

1914.  
NEW ZEALAND.

---

# SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN EUROPE.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, SUMNER.

---

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

---

The Secretary for Education.

Sumner, Christchurch, 1st March, 1914.

As directed by you, I have to report on my visit to schools for the deaf in other parts of the world.  
The following institutions were visited by me:—

The National Bureau for Promoting the General Welfare of the Deaf, High Holborn, London. Secretary, Mr. A. E. Illingworth.

The Schools for the Deaf administered by the London County Council. Superintendent and Organizer, Mr. B. P. Jones:—

Oak Lodge Residential School for the Deaf. 38 boarders and 38 day pupils.  
Principal, Miss A. B. Hopson. (For older girls only.)

Anerley Residential School for the Deaf. 60 boarders and 30 day pupils.  
Principal, Mr. A. F. Boyer. (For older boys.)

Homerton Residential School for the Deaf. 45 boarders and 35 day pupils.  
Principal, Mr. F. G. Barnes. (For subnormal children.)

Hugh Myddleton School for the Deaf. 110 day pupils. Head teacher, Mr. J. W. Fisher.

Old Kent Road School for the Deaf. 94 day pupils. Head teacher, Mr. J. D. Rowan.

Ackmar Road School for the Deaf. 70 day pupils. Head teacher, Miss A. W. Brown.

Fitzroy Square Training College and Oral School for the Deaf. 72 pupils. Principal, Mr. G. Sibley Haycock.

Ealing Training College. Miss Hewitt and Miss Pirrie. (For girls only.)

The Jews' Deaf-and-dumb Home. 80 pupils (residential). Principal, Mr. S. Kutner.

Mr. S. Schontheil's Private School for the Deaf, Sutherland Avenue, London.

The Royal School for the Deaf-and-dumb, Margate. 360 pupils. Principal, Mr. J. O. White.

The Royal Schools for the Deaf at Manchester. 367 pupils (residential). Principal, Mr. W. Nelson.

Subdivided into—

- (1.) Royal Schools. 242 pupils.
- (2.) J. E. Jones School of Industrial Training. 30 pupils.
- (3.) Clyne House School for Backward Pupils. 65 pupils.
- (4.) Henry Worrall School for Infant Deaf Children. 30 pupils.

- North Staffordshire Blind and Deaf School, Stoke-on-Trent. 112 pupils (residential). Principal, Mr. A. J. Story.
- Royal Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb, Derby. 172 pupils (residential). Principal, Dr. W. R. Roe.
- Yorkshire Institution for Deaf Children, Doncaster. 120 pupils. Principal, Mr. G. H. Greenslade.
- St. John's Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb, Boston Spa, Yorkshire. 228 pupils (residential). Secretary, Very Rev. Canon Dawson.
- Royal Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb, Birmingham. 180 pupils (residential). Principal, Mr. J. Brown.
- Institution for Deaf Children, Bristol. 45 residential and 10 day pupils. Principal, Mr. O. H. Illingworth.
- Royal West of England Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb, at Exeter. 132 pupils (residential). Principal, Mr. P. A. Dodds.
- Glasgow Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb. 200 pupils (residential). Principal, Dr. W. H. Addison.
- The Institution for Deaf-mutes, Rotterdam. 135 day pupils. Director, Mynheer A. F. Fehmers.
- The Institution for Deaf-mutes, Frankfurt-a-Main. 60 pupils (residential). Director, Herr J. Vatter.
- The Institution for Deaf-mutes, Munich. 108 residential and 48 day pupils. Director, Herr A. Hofbauer.
- The National Institution for Deaf-mutes, at Paris. 270 pupils. Director, M. V. Collignon.
- The National Institution for Deaf-mutes, at Milan. 50 pupils. Director, Signor G. Ferreri.
- The New South Wales Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb and Blind. Principal, Mr. H. Earlam.
- The Victorian Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb. Superintendent, Mr. Adock.
- The South Australian Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb. Superintendent, Mr. S. Johnson.
- The West Australian Institution for the Deaf-and-dumb. Principal, Mr. Wichell.

Besides visiting these schools I attended the Conference of Teachers of the Deaf held at Glasgow at the end of July last under the auspices of the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf. This conference was attended by a large and highly representative body of teachers, medical men, and others, mostly from Great Britain, but including representatives from America and other parts of the world, and many interesting questions connected with the education of the deaf were discussed by those present. I contributed a paper dealing with the education of the deaf in New Zealand, which was well received, my statement of our New Zealand legislation with regard to the education of the deaf meeting with general approval.

