

# School songsters foiled by the flu

THE inescapable flu resulted in an unexpected hitch at Oldbury Grammar School's senior prize distribution last week. For although the school song appeared on the programme it was omitted from the proceedings.

And for the first time in many years, the lusty chorus "So hurrah for the Old Boys of Oldbury" did not echo round the school hall on speech night.

Headmaster Mr. H. A. Aykroyd explained to the audience: "We have lost the music. We have also lost the music master—and he has the music!

"He has been ill in bed for some days and we have not been able to get in touch with him."

## FIRST TIME

Mr. Aykroyd, who has been head at Oldbury since 1963, said later: "I believe the school song was composed by a previous senior master. It was certainly many years before my time."

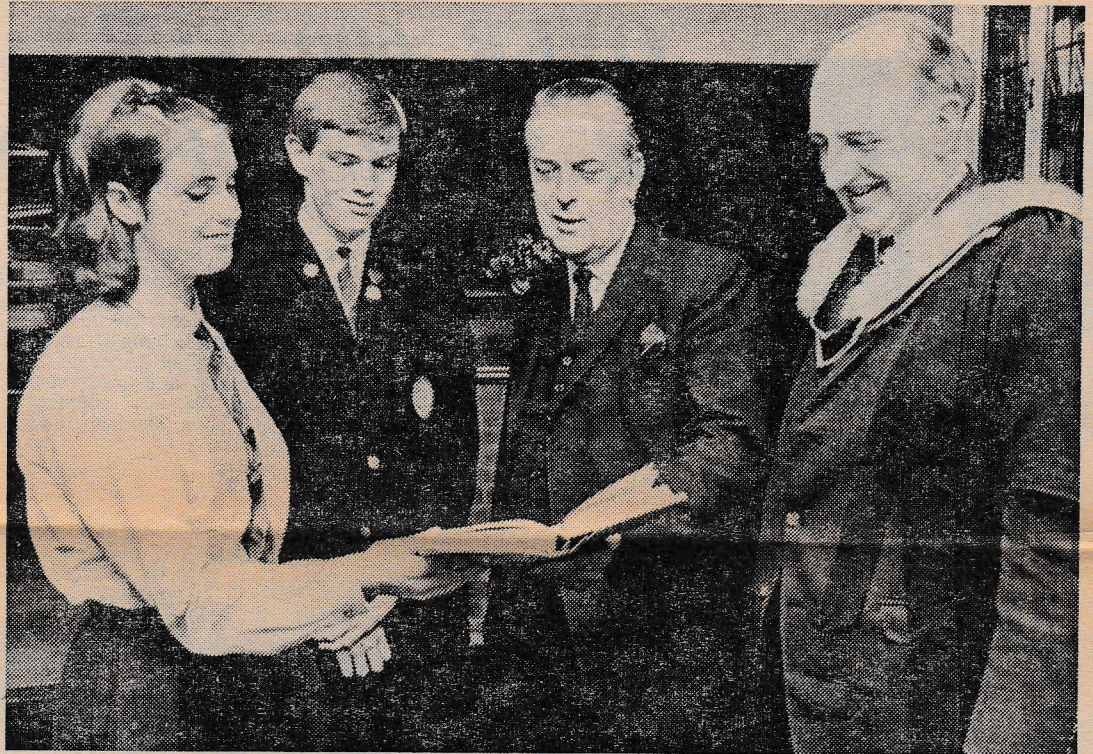
He said it was certainly the first time the Oldbury School Song had not been included in a speech day for many years.

Mr. Aykroyd said the music master, Mr. R. Broome, had been away ill with flu and was staying at his Stourbridge home.

The evening was not completely without music, however, for senior chemistry master Mr. E. Jones was able to play the National anthem on the school organ.

"Had the school song music been available, he would have been able to play this, too," added Mr. Aykroyd.

In his report, the headmaster



Pictured at Oldbury Grammar School's senior prize distribution are, from left: Head girl Josephine Green, Head boy D. Cooper, guest speaker Professor Threthowen and headmaster Mr. Aykroyd.

advocated changes in present school examination systems.

In their present form, they tested memory rather than intelligence, he contended. Results determined "in no small measure" the future careers of pupils.

It was therefore disturbing when the school's estimate of the performances of certain candidates differed from that of the examiners.

"One begins to wonder whether determining a child's future by examinations taken under tremendous time pressure is really the best way," he said.

## STRONG CASE

Candidates should be allowed as much time as they needed to complete examination papers, but be told to what lengths to restrict their answers. They should also be

allowed to refer to their text books.

"We should then get an examination of intelligence," he added.

There was "a strong case to be made out for allocating a proportion of examination marks to course work.

Mr. Aykroyd warned of the dangers of a student choosing a career at an early age to comply with the university admissions system.

## MUCH TOO EARLY

"Because of the demands made by universities in their entrance qualifications, particularly for science faculties, it becomes necessary that the choice of subjects made when a pupil is entering the fourth year of a school shall be a particularly careful one.

"The situation is complicated by the fact that at that stage it is not easy to tell who all the potential university candidates are, and in any case, this is much too early a time to decide definitely upon a career," he said.

In his remarks, Alderman John Beard, chairman of the school governors, criticised the activities of troublemakers in colleges and universities.

## SACRIFICES

He said: "It must be noted that we in the public life of this town are concerned to see that sacrifices that many parents — and the scholars—make shall not be wasted due to the efforts of some who we can do without."

The prizes were presented by Professor W. H. Threthowen, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at Birmingham University.

Head Boy D. Cooper gave a report of school activities and Head Girl Josephine Green proposed a vote of thanks to Professor Threthowen.