

1890.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION OF DEAF-MUTES

(EVIDENCE GIVEN BY MR. H. E. CROFTS BEFORE A ROYAL COMMISSION IN LONDON
RESPECTING).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives, dated 11th September, 1889.

Ordered, "That the evidence recently given by Mr. H. E. Crofts, an instructor of New Zealand deaf-mutes before a Royal Commission in London, be laid before this House."—(Mr. JOYCE.)

THURSDAY, 8TH MARCH, 1888.

Present: The Right Hon. the Lord Egerton of Tatton, in the chair; the Lord Bishop of London; Admiral Sir E. Sotheby, K.C.B.; B. St. John Ackers, Esq.; L. van Oven, Esq.; Charles E. D. Black, Esq. (Secretary).

Mr. HERBERT EDWIN CROFTS examined.*

1. *The Chairman.*] You are one of the teachers of the Sumner Institution, in New Zealand?—Yes.

2. How long have you been in that position?—I took my position there in July, 1884.

3. What was your previous training?—Ordinary scholastic work in England.

4. Was Mr. Van Asch the Principal of the institution when you went out to New Zealand?—Yes.

5. And therefore you have been under his direct training?—I have been trained entirely by him.

6. Was Mr. Van Asch trained in a German or in a Dutch school?—He was trained, I think, in the institution at Rotterdam.

7. How long has the Sumner Institution been founded?—It was founded in 1880.

8. Is there any institution for the deaf and dumb besides this in New Zealand?—There is no other institution in New Zealand.

9. And are the blind provided for in the same way?—There is nothing done for the blind at all. I am speaking from a Government point of view. I do not know of anything being done for the blind.

10. Have you any statistics as to the number of the deaf and dumb in New Zealand?—We have no such statistics further than we can get from the number of children we have in the institution, and from general observations in the colony. We have now forty-three deaf children in the institution.

11. And what is the present population of New Zealand?—Over six hundred thousand white people.

12. Could you describe what is done by the State for the deaf and dumb in New Zealand?—The parents of children sent to the institution are supposed to pay a sum of £40 a year for their board and education, where they can do it; if they cannot, they are allowed to pay what they can afford. In a great many cases, where the parents are too poor to pay anything towards their children's education, it is entirely free.

13. Is there free education in the colony in regard to ordinary education?—Yes.

14. In the elementary schools, that is to say?—Yes, in the elementary schools there is free education.

15. For every one?—Yes.

16. Those are not boarding-schools?—No. This £40 a year which I have mentioned is simply paid for their board.

* The footnotes signed "G.V.A." are by Mr. Van Asch, the Principal of the institution, to whom Mr. Crofts's evidence was submitted for comment.

17. But in the case of poor parents this is free education with board, is it not?—Yes, for the deaf. Of course that does not include clothing; the clothing is provided by the parents.

18. How many children are there in the institution who get their board and education entirely free?—During the year 1887, twenty-three out of forty-two entirely free; four pay £40 per annum, one £30, one £25, one £20, two £15, two £13, seven £10, one £5.

19. Can you tell us how many pay entirely for their children and how many partly?—There are, I believe, about six people who pay the full fee. If you notice the expenses quoted in the reports of the institution you will see what the parents have been paying during the last five years, and from those statistics you will be able to form some idea of what number of children get their education free.

Year.	Number of Children.	Payments by Parents.	Average Payments by Parents, per Head.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1883	31	322 5 10	10 7 11
1884	32	457 3 4	14 5 9
1885	36	265 12 6	7 7 6
1886	37	344 7 6	9 6 2
1887	41	385 15 10	9 8 2

20. What is the salary of the headmaster?—The salary of the Director is £600, I believe.

21. And a house found?—And a house found.

22. Are you the only master?—I am the head assistant. There are two other male teachers and one female teacher.

23. That comes to about one teacher for every ten pupils, does it not?—Yes; but the Director, Mr. Van Asch, teaches one-half or two-thirds of the time, with a view, first, to improve the pupils, specially the weaker ones; secondly, to train the assistants.

24. Does not the Director take the pupils when they first come in?—Not necessarily; he does if there is any peculiar point that he wishes to point out to his subordinates.

25. Have you any statistics as to what proportion have partial hearing?—No. I believe we have now about fourteen children partially deaf.

26. Is there any medical examination?—Yes.

27. You teach the oral system, I understand, exclusively?—Yes.

28. It is rather important that we should know what proportion of them are totally deaf, and what proportion have remains of speech or hearing, in order to enable us to judge as to the value of the remarks you make in regard to their progress afterwards?—It will take a little time to work out.

29. Would you tell us whether you are or have been yourself accustomed to give the first instruction to pupils?—Yes.

30. Would you tell us whether the method followed is that which is followed by Mr. Van Praagh?—I believe it is very similar.

