

Only in one instance has delicate health seriously interfered with the regular school attendance of a pupil.

The provision of a compulsory clause in "The School Attendance Act, 1901," whereby parents may be compelled to send their deaf-mute children to a school for deaf-mutes will be welcomed by all competent judges as a wise and humane measure.

There are plain signs of late of a further increase in the number of scholars next year. With this growth of the institution's work the peculiarities and drawbacks of an internate or asylum as against the advantages of an externate or day-school will become more pronounced. The difficulties, therefore, of the Director and his teaching-staff in promoting the use of speech amongst the pupils will equally increase. To minimise this evil a regulation that all the members of the domestic staff, as well as the teachers, should speak *viva voce* to the inmates where and whenever their duties bring them into personal contact ought to receive official recognition. The Director should likewise have the privilege and power to request, at convenient times, the attendance in the class-room of any domestic in the establishment.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

### No. 3.

#### REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 30th June, 1903.

I have the honour to report that the pupils of the Deaf-mute Institute have generally enjoyed good health during the past year; but early in December whooping-cough appeared in the school, attacking five of the pupils. I therefore recommended the Director to commence the Christmas holidays a fortnight earlier than usual, the effect of which was that no more cases occurred.

The want of a hospital building separate from the school is urgently felt, for the isolation of infectious cases. I submit a plan of what I think is required; and I may say that the Director, Mr. van Asch, has approved of the plan, and says that when the building is not required for illness he can make good use of it for additional teaching-rooms. There is, however, a special purpose which such a hospital would serve, in addition to providing for ordinary infectious diseases, such as diphtheria and scarlatina, or measles. We have always got a small number of pupils with a tendency to tuberculosis, of whom some—at present three—are sufficiently affected to make them dangerous to other pupils if sleeping in the same room. These three pupils are now sleeping in a separate cottage by themselves; and an instance occurred of the necessity for this arrangement, from the cottage attendant becoming infected, though she is now cured. The proposed hospital will afford a convenient pair of dormitories for the tubercular pupils, who can be removed temporarily in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

I have, &c.,

W. H. SYMES, M.D.,  
Medical Officer.

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

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