

1885.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION : **DEAF-MUTE INSTITUTION.**

[In Continuation of E.-4, 1884.]

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

No. 1.

EXTRACT from EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT of the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

THIRTY-SIX pupils (twenty boys and sixteen girls) are now in attendance at the Sumner Deaf-Mute Institution. Seven of them have been sent from the Auckland Provincial District, one from Taranaki, four from Wellington, one from Hawke's Bay, ten from Canterbury, and twelve from Otago. The thirty-sixth pupil is a deaf-mute girl from Adelaide, South Australia. A year ago there were thirty-two pupils; two of them have left the institution, and six fresh pupils have been entered this year. The Director had the aid of two assistants last year; but, owing to the increased attendance, the various degrees of the pupils' attainments, and the peculiar difficulty and laboriousness of the work, it has been found necessary to engage the services of a third assistant.

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. No use is made of finger-signs or other means employed elsewhere as substitutes for speech. 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 accomplishments.

The pupils, who are all resident boarders under the watchful care of Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch and their assistants, occupy four separate dwellings, situated at convenient distances from one another. There is also a detached schoolhouse, with an ample playground and abundant facilities for recreation purposes. This arrangement is in several respects better adapted to the purposes of such an institution than one large building in which all the pupils could be accommodated. The separate residences afford abundant means of classifying the pupils according to sex and age. During the day all the pupils are assembled for meals and for school instruction, when they are under the supervision of the Director and his assistants. After school lessons and meals are over, the pupils separate and retire for the night to their several residences. One of these is under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch; a second accommodates girls, who are under the care of the lady-assistant; and each of the other two residences is occupied by boys, in charge of an assistant master and a trustworthy matron. The locality is salubrious, as is attested by the general good health of the children. The institution is subject to medical inspection, and it is visited from time to time by officers of the department. The ability and zeal of the Director

are deserving of high commendation, and the results of his labours are surprising and gratifying. He has been well seconded in his efforts to promote the welfare and comfort of the pupils by Mrs. Van Asch and his assistants.

The following is a summary of the expenditure on the institution for the financial year ending 31st March, 1885:—

	£	s.	d.
Director and assistants	859	19	2
Rent and repairs	300	0	0
Travelling expenses, medical attendance, furniture, school-room requisites, advertising, &c.	269	4	7
Maintenance of pupils	£1,209	0	8
Less payments by parents	265	12	6
	943	8	2
	£2,372	11	11

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 institution may be excluded.

No. 2.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Sumner, 10th June, 1885.

I have the honour to enclose herewith my report of the institution for the past year.

A steady increase in the number of inmates is still apparent. For this year we count not less than thirty-six pupils, six of whom were received only last February. These fresh additions are chiefly contributed by the Provincial District of Wellington.

The relative proportions of pupils from each provincial district are now—twelve from Otago, ten from Canterbury, seven from Auckland, five from Wellington, and one from Hawke's Bay. One child is confided to our care from Adelaide, South Australia. Twenty of the pupils are boys and sixteen are girls.

One of last year's pupils, a youth of twenty-one, left the institution at Christmas. This case was an exceptional one. He had gradually lost his hearing from the age of fourteen; he was of course able to speak, but seemed to have grown disinclined to hold verbal intercourse with his friends, owing to the fact, as he asserted, that he could not understand what others tried and wished to say to him. On his reading in the *Auckland Herald* of the successful result of practising lip-reading obtained with a deaf pupil in 1882, mentioned in my report for 1883, he applied to be admitted into our institution to be trained likewise. To what extent he attained his object, in a course of twelve months' training, may be inferred by a reference to the following extracts from one of his letters: "H— 16th February, 1885. Since Mr. Van Asch was here and showed them all how to talk to me I have got on much better with the lip-reading. I can read them all [meaning his relatives] very fast now, and I am improving every day. . . . I can understand most of the people about the town now; they are all very much surprised and well pleased to see that I can make them out. The people all like to talk to me, so I get plenty of practice. I shall always feel grateful to you and Mr. Van Asch for all the good you have done me. I feel quite another fellow from what I was before I went to Sumner."

Successful work of the same nature has been done at the institution in two other instances, distinguished from the foregoing case only in degree, in so far that the two subjects now referred to are young boys, who, having been deprived of their sense of hearing at a much earlier period of life, would have gradually grown dumb as well as deaf. In their case the articulation method acts as a staying or conservative power on that portion of speech which they acquired in a natural way; while lip-reading is aggressive with reference to language which is new, abstruse, and artificial to them.

