

1880.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION

(FURTHER PAPERS RELATING TO).

[In continuation of H.—1, Session II., 1879.]

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.*

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## No. 1. PROSPECTUS.

DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT AT SUMNER, NEAR CHRIST-  
CHURCH, UNDER THE DIRECTORSHIP OF MR. G. VAN ASCH.

THIS Institution will be open for the Education and Training of Deaf-mutes on the 1st of March, 1880. It is requested that, if at all possible, intending pupils be entered not later than the 10th of March. Pupils will also be received after the midwinter holidays, on a day that will be hereafter announced.

The objects of the Institution are—

- (1.) To train young mutes (below 12 years, and in some cases over that age) to utter articulate sounds, and to read spoken language from the lips of their teacher.
- (2.) To employ this acquired power of speech as a means for the instruction of the pupils—first, in the understanding and use of easy language, and in reading and writing; and, at a more advanced stage, in English composition, geography, history, arithmetic, drawing, elementary science, &c. The result of a complete course of instruction, as herein indicated, will in almost all cases be to enable the pupil to read with thorough comprehension, and to hold oral conversation with relatives, friends, and even strangers.
- (3.) To impart to the pupils a good moral training, and to teach them habits of industry, with a view to the increase of their own happiness, and to their becoming, as far as is consistent with their natural defect, useful members of society.
- (4.) To render effectual assistance to children who, from fever or other causes, have lost the sense of hearing, and who would in consequence become wholly dumb.
- (5.) Arrangements will be hereafter made, as far as practicable, for affording to boys, before the completion of their course of instruction, an opportunity of learning a trade or of acquiring a practical acquaintance with gardening and farming. Girls will receive thorough instruction in household economy, needlework, &c.

The pupils will board with the Director and his wife, and will be under their care and direction.

Every pupil on entering should be provided with a supply of clothing sufficient for at least a half year's wear. Every article should be plainly marked with the owner's name. Each pupil is also expected to take the following articles: Two dessert forks, and one spoon; six table napkins; two pairs of twilled sheets; two bath towels; and four hand towels.

The charge for board, lodging, and education is at the rate of fifty pounds (£50) per annum, payable to the Director half-yearly in advance.

The parents, guardians, or friends of deaf-mutes within the Colony who are unable to pay the whole or any portion of the cost of their residence at the Institution, are invited to communicate with the Hon. the Minister of Education.

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The following is an extract from the report of the Commissioners in England appointed to select a teacher: "Mr. Van Asch appeared to us to be quite suitable for the appointment. He has a thorough knowledge of the German system; and the results as witnessed by ourselves on his pupils, are astonishing in the extreme. The testimonials submitted by him show that he has entirely satisfied the parents of the children who have been with him. The pupils we saw, about ten in number, were of various ages from seven years to seventeen; and their general behaviour and obvious cheerfulness impressed us no less favourably than their proficiency in articulation and lip-reading. Mr. Van Asch is accustomed to take the whole charge of his pupils, including their board and lodging, and would therefore be suitable for the duties of that nature required by the conditions set forth in the instructions of the Government."

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Mr. Van Asch strongly urges that, as the process of education in the case of Deaf-mutes is necessarily very slow and gradual, they should be sent to the Institution at an early age, and maintained there for the full term of from eight to ten years.

By order.

Department of Education,  
Wellington, 4th February, 1880.

JOHN HISLOP,  
Secretary to the Education Department.

## No. 2.

REPORT by MR. VAN ASCH.

Institution for the Deaf and Dumb,  
Sumner, 19th June, 1880.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that the Institution for the training and instruction of deaf-mutes was opened here on the 10th of March last with five pupils, and that five others have arrived since. There are therefore ten pupils now in attendance; three girls and seven boys.

Although the buildings are not of a pretentious kind, yet they sufficiently answer the purpose as temporary premises. The grounds are decidedly suitable for recreation, being dry and quiet as well as spacious.

