

1899.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# EDUCATION: SCHOOL FOR DEAF-MUTES.

[In continuation of E.-4, 1898.]

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

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No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

## SCHOOL FOR DEAF-MUTES.

At this school, as most people are aware, deaf-mutes are taught to hold communication with their fellow-men, not by the use of finger or other signs, but by what is known as the oral method. They are trained in such a way that they can follow the speech of any person who will take the trouble to articulate properly, and can themselves speak so as to be easily understood by others. Their general intellectual and moral education is also well attended to.

It is worthy of note that the roll of the school includes all the known deaf-mutes of school age and of sound intellect in the colony who have been brought under the notice of the Education Department. It is possible that there are a few, say, in the North Island, whose parents have not responded to the invitation to bring the cases of their children under the notice of the Director in his periodical visits to the various parts of the colony. As the Director pointed out in his report for 1897, "It would be a real kindness to the afflicted if parents or friends would, by letter, report all cases of deafness between the ages of four and seven to the Director, or to the Secretary for Education, so that an expert might visit and report upon them whenever suitable opportunities occur."

Four boys and one girl left at or near the beginning of 1898, and seven boys and one girl were admitted during the year. At the end of 1898 the number in the institution was thirty boys and twenty girls. The Director, besides exercising a general control, takes the chief part in the instruction of the pupils, and in this work is assisted by a staff of five teachers; the boarding arrangements and the care of the inmates when out of school are in the hands of a steward and matron.

The gross expenditure for the year ended 30th December, 1898, was £3,342 14s. 7d., made up as follows: Salary of Director and teachers, £1,373 10s.; steward, matron, and servants, £481 15s.; rent, £470; housekeeping, £742 19s. 8d.; travelling-expenses, £128 12s. 6d.; school material, £8 19s. 6d.; repairs and works, £26 8s. 7d.; clothing, £23 9s. 1d.; medical attendance and medicine, £9 16s. 7d.; water-supply, £30 4s.; sanitary precautions, £15 8s. 8d.; sundries, £31 11s. Less amount contributed by parents, £207 12s. 7d. Net expenditure, £3,135 2s.

## No. 2.

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR.

SIR,—

Institution for Deaf-mutes, Sumner, Christchurch, 19th April, 1899.

I beg to report on the School for Deaf-mutes for the year 1898.

The number of pupils present during the first half of the year was forty-nine, and during the last half of the year fifty. Their ages varied from seven to eighteen. With the exception of one little boy of ten, who lost his hearing about eighteen months before his admission, all these pupils were born completely deaf, or nearly so, and entered the school without the least notion of how to use their vocal organs for the purposes of speech. It must also be stated that the roll—fifty—includes all the *bona fide* deaf-mutes of school age who have during the last few years been brought under the notice of the Education Department. Statements made by opponents of the oral system implying that only the bright and intelligent applicants are admitted cannot be regarded, therefore, in any serious light.

The balance of numbers in the school is still in favour of the boys, there being twenty-nine boys to twenty-one girls. Of these pupils, Dunedin sent us 5; Portobello, 1; Invercargill, 1; Riverton, 2; Pembroke, 1; Balclutha, 1; Mosgiel, 1; Lawrence, 1; Warrington, 1; Gorge Creek, 1; Moeraki, 1; Christchurch, 4; Rangiora, 1; Timaru, 2; Temuka, 1; Winchester, 1; Lyttelton, 1; Akaroa, 1; Halswell, 2; Greymouth, 1; Hokitika, 1; Kumara, 1; Nelson, 1; Wellington, 6; Lower Hutt, 1; Masterton, 2; Foxton, 1; Auckland, 4; Upper Waiwera, 2; Onehunga, 1. Looking at these figures from different points of view, it appears that the southern element in the school is still predominant, and that the number of pupils from the four centres is greater in proportion to the population than the number from the inland towns and country places combined.

Nine children entered the institution at the beginning of the year, and two later on; eight left in December.

One boy with a broken leg was away for some time in the hospital, and another had to lose a few days' schooling in consequence of a broken arm. On the whole the health enjoyed by the inmates of the institution during the year was good, and there was very little interruption to school work.