31. Do you confine the teaching of the first year to a mere repetition of consonants and vowels without attaching any words to them, or do you attach definite words and objects to them as early as possible?—We attach words to them as early as possible, and by the end of the first year the child would be able to give you an idea of some simple action. The child would be able to understand and use simple verbs—"I run," "I jump," &c. Such a child would also be able to give a short description of any ordinary object pointed out to it, as "the horse," "That is a horse," "The horse is brown," "The horse has four legs," "The horse can run."

32. And you teach them grammar, I suppose, as they go on?—Yes.

33. And writing as they go on?—Writing is taught from the very beginning, but composition as they go on.

34. How soon are you able to teach them the Lord's Prayer?—That is a thing we have not attempted, because it is not allowed.

35. You mean that you give no religious instruction?—No religious instruction whatever.

36. It is purely unsectarian?—Yes.

37. And these children are boarded there for how long? How many years do you keep them generally?—The institution has only been started now eight years.

38. What is your curriculum of education?—From eight to ten years.

39. During the whole of that time is no religious instruction given?—No.

40. None, even of an unsectarian character?—None whatever.

41. The Bible is never read?—No.

42. No moral instruction of any kind, not even the Ten Commandments taught?—There is nothing whatever done in the way of religious instruction.

43. Do they go home for the holidays?—Yes; they go home for Christmas only, which is our summer. The children of parents quite close to us also go home for a fortnight during winter.

44. Is it the idea of the school that the parents are responsible for the religious instruction of the children?—It is entirely a Government institution, and religious instruction is not given in any elementary school.

45. But the ordinary elementary schools are day-schools?—Yes.

46. And your institution is a boarding-school?—Yes.

47. Can you give the hours of the instruction day by day followed in the school in a tabular form afterwards?—Yes.

				Morning.	Afternoon.
Monday	...	...	...	9 to 12	2.15 to 4.15
Tuesday	...	...	...	"	Boys engaged " in gardening and out-door work, and the girls in sewing.
Wednesday	...	...	...	"	
Thursday	...	...	...	"	The boys are engaged in outside work during the day, and the girls in the domestic work of the institution.
Friday	...	...	...	"	
Saturday	...	...	...		

The hours shown above are occupied in ordinary schoolwork, excepting the Wednesday afternoon and the Saturday, as pointed out. It would be impossible for me to give a tabular form of the work done during those hours in the various classes without reference to our time-table.

49. Will you give us, roughly speaking, what would be the first, second, third, and fourth year's instruction, and so on?—Yes. First year: The elementary sounds, with names of common things around us; short sentences, using simple verbs, adjectives, &c., as "table," "chair," "horse," &c., "I walk," "I jump," "That is a bag," "The bag is black," &c. Second year: Advance on first year, with use of adverbs and prepositions, to giving a simple description of common objects around us, and reading simple sentences; arithmetic (addition and subtraction), and the geography of the local district. Third year: Advance in reading and composition, in grammar, letter-writing, geography, and arithmetic. Fourth year: Reading simple tales and newspaper reports; advance in grammar, composition, geography, and arithmetic, with use of money. Fifth year: Same subjects as previous year, with a little history and elementary science. Sixth year: Same subjects as previous year, though of a higher standard.

50. Is the education of the deaf and dumb compulsory in New Zealand? First of all, will you state whether education is compulsory for all?—In the ordinary way it is.

51. Then the same thing applies to the deaf and dumb, I suppose?—It is the law, I believe; but the law is not enforced—at any rate, not in the case of the deaf and dumb. It is a deplorable fact that several parents of deaf children keep them at home to do the work.

52. Do you get children from both the Islands?—Yes, from all parts of New Zealand, and we have one child from Adelaide, in Australia.

53. You are, I suppose, aware that they have an institution at Adelaide?—Yes; they have a deaf-and-dumb institution at Adelaide. I visited it.

54. Has Mr. Laishley's report been considered by the Government? Has any action been taken upon it?—No action has been taken upon it at present.

55. Is there any probability of day-schools being established instead of boarding-schools, except in cases where the parents live at a distance?—I believe that the Government is trying to do something in that way.

56. That is to say, that where parents live at a distance the pupils should be boarded out?—Yes.

57. Is your school inspected by any one for the Minister of Education?—It is visited by the Inspector-General.

58. And how do you obtain teachers? Are they entirely trained on the spot?—They are trained on the spot entirely. I am the only one that has been trained at the present time. There are two other male assistants being trained, and one female assistant.

59. You said that you would give us your curriculum year by year?—The ordinary working-time is, in the beginning of the year, from about the 6th February—we generally begin at that time—up to about the 17th July; then we take about a fortnight's holiday, and from that time again we work on to about the 18th December. Our daily work is from 9 in the morning till 12, and from a quarter past 2 to a quarter past 4. Wednesday afternoon is employed by the boys in gardenwork, and by the girls in sewing.