The majority of the children are between the ages of nine and eleven, two are fourteen, one is five, and one youth of seventeen attends as a day-boarder. Classified according to their respective homes: two belong to Auckland, one to Wellington, two to Canterbury, and five to Otago. All are in the enjoyment of good health and possess healthy faculties, save one, who unhappily suffers in some degree from mental weakness as well as deafness. The case being a mild one, and evidently capable of improvement, I allowed the child to enter on six or twelve months trial.

The time, specially set apart for instruction is five hours a day. This time is devoted chiefly to mechanical exercise of the vocal organs, to teaching lip-reading, and to writing, so as to create a medium for acting on the mind and understanding of the pupils. The effect of such exercises is already apparent in all the pupils, in the better development of the facial and other muscles. It is also manifest from the acquired power (more or less) to articulate certain letters, combinations of these, and certain short words carefully selected for their suitability. For example,—the most advanced pupils are able to audibly enunciate words such as ba, bee, oak, beef, hat, bone, sea, sleep, soap, &c., &c. They can also write these words, and read them from the teacher's lips.

For the first year, it is of great advantage if personal attention can be given to each pupil. Yet to facilitate this it is desirable to have several of the same standing together; wherefore admitting children of different ages, at all times, to the Institution is injurious to the work, and very wearing to the teacher.

Notwithstanding that the mental calibre of the pupils, with two or three happy exceptions, is below the average, and in spite of the disadvantages already referred to, I am happy to state that the progress of all according to their different powers may be considered satisfactory. In the case of the one who became deaf at the age of seven, and who still retained part of his speech, it is particularly so. Indeed it may be pointed out, that this Institution offers special advantages to all such.

Bearing in mind the physical nature of these Isles I cannot forebear expressing to the Government the fear I have, that the proportion of deaf-mutes in this Colony must be large, probably larger than is at present shown in statistical returns; also, that as the population of the land increases numerous cases of deafness are likely to occur; and I would respectfully but earnestly submit for the Government's consideration, the desirability of setting aside certain land revenues (as is done in other Departments of Education) so as to provide specific funds on a permanent basis for the maintenance and instruction of these afflicted children. I would further recommend that no fresh pupils be admitted to the Institution between the terms, and not until they have completed their sixth year.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

I have, &c.,  
G. VAN ASCH.

## No. 3.

REPORT by DR. PRINS, Visiting Medical Officer.

Christchurch, 2nd June, 1880.

SIR,—

In accordance with your request I have the honor to report that I visited the Deaf and Dumb Institution, at Sumner, on the 31st ultimo.

The buildings in which the Institution is located consists of two cottages a short distance apart. They are capable of accommodating about 18 inmates, twelve in one and six in the other.

There are at present eight children, five boys, and three girls. They are in excellent health, clean, and seem to be very happy and well cared for.

The only needed attention to the buildings that I would suggest is, that an arrangement be made for ventilating the school-room before next summer.

The water used on the premises is rain water collected in tanks; there seems to be sufficient in quantity for the requirements of the Institution, and the quality is very good.

The closets have pans which are emptied and buried on the premises periodically.

I presume that the present arrangements as to buildings is a temporary one; as such it answers very well; the locality is healthy, and the accommodation sufficient. I found the place orderly and clean, and the impression left is of having visited a happy family home rather than a public Institution.

In conclusion, I cannot help remarking that although the Institution has been but very recently established the progress made by the inmates in the method adopted by Mr Van Asch is wonderful, and requires to be seen in order to be appreciated and understood.

I have, &c.,  
H. H. PRINS,  
M.R.C.S., Eng.

The Secretary, Education Department, Wellington.

## No. 4.

## A VISIT TO SUMNER DEAF AND DUMB INSTITUTION.

(EXTRACT from *The Lyttelton Times*, of May 5th 1880.)