I also attended in London meetings of the College of Teachers of the Deaf, and by the courtesy of the examiners was present at the annual examination of students in training conducted by the Joint Examination Board. This took place at the Jews' Deaf-and-dumb Home, and the students were required to demonstrate their skill as teachers by giving lessons to pupils selected either from the Home or from the Oak Lodge School next door. The practical nature of the examination and the kind and considerate manner of the examiners towards the students appealed to me strongly.

I also had several interviews with Dr. A. Eichholz, the Board of Education's Inspector of Schools for the Deaf, and am much indebted to him for the supply of information and for assistance in many ways. Mr. B. P. Jones, the Superintendent and Organizer of the London County Council Schools for the Deaf, also showed me the greatest amount of courtesy and consideration in every possible way, as did teachers and officials generally wherever I went. Every opportunity was given me for making the fullest and freest investigations of all matters connected with the administration and with the methods of instruction in use in the various schools that I visited, and no pains were spared by those in authority fully to enlighten me on any questions on which I desired information, and to make my visit as profitable from a professional point of view as could be. I left Europe with the most cordial feelings towards those members of my profession that I had had the pleasure of meeting, and with much satisfaction that the destinies of the deaf in the countries I visited were in the hands of such able and earnest men and women.

My meeting with Dr. Kerr Love, of Glasgöw, and Dr. Macleod Tearsley, of London, two of the leading aurists of Britain and co-workers in the study of the causes of and of the prevention of deafness, was a source of much interest and of pleasure to myself. I beg to draw your attention to their writings on the subject of deafness, and particularly to a course of lectures recently delivered under the auspices of the National Bureau for Promoting the General Welfare of the Deaf by Dr. Kerr Love. He and Dr. Tearsley, after prolonged investigation, have come to the conclusion that in a large percentage of cases deafness is due to preventable causes, and that in a much smaller percentage of cases than is commonly believed is it due to the working of Mendelian laws.

It gave me great pleasure also to meet those veteran teachers, Miss S. E. Hull and Dr. Elliott, both of whom, though now retired from the actual teaching-work, still take a very active interest in movements connected with the education of the deaf, and particularly in the promotion of the teaching of speech to them. I also had the pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. B. St. John Ackers, who have laboured for many years in the same field.

My coming in contact with such a large number of teachers and other experts was of the greatest professional value to myself. I had many opportunities of discussing with my colleagues the more important problems connected with the education of the deaf, and was gratified to find that, judging by their verdict, we in New Zealand have been proceeding on right lines. Differences of opinion naturally occurred on some points, but these were mostly of minor importance. Among the teachers I met the consensus of opinion was overwhelmingly in favour of the oral system, which is fast gaining ground in England, and which is practically the only system in use on the Continent. Indeed, I scarcely met a teacher who, theoretically at least, was not an oralist. Some, however, disputed the applicability of the method to all cases of deaf-mutism, and contended that for a percentage of their pupils, notably those of feeble intelligence, the manual system was necessary. It was also claimed by some teachers that children commencing school life at a more advanced age than is usual can be more rapidly and efficiently educated by silent than by oral methods. In a good many so-called oral schools in England I found silent classes taught mainly by the manual alphabet and by writing. The percentage of pupils taught by silent methods varies much in different schools, and tends to get less and less as the oral system gets more and more firmly established. I carefully observed the work done in some of these silent classes, and found nothing to make me change my previous conviction—viz., that the oral system rightly applied can do more for deaf children of poor mental endowment than any silent system can do. The knowledge of language and the vocabularies possessed by the pupils in these silent classes appeared to me to be inferior to those of deaf children of similar mental power in purely oral schools such as our own. The humanizing effect of oral instruction and of oral expression is beyond question, and the mental and moral effect of the ability to utter even a few words vocally is of higher importance to the child himself than that of the ability to write and read hundreds of words would be. Until he can express himself as other people do, by voice, he feels cut off from humanity; but when he can say two or three words he becomes a man and a brother. The presence of silent classes and the use of the manual alphabet in oral schools for the deaf appear to me to be objectionable in every respect, and should not be tolerated. If, contrary to my opinion and experience and to that of many eminent authorities on the subject, there should be deaf children incapable of responding to proper oral treatment, these should be removed to a separate school and kept entirely apart from the oral pupils, especially outside of school hours, as is done at Manchester and elsewhere. I am afraid, however, that in some schools there is too great a tendency on the part of teachers, particularly in the earlier stages of oral instruction, to despair with regard to cases that present special difficulties, and that the temptation to get rid of such difficulties by removing the unfortunate children to the silent class is one that is ever present. In my own experience I have frequently met with cases of pupils, for some years disappointing from an oral point of view, becoming very satisfactory oral pupils.

