

at the school, an arrangement which Dr. Bell describes as admirable, and which he thinks should be introduced into the United States. Intermingling with hearing and speaking people increases alertness, and is found to be a great help to the children when they have to go out into the world. Dr. Bell found a great deal to admire at the Sumner school, and he says that he wishes it "God speed" in its good work.

*Lyttelton Times*, 7th September, 1911.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—I quite concur with what our distinguished visitor, Dr. A. Graham Bell, has to say as to the value of phrasing in the teaching of articulation to the deaf, but it is a method which should only be applied after the elements of speech have been established. In attempting to make use of it too soon I am convinced that harm is done.

The method that has been followed at Sumner since the opening of the school by the late Mr. G. van Asch in 1880 is practically that made use of in the most successful schools for the deaf in Germany and Holland. In the earliest stages of instruction the elements of speech are taught single at first and afterwards in combination, as h-oo-p, hoop. Later on, the word-by-word method is applied, and easy sentences containing only simple words are taught. These are pronounced word by word as noticed by Dr. Bell. Later on, polysyllables are brought into use, and the children are taught to speak and read in phrases. This stage of education is usually reached about the third year of instruction, or in some cases earlier. A simple phrase such as "on the table" presents no more difficulty to a pupil when taken as a whole than does a common word such as "vegetable."

Had Dr. Bell been able to spend longer time at the school I should have had pleasure in showing him the work of the higher classes in this respect.—I am, &c., J. E. STEVENS.

Owing to the continued increase in our numbers, more accommodation in the way of schoolrooms and servants' quarters is urgently necessary. Some time ago, as a temporary expedient, it was found necessary to subdivide two of the larger class-rooms, but this arrangement has not worked very well. The partitions interfere with the lighting and ventilation of the rooms, and should be removed as soon as other rooms can be provided. The course to be recommended is the building of a new wing on the western side of the building, and the addition of an upper story to the kitchen block. The new wing should include sick-rooms. Besides these a play-shed and gymnasium at the Boys' Home are much needed.

The present number of pupils is, in my opinion, greater than it is desirable to have educated in one institution. It was the opinion of the late Director, Mr. G. van Asch, with which I fully agree, that no more than seventy or seventy-five deaf pupils should be educated in one school, and that better results could be obtained with forty or fifty. The question of subdivision is now ripe for consideration. As I have previously stated in my reports, subdivision should be in accordance with a scheme of classification based on the mental and auditory capacities of the pupils. The system I should recommend would be somewhat on the lines of that adopted in Denmark. The children should be admitted first to a preparatory school, where they should remain from one to three years, according to their abilities. In Denmark there are about 350 children of school age, and the pupils there are classified from the preparatory school into four separate schools according to their auditory and mental powers. With our small deaf population it would be advisable to commence the subdivision by the establishment of the preparatory school. The other developments could follow with our increase of population. Children might be admitted to the preparatory school somewhat earlier than under present conditions is desirable. Its establishment would tend to diminish existing defects. In a school containing a considerable proportion of children with little or no acquaintance with language there is too great a tendency on the part of the older pupils to resort to signs when communicating with them. At the same time, the necessity of commencing the training in articulation while the vocal organs are still plastic, and when the child is not too far removed from that period of its existence at which in the hearing child the hereditary speech instincts become active, should not be overlooked. By the separation of the younger children in a preparatory school the natural development of speech could be more closely followed and the tendency above referred to removed.

I enclose for your information a letter received from a parent expressing appreciation of the training that his daughter received at the school.

I have, &c.,

The Inspector-General of Schools.

J. E. STEVENS, Director.

DEAR SIR,—

Wellington, 30th April, 1911.

Just a few lines, which I think is due to you, to let you know how H. has been getting on since she left school at the end of last year. You will be pleased to know that after enjoying a good long holiday her mother got her engaged as an apprentice dressmaker in a warehouse here. She got engaged simply on her own merits, as they had applied in the local paper for two apprentices at the time. At first the head dressmaker was very doubtful about engaging her; but when she was shown a sample of her work (thanks to the lessons she got at school) and understood that she could speak and understand speech, she took quite a different view of the case, and said she would give her a trial; and she has since expressed herself in terms of the highest praise of H.'s ability, and says she is a beautiful sewer, and that they have no difficulty in understanding her speech or making her understand what they want done. She also remarked that H. was such a neat tidy girl that one could take kindly to her. I think she is talking more and getting more confidence in herself since she went to business. It is a great pleasure to be able to talk to our children in the ordinary way when they are at home, and to see that they understand what we are saying to them; and I cannot speak too highly in praise of, or express adequately here how thankful we are for, the purely oral system taught at Sumner by you and your staff to our children.