

BEAT PROBLEMS TO KEEP STANDARDS HIGH

THERE is a gap in the records of Milton Junior School from 1928, when the senior boys moved to their new premises, to December 21, 1955. On that night a fire broke out which completely destroyed the headmaster's and secretary's offices, reducing even the telephone directory to ashes.

In the disaster, besides many precious papers, the very core of the school, the library, was gutted. It had contained hundreds of books, a piano, all the games and athletics trophies, and several inter-school trophies which had been won during the year.

A cloakroom, too, was burnt out and the flames spread through the roofs of three adjoining classrooms and the craft room.

Amid the chaos of smoking, sodden debris, daylight revealed one reassuringly recognisable object. It was a half-pint bottle of milk which the delivery boy, after a wondering glance around, set as usual on the ash-strewn threshold of the ruined offices!

The distress the fire caused to the staff — especially to the School Superintendent, Mr. C. S. Lineham, whom no one thought of awakening although he lived in the hostel only 300 yards away — was soon tem-

pered by the outburst of affection for the school evoked by the news.

Offers of help and cash started coming in the next day.

The Public Works Department gave the restoration job top priority. While this was going on, the prep-room at the hostel, a Scout hall and the hall of the Hellenic Community were used as temporary classrooms.

The first Headmaster of the Junior School, Mr. Duncan MacDonald, was succeeded in 1932 by Mr. C. J. Edgecombe, who was promoted Inspector of Schools in 1946. Mr. A. Page then took over, and was headmaster for the next 14 years.

After Mr. Page retired in 1960, Mr. C. S. Lineham, who had been an assistant master since 1935, was appointed to the post, and is still in office.

Along with other schools, Milton Junior had its share of problems because of over-



MR. C. J. EDGECOMBE

crowding during the rapid growth of the 1950s. Classes became uncomfortably large, and boarding houses were crowded.

The staff worked tirelessly to meet the heavy demands made on them, and the school managed to keep its standards, especially in cultural matters, remarkably high.

In the 1958 Eisteddfod, for example, there were more than

300 of its boys taking part, many of them competing in two or more classes. Four choirs were entered and eight speech choirs, while the School Drama Club won the Stegall Trophy for the best performance in the junior dramatic class with its play "Christopher Columbus".

Another well-remembered production, "The Tinder-Box", staged as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1960, was a great source of pride to parents and all connected with the school.

A memorable social event during the Golden Jubilee was the dinner held at Milton House, when nearly 100 old boys who had attended the school before 1928 sat down in the crowded dining room.

The following January — a few days before term began, the unique experience of fire was counterbalanced by a less dramatic and destructive, but equally rare event — a flood.

The rains were so heavy that the usually insignificant Matsheumhlope River overflowed its banks and inundated the rugby pitch, creeping many inches up the goalposts.

'SEEING' TRIPS

The boys of Milton Junior have for years been encouraged to take a lively interest in the resources of their country. This has been stimulated by "see for yourselves" trips.

For example, in March, 1962, a party of 16 was taken to the Marvel Mine at Filabusi as part of the year's programme in connection with mineral resources. They went all over the mine, and underground.

The following year a party of 20 visited Wankie Colliery, the underground workings, and the by-products plant. It was a most instructive weekend.

In the August holidays of 1964, they undertook a much more ambitious venture — a fortnight's camping tour of Rhodesia. The itinerary included Zimbabwe, Kyle, the Lowveld, the Eastern Districts and a Que Que gold mine.

● There are at present about 490 boys at the school, including 65 boarders.



Milton Junior School contributes its share to an early fostering of sporting prowess and enthusiasm. These boys were taking part in a rugby festival that was one of the major events in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Milton Junior School.