In the European countries visited by me there is practically unanimity of opinion among experts as to the superiority of the oral system of instruction. Signor Ferreri, of Milan, one of the greatest living authorities on the subject of the education of the deaf, in discussing the question with me gave his opinion as follows: "With deaf children of feeble intellect not much can be attained under any system of instruction, but at least as much can be done orally as by any other system, and the uplifting mental and moral effect of oral expression is immensely superior to any other mode of expression." Herr Vatter, of Frankfurt, the doyen of the oral system in Germany, a teacher of world-wide celebrity and of wonderful skill, informed me that during the fifty-two years in which he had been labouring as an oral teacher he had not met with one case of a mentally sound deaf-mute that could not be efficiently educated by means of the pure oral system. In France this opinion is also held, and the brochure entitled "*La Parole et Les Sourds-muets de Faible Intelligence*," written by the distinguished professors of the National Institution at Paris, Messrs. Marichelle and Thollon, is a very able psychological study of the question, which I commend to your notice. In it the authors prove very conclusively that as a means of developing the mental powers of deaf children of weak intellect the oral method is indispensable.

The English schools are remarkably well planned and well equipped. The arrangement of the schoolrooms in the more modern schools is to be preferred to that of our own. There is a large central rectangular hall which is used for assembly, drill, lectures, &c. (In some of the day schools dinner is served to the pupils in it.) On each side of this hall are the class-rooms, each with a glass door opening off the hall. The headmaster from his desk in the hall can command a view of what is going on in each room.

In some of the schools, notably Stoke, Doncaster, Anerley, and Margate, open-air class-rooms are made use of during the summer months, and the teachers in these schools speak highly in their favour, and consider that they have a very beneficial effect on the general health of their pupils, and that consequently they promote the efficiency of their work.

Kindergarten materials and methods are freely made use of in the lower classes of most of the schools, and in some of the London County Council schools and in other schools I saw very good work of this kind being done. The Montessori appliances are in use in some of the schools, and are highly approved of. The particular merits of the Montessori system appeared to me to lie more in the spirit of the system than in its appliances. The latter, however, as a means of training and developing the senses are admirably selected. It was a great disappointment to me to be unable to see the system actually in operation at Rome. Owing to the Italian elections being held during the time I was in Rome the Italian schools were closed, and did not reopen until after I had sailed from Naples. However, what I saw of the system in England appealed to me much.

Drawing is taught very successfully in many of the English schools, particularly in Manchester, where I saw some really excellent work done by pupils. The work done in the institution at Milan is also exceedingly good, and a great amount of time is devoted to it. Signor Ferreri informed me that a large proportion of the pupils on leaving school obtain employment as decorators. In some of the schools art training is given by special art teachers; in others it is taught by the general staff.

Strip woodwork is a branch of manual instruction that is much in favour in England, and forms a splendid introduction to carpentry and cabinetmaking. Bookbinding is another form of manual instruction that is much in vogue. Many of the schools also teach printing.

The policy of crowding the deaf together in large institutions is pretty generally condemned in England and in Europe, the modern tendency being in the direction of the multiplication of small schools and the subdividing of large ones into smaller units under one control. It was therefore somewhat of a surprise to me to find in many of the provincial towns of England deaf children from the immediate vicinity, who might very well be living in their own homes and attending school as day pupils, augmenting the already overcrowded conditions of large residential schools.

The system adopted by the London County Council in dealing with its young deaf population appeared to me to be excellent, except that grading should be on the basis of individual progress and capacity rather than of age. The London County Council has seven day schools for deaf children under thirteen years of age, at which practically all the young deaf of London attend as day scholars. They are provided with a midday meal at a charge of 2d. per head, and their tramway fares are paid by the Council. Children from very poor homes are boarded out in the vicinity of and attend one of these day schools. After a fair trial the feeble-minded deaf children are sent to the special school at Homerton, as also are the blind deaf and the physically defective deaf. At the age of thirteen years the day-school boys are passed on to a residential school at Anerley and the girls to a similar school at Oak Lodge. A considerable number of the pupils at these two schools, however, continue to attend as day pupils.

