

THE MAYORALTY.

MR. F. E. ABBOTT'S ELECTION.

PROPOSED HARBOUR BOARD.

C.T. November 1929

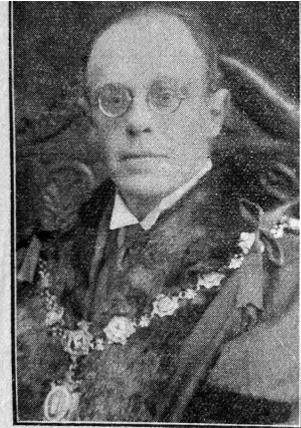


Photo Mr. F. E. Abbott, C.C.,
the newly-elected Mayor,
who also held the Office in 1925-26.

The time-honoured function of the election of Mayor of the ancient Borough of Christchurch took place on Saturday, November 9, at the Town Hall, in the presence of a large gathering of the burgesses, Mr. F. E. Abbott, County Councillor for the Borough, being unanimously elected.

The members present were the retiring Mayor (Coun. Miss Robinson), Aldermen H. J. Martin, Frank A. Lane, J.P., N. Barnes, F. Clarke, Councillors A. R. Tiller, J. C. Wyatt, W. G. Spickernell, A. E. Shave, Fred Gelsthorpe, E. Russell Oakley, Mrs. Bellamy, F. C. Emerson, Douglas Galton, John W. Tucker, Major Saunders, Major Bellairs, with the Town Clerk (Mr. W. D. Platt, LL.B.), Borough Surveyor (Mr. H. J. Farmer), Rating Officer (Mr. J. Nutman) and Sanitary Inspector (Mr. C. Crowther).

Mrs. Abbott sat in the body of the hall with her husband during his election, with a muffler round the lower part of her face, as she has recently left a nursing home following a dental operation.

Coun. Russell Oakley, as Chairman of the Mayoral Selection Committee, moved the election of Mr. F. E. Abbott. He pointed out that normally the nomination as Mayor of somebody who was not a member of the Council would be a matter for grave consideration, but in Mr. Abbott's case that did not arise, for he had been a member of the Council for nine years, had already served as Mayor, and a further fact was that he was the representative of the town on the County Council. If Mr. Abbott accepted he could rely on the wholehearted co-operation of the members of the Council in everything that would be for the welfare and prosperity of Christchurch.

Ald. Martin, in seconding, said that the Council knew from past experience how well the duties would be carried out by the new Mayor. It would be a difficult task in the next twelve months owing to the many changes that were to take place in administration, but there was not a member of the Council but would assist him in solving those difficulties.

The motion was carried unanimously, and the newly-elected Mayor left the Town Hall with the retiring and Deputy Mayor for the purpose of robing.

THE MAYOR'S REPLY.

The Mayor, after expressing thanks for his election, first welcomed the six new Councillors, remarking that he did not remember a year in which "the old mother had so many cubs forced upon her to bring up"—(laughter)—and he hoped they would not incur the punishment of other children of a mother mentioned in nursery rhymes! Older members would do their best to initiate the newly elected in the "mysteries of the work of the Town Council."

Proceeding, he said that many important matters were to be dealt with in the coming year, and the Council would endeavour to carry out the work with efficiency and economy. It was not always true economy to keep down the rates. Christchurch was a progressive Borough and they desired to assist its development by combining efficiency with economy and thus make it worthy of its ancient history.

He alluded to Town Planning as a step "to guard the burgesses from possibly ill-considered and occasionally disfiguring schemes of development which might tend altogether to destroy the charm and beauty of our town."

Regarding Iford Bridge, the newly-elected Mayor said: "You know that for the time the County Council saw fit to turn down the scheme indefinitely. I, personally, have done my best to urge the matter on, I am afraid with little success; but I can give you a real hope that something will be done in the near future. In fact, I think by the end of this month the matter will be finally

settled. I am hopeful that we shall be able to see the commencement of the new-bridge within the next two or three months. This will give relief to traffic and will tend to give employment to many men who are at present on our lists of unemployed."

In conclusion, he spoke to the children—to whom the town would look for guidance in the future—and made sympathetic reference to the Books of Remembrance before him, containing the names of the local men who served in the late war. "I want the boys and girls to think of these books not as a remembrance of war, but as a remembrance of peace . . . and to resolve that all their efforts as they grow up to manhood and womanhood shall be in the cause of peace," he concluded.

THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR.

Ald. Barnes proposed that the grateful thanks of the Council and their very high appreciation of her invaluable services should be tendered to Coun. Miss Robinson for the manner in which she had carried out the duties of Mayor during the past year; and that the resolution should be recorded on the minutes. He remarked that he had the honour of proposing Miss Robinson as the first lady Mayor of the Borough, when he predicted that she would worthily maintain the honour and dignity of the office. That prediction had been entirely fulfilled. (Applause.) Moreover, she had brought to bear a very charming and winsome personality, which had endeared her to every section of the community. Another outstanding characteristic of the retiring Mayor was her thoroughness, which had been most marked in everything undertaken by her. He particularly instanced her visit to South Wales to ascertain first hand the condition of the miners and their families at the time of the miners' appeal. He spoke, too, of the energy and ability which she had shown on behalf of local charities, the child welfare movement and the technical school "as a few of the things" for which she had worked especially hard, adding that her public utterances had been stamped with commonsense and a keen desire to keep Christchurch in the forefront. Also, he referred to the dignified, albeit natural manner in which Miss Robinson received the King's son (the Duke of Gloucester), when he visited the town. The burgesses felt a very deep sense of gratitude to her for all that she had done, and, he concluded, addressing the newly elected Mayor, "in handing over the office to you, sir, she hands it over with undiminished lustre."

Coun. Tiller seconded, remarking that Miss Robinson had carried out the duties single-handed and, therefore, she was entitled to all the more credit.

MISS ROBINSON'S REPLY.

Coun. Miss Robinson, in reply, expressed her appreciation of the generous support given her by the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. H. J. Martin), the Council as a whole, and the officials, stating that she would always cherish "very happy remembrance" of her term of office. She omitted nobody's name in her thanks, with a special word for the Town Clerk for the way in which he "had smoothed out" all difficulties and "made my path easy," adding that the Borough was in a sound financial position, thanks to his expert ability and efficient administration.

One of her happiest memories would be the help cheerfully given to various charitable causes by the Brotherhood, Town Band and Fire Brigade.

In a reference to the Town Planning Act, Miss Robinson remarked, "Christchurch is English history illustrated and it should be enshrined for posterity," and spoke of the anxious fight made for the preservation of Church Hatch.

She also stated: "The Council have considered the advisability of obtaining a provisional order for the setting up of a Harbour Board, and no doubt it will bear fruit by the end of the year. At present negotiations are being made with various interested parties."

Regarding housing development, she referred to the Homelands, Douglas, Latch Farm and Fairmile estates and 78 acres at Friars Cliff adjoining the Borough. Last year 131 houses were

erected in the town and ten times more houses were being built than in pre-war days. The Council were applying to the Unemployments Grants Committee for approval of roadway and sewerage schemes to provide work for the unemployed. Byelaws adopted by the Council now required the humane slaughter of all animals killed in the Borough.

In conclusion, Miss Robinson said: "This Town Council has visions, and who would not welcome Bernard's Mead as a recreation ground for Jumpers; the acquisition of a lease of the foreshore rights from the owners of the beach at Mudford; the further development of Quomps, with acquisition of land, for a bathing pool; the continuance of the Riverside Walk; a fire engine; houses with rents within the reach of the working, man?"

The Mayor appointed Miss Robinson as Deputy Mayor.