The North Island pupils were last Christmas accompanied to their homes by the Director and his wife, who were thus enabled to confer with the parents on matters affecting their children's education and general welfare. It was pleasing to find how much spirit of industry and helpfulness in the home circle was exhibited by many of them, and how much use all of them made of their power of speech as far as their knowledge of language would permit.

The health of the pupils may be said to have been exceptionally good, for no disorder of an infectious or other serious nature occurred amongst them throughout the year.

In last year's report I made mention of the growing want of accommodation. With an influx of six new pupils, and our three habitations fully occupied, it became necessary to rent a fourth. Arrangements for a cottage were accordingly made, but not for longer than the end of this year; for, being reminded that the leases of the other premises now occupied by us will expire about the beginning of 1886, it was thought expedient not to saddle the institution with responsibilities for a longer period. Besides these measures—making provision for more sleeping room—there are other equally important points demanding attention. As you are aware, the chief business of the institution—namely, teaching—also dining, &c., is carried on at our central home between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. For our present large requirements the water-supply (rain-water from tanks) at these premises is insufficient, and this want has often been grievously felt by the Director's wife. The dining-room, spacious enough for a large family, is not calculated to seat forty persons, and is moreover wanting in proper ventilation.

We have likewise outgrown our school-room accommodation, for a division of seven pupils has, for the want of room and quietude, to be taught daily in the dining-room. In many other respects, more suitable accommodation at the same rental could be found nearer Christchurch, I believe, thus facilitating the good management of the institution from a domestic and maternal, as well as social, point of view.

Amongst the many visitors who came to see the institution, we had the honour of receiving Sir William Drummond Jervois, the Governor of the colony. His Excellency seemed greatly interested in our method of teaching the deaf, and testified in complimentary terms to the value of its results. Shortly after the summer vacation the pupils had also the honour and pleasure of spending, at Lady Jervois's special invitation, a delightful afternoon at Elmwood.

For the information of parents of pupils and others interested, I beg to enclose a few notes on a blackboard lesson recently given to the advanced class in the institution, showing the mental status of some of the pupils, and a mode of assisting them to get at the meaning of simple language.

The following sentence was first read by one or two of the seven pupils in the class: "Since her return from Darmstadt the Queen's health has notably improved," &c. (See *Lyttelton Times*, 2nd June, 1885, page 5.) One or two were requested to read the sentence *vivâ voce*. The teacher, having corrected errors of pronunciation, asked, "What does that mean?" Pupil 1 replied, "I do not know." This answer was probably given because the pupil, not yet having learned much continental geography, was puzzled by the word "Darmstadt," and probably also by the word "notably." Deaf children, instead of looking at the whole sentence, not unfrequently fix their attention on particular words, and are thus hindered from getting at the general meaning. Pupil 2 said, and the answer was written on the blackboard as here shown,—

The Queen's health was not very good.
The Queen went away.
She is better now.

Now, this ready answer from a deaf child may be considered a very good one. The teacher's only duty was to lead the class to construct improved sentences from it, as was done thus:—

The Queen's health was not very good,
so
she left home for a ——.
She has returned now.

The teacher halted after "for a ——" in order to elicit the word "change," but, not succeeding, finished the sentence himself, after which pupil 6 immediately observed,—

Yes—for a change; for a holiday.

The teacher then asked, "What means *since* her return?" Pupil 3 replied, "After her return." *Teacher*: Give another sentence. *Pupil 3*: I have not seen my mother *since* my return to school. The teacher, reading, "Since her return," asked, "*Whose* return?" *Pupil 3*: The Queen's return. The teacher asked pupil 4, What means "notably improved?" *Answer*: I do not know. The teacher then said and wrote,—

Notably improved means
much improved,
visibly improved;
so much improved that people can
see it
note it
notice it } in the Queen's face.

Sentences were then written as follows:—

(a.) The Queen's health was { (not very good,
poor,
failing, } and

therefore
for that reason } the Queen left her home
on that account }
for a change. She went to Darmstadt.

Now she has { come back, } and { is } better.
returned, } { feels }

(b.) Because the Queen was { unwell
out of health }

she { went to
left for } Darmstadt, and
visited }

has returned { in better health.
benefited by the change.
much improved in health.
notably improved in health. }

Then followed questions and answers. *Teacher*: Where is Darmstadt? *Pupil 4*: In England. *Pupil 5*: In Germany. (Brings the globe to show the place; whereupon pupil 6 brings his atlas also. The whole class is shown where the town is). The curiosity of all seemed now aroused, and pupil 6 asked the teacher, with emphasis, "Have you been there?" *Teacher*: Yes, I have been there; a long time ago. *Pupil 6*: Did you like it? *Teacher*: Yes; it is a beautiful town. *Pupil 3*: Did the Queen journey through the sea? *Teacher*: Yes; the Queen travelled across the sea. *Pupil 3*: Is the town of Darmstadt like England? This question was corrected into, "Is the town of Darmstadt like an English town?" and the answer was given, "Yes; but it is not so smoky."

