

Compton's is 7th of 9 new secondary schools

MINISTER PRAISES BERKSHIRE'S GOOD RECORD

Catching up with county programme

Sir David Eccles, Minister of Education, praised Berkshire Education Authority's good record in providing secondary modern schools when he officially opened the £118,000 Downs Secondary Modern School at Compton on Friday.

"I am told that nine secondary modern schools were wanted in the county, of which the Downs School is number seven. You have done something in Berkshire that is very notable," he said.

"Berkshire is a popular place to live and there are developments like the Atomic Energy Establishments, all of which brought additional children to the area. It is a real feather in your cap that you have been able to catch up with the programme," Sir David went on.

"Let Children Stay On"

He liked the design of the school as it did not look too institutional. He appealed to parents to allow their children to stay on at least until the end of the academic year in Septem-

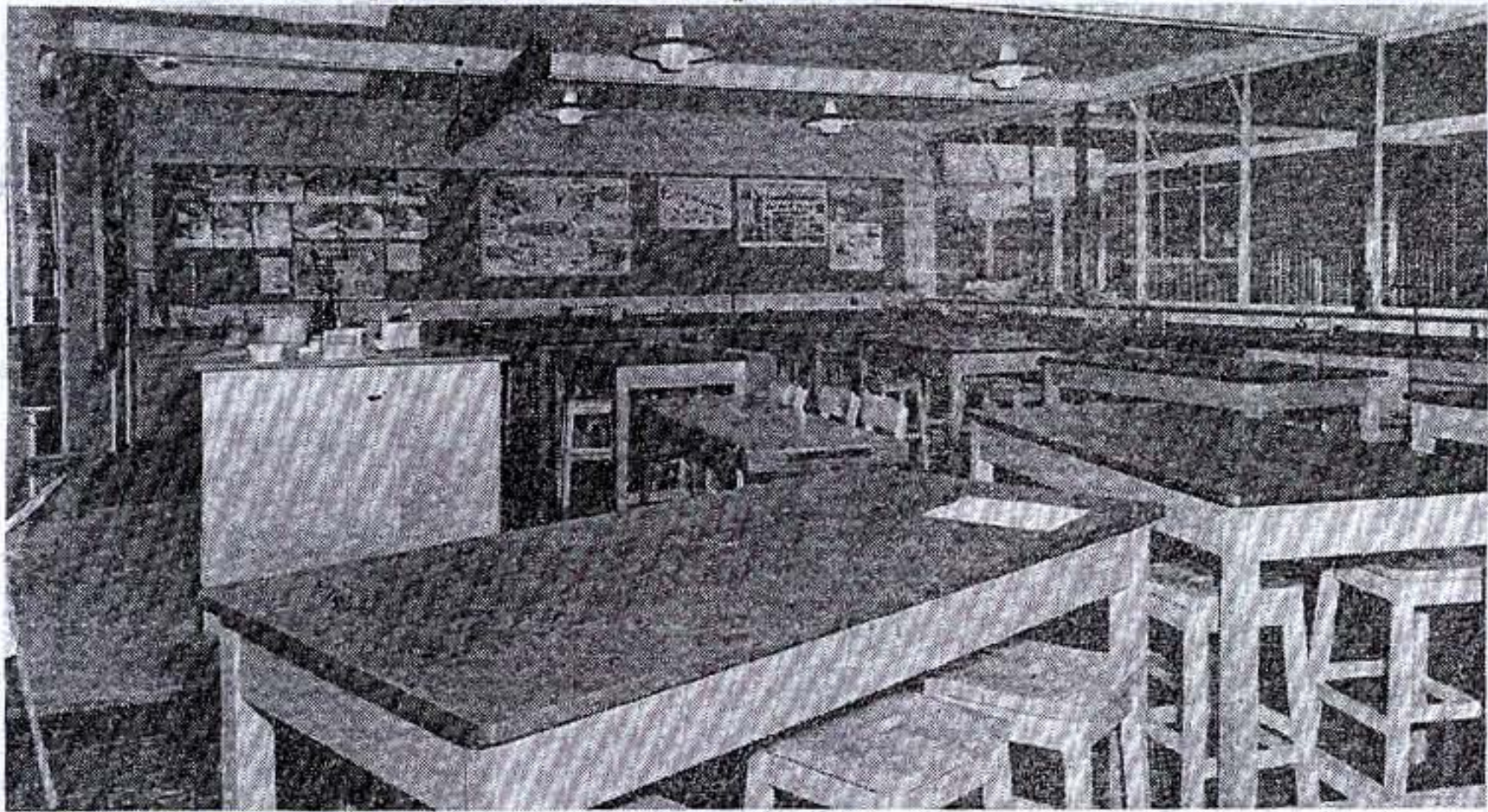
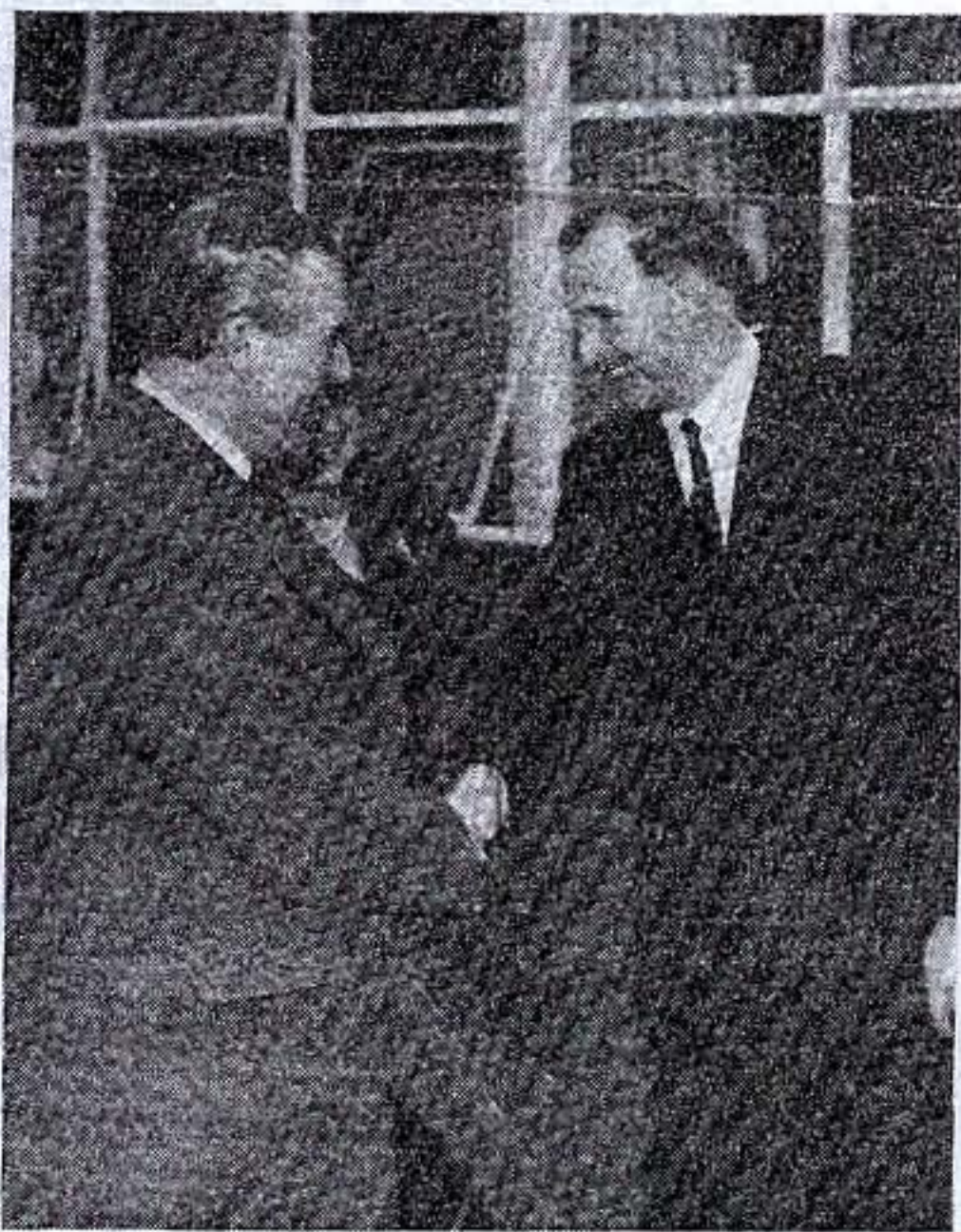
"If some enterprising boy, getting 2s. 6d. a week pocket money asked for 5s. and was given 3s. 6d. he could not expect much sympathy if he complained that his 5s. programme had been 'cut' by 1s. 6d. But that is exactly what some of his elders and betters are saying about school building," the Minister continued.