At Anerley and Oak Lodge trades are taught with considerable success. The boys learn carpentry, cabinetmaking, baking, confectionery-making, tailoring, and bootmaking, and records show that in after-life a very large proportion of them continue in the trade they have learnt at school. The girls at Oak Lodge learn dressmaking, blouse-making, laundry-work, and house-keeping. An excellent feature here is the cottage for training in domestic economy. At both schools physical instruction is given in a most efficient manner. The pupils spend about the same amount of time in the workshops as in the ordinary class-rooms, but it should be noted that language-teaching goes on in the former as well as in the latter. The pupils leave in most cases at the age of sixteen years, except in the case of scholarship-winners, who have an extra year.

All pupils before admission to the schools are examined by an aurist, and treatment is given when necessary with a view to preserving and developing remnants of hearing. Through the courtesy of the Superintendent, Mr. B. P. Jones, and of Dr. Macleod Tearsley, the Aural Surgeon to the London County Council, I was present at one of the examinations made by the latter of candidates for admission to the London County Council Schools for the Deaf. The utility of and the necessity for an aural examination is generally admitted abroad, and I think it very desirable that the services of a properly qualified aurist should be secured for our school. The possession of even a relatively small amount of hearing is of such inestimable advantage to deaf children that every effort should be made to preserve and to develop the same, and it is probable that a proper examination might reveal cases susceptible of improvement by treatment. The services of an oculist and of a dentist are equally necessary, and no institution at home is without them.

In visiting the schools of Great Britain it appeared to me that greater attention might profitably be paid to the aural training of those pupils possessing some remnants of hearing. There were in some of the schools special classes for hard-of-hearing pupils, but none that I saw in which acoustic instruments were made use of to any extent. In some of the foreign schools—at Munich, for example—considerable attention is paid to the development of dormant hearing-powers, and with excellent results. Pains are also taken, by means of simple vibratory apparatus, to give to the pupils some concrete perception of the vibratory character of sound. I was much impressed by the value of such teaching and by the technical skill of those engaged in the work.

On the Continent, more especially in Italy and in Germany, I was particularly struck by the fluency of speech of the pupils and by the great amount of modulation of voice obtained by them. Their enunciation was wonderfully clear, and their sentences were rhythmic and well accented, in some cases indeed to an extent that I had previously thought impossible of attainment by the congenital deaf. At the National Institution of Paris I found the articulation most carefully taught, and the voices of the children exceedingly clear and distinct. Less attention, however, seemed to me to be paid to modulation of voice than was the case in the schools I visited at Frankfurt, Munich, and Milan. The practice in vogue at Paris of making the pupils repeat along with the teacher every word spoken by him did not appear to me to be a good one. Following the precepts of Vatter we have for many years abandoned this old-fashioned plan and have never been tempted to renew it. It is to some extent useful in the very early stages of instruction, but even then should be used sparingly, and later on it becomes more of a hindrance than a help. Much better is it even at the commencement of instruction for the pupil to concentrate all his attention on the observation of the teacher's vocal organs, and when he has done so to attempt to imitate them, than to observe and imitate at the same time. When a whole class is speaking along with the teacher the effect is exceedingly inharmonious, and it is quite impossible for the teacher to notice many faulty articulations, which necessarily being passed over instead

of being immediately corrected tend to become habitual. This speaking with the teacher is also very trying to the pupils. As Vatter says, "Let a hearing person try it." Let him speak aloud after the speaker every word spoken to him and he will soon find how tiring it is. How much more so must it be for a deaf person who has to make use of all his attention and his intellect, first to observe the exact arrangement of the speaker's vocal organs, and secondly to imitate the same and to produce the tone! He can then give little attention to the meaning of the words, and after a little time he takes his attention off the latter and repeats mechanically, and his speech, so far as this repetition is concerned, ceases to be an expression of thought. The practice also tends to make the speech of the teacher and pupils unnecessarily slow, and therefore monotonous and unnatural, but its chief disadvantage is that it prevents the pupils from concentrating their mental energies on the matter of the lesson. I have referred to it at length because I observed it in use in a number of schools that I visited. Teachers have defended it by claiming for it that it ensures the attention of the whole class, and that it shows the teacher that the pupils are following what he is saying. As regards the latter point, a good teacher always knows when this is the case whether the children are repeating after him or not; and as regards the former point, it is, as I have shown, only a divided attention that is secured by this old-fashioned method. Apart from this the teaching in the French Institution is excellent and well worthy of thoughtful observation and imitation, and the text-books of M. Thollon are admirable.