The domestic arrangements were again, as for the last five years, under the supervision of the steward and matron, Mr. and Mrs. Buttle. To them is also intrusted the care of the inmates when out of school and not under the supervision of the assistant teachers.

For instruction the children were, as formerly, grouped into divisions. Of these there were eight; but classification of deaf scholars is not always as simple as it would appear. Frequently pupils are too slow to keep up with the average of their class, and then they have to go over the same work again. It also happens that pupils gifted by nature with specially good faculties, and with a slight sense of hearing to boot, progress at double rate, and so can pass into a higher class in a few months. Further, deaf children are sometimes sent to us who cannot be classified with the rest of our pupils. An afflicted boy of this description gained admission shortly before the mid-winter holidays. His case being a typical one, likely to recur from time to time, I describe it in detail.

J. P., a New-Zealand-born boy, ten years of age, fell ill with fever about two years ago, and lost his hearing. He is now totally deaf. Previous to his illness he could speak in a perfectly natural way like other children, and for some time attended the public school. He reached Standard I. What were the serious results of this boy's illness? (1.) The nerve of the ear was destroyed. (2.) As a result, communication between him and his parents or his teacher was no longer possible. (3.) The boy's speech, though distinct for some time after his recovery, soon deteriorated both in tone and in articulation. (4.) As time passed by, so this process of deterioration went on, until finally the lad ceased to speak altogether. In general terms, there was paralysis of the auditory nerve, involving stoppage of intellectual supply, ruin to vocal utterance, gradual diminution of mental vocabulary, and well-nigh complete isolation of the mind. And what measures were the most urgent to afford relief to this little fellow? (1.) To partly re-establish the lost chord of communication by teaching him lip-reading. (2.) To preserve the remnant of his speech by enticing him to pronounce names of objects, &c. (3.) To encourage the reading and the writing of very simple words. (4.) And, later on, to utilise the acquired art of lip-reading and the recovered speech for the purpose of building up his general education. It was also important to support these measures by boarding the lad out with a respectable family, so as to keep him in the society of hearing people, and by providing him with special and individual instruction. By these remedies a remarkable change has already been wrought, for not only has the boy's pronunciation been improved, his former ability to read a few simple words restored, and his memory of lost English refreshed, but he has also made excellent progress in the reading of easy stories, in arithmetic, and above all in the art of lip-reading; so that he can now hold communication with his teacher and others.

Numbers of visitors have availed themselves of the privilege to see the domestic arrangements of the institution on Wednesday afternoons. In the case of interested relatives of pupils, or of professional men specially desirous of seeing the *modus operandi* of the articulation method, opportunities have been given of entering the class-rooms; but as a rule visitors to these are not encouraged, on account of the serious interruption to the regular course of school work.

On the 15th of June last the school was honoured by a visit from His Excellency Lord Ranfurly, the Governor of the colony, who had a special desire to gain an insight into our educational work. No pains were spared to give him every opportunity of seeing and hearing nearly all the pupils in the institution. After it had been explained by examples how the classes for beginners and the intermediate classes were carried on, all the pupils of the upper class were introduced to

His Excellency, and engaged in conversation on the powers and duties of the Governor as the representative of the Queen, on law-making, the war in Cuba, and on other topics of the day. Unmistakable evidence was thus given of the pupils' familiarity with conversational language; of their appreciation of the daily newspaper; and, above all, of their *capacity* to absorb information of every kind. Many and unreserved were His Excellency's expressions of encouragement to the workers of the school.

As a further proof of the general intelligence of the pupils of this class, I close this report by quoting the *précis* of a conversation held with and amongst them on the day following the animated election for the mayoralty of Sumner. A pupil, on being charged in a jocular way with neglect of duty because he had not voted, said, "I have no vote because I am not twenty-one." A second, being asked also to explain, remarked, "I have no vote because I do not pay rates." On receiving the explanation that they would all have a vote at the general election after being twenty-one, one of the two girls in the class immediately observed, "I would like to be without a Government." The teacher, astonished: "Why?" "Because there would be no taxes to pay." The second girl, seeing these remarks on her classmate's lips, at once observed, "If there was no Government people would break the laws." A lad added, "People would commit murder." Another lad, "People would steal; people would commit forgery." Notes of this conversation were taken immediately after it. They are quite accurate, and afford good evidence of the mental status of the class.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

### No. 3.

#### REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 9th June, 1899.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Deaf-mute Institute at Sumner, for the year 1898:—

The number of pupils was fifty, being twenty-one girls and twenty-nine boys. On the whole, their health has been fairly good throughout the year.

