

I believe they are all benevolent institutions there. I believe there is a small grant given from the Government to the institutions, but the institutions are principally supported by subscriptions.

103. *Mr. Van Oren.*] Mr. Van Asch's school is the only school for the deaf in New Zealand?—Yes.

104. Consequently, a large number of the pupils come from different districts?—Yes.

105. How are the funds found to make up the payments necessary? Are they found by the district, the parochial funds or local funds, or are they all found out of the Imperial fund?—They are all found out of the Imperial fund.

106. There is no compulsion as regards teaching the deaf, I understand you, in New Zealand?—There is no compulsion.

107. They are not looked after; a deaf child might be left uneducated?—He might be left uneducated.

108. Then these pupils come there voluntarily?—Yes.

109. Who assesses the amount that they are to pay? How is that determined?—That is determined by the Resident Magistrate.

110. At what age do you receive the children?—From six years of age.

111. Do many come in after that age?—Yes; we have several cases of children coming up after that age.

112. What is the highest limit of age at which you receive a child?—The fixed rule is that no deaf-mutes over twelve need be admitted, and a few years hence the highest limit should be eleven or even ten. Of course we take in young men and young women if they have lost their powers of hearing, simply to teach them lip-reading.

113. But I mean with regard to the congenital cases?—The rule is as above stated.

114. And have you any rule about retaining them for the full term of eight years?—No, we have no rule about that.

115. Do many leave before the full term of eight years? During the time that you have been established have many left—I mean, of the purely deaf-mutes?—Sometimes pupils leave after two or three years' training, because the parents want to make them work. In other instances they are kept away because the plain speech of the deaf children leads the parents to the false conclusion that the children understand language very well, or parents are deluded into the belief that their children will henceforth pick up speech in the ordinary way.

116. Are there many other deaf and dumb in New Zealand?—Well, I suppose there are for the number of the population.

117. And have they been taught by the finger alphabet?—I have only come across one case taught on the finger system, and that was a gentleman who had been taught in England.

118. What proportion of the population in New Zealand are deaf and dumb?—That I could not say; we have no way of getting at that.

119. *The Chairman.*] I did not ask you if there had been lately a general census?—The last census was taken in 1885.

120. *Mr. Van Oren.*] Then these children who are in your school, and those of your pupils who have left, have no knowledge whatever of the finger alphabet?—They have no knowledge whatever of the finger alphabet.

121. They are not taught the finger alphabet, I know; but has a knowledge of it crept into the school?—There is no knowledge of it in the school at the present time.

122. That is to say, when the children are by themselves they do not make any use of the finger alphabet?—No; not so far as the school is concerned.

123. I mean, while they are at the school?—No; while they are there they do not.

124. Have you any cases of defective sight in the institution?—Two cases of short-sightedness.

125. But not of sufficiently defective sight to prevent their acquiring lip-reading?—No.

126. If you had such a case, how would you treat it?—I suppose the sight could be helped by the use of glasses.

127. But suppose it were impossible for them to acquire lip-reading?—If the sight is so bad that the child would never be able to read the lips, the child would be practically blind.

128. You would consider that a case for a blind asylum, not a deaf one?—That I cannot say.

129. Therefore a blind child who was deaf, you consider, should be taught in a blind asylum, not in a deaf institution?—That I do not know; my experience of work does not enable me to give an opinion on that question. If I had a case before me I should have to form my own ideas.

130. Who undertakes the management of the house and all the domestic arrangements of the institution? Is that under Mr. Van Asch's special care?—Yes.

131. Then, as regards the question of religious instruction, there may be no religious instruction or training given, but is there no prayer of any kind that the children make use of night and morning? Is there no grace before and after meals?—No. Every child says a prayer at the bedside.

132. And are the parents satisfied with that?—Well, I suppose so; I have not heard of any complaint being made.

133. Are there any district visitors that come round like missionaries, or people of that kind?—No.

134. You said that there were difficulties in Adelaide as regarded the oral school: what are the difficulties?—I mean, in doing away with the old system. Of course, in the Adelaide institution the children they have had for some years past have been taught on the old manual system, and now they find a difficulty in introducing the oral. Unless they can keep the children taught under one system apart from the children taught under the other, they can do no real good with the oral method.