Teacher: Do you know why the Queen likes to go to Darmstadt? *Pupil 7*: Yes, I think so; because Darmstadt is a beautiful town. *Pupil 6* (again of his own accord): Has the Queen many friends in Darmstadt? *Teacher*: Yes; I will tell you. The Queen likes to go to Darmstadt because her daughter Alice, who died some years ago, lived there. The Queen went to see her grandchildren. Princess Alice was married to the Duke of Hesse, who is still alive and who lives in Darmstadt now.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 3.

REPORT OF INSPECTOR-GENERAL.

Education Department, Wellington, 9th July, 1885.

On Thursday last I went to Sumner late in the day, intending to spend the evening with Mr. Van Asch, and inspect the institution in the morning. I found, however, that Mr. Van Asch was absent, engaged in some business connected with the site between Prebbleton and Lincoln, to which he desires to remove the school. His absence gave me a better opportunity than I have ever had before of observing the work of the assistants. Of these, Mr. Crofts and Miss Kay have been in the school nearly a year, and Mr. Allan has entered within the last fortnight. Mr. Crofts it has been decided is to be engaged for a definite term, long enough for proper training in the system, and I understand that Mr. Van Asch will recommend Miss Kay for a similar engagement. They have both acquired considerable skill, and their devotion to the welfare of the children and of the institution is very praiseworthy. Mr. Allan has, of course, everything to learn; but I have confidence in his diligence, ability, and character. The school was very well carried on in Mr. Van Asch's absence.

The recent appointment of Mr Allan will, I hope, render it possible for the Director to give more time than he has hitherto been able to give to the instruction of his assistants in the fundamental parts of the system of articulation and lip-reading. It is not to be expected that they will soon acquire the mastery of the system which his long experience and remarkable practical skill as a teacher have given him; but they are capable of doing better than they do now (though I desire to speak only in terms of praise of their present actual efficiency) when Mr. Van Asch is able to devote more time to their training.

I am disposed to think that teachers knowing the children well, and therefore understanding their speech more readily than a stranger would, are apt to accept pronunciations that are not as accurate as they might be. This is likely to occur most frequently in lessons that are given to impart information or to cultivate the mind, when the attention of the teacher is partly diverted from the mere speech. But I think that even in such lessons care should be taken to have every word uttered as correctly as possible. For example—*tickut* should not be accepted as equivalent to *ticket*. I believe it would be a good plan to have a list of typical syllables and words to refer to as models, or rather as analogues, and to let each teacher use this list in indicating the true pronunciation of any new word that the children find it difficult to utter.

The care and kindness with which the children are treated are eminently satisfactory, and the Director's ability is so well known that I need not add any testimony of mine.

WM. JAS. HABENS.

No. 4.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 15th June, 1885.

I have the honour to report that the institution at Sumner continues to be admirably managed. The work is carried on in an orderly and satisfactory manner, and the various rooms in the buildings are models of neatness and cleanliness.

The inmates now number thirty-six, of whom sixteen are girls and twenty are boys. I have had to treat one or two of the inmates at my house for a few trifling ailments. Generally speaking, however, the pupils have all enjoyed good health. The children are making satisfactory progress with their education, and Mr. Van Asch is entitled to every credit for the success which has attended his labours.

The Director, who, unfortunately, met with an accident on the 15th April last, has, I am glad to state, now sufficiently recovered to enable him to resume his duties. During the time he was invalided the other officers carefully looked after the requirements of the establishment.

I beg to call the attention of the Government to the fact that all the cottages are now quite full, and that the institution is so crowded that the Director is compelled to use the dining-room as a class-room. The Government will have to take into consideration the question of providing extra accommodation, not only with the object of affording room for new pupils, but also with a view of training the older inmates of the institution in various branches of industry.

The deaf-and-dumb asylum at Sumner has been not only a credit but a great boon to the colony, and it would be a great misfortune were its usefulness to be in any way marred through the want of proper facilities. I trust, therefore, that the Government will see their way to act on the suggestions I have made in this report without delay.

I have, &c.,

H. H. PRINS,
Medical Officer.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.