

## No. 4.

## REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER, CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 31st May, 1906.

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

The health of the pupils has been generally good, and no outbreak of infectious disease has occurred. One death was caused by peritonitis, in the case of a girl, Nettie Scott, aged twelve. One boy, P. Smith, and one girl, E. Askey, had to be sent back to their parents on account of tubercular disease, as they were too delicate to remain at the Institute. Three boys—J. Atkinson, H. McCurdy, and J. Sullivan—had also to be sent away for the same disease, but these all returned in better health.

As tuberculosis is specially prevalent in deaf-mutes, I recommend an extension of the system of sleeping in tents in the case of the boys, whose dormitories are overcrowded. We have now had two tents for more than a year, and they have proved very useful, and have not been attended with any inconvenience in their management. I recommend that their number be increased to four, and the Director fully agrees with this proposal.

An excellent system of daily drill has been carried out by Mr. Stevens, all the pupils being exercised in deep breathing and the Sandow methods.

The girls have recently been removed from the old house they occupied to the very fine new building, where the admirable large dormitories must greatly benefit their health.

The past year will be remembered with regret as the closing year of Mr. van Asch's Directorship. He retires after twenty-six years of arduous and successful work, with the love and esteem of all who have worked and been taught under him. He introduced into England the oral method of teaching deaf-mutes, and has lived to see it generally adopted. Few reformers have been thus rewarded.

I beg again to remind you of the urgent need of a small separate building to be used as a hospital ward; it could, of course, be used for other purposes when not required for sickness, and the Director says it would be most useful. As one of the lady members of the staff was previously matron of the Christchurch Hospital, a small hospital would enable her to render most valuable service to the Institute.

I have, &amp;c.,

The Inspector-General of Schools.

W. H. SYMES, M.D., B.Sc.

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