1884.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION

(PAPERS RELATING TO THE).

[In continuation of E.-4, 1883.]

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

1 EXTRACT from SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT of the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

THE institution at Sumner for the education and training of deaf-mutes has now been in successful operation for upwards of four years. A year ago there were thirty-one pupils. Since then one girl died, another girl was removed for family reasons, and two youths left after having attained a fair degree of proficiency. Five fresh pupils (three boys and two girls) were received during the year, making the number of inmates at present thirty-two. Sixteen of these are boys and sixteen are girls. The following are the provincial districts from which the pupils have been sent Auckland, 7; Taranaki, 1, Hawke's Bay, 1; Wellington, 1, Canterbury, 10, and Otago, 11. The thirty-second pupil is a deaf-mute girl who has been sent from Adelaide, South Australia. During the past year the Director has had the aid of an assistant master and a mistress

The method of instruction is that which is known as "the articulation method," by which deaf-mutes are trained to the use of the organs of speech, and learn both to speak, in the ordinary sense of the word, and to understand (from the motion of the lips) the speech of others. The use of finger-signs, or other means employed as substitutes for speech, is strictly excluded. The course of instruction includes reading and writing in the first instance, followed by English composition, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, elementary science, &c. The girls are also instructed in sewing, knitting, and other useful domestic accomplishments.

There are in connection with the institution three separate residences and a detached schoolroom, at convenient distances from one another. There are also a large garden, playgrounds, and other useful adjuncts. These detached residences are in many respects well adapted to the purposes of such an institution. They afford better facilities for satisfactory separation, according to age and sex, than one large building would do. During the day the pupils are assembled for meals and for school instruction under the eye of the Director and his two assistants. After school lessons and meals are over for the day, the pupils separate and retire for the night to their different residences. One of these is under the supervision of Mr and Mrs. Van Asch, the second is occupied by girls, under the care of the lady assistant; and the elder boys, in charge of the assistant master and a trustworthy matron, are accommodated in the third residence.

The institution is visited as occasion requires by the medical officer, Dr. Prins, of Christchurch, who takes much interest in the work of the school; it is also visited from time to time by the Minister of Education and officers of the department. The ability and zeal of the Director are deserving of high commendation, and the results of his labours invariably call forth expressions of

surprise and gratification from those who visit the institution. The following is an abstract of the expenditure on the institution for the financial year 1883–84.

	£	s.	d.
Salaries—Director and two assistants	845	0	1
Rents and repairs	315	16	10
Travelling expenses, medical attendance, furniture, and school-room requisites, &c.	212	4	8
Maintenance of pupils	1,197	3	8
	2,570	5	2
Less payments by parents	457	3	4
Total	£2,113	1	10

The charge made by the Government for the board and education of each child is £40 a year, but in many instances pupils are admitted free, or at reduced rates, so that no child in the colony capable of receiving benefit from the course of instruction may be excluded.

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2. Director's Report.

Sir,— Sumner, 31st May, 1884.

In introducing to your notice this year's report, I have the honour to state that the past year has been one of complete freedom from sickness in the institution, and that the general progress of most of the pupils is of a satisfactory nature.

Of the total of thirty-two pupils now attending, eleven have their homes in Otago, ten in Canterbury, seven in Auckland, and one in each of the Provincial Districts of Wellington, Hawke's Bay, and Taranaki. There is also one pupil from Adelaide.

The boys' home and other school buildings are still suitable for present requirements, but as all the inmates have grown considerably, and as five new pupils took the place of three who left, there is now no further spare room for future applicants. Of still greater importance to the institution than the question of space are—(1) The consideration of whether trades and other occupations should be taught to the pupils of the advanced classes, and (2) the supply of teachers.

Trades, etc.—To the utility of farming and gardening for deaf boys in the colony I have already drawn the department's attention in my former recommendation to have certain blocks of land set apart for the ultimate use and instruction of such children. That other branches of industry are suited to their peculiar condition, a reference to what is being done in older institutions may serve as a guide. In the tabular statement of the American institutions, mention is made of carpentry, cabinetmaking, baking, dressmaking, gardening, painting, printing, shoemaking, and tailoring, in connection with the institution at New York, of broommaking, cabinetmaking, farming, printing, and shoemaking at Iowa, and of two or three of these same occupations in nearly all the other American institutions. At the Rotterdam Institution the boys have an opportunity of attending workshops in the town, and are brought up to either shoemaking, cabinet-making, tailoring, bookbinding, lithography, or basketmaking. Several I remember have turned out good farmers. And, for the girls, three ladies are specially engaged to teach them plain sewing, knitting, measuring, the cutting-out and fitting of dresses, &c. I may here remark that in our own institution five boys will before long be sufficiently advanced in age as well as in education to pass part of the day on a farm, or to be sent to a workshop. Several of the girls have come to us at a late age—fourteen and sixteen. Their proficiency in speech and progress in general knowledge must naturally remain defective, but have they not, for this very reason, all the greater claim on us to receive such instruction as will fit them for some industrial occupation.

