

1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION.

[In continuation of H.—1E, 1880.]

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

No. 1.

EXTRACT from the FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT of the MINISTER of EDUCATION.

THE Deaf-and-Dumb Institution was opened at Sumner on the 1st of March, 1880, by Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch, whose labours have been attended with marked success.

The system of instruction is that which is known as “the articulation system,” 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 conventions 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, &c.

For a time the two buildings which had been rented for the purposes of the institution proved sufficient; but towards the close of the past year the number of pupils in attendance and in prospect rendered it advisable to provide increased accommodation, and advantage was taken of a very opportune offer of the lease, on reasonable terms, of premises at Sumner, which had been occupied as a boarding-school. The house is a commodious one, with a large dining-room, a detached schoolhouse (comprising two pleasant and well-ventilated classrooms), a good garden, a large play-ground, and other useful adjuncts. The three detached residences now occupied 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 if one large building only were made use of. During the day the pupils are assembled for meals and for school instruction under the eye of the Director and the lady-assistant. After 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 presided over by the lady-assistant, and the third is in charge of a trustworthy matron.

At the close of last year the number of pupils was 10; it has since increased to 21. Thirteen of these are boys, and 8 are girls: their ages range from six to nineteen years. The following are the provincial districts from which the pupils have been received: Auckland, 4; Hawke's Bay, 1; Wellington, 1; Canterbury, 7; Otago, 7: total, 20. The twenty-first pupil is a deaf-mute girl who has been sent from Melbourne to study under Mr. Van Asch. At the beginning of the year the increasing number of pupils and their varied degrees of attainment rendered necessary the employment of a lady assistant-teacher, whose services are proving to be of great value, not only in connection with the more technical work, but also as regards the assistance she is able to render Mrs.

Van Asch in the instruction and training of the girls in domestic economy. As already mentioned, the lady-assistant is in charge of one of the residences.

The institution is visited as occasion requires by the medical officer, H. H. Prins, Esq., of Christchurch, who takes much interest in the work of the school. Since it was opened in March, 1880, the institution has been visited once by the Minister, and on eleven different occasions by officers of the Education Department, whose reports have invariably been of a satisfactory character. A separate Parliamentary Paper contains a copy of the prospectus of the institution, prepared for public information and extensively circulated, and also reports from the Director, the medical officer, the Inspector-General of Schools, and the officer of the Education Department who last visited the school. These reports give full and interesting particulars respecting the institution and Mr. Van Asch's system of instruction. Copies of two letters are also published as showing the opinion of parents regarding the results of the school in the case of their own children.

Table No. 8 of the Appendix contains a statement of the expenditure on the institution for the financial year ending 31st March, 1881. The following is an abstract of the statement:—

	£	s.	d.
Director and lady-assistant	611	5	0
Rents, rates, furniture, and repairs	428	6	10
Travelling expenses, advertising, medical attendance, and schoolroom requisites		61	16 6
Maintenance of pupils	£407	17	8
Less payments by parents	263	8	8
		144	9 0
	<u>£1,245 17 4</u>		

The sum of £75 paid as compensation is omitted because the payment cannot properly be regarded as a charge against the institution itself.

No. 2.

PROSPECTUS.

DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION, SUMNER, CHRISTCHURCH.

THE above Institution will be reopened on Saturday, the 5th February next. There is ample accommodation for a number of additional pupils. It is indispensable that pupils enter at the beginning of the quarter. The system of instruction is that which is known as "the articulation system," 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 conventions 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, &c. The result of the complete course of instruction will, in almost all cases, be to enable the pupil to read with thorough comprehension, and to hold oral conversation with relatives and friends, and even with strangers. The charge for board and education will be £40 per annum. Persons unable to pay this rate are invited to communicate with the Minister of Education. For full particulars application may be made to the Director of the Institution, the Secretaries and Inspectors of Education Boards, and the undersigned.

JOHN HISLOP.