Picking Most Urgent

"Naturally local education authorities put more schools on the list than they can expect to be allowed to build, so each year I saddle myself with the difficult job of selecting the ones that are most urgent," said Sir David. "This method is troublesome, but it is the fairest and most efficient."

"Everyone knows that the Government has to put upper limits

Right: Sir David Eccles with the headmaster, Mr. Philip Bowden. Below: A view of the science laboratory.



ber, rather than taking them away at the end of the term in which they reached the age of 15. The last few months at school could prove very important.

With the total educational building programme now running at £100 million a year — the highest ever — it was unfair and made no sense to accuse the Government of "cutting" school building.

on the money that can be spent on all the building programmes under its control including the school building programmes. I could just cut the figure for the schools into slices and hand them round the local authorities leaving it to them to make the best use of their allocation."

Considering Priorities

"That would be very unscientific and the local authorities themselves would be the first to object to it. It is much more satisfactory to ask each to send me in advance a list of priorities. We can quickly agree which schools simply must be built to provide for children who otherwise would have no school at all. For the rest of the annual programmes we compare very carefully each authority's requests with those of all the others, and on the basis of relative needs decide which schools should be built. Nobody is in a position to do this job except the Ministry."

Sir David ended by wishing every success to the governors, staff, parents and all the boys and girls at the school.

for the Hungerford School, Mrs. Sheesby added.

Raising Rural Schools' Standard

Mr. M. W. Paine, chairman of Newbury Divisional Executive, said he did not want to appear to be pleading with the Minister on this occasion, but they did want to bring rural schools up to the standard of town schools. They did not like to see young people moving out of the rural areas because their children could get a better education in the town.

The chairman of the school governors, Sir Leonard Wilson, said the opportunities open to a young person at the new secondary modern schools were now better than they could get at a grammar school.

The head boy, Gary Gregory, presented Sir David with a wooden bowl made in the school.

Mrs. Sheesby was presented with a bouquet by Angela Jellery, head girl.

Later, Sir David planted a double flowering cherry tree in the school grounds.