The Teaching Staff.—Our institution is only in its infancy, yet unavoidable changes of teachers have already taken place, and are shortly to take place again. While a school is small this may not seriously interfere with its effectual working, but with our increased number and strict classification—strict, because of the great difference in the age of the pupils who enter—permanent success is impossible unless teachers are trained to the work young, and are induced to take it up, not for convenience' sake, but as a special profession. At the Royal Deaf-and-dumb Institution, Berlin, there were in 1882 eighty-four pupils. These were instructed by a staff of nine experienced teachers and eight candidates or student-teachers undergoing a course of five years training. In Rotterdam, during the same year, 162 pupils were being taught by fifteen masters (most of these have been engaged in the work of deaf-mute education for upwards of twenty years, and of their zeal and ability I can speak from personal knowledge), three ladies for needlework; three teachers for religious instruction, and one for drawing.

In citing these particulars for comparison it is my aim to supply the Government with reliable data, in order that the first institution in New Zealand for the amelioration of the pitiable condition of the deaf-and-dumb may be established on a sound basis, and that such an institution may be governed and directed according to the requirements, the experience, and the most enlightened views of the age.

In view of a possible change from our temporary settlement, I may observe that, having regard to the requirements of boys who show an aptitude for learning a trade, the neighbourhood of an industrial centre (or railway-station to reach the same) would be the most suitable for a permanent establishment. For boys with a taste for farming, and for others of too small a capacity to become artisans, a good-sized farm of two or three hundred acres of good arable land is the desideratum.

I must finally refer to the valuable services rendered to the school by Miss Matilda Young. She filled the post of assistant from the 1st August, 1882, to the 31st March, 1884, and her influence over the girls is deserving of the highest commendation. I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education. G. VAN ASCH.

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3. Mr J H. POPE to the SECRETARY for EDUCATION

The Secretary for Education. Wellington, 4th December, 1883.

I VISITED the Sumner Institution for Deaf-mutes on the first of the present month. At the time of my visit no work was going on, it was Saturday afternoon, and nearly all the children were at play I had, therefore, an opportunity of seeing them when not engaged with the ordinary school routine, of talking with them when they were free from the restraint of being in school, and of judging how far their training has fitted them for holding communication with outside people.

For the casual visitor to an institution of this kind, the most striking feature, and the one by which the amount of good done is generally estimated, is the ability of the children to talk, and to understand what is said to them. I found that nearly all the children could make out what I said to them, and could give fairly intelligible answers. The pupils that have been but a short time at Sumner, say a year or two, understand very much better than they speak, those that have been there for a longer time, say for three or four years, do both nearly equally well. Seeing, however, that the number of children that have been at Sumner for a long period is small as yet, the impression made on a visitor is that the comprehension is very much better than the speaking. I am convinced that in two or three years' time there will be an alteration in this respect. I had quite a long conversation with one of the boys this lad is stone-deaf, and four years ago he could do no more than make a few signs, any one who had seen us talking together on Saturday last would have noticed only that the lad repeated what I said to him, that, so to speak, he *looked at* what I said instead of listening to it, and that his own sentences were delivered in a monotone otherwise there was nothing to give any one an indication of the nature of his affliction, or to cause a person unacquainted with the kind of work done here to imagine that it was a deaf-mute that was holding a conversation with me. A little girl, who two years ago was just beginning the course, was able to understand and answer questions about her home, and to inform me that she wished the holidays to come, so that she might visit her friends. I noticed, too, that the children *spoke* to one another while they were playing. It would be futile to expect that these children could ever be placed on anything like an equal footing with those who can hear, but it is very plain that all the children here are in a fair way to be able to hold conversations with their friends on any ordinary subject, and to have the disabilities depending on their want of the sense of hearing diminished indefinitely This is, in my opinion, a very great deal to have accomplished in the short time that the institution has been at work.

But the mere speaking and understanding, though of course of cardinal importance, are by no means the only acquirements of the inmates of the Sumner Institution. It is the awakening of the intelligence, and the developing and putting into working order of minds disabled by the blocking-up of two of the most important avenues of thought and its expression, that are in reality the greatest benefits conferred on the children here. It is impossible to see these children after an interval without recognizing that in the meantime their reasoning powers have been greatly improved, and that their minds are able to perform operations that had previously been quite beyond their range.

There is nothing connected with this institution calling for unfavourable remark, as far as I can see, everything is going on very satisfactorily

JAMES H. POPE.

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4. MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

SIR,— Christchurch, 5th June, 1884.

I have the honour to forward the following report on the Deaf-and-dumb Asylum at Sumner.

The inmates number now thirty-two pupils—sixteen girls and sixteen boys. They have generally enjoyed good health throughout the year, the exceptions have been a few trifling ailments, for which the patients were brought to my house for advice. The institution has been kept clean, and in excellent order in every respect. There is no more room to receive any new pupils. The pupils are now approaching an age when the question will have to be taken into consideration whether, in addition to their education, it will not be advisable to teach the girls housework, millinery and dressmaking, dairywork, &c., and the boys gardening, farmwork, and other occupations.

As the institution is now so well known, public confidence established, and the advantages to the community by educating these afflicted children so creditably and efficiently appreciated, the Government will have to take into consideration the urgent necessity of providing land, buildings, &c., in order to meet increased demands from an increasing population. The Director's energies are already sufficiently taxed, and it would be well to afford every facility for instruction to those desirous of becoming trained and assistant teachers in the institution. A breaking-down in the teaching power would seriously cripple the advance of the asylum, and materially affect the value of the great amount of good work already accomplished by Mr Van Asch.

I have, &c.,

H H. PRINS,

The Minister of Education, Wellington Medical Officer.

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