I may mention that at the Paris Institution I had the pleasure of meeting M. Pentelides, of Constantinople, who was sent to Paris three years ago by the Ottoman Government in order to be trained in the art of teaching the deaf by the oral method, and who is now taking up the position of Director of the new Government Institution at Constantinople. I had several long conversations with this gentleman, and was greatly impressed with his zeal and energy and with his general fitness for the difficult task he is taking up.

An extremely interesting feature of the Institution at Paris is "La Laboratoire de la Parole," conducted by M. Marichelle, in which, besides the kinematograph, which is made use of for recording the positions of the visible organs of speech, an elaborate electrical machine, somewhat of the nature of a phonograph, is used to record visually the actual voice-vibrations. To what extent the latter may be found to be of use in the actual work of teaching speech to young deaf-mutes is somewhat doubtful to me. I think it likely that, apart from its value as an aid to the teacher in studying the mechanism of speech, its principal utility will be found to be in assisting in the correction of errors of articulation or enunciation in deaf persons whose intelligence has already been reached by oral instruction.

The principal difference that I observed between the methods of instruction in the oral schools in England and in those on the Continent was that in the latter, particularly in Germany and in Italy, the methods appeared to me to be more oral than in the former, writing being much less used as a means of instruction in the Continental schools than was the case in England. In Herr Vatter's school at Frankfurt and in Signor Ferreri's at Milan practically the whole of the instruction is given by word of mouth, and the blackboard is very sparingly used. This I think largely accounts for the fluency of speech and the accuracy of the lip-reading in these foreign schools. One thing I noticed in the last-mentioned school appeared to me to be specially worthy of imitation. In most schools the greater part of the speech used during a lesson is used by the teacher himself, the part played by each pupil being largely confined to answering questions put to him by the teacher, with the result that at the end of a lesson each individual member of the class has uttered a very small percentage of the total words spoken during the lesson. In this particular school I was much impressed by the skill of the teacher in securing an opposite result. During the lesson a very large proportion of the speech used was used by the pupils to one another, the teacher confining himself as much as possible to the general direction of and the equalizing of this speech-work, so that at the end of the lesson he had not spoken very much more than any individual member of the class.

The education of the very young deaf child was a question that received much attention at the Glasgow conference, and while there was some difference of opinion as to the advisability of making the attendance at school of such children compulsory, the general opinion appeared to be entirely in favour of commencing their education as soon as possible. It was felt that something should be done to bridge the gulf of silence and mental starvation that in the case of deaf children ordinarily reaches from infancy to the age of seven or more, and that the age at which the first lessons in language should be given to a deaf child should approximate as closely as possible to the age at which normal children learn to speak. The necessity for the instruction of parents as to the home treatment of infant deaf children was urged by several speakers, and the still stronger necessity of skilled tuition by expert teachers at an age when the vocal organs are still plastic and when the desire for oral expression is first awakened was generally conceded. Preparatory schools for young deaf children have shown such gratifying results in America and in Denmark, and more recently in England, that I strongly urge the Department to consider the question of the establishment of such a school here. It is essential that a preparatory school should be entirely separate from the main school, and that pupils should remain at it until they have some command of spoken language. One of my most pleasing experiences while at Home was a visit to the Henry Worrall Infant School at Manchester, which is very ably conducted by Miss Goldsack under the direction of Mr. W. Nelson, Superintendent of the Royal Schools for the Deaf at Manchester, of which it is a branch. It is situated about five or six minutes' walk from the main school. At the time of my visit there were about thirty pupils in residence, and the arrangements for their care and the methods of tuition struck me as admirable. Similar preparatory schools are being planned in connexion with schools in other parts of Great Britain.

In Great Britain (but not in Ireland) the attendance of deaf children between the ages of seven and sixteen years is compulsory by law. By the higher education section of the Education Act of 1902, Education authorities are enabled to grant scholarships for the technical training of the deaf after the age of sixteen, and these scholarships are the means of some of the brighter pupils having another year at such schools as Oak Lodge. By the Act deaf children may be sent to school at the age of five years and earlier by consent of the Board of Education. Teachers generally are emphatic in their approval of our legislation by which the compulsory age is extended from six years to, where necessary, twenty-one years, and many expressed to me a hope that similar legislation would be passed in Great Britain.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks to the High Commissioner for New Zealand and to his staff for their very material assistance to me during my visit to England.

J. E. STEVENS,  
Director.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (850 copies), £3 15s.

---

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1914.

*Price 6d.*]