Education Department, Wellington, 13th January, 1881.

No. 3.

REPORT by the DIRECTOR.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report that, in addition to the 10 pupils who were in the Institution for instruction last year, there are now 11 others, and that this total of 21 pupils is composed of 13 male and 8 female scholars, ranging in age from six to nineteen, from the following places: From Otago, 7; from Canterbury, 7; from Auckland, 4; from Wellington, 1; from Hawke's Bay, 1; and from Melbourne, 1.

For obvious reasons this number of deaf children could not be properly housed and cared for in our two cottages, and therefore, and in order also to dispose of the difficulty of inadequate school accommodation, the offer to lease at a moderate rental the boarding-school premises lately occupied by C. L. Wiggins, Esq., was accepted. Experience has proved these to be exactly suitable to our requirements, for in connection with them we have the use of a light and well-ventilated schoolroom, detached from the house, and of sufficient dimensions to admit of at least

forty scholars; there are likewise a large cheerful dining-room, a good garden, and a suitable playground. Probably the buildings now in occupation will suffice for the requirements of the Institution for the next few years, should the Government deem it advisable to prolong the present arrangement beyond the time originally contemplated.

To dilate upon the early work of the elementary class, as was done in last year's report, would seem like the repetition of an old story. I must remark, however, that all the new arrivals are again successful in the enunciation of vowels and consonants, and that some of them promise to become very apt scholars.

A marked difference is noticeable in the pupils that have had a full year's tuition. Six of these form a separate class. They begin to realise the blessing and advantage of a knowledge of language. With smiling countenances they await their teacher entering the classroom, and are proud to greet him with the usual "Good morning." Although the mechanical imperfections of their speech are by no means overlooked, yet the principal care is now bestowed upon the mental part of the work. For these more advanced pupils articulation is no longer to be wholly or even partially mechanical. Words are to be names of objects, names of colour and form, and names of actions; no longer simple muscular movements of the tongue and mouth, but intelligent movements to which the hearing community attaches meaning; symbols used with a due observance to rule and order.

Special regard is also paid to the choice of matter. Sentences are carefully selected for their simplicity. Lessons, specially written for them, are now read and explained, and frequently object-lessons are prepared with them to sharpen their powers of observation. To make the matter clearer—if, for example, the object "dog" were under observation, the teacher's proceeding might be somewhat thus: Pointing with an inquiring face to the dog as a whole, and then to the parts of its body, he would ask, "What?" and the pupil would answer (in words more or less distinct, of course), "a dog," "eyes," "ears," "legs," "a back," "a tail," "hair," &c. If, the same course being pursued with other parts less prominent to the sight, the pupil were to indicate by gesture, or by the word *no*, that he was ignorant of the name, the teacher would, after repeating the question, supply the words "a skin," "a neck," "flesh," "bone," "a backbone," "ribs," "teeth," "a tongue," "a jaw," "a jawbone," always taking care that the names follow, not precede, the indication of the parts referred to. To an experienced teacher the task of pursuing the subject by further explaining to the pupil "hearing," "sight," "feeling," &c., is very fascinating; but with a young class he must restrain his own eagerness, and lead them on to another track equally interesting and necessary. The dog might be a large one, and, if so, the teacher might, with a special view to a practical illustration, attempt to lift the dog on to the table. The failure would doubtless be accompanied by roars of laughter, and the opportunity ought to be seized by explaining to the children that, in answer to the question *how* the dog is, we say "*heavy*," "*large*," &c. In a similar way, other names denoting colour, size, condition, &c., as black, white, long, sharp, quick, soft, hard, gentle, fierce, &c., may be elicited, and sentences composed with the pupils thus: *What?* A dog. *How?* Black? The dog is black. *What?* A tail. *How?* Long. The tail is long. Teeth, white. The teeth are white, &c. Further intellectual exercises are: What is the dog doing? Or simply, *What doing?* Standing. *Where?* On the floor. The dog is standing on the floor. Lying. *Where?* Under the table. The dog is lying under the table. And again, with a view of giving a notion of words denoting *time*: The dog is running *now*? No; will run *after*. The dog is eating *now*? No; will eat *this afternoon*.

