

By some these figures are taken as proof that we have already collected in the institution the majority of the *bona fide* deaf-and-dumb children in New Zealand; but such an inference is, I think, prematurely drawn; for this year's contingent of fresh arrivals—being ten, with another to enter shortly—is on a par with the highest of any of former years, and seems to indicate that, although the number of those availing themselves of the advantages of the school is comparatively great, it may still be expected to grow as time causes the existence and nature of the school to be more widely known, or as several preventive causes, which now tend to keep several of these unfortunate children away, cease to operate.

The additional ten pupils are four boys and six girls, namely, two children from Westland—a district hitherto unrepresented in our community—three from Auckland, and five from Canterbury; and, dividing the total number of forty-three pupils now in the institution according to the provincial districts whence they come, we find that Otago contributes twelve; Canterbury, thirteen; Westland, two; Wellington, five; Hawke's Bay, one; and Auckland, nine. The remaining pupil has her friends in South Australia.

Of the three pupils who left us this year two remained at home in July last, and one at Christmas. The eldest was a girl of twenty. She belongs to Canterbury. For five years she had been educated in England on the manual or signing system. But, having spoken a few words in infancy, she had ever since evinced a strong desire to learn to speak again, and was brought to us through the instrumentality of a cultivated lady from Christchurch. The two years this girl passed in the institution were, it appears, well spent, for the father, a shoemaker by trade, in writing to express his gratitude, remarks: "She can talk very plain, but the greatest benefit she has derived is fitting her more for society, which before she avoided. Although the time was short that she was with you, it will prove a blessing for the rest of her life." I have been an eye-witness of the usefulness of this pupil in her own home.

The next is a lad of sixteen. He came to us at the opening of the school, a quiet boy, struck stone-deaf by fever at the age of six or seven, and still in possession of a remnant of speech. In my humble opinion this youth has benefited by the training and instruction to the fullest extent. The decay in his speech has been arrested, and he is now chatty and companionable; his mind is fairly well stored with useful information, and by practice he has attained to a remarkable degree of excellence in lip-reading. The father employs him in his business as blacksmith and shopkeeper, and shares my own opinion that the education the boy has received has, in a great measure, reduced and alleviated the extent and burden of his affliction.

The pupil who remained at home after the Christmas vacation is from Auckland. Her age was over fifteen when she entered. She was naturally bright, but wholly ignorant of a written word even. Considering the drawback her case presented from entering the school so late, which circumstance also affects her clearness in articulation, speech, and lip-reading, the system pursued has awakened her intelligence and to a very great extent enlarged her understanding. During the three years she remained in the institution she learned to express her wants and pleasures in simple language. She was made to understand the advertisements and short reports of accidents and similar occurrences in the newspaper; she received a fair idea of time and money, was trained in plain sewing, and, having a good physique, acquired a ready as well as an intelligent use of our treadle sewing-machine. Her parents have made arrangements for her to learn dressmaking, an employment for which she seems well fitted. May it prove the means of her gaining a livelihood.

One defect in our arrangements has suggested itself to my mind since the departure of this last pupil. It is desirable to let elderly girl-pupils like these have an opportunity now and again of watching and practising the art of preparing food. No doubt, want of space and convenience in our old premises would have proved great obstacles to such a proceeding in the past, had we attempted it, but in the future we hope, with your permission, to rectify this defect.

Persuaded, as one might be by a perusal of last year's detailed report, of the necessity for increased accommodation in the institution, the influx of so many new-comers this year would have made it now absolutely impossible to carry on the complicated work of boarding and teaching even in the three separate dwellings. It is for this reason a matter for congratulation, I think, that such a timely offer was received by Government from C. L. Wiggins, Esq., of Sumner, to lease his large premises known as "Sumner College," erected by that gentleman about five years ago for the purposes of a private boarding-school.

The practice of crowding large numbers of deaf children under one roof is open to objection from an educational point of view. It was, in this instance, not altogether in accordance with the Director's wishes; but, on account of the many difficulties looming in the distance if no arrangements were promptly made, as well as in consequence of the roominess of the place offered, it was thought politic and judicious to waive particular objections and to conform to the exigencies of the case. The agreement with Mr. Wiggins bears date from the 1st January, 1886, and will remain in force for a period of five years. The rental is at the rate of £360 per annum.

The building, of which we took possession in January, is a two-storey one, and is now doing duty both as Director's residence and as a home for the girls and the small boys. Twelve of the older boys and the two assistant-masters are still occupying Mr. Kay's house.

Besides two good bath-rooms and a well-appointed lavatory, the institution proper contains seventeen bed-chambers, four of which are extra large and serve the purpose of so called dormitories; a spacious dining-room to accommodate fifty or fifty-five persons; four sitting-rooms;