

Secretary for Education, and also a copy of the letter sent by the Government to the Agent-General, requesting him to secure the services of a male teacher for the deaf and dumb. [Read.] Miss Mitchell, he might say, had written to Lady Robinson, and had received her consent to become lady-patroness of the institution. He (the Chairman) had received from Miss Mitchell a number of reports of the working of similar institutions in England, America, and Australia. From these he found that they were supported partly by the State and partly by contributions. He regretted that Mr. Rolleston was not able to be present, as he had taken a great interest in the matter. He had taken upon himself to convene this meeting, and now he hoped to hear the opinions of those present.

The Rev. C. FRASER said that the fact of the Government proposing to establish a central institution for the whole of New Zealand removed it at once from the list of charities receiving aid to the extent of pound for pound. It could not be thought for a moment that the inhabitants of Christchurch were to contribute for the whole colony. The chief object of the meeting seemed to be to find if a sufficient number of those who usually interested themselves in benevolent objects could be found willing to interest themselves in this one. This was made very plain by the very good attendance. He thought some expression of opinion should be given by them on two points of greatest importance in this matter, and that they should be brought before the public meeting. The one was how the funds were to be raised. Such a matter should not be left to the casual charity of a portion of the public, even the benevolent public; but should be secured partly by endowment, partly by a charge on the Customs revenue, and partly by a rate. It was high time that more attention was given to this important department of Government work, and that the public and Parliament should take up the subject. An institution for the deaf and dumb, lunatic asylums, orphanages, and hospitals, should all be brought under one department, and placed on a permanent footing. He did not think it would be too much to expect that one of the Executive portfolios should be devoted to this work, along with the Department, say, of Education or of Justice. The other main point was that of the local control of these establishments. He was of opinion that Boards, having the same boundaries as the Education Boards, and appointed partly by the Government and partly by the ratepayers, would afford the best means of a local and energetic control, under the public view. The present time, coming near to a general election, was especially appropriate for advocating a just regard to business which so nearly concerned the public interests, and he felt that that Government would deserve well of the country which should inaugurate a wise scheme for dealing with these permanent necessities of the population.

The CHAIRMAN quite agreed with what had fallen from Mr. Fraser on the subject.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked how many there were in the colony deaf and dumb.

The CHAIRMAN said, according to the last census, about fifty, including adults.

Mr. STEVENS asked if there was any estimate of the cost of a central institution for the colony.

The CHAIRMAN replied in the negative.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said this was purely a colonial undertaking, and then came the question if the localities should be called on to subscribe £1 for £1 for the support of an institution for the whole of the colony, or if the Government would not keep such an institution up as well as other Government establishments.

Mr. STEVENS considered it perfectly hopeless to suppose that the institution could be worked on the principles which seemed to be the idea of how charitable institutions should be worked. It would be perfectly impossible for any committee to undertake its management on the indefinite terms proposed by the Government. He believed the only way to work it was as a Government institution. Proper buildings should be erected, and the whole institution managed as any other Government establishment. The £20 the Government proposed to contribute towards the board and education of those who were unable to pay for it seemed to him to recognize the duty of the State to provide for these cases.

After some further discussion, in which the Rev. Mr. ELMSLIE and Messrs. BOWEN and MONTGOMERY took part,

Mr. STEVENS moved, That this meeting is of opinion that an institution for deaf-mutes should be established as soon as possible, and as a Government institution.

The Rev. C. FRASER seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

It was resolved that the Chairman forward the resolution to the Government.

The proceedings then terminated.

No. 17.

Mr. J. HISLOP to Mr. H. R. WEBB.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 28th May, 1879.

I have the honor, by direction of the Minister of Education, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, communicating the result of a meeting held at Christchurch respecting the proposed establishment of a deaf and dumb institute. I am to convey to you the thanks of the Government for your letter and for your kind offer of assistance, and to say that the matter will receive from the Government that consideration which its importance merits.

H. R. Webb, Esq., Christchurch.

I have, &c.,

JOHN HISLOP.

No. 18.

The Hon. J. BALLANCE to Mr. A. C. STRODE.

(Telegram.)

Government Buildings, 22nd May, 1879.

You have, no doubt, read official letter to Miss Mitchell re proposed formation of association for establishing deaf and dumb institution. Government would subsidize liberally, and probably erect