Having practised the pupils in noticing other objects in a like manner, the master may write out on the blackboard short descriptions, in which the pupils should assist, thus: That is a dog. The dog is black. He is large and strong. He has four legs. He can walk. He can run and jump also. The dog has two eyes. He can see. He is looking now. He has two ears. He can hear. The dog has a mouth and a tongue. Can he talk? No, he cannot. He cannot talk, but he can bark, &c.

By thus describing the *modus operandi* of the method of instruction, a faint idea may be conveyed of the difficulty there is in bringing these afflicted children to any light of speech and understanding of language at all. One rule in particular should be adhered to in all their teaching. This is: Whatever the subject-matter under consideration may be, and whether the process of dealing with it be analytical or synthetical, the means taken ought to be simple, the manner cheerful, and the treatment thorough.

In conclusion, I must mention that the Institution has been laid under obligation to two Christchurch ladies: to Mrs. R. Rhodes, for kindly sending the pupils a parcel of picture-books as a Christmas present; and to Mrs. Washbourne, of Riccarton, for liberally providing them with a long day's enjoyment in her own grounds.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 4.

REPORT by MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 13th June, 1881.

I have the honor to forward a report on the Deaf-and-Dumb Asylum at Sumner.

There are at present 21 pupils, 13 boys and 8 girls, their ages ranging from six to nineteen years. They have been all in good health until recently; but, on the 20th May last, a lad from

one of the neighbouring provinces, after a fortnight's admission, was attacked with measles, and during the following week there were thirteen children laid up, including three of the Director's children. I am glad however to inform you that they are now quite recovered. I find that three pupils in the Institution have not been vaccinated, or at least have not the vaccine marks. I purpose attending to them immediately they have regained strength after the attack of measles. The buildings and premises occupied are kept scrupulously clean and orderly. Since my last report, extra accommodation has been most advantageously added; it consists of the dwelling-house, detached schoolroom, and playgrounds lately occupied by Mr. Wiggins. The premises as they are at present are quite sufficient to accommodate thirty children: the schoolroom, being subdivided and ventilated, is suited for the requirements of that number of pupils. The diet supplied is a good mixed and generous one. The fact that the pupils take their meals with the Director, his family, and the assistant teacher, would appear to furnish a sufficient guarantee that the food is of good quality and well cooked, inasmuch as there is no distinction made in this respect between the pupils and those who are in charge of them. The pupils, as far as my observation enables me to judge, are making good progress in their education. The appointment of an assistant lady-teacher, as recommended by me in October last, has added considerably to the efficient working of the educational system, the Director being now enabled to devote a greater portion of his time to the more advanced pupils under his care, the assistant teacher being in the meantime engaged with the younger ones.

I cannot close my report without assuring you of the pleasure which it has afforded me to inspect an institution which I am satisfied is so thoroughly well conducted and managed. It is only right to add that during the recent attack of measles a considerable amount of extra trouble and care was necessarily entailed in nursing the afflicted children. The Director, Directress, and assistant teacher were indefatigable in their attentions, and, without additional assistance, conducted their labours with great patience and kindness. In my opinion, the Deaf-and-Dumb Asylum at Sumner is a boon and credit to the colony. I can confidently recommend parents who may unfortunately have children so afflicted to send them to this institution, where, in addition to education, they will receive every care and kindness.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

H. H. PRINS.

No. 5.

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS.

I HAVE paid four visits to this Institution—the first two about the time of its establishment, the others last November and last April.