The only accidents were an elbow dislocated by a fall, and a finger crushed in a door: both healed satisfactorily. Three slight cases of German measles occurred in July. In October a good many pupils suffered from disorders of the digestive organs, which I traced to the contamination of the water-tanks. These have been cleaned out, and to prevent a recurrence of this trouble I had a short piece of 1-inch pipe fitted with a tap, and fixed underneath the bottom of each tank.

The only other ailments worth mentioning were certain affections due to a constitutional tendency to tuberculosis. Twelve pupils, or about one-quarter of the total number, showed evidences of this kind of ill-health. Deaf-mute children are especially liable to tubercular affections, partly from the same defect as produced their deafness, and partly from the imperfect chest development resulting from their muteness. These tubercular affections assume a variety of forms, too numerous to mention, but the following have been observed at Sumner Deaf-mute Institute during 1898: Skin eruptions; inflamed and thickened eyelids; ear discharges; enlarged tonsils; adenoids; swollen glands in the neck and abdomen; frequent bronchial catarrh, with tendency to pleurisy. These cases have generally exhibited a feeble circulation, with cold hands and feet.

My first attention has been directed to improve the nutrition of these children, by substituting plenty of pure milk for the weak tea previously given; by largely increasing the allowance of butter; and by giving a cup of hot cocoa at bedtime, to break the long interval previously existing between the evening meal at 5 p.m. and the morning meal at 7.45 a.m. In certain cases cod-liver oil and other strengthening medicines are used. Every child is weighed on the first day of every month, and any who fail to show a reasonable increase in weight are specially examined and dealt with. It is significant that most of the children lose weight during their holidays at their own homes, but regain it soon after returning to school. A troublesome difficulty hitherto has been that no convenient method has yet been found for pasteurising milk in large quantities with the means at our disposal, but I expect soon to overcome this. I have examined the cows supplying the milk used, and found the usual proportion of tubercular cows among them, as well as the insanitary conditions of milking common to most small dairies; and these evils will probably continue until a code of rules is published, to which every dairy must conform which tenders for the supply of any Government institution. It is of no use condemning any particular dairy until the unfortunate dairymen are told what rules they are expected to comply with. Such rules have been published by the Victorian Government.

Professor Jonathan Hutchinson, of London, one of the most eminent authorities in the world, states: "Probably there are few practicable dietetic changes which would be more beneficial to our population in reference to scrofula (tuberculosis) than a large increase in the consumption of butter and other animal fats." Such children should be brought up in the country, and as much as possible in the sun and in the open air. Care should be taken to protect them against chills. Woollen underclothing from head to foot should be constantly worn. Sea-bathing and sea-side air have been found highly beneficial. The prevention of over-crowding, and the proper ventilation of sleeping- and class-rooms should be carefully watched. A sheltered locality should be selected for residence, with a mild, uniform climate, and a dry soil. Not only is a hilly district greatly preferable to a flat district for residence, but also the regular exercise of hill climbing, besides drill and gymnastics, is recognised to be the most effective means of expanding and

strengthening the chest, and thereby preventing pulmonary consumption. As tuberculosis causes more deaths than any other disease, while at the same time it is both curable and preventible, no trouble should be spared to eradicate it, more especially in a deaf-mute institute.

One of the most interesting features of the school, is the instruction in drill and calisthenics given by Mr. Stevens. The boys and girls are drilled separately on alternate days for four days in the week, and on the fifth day the school is visited by the Sergeant-Instructor, who reviews the drill. The effect on the physique of the pupils is very marked.

The premises have been kept clean and in good order. The new outside drains and garden irrigation introduced by me last year have given complete satisfaction, and the garden could receive a much larger quantity of sewage without inconvenience. A similar sewage-irrigation scheme is greatly needed at Beach Glen.

In conclusion, I desire to testify to the unremitting care and kindness of the Matron to the pupils, in which she is ably and cordially assisted by Mr. Buttle and the rest of the staff.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

W. H. SYMES, M.D., B.Sc. (Paris).

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