

The King's School, Grantham

An Outline History



11. Financial problems and the L.E.A.

The expansions under **William Dawson** from 1899 to 1906 were proving very costly. The building programme committed the Governors to a large mortgage and they were receiving grants from the Government that required them to expand further. The Board of Education had been set up in 1899 and the Education Act of 1902 placed the responsibility for education on the Local Education Authority (L.E.A.), South Kesteven Council in the Grantham area. The L.E.A. set up a Technical Institute. To obtain the available grants it was necessary to provide science and technology subjects with laboratories.

The buildings opened in 1904 cost £18,000 obliging the Governors to sell £12,000 of Government Stock and take a mortgage of £5,000 on the Billingham farm. They were required to pay back half over the next 30 years. The yearly cost was £240.

[As a rough comparison this was a repayment of over £80,000 per year at twenty-first century values].

Early in 1906 **William Dawson** asked to be relieved of his contract because he had accepted the post of Head Master of Brighton College. He left at Easter and two masters and 40 of his boarders went with him. Four more masters followed him later. Not only did this reduce the number of pupils but the rumour that the school was about to close lost even more. In 1908 the Governors reported an expenditure of £3,300 with an income of £3,006. In the next year the deficit was nearly £3,500. By 1911 the annual loss was estimated as £772. [Approaching £300,000 at twenty-first century prices]

Negotiation between Governors, the Board of Education, the County Council and Town Council in 1911 eventually brought about a solution. Properties were sold, the mortgage and overdraft were paid and the order to repay the loan was rescinded. It was required that six more of the governors should be County Council appointees. Kesteven County Council and the Town Council then had a majority on the Governing Board.

William Theodore Keeling 1906 to 1910

Of the 54 candidates who applied for the post of Head Master in 1906 two only were called for interview. **William Theodore Keeling**, who was appointed, and **Charles Bowen Nicholl**, who was an assistant master in the school. **Charles B. Nicholl** had to wait until **William T. Keeling** left four years later before becoming Head Master.

When the post of Head Master was advertised there is little doubt that the applicants would have believed the school was a successful school of over 200 pupils. **William Theodore Keeling** would have been dismayed to discover the parlous state of the finances and, in the next few years, the prospect of the school becoming a state school under the jurisdiction of the L.E.A. could not have been to his liking.

It was during his term of office that the Cadet Corps became the Junior (Officers) Training Corps and the school became **The King's School**. He left in 1910 to set up a school to prepare pupils for Eton College.

Charles Bowen Nicholl 1910 to 1917 Ushers J.B.D. Godfrey; E. Dungey

Charles Bowen Nicholl followed in the post of Head Master. He was allowed to retain his position as Curate of Wyville for two years and the Governors made no charge for the Boarding House. In 1914 the country was plunged into war.

The school was used as a Red Cross Hospital for a while. Several masters left for war service and for the first time the school had women teachers.

Charles Nicholl resigned in 1917 and **Alexander Tate** was appointed in the same year.