

TOWN COUNCIL. THREE MAIDEN SPEECHES.

C.T. November 1929

At the meeting of the Christchurch Town Council on Saturday, the Mayor (Mr. E. E. Abbott, C.C.) presiding.

The Town Clerk (Mr. W. D. Platt) reported that 98 applications, including 40 from the town, had been received for the position of handyman to the Corporation. It was suggested that these should be referred to the Municipal Committee with power to make an appointment.

Ald. Martin disagreed, his point being that it was not an economic proposition to appoint a man with a standing charge of £168 a year. There should be periodic inspection of the Council houses and the work put out to contract. He was ill at the last meeting otherwise he would have opposed it then.

The Borough Surveyor (Mr. H. J. Farmer) admitted that he was not in a position with a handyman to beat contractors at their own jobs.

Coun. Spickernell, in a maiden speech, supported Ald. Martin, on the ground that from experience he found that in ordinary repairs to property, such as the Council possessed, it was cheaper to put the work out to contract, especially if the sum were over £3. More particularly would it be cheaper to give the work to firms in their particular districts, such as Mudeford and Fairmile. He added that he could speak now from a disinterested point of view, whereas a few weeks ago he might have been charged with having expressed his opinion from interested motives.

Coun. Oakley rose to speak, but was ruled out of order, whereupon he remarked, "I am glad you are not allowing more talk, because it is an absolute waste of time."

On a close vote, the applications were referred to the committee.

RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. A. J. King, of Southbourne, a commercial traveller, wrote asking the Town Council to approach the Southern Railway to stop the 3.30 down train at Christchurch Station. He pointed out that it stopped at New Milton, but went through Christchurch, which served Southbourne.

Ald. Martin moved that the Town Clerk write to the Southern Railway, pointing out how the town was suffering from lack of railway facilities, and asking for an improvement. He alleged that the local train service was as bad as it could be, and quoted a number of instances which had befallen him as a railway traveller to London and Southampton. The matter ought to be taken up very strongly. Christchurch was a very important station and was used by a great many people. They were losing facilities which they used to enjoy. Representations should be made for the 3.30 to stop and another one about 6 o'clock.

Coun. Douglas Galton, also in a maiden speech, entirely agreed with Ald. Martin. "I can bear out what he says regarding the lack of train service to Christchurch," he remarked, "and I am heartily in favour of taking it up with the railway company."

The Deputy Mayor said that it was high time that the north side of the station was opened for the benefit of Jumpers' residents, which view was endorsed by Coun. Shave.

Ald. Barnes, however, thought it was inadvisable to incorporate the two matters, and the resolution asking for an improved train service, was carried.

The Church of England Home for Waifs and Strays wrote asking for a flag day, but it was decided to reply that the two flag days approved by the Council had already been allotted.

GUARDIANS.

Ald. H. J. Martin and Couns. Gelsthorpe and Emerson were elected to serve on the Guardians' Committee of the Hampshire County Council.

HANTS AND DORSET.

Mr. W. W. Graham, general manager of the Hants and Dorset Motor Services, Limited, wrote with reference to his last application for the licence of a 14-seater motor bus, asking whether he could meet a committee of the Council regarding the services in and out of Christchurch.

Ald. Barnes said that it was a courteous letter which demanded a courteous answer, and suggested that a small committee should be appointed.

Coun. Gelsthorpe was the third member to make a maiden speech. He asked that when meeting Mr. Graham the committee should raise the question of the Hants and Dorset issuing season tickets or if they could run the journey to Boscombe and Bournemouth at single fare. "If we meet him we might get something good for Christchurch," he said.

Coun. Shave also strongly supported meeting Mr. Graham, stating that the Hants and Dorset had certainly opened up the district and he thought that good would come of the interview.

A small committee, was appointed to meet Mr. Graham.

THE TOWN BAND.

Ald. Barnes read the annual report of the Town Band, stating that the income amounted to just over £200 and there was a credit balance of £26 16s. 8d. The band had done remarkably well for charitable purposes during the past year, having raised over £87 for various causes. (Applause.) It had been decided to pay the bandmaster 10s. a week. A small deputation had been appointed to interview Supt. Jacobs regarding the band's playing in High Street on Saturday evenings, and it was hoped that this would provide a regular source of income. He said that half the collections obtained by the band was shared between the members, and the other half went into the general funds. In conclusion, Ald. Barnes announced that he was giving up the position of hon. treasurer and that Coun. Spickernell had consented to take it on.

NO CHANGE.

In the election of committees, Coun. Russell Oakley moved that a Housing and Allotments Committee be appointed, in addition to the existing four main committees of Municipal, Finance, Roads and Sanitary. The Council owned about 70 houses, and their repairs were an important matter. He invited an expression of opinion on the proposal from the Chairman of the Municipal Committee. Continuing, he said that the Ancient Documents Committee could be abolished and at the next meeting he would be in a position to bring forward a resolution dealing with the documents of the Borough.

Major Saunders said that the Municipal Committee were considering schemes, including the proposed Harbour Board, and the taking over of the foreshore rights, which might mean the appointment of two or more additional committees.

The proposal was negatived.

A CLOSED STREET.

Ald. Martin drew attention to the fact that Millhams Street had been closed without the sanction of the Council, which, he said, was a high-handed action.

The Borough Surveyor stated that the contractors had hoped to find ways and means of doing the work without closing the street, but they later found there was no alternative. They spoke to him about it and he advised them to take precautions to inform everybody who was likely to be affected. He did not understand that it would be closed so long.

A QUESTION.

Coun. Gelsthorpe inquired whether any member of the Council acting as Returning Officer in the elections was justified in nominating a candidate.

The Town Clerk replied that any officer in an election ought not to do so. He should do nothing which was likely to encourage one candidate against another.

Ald. Barnes said that as a Returning Officer he always declined to nominate candidates, as that official might be called upon to give the casting vote.

SUPERANNUATION.

Ald. Martin moved the adoption, of the Finance Committee's recommendations, which included ascertaining from the Hants County Council whether they would include Town Council officials in their superannuation scheme, and that steps be taken to find out the cost.

Ald. Martin said that the three officials affected were the Town Clerk, Borough Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector. He explained that at present superannuation was optional regarding local authorities, but in the near future it was to be compulsory.

JOB FOR HANDYMAN!

Major Saunders moved a recommendation of the Municipal Committee that the Borough Surveyor be instructed to extend the riverside walk at the quay to the Borough boundary at an estimated cost of £120.

Ald. Martin (humorously): Why not wait until the handyman is appointed!

Coun. Shave: That will take two or three months.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

A circular was received from the Home Office notifying the suspension of the Early Closing (Shops Hours) Act, between Wednesday, December 18 and Tuesday, December 24.