

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION.

[In continuation of E.-4, 1882.]

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

No. 1.

EXTRACT from SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT of the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

The institution at Sumner for the education and training of deaf-mutes has now been in successful operation for upwards of three years. A year ago the number of pupils was 24; it has now increased to 31. Fifteen of these are boys, and 16 are girls. The following are the provincial districts from which the pupils have been sent: Auckland, 7; Hawke's Bay, 1; Wellington, 2; Otago, 10; and Canterbury, 10. The thirty-first pupil is a deaf-mute girl who has been sent from Adelaide, South Australia, to study under Mr. Van Asch. For a portion of the past year the Director had the aid of two assistants. He reports that there is every reason to expect an accession to the number of pupils in the course of the present year, and he represents the necessity of making provision for the employment of a third assistant, the peculiar difficulty and laboriousness of the work being such as to render it almost impossible for one teacher to do justice to more than ten pupils.

The method of instruction is that which is known as "the articulation method," by which deaf-mutes are trained to the use of the organs of speech, and learn both to speak, in the ordinary sense of the word, and to understand (from the motion of the lips) the speech of others. The use of finger-signs or other means employed as substitutes for speech is strictly excluded. The course of instruction includes reading and writing in the first instance, followed by English composition, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, elementary science, &c. The girls are also instructed in sewing, knitting, and other useful domestic accomplishments.

The pupils, who are all resident boarders under the watchful supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch and the assistants, occupy three separate dwellings situated at convenient distances from one another. There is also a detached schoolhouse. This arrangement is in several respects better adapted to the purposes of such an institution than if one large building only were made use of, affording, as it does, excellent facilities for satisfactory separation according to sex and age. Besides the gardens attached to the residences, there are an ample playground and abundant facilities for recreation purposes. The locality is salubrious, as has been testified by the general good health of the children. The institution is subject to regular medical inspection, and it is visited from time to time by the Minister of Education and officers of the department. The ability and zeal of the Director are deserving of high commendation; and he has been well seconded in his efforts to promote the welfare of the pupils by Mrs. Van

Asch and the assistants. The results of Mr. Van Asch's labours invariably call forth expressions of surprise and gratification from those who visit the institution.

The following is an abstract of the expenditure on the institution for the financial year ending 31st March, 1883:—

	£	s.	d.
Director and two assistants	733	18	8
Rents and repairs	268	5	0
Travelling expenses, medical attendance, furniture and schoolroom requisites, advertising, &c.	240	13	10
Maintenance of pupils	£1,016	10	0
Less payments by parents	322	5	10
	694	4	2
	£1,937	1	8

The charge made by the Government for the board and education of each pupil is £40 a year; but in a number of instances pupils are admitted free or at reduced rates, in order that no child capable of receiving benefit from the course of instruction may be excluded.

No. 2.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Sumner, 12th June, 1883.

I have the honour to report that the Institution, which has now been established for upwards of three years, is still extending in influence and usefulness. The number of inmates is constantly on the increase, and the remotest parts of New Zealand contribute their fair quota to the numbers that make up the whole of the pupils now under instruction; the Institution may therefore be regarded, not as a provincial, but as a truly colonial one.

Of the total of 31 pupils, 7 are sent from the Province of Auckland, 1 from Hawke's Bay, 2 from Wellington, 10 from Otago, 10 from Canterbury, and 1 has entered from Adelaide, in South Australia. Fortunately, no serious illness has interfered with the usual routine of the establishment, and the health of all the pupils may be considered good.

An unquestionable drawback to the profitable working of the educational machinery was the lack of an assistant master. For nine months instruction to 24, and later on to 27 children, had to be given with the assistance of a lady-teacher only. Assuming the correctness of declaration 3, resolution 7, passed at the report of the International Congress of experts held at Milan, 1880 (*vide* last year's report), which reads: "That no teacher can effectually teach a class of more than ten children on the pure oral method," it will be seen that for the greater part of last year the officers of the Institution laboured under great disadvantages in the discharge of their duties, and that a considerable strain on their teaching powers was necessary in order to prevent a falling away throughout the school of the former general rate of progress. A recurrence of this very difficulty is, I fear, again impending. In addition to the 31 pupils now in attendance, there are others in prospect, and a goodly number of deaf mutes must be supposed to be scattered over the length and breadth of this colony not yet aware of the school's existence. It is on these grounds reasonable to infer that the list of pupils is likely to swell still more as the year advances, and that the present staff of teachers will be inadequate to cope with the task of giving every child that amount of attention to which it is entitled from its sad state of isolation and mental helplessness. Connecting this, moreover, with the fact that new teachers of the deaf cannot be readily trained so as to be of much service in the technical parts of the class work, it is my duty to ask you, in the interest of the deaf mutes of the colony, to provide for the probable event of another master being required by the end of this year.

A more agreeable subject to revert to is the pleasing duty I feel in having to report that one of the inmates has been able to leave the Institution greatly benefited, and with my entire approval. The young lady referred to came to us not as a dumb person,—for she could hear during infancy, and her parents had the wisdom to foresee that, by encouraging her to read and speak *viva voce* continually, they would greatly preserve her voice and speech,—but as a totally deaf person, defective in utterance. After two years' training she returned to her friends greatly changed and in a most cheerful and happy frame of mind. She felt conscious that, through having accomplished the object for which she entered—viz., that of learning the valuable art of lip-reading and of improving her articulation, &c., she did not only return home better fitted for the domestic circle, but that she could now also enter into and in a great measure participate in the cheerful society of others. I am describing this case somewhat minutely, because I am convinced that several similarly afflicted adults and children are to be found in different parts of New Zealand, to whose case the same kind of treatment is applicable, and to whom it would be a kindness if, through medical or other agency, they could be brought to the knowledge of the facilities there are now in the colony for ameliorating their condition.

In continuation of my former practice of referring to some of the subjects dealt with by the oldest class, I beg to state that the pupils of the most advanced class, six in number, have a fair knowledge of the elementary geography of New Zealand, are able to appreciate short notices in the newspapers relating to accidents, fires, &c., and can make themselves fairly understood by letter in matters having reference to their wants and pleasures and the ordinary incidents of school life.

A most enjoyable treat was again provided this year through the kindness of Mrs. Washbourne, of Riccarton.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 3.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 18th June, 1883.

I have the honour to report that the Deaf-and-Dumb Asylum at Sumner is kept very clean and orderly.

The inmates (to 15th June, 1883), numbering 31, viz., 15 boys, and 16 girls, have, with the exception of a few trifling ailments, for which they have been brought to my house for advice, enjoyed very good health.

The accommodation is now limited to the admission of two more boys. If any girls are admitted they will have to be temporarily accommodated in the Director's house. As the admissions will most likely increase after the Christmas vacation, the Government, with the advice of the Director, will have to take into consideration the advisableness of securing extra accommodation. The school-room, however, is large enough to accommodate many more pupils.

The pupils are progressing favourably in their education. Those admitted when the institution was first opened are now beginning to converse on small matters among themselves and with their friends; but no great improvement in this respect must be expected until after a course of training for eight or ten years.

It would, therefore, be advisable that the Government should, in some way, draw the attention of parents having children afflicted with deaf mutism, and members of the medical profession attending families, to the advantages likely to be derived by communicating with the department or the Director, and sending such children to this institution at an early age—that most suitable being between eight and nine years.

The unremitting care, cleanliness, attention, and kindness displayed in the treatment of the children by the management are great inducements to this being done with confidence, and the improvement in the elder pupils already noticed gives promise of success for an institution so practically useful as the one under review.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

H. H. PRINS.

