overseas before confirming their entry. However, on learning that my child was at Raeburn Park she said, "In that case no preliminary test will be necessary — we know the school well and the children from there are always well up to standard!"
(c) As parents we can only directly observe the workings of the school at the annual "open" days and at the school sports, but both these events are so magnificently run by the school staff that no parent could fail to be impressed by the tremendous efficiency with which these two very dissimilar functions are handled.

A few years ago I was talking to a most successful headmaster who said, "I can look a school board in the eye, I can control a mass of children but I take to my heels at the approach of a parent." Our school is staffed by members of the weaker sex but they are obviously made of much sterner stuff than my headmaster friend, as they do not take to the trees when they see a parent coming!

On the contrary, as parents we have been received with sympathy and understanding wherever we have wanted to discuss problems connected with our children’s progress. Making themselves so readily available to parents in this way must have put a considerable additional strain on the staff, but it has cemented over the years a very real feeling of mutual confidence between parents and teachers.

We can count ourselves as extremely fortunate that over the ten years we have had remarkably few changes of staff, which has preserved a continuity that is rare in our society. The teachers have invariably been selected carefully and we can with confidence say that we have entrusted our children to the charge of dedicated experts.

No first class organisation can operate without a first class team and no first class team can operate without a first class leader. So, whilst not forgetting the excellent team, we must pay high tribute to its leader, Mrs. Muriel Mackay, who has so capably guided the school firmly along the road to success since its inception.

In congratulating the school on its tenth anniversary I am sure I voice the feelings of all parents past and present in thanking the school board and staff for the benefits our children have received and in wishing the school ever increasing success in the future.

Centre of Stamp Trade

LONDON is the centre of the world stamp trade, particularly for British and Commonwealth “classics.” When an important collection comes on the market, the auctioneer’s experts prepare an illustrated catalogue and circulate publicity throughout the world.

In recent months some of the rarest stamps in the world have been acquired in London by dealers and collectors from all over the world, including Asia.

An unused specimen of the Mauritius “Post Office” one penny went last year to Japan. The price, a record for this stamp, was £6,500. A famous cover bearing the “Post Office” one penny and three adhesive stamps found by a schoolboy in 1902 and which sold for £1,100 a year later, went to a New Orleans dealer for £28,000, an all-time world record.

Generally rare stamps tend to return to their country of origin. The greatest demand for French stamps, for example, comes from France, and British stamps are more sought after in Britain than elsewhere.

Centenary of H & S Bank

THE CENTENARY of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation falls on March 3 next year. The chairman, Mr. W.C.G. Knowles, has announced that there will be a variety of functions in Hong Kong and other centres to celebrate the event.

The bank has branches in Malaysia and throughout the Far East and its name has become a household word in its 100 years of service to the commercial communities of the whole area.

Mr. Knowles added: “The celebrations in Hong Kong will take place from March 1 to 15 and we shall be glad to welcome any old friends of the bank who may be intending to visit Hong Kong next Spring.”

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