Mr. Van Asch's method of teaching the deaf to utter words and sentences, and to follow the speech of others by watching the movements of the lips, &c., is, in my judgment, thoroughly scientific, and very successful. It requires teaching ability of a high order, and Mr. Van Asch is an enthusiastic teacher. Very few persons know how wonderful are the results that have already been attained in making the dumb to speak—or, to put it more correctly, in teaching the deaf to speak, for the system is based on the fact that the deaf are not dumb, as is commonly supposed.

The necessity of unusually skilful teaching is apparent when it is remembered that for want of speech the deaf-mute's mind is comparatively undeveloped, and that he must be taught to think as well as to speak.

The bearing of the children towards their instructor betokens not only confidence, but gratitude. I regard the Institution as in every way a most satisfactory one.

WM. JAS. HABENS.

No. 6.

REPORT BY MR. POPE.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 14th June, 1881.

In accordance with instructions received from the department I went to Sumner yesterday to visit the Institution for the Deaf-and-Dumb. Many of the children had been suffering from measles, and, though convalescent, were not yet strong enough to go on with their ordinary work. Mr. Van Asch, however, kindly did his best to enable me to form some idea of the nature of the methods adopted for training his pupils to understand what is said to them, to speak intelligibly, and to write. A first visit to Sumner hardly enables one to do more than give an account of what he has seen and heard there. It is possible, however, that a mere record of the first impressions received by one who visits the Institution may be of some use. While I was at the school five children were put through their exercises. One of these was a girl about eight years old, three of them were boys of about ten, and one was somewhat older. The girl had been only a few weeks at Sumner, but she was already able to produce many of the elementary sounds that constitute what may be called the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. The apparently hopeless task of making a deaf-mute understand articulate speech is accomplished by causing the sight and the touch to do the kind of work that is ordinarily done by the sense of hearing. The child was

made to place one of her hands on the teacher's throat and the other on her own. At the same time she watched intently the motions and configurations of the teacher's lips. By these means she obtained information that comes to ordinary children through the ear. She received it so thoroughly that she was able to reproduce almost exactly the sounds uttered by Mr. Van Asch.

Writing and speaking are taught simultaneously. The teacher utters a sound, say that which is represented by *ee*. The pupil pronounces it, and then writes the letters on a slate. The sounds represented by *f* and *t* are treated in a similar way; finally these sounds are combined, and the word *feet* is produced. This was one of the words used yesterday. The little girl recognised the word when it was pronounced, pronounced it correctly herself, and, finally, wrote it correctly on the slate. Her frequent glances at her feet showed that she knew what she was saying. Many other words were treated in the same way, including my own name, which she mastered without any difficulty.

The other children were much further advanced. In their case it was easy to discern the practical benefits resulting from continued instruction under the system pursued by Mr. Van Asch. One of the younger boys who had been about twelve months at Sumner was able to repeat almost any easy sentence that Mr. Van Asch had previously pronounced for him, to write it down on a slate, and to give convincing evidence that he understood what he was saying. After the children had gone through the exercises, I asked their teacher to allow me to talk to the boy that appeared to be the furthest advanced. After one or two false starts had been made we got on very well indeed. The little fellow understood quite well what I said to him, and gave intelligible and intelligent replies. On coming away I wished the children good-bye. They immediately returned the salutation, just as other children would have done.

One cannot but regard the result achieved here as a masterpiece of the teacher's art. The ordinary skilled teacher merely does the best that can be done with materials ready to his hand, but he who succeeds in teaching the deaf-mute to utter and to understand speech is, in the truest sense of the word, an artist. He does not merely combine skilfully: he creates.

It is quite unnecessary to say anything about the value of such work as is done here. Everybody recognises that. What is required is merely that it should be fully known that here, at Sumner, the deaf are taught to hear (virtually) and the dumb to speak, and that, if children are allowed to grow up in what is almost the most helpless condition that human beings can be placed in, the fault lies with parents that neglect to give their children the benefit of advantages that are so readily obtainable.

JAMES H. POPE.

The Inspector-General of Schools.