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MR. VAN ASCH commenced work at Sumner on March 10th last, and yesterday I paid him a totally unexpected visit. He has now seven pupils under his charge (the seventh arrived yesterday), four boys and three girls, their ages varying from six to fourteen years. With one exception, they have received no previous tuition of any kind. The exceptional case is a lad who, through illness, became stone deaf about three years ago, and gradually relapsed into a condition of "dumbness." Some of the claims which Mr. Van Asch puts forward are as follows :—To train young mutes (below 12 years, and, in some cases, over that age) to utter articulate sounds, and to read spoken language from the lips of their teacher. To employ this acquired power of speech as a means for the instruction of the pupils; the result of a complete course of instruction (for the full term of from eight to ten years) being, in almost all cases, to enable the pupil to read with thorough comprehension, and to hold oral conversation with relatives, friends, and even strangers. Also, to render effectual assistance to children who, from fever or other causes, have lost the sense of hearing, and who would, in consequence, become wholly dumb. I elected to proceed at once to the schoolroom, whence Mr. Van Asch had been summoned, in order that I might be an observer of the every-day routine, and so, perhaps, gain a clearer idea of the system. Let me at once say that I was absolutely astonished at the results which had been obtained in so short a time, that I received overwhelming proof of the immense superiority of the German system, and that I was convinced of the applicability of the system to all children possessed of ordinary intelligence. As I was in the schoolroom perhaps two hours, and went minutely into the details of the work, it will be evident that the *modus operandi* can only be indicated in this paper. I hope, however, to convey a sufficiently clear idea of the marvellous science. A little girl is standing in front of the teacher, who is seated. One of her little hands is pressed against his throat, and the other hand is applied to her own throat. The teacher utters sounds such as ah, oo, o, e, and the child repeats them clearly. Then she sounds f, and then come the sounds fah, foo, &c. Next, the combinations are reversed, and the child utters aaf, oof, &c. The letters are written upon the black-board, they are again sounded to her, and pointed to her at the same time, and then she copies them upon her slate; the process being repeated for days, weeks, or even months, until the written signs, the muscular movements, and the utterances, are intimately associated. When the vowel sounds have been mastered, and the tongue and throat muscles are beginning to recover from the paralysis of long disuse, the nasal sounds are proceeded with. I saw each of the six pupils who were present fully tested. One of the more advanced wrote one or two sentences, such as "We have tea," uttered them distinctly, and with some amount of animation, though in monotone, and at once indicated by expressive action that she understood their meaning. Yet the parents of this pupil have never had the joy of hearing her utter an intelligible sound. An exercise of simple nouns was tried, to show me the mode of associating ideas. The words leaf, hat, feet, nail, for instance, were spelled, written and uttered, and the objects indicated were immediately pointed out. That absolute deafness existed in every case, and that nevertheless these children were by no means dumb, was strikingly proved by Mr. Van Asch. He stood as far away as possible, in a good light, and moved his lips without producing sounds. His "silent speech" or "lip language" was at once written down, no matter what vowels or or combinations of them he employed. A more advanced pupil could carry out this silent dictation in the form of simple words and sentences. I was much struck with the intense eagerness displayed by the pupils, and could not help commenting upon it. As Mr. Van Asch remarked, the mechanism is used to educate the mind, and then the children feel a light go up into them. To summarise the system, there are four essentials *pari passu*. These are—1. Reading from the lips of the teacher; 2. Imitating the muscular movements and producing the consequent sounds; 3. Writing the sounds; and 4. Reading them. The lad referred to, who became stone deaf through illness, and subsequently lost the gift of speech also, can already read from the lips, and show that he perfectly comprehends, sentences such as "Would you like to go to Christchurch with that gentleman?" and in arithmetic he is as far advanced as the multiplication of a line of eight or nine figures by nine. It may perhaps be of interest to add that the system of sounds used is a purely phonetic one; in other words, the deaf mute is taught to see sounds, just as a shorthand writer would hear them.

In time, the value of the labours of Mr Van Asch in this community will be more strikingly apparent, but I am firmly of opinion that he has already given as convincing proof as can be needed of the immense superiority of the pure German system before alluded to, as compared with the cumbrous dactylology which has so largely obtained; and proof also that the Committee of selection secured the services of a gentleman to whom his most arduous undertaking is a labour of love, and who secures for himself the respect and affection of his pupils.

