

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.

### 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.

### 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,

Medical Officer.

The Minister of Education, Wellington