60. One day a week is devoted to that?—Yes, Wednesday afternoon. Saturday morning is occupied entirely by the boys doing some outside work, and the girls doing some work in the institution. The afternoon is spent in recreation.

61. Are drill and gymnastics and the Kindergarten exercise included?—No; there is nothing done in that way—not systematically.

62. Are any trades taught, or is anything beyond gardening taught outside the institution?—No; there is nothing taught. Mr. Van Asch has often called the Government's attention to this matter. The distance from Christchurch to Sumner being eight miles, and there being no railway communication, the difficulties are of course great.

63. Have you any land connected with the institution?—We have ten acres of land connected with the institution.

64. Is that cultivated by the pupils?—Yes; part of it is cultivated by the boys.

65. And part is in grass?—Yes.

66. Is there any difficulty in getting places and situations for the boys after they leave?—Of course we have had very few cases of boys leaving up to the present time; but the boys who have left us just happen to be the sons of farmers, excepting one case, and that boy was the son of a blacksmith. They are all working at home now with their parents. A boy left us at the close of 1887, and he was immediately engaged on a farm near his home at 8s. or 10s. a week.

67. When they leave the institution what amount of language have they?—They are quite capable of going out into the world and carrying on an ordinary conversation, asking simple questions, and being able to talk on the ordinary topics of the day.

68. Asking for what they want, and understanding what is said to them?—Yes.

69. What proportion of boys and of girls have you?—Twenty-one girls and twenty-two boys.

70. What situations do the girls get? What are they trained for?—They are not trained for anything in particular.

71. For work in the household?—For household work. One girl is apprenticed to a dressmaker now; and another is at home with her father, who is in the shoemaking trade.

72. You have told us about the first year; but I want to know, with regard to the other years also, what is your course of instruction. I want to know what standard you expect them to get up to year by year, and what change of treatment you make—in fact, what progress they make from year to year. You have told us the results, but I want to know the gradual steps that lead up to those results. You have told us as to the first twelve months; will you go on with the other years?—Then in the second year a child would get into the way of reading short sentences from a book, and being able to give us short accounts and descriptions of pictures and of things that are going on around him.*

73. There are no signs used?—There are no artificial signs used. Of course there must be a certain amount of natural signs used in teaching the deaf, but we do away with those signs as quickly as we possibly can.

74. Do the children among themselves use signs?—They use natural signs to a certain extent, but we endeavour to stop that as quickly as we can. As they advance and begin to learn the advantage they get by communicating by speech they will leave that sort of thing off to a very great extent. Of course they will never leave off signing entirely. It is a very difficult matter to draw the line as to what is signing and what is not signing.

75. I understand you to say that they use certain natural signs?—Just natural signs. There are no artificial signs used.

76. What happens in the third year?—In the third year they will be able to read and to understand very simple stories, as simple as it is possible to get, and very short ones.

77. And in the fourth year?—They will then be able to get on to describe ordinary objects which they see about them, and, of course, to advance again in their reading. I should have said that in the second and third years of course they have started with their arithmetic. A child in the second year would be able to count up to a hundred perhaps, but not with mere figures, and to do a few simple addition sums. In the third year he would go on with addition, and also do subtraction and simple multiplication. In the fourth year we begin to teach them the use of money. Then, in the fifth year we teach them geography, and parts of the newspaper.

78. Do you teach them Euclid?—In three cases. Geography and history are taught.

79. You do not go beyond the ordinary rules of arithmetic?—No. Of course the Government in general simply give the children a sound education, because, as a rule, they are the children of poor parents, and they will have to earn their living in the future in some ordinary line of life, and their education is carried on with a view to that.

80. Are the parents satisfied with the results of the schooling?—Yes, the parents are well satisfied.

81. Have you any testimony to that effect?—I have one of the reports. In his report of the 10th June, 1885, the Director says, "The North Island pupils were last Christmas accompanied to their homes by the Director and his wife, who were thus enabled to confer with the parents on matters affecting their children's education and general welfare. It was pleasing to find how much spirit of industry and helpfulness in the home-circle was exhibited by many of them, and how much use all of them made of their power of speech as far as their knowledge of language would permit." There are some remarks in some of these reports which may be interesting, referring to those children who have been in the institution and have left it.

82. Can you give us any extracts?—Yes; I can give you extracts from these reports.

83. Year by year?—Yes, since 1883. The first case was that of a girl who left us in 1883.

84. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] This girl had been only two years in the institution, because you have told us that it was founded in 1880?—Yes; this was the case of a girl who had not lost the power of speech.

85. *The Chairman.*] Will you read the extract relating to her?—"The young lady referred to came to us not as a dumb person, but as a totally deaf person, defective in utterance. After two years' training she returned to her friends greatly changed, and in a most cheerful and happy frame of mind. She felt conscious that, through having accomplished the object for which she entered—viz., that of learning the valuable art of lip-reading and of improving her articulation, &c.—she did not only return home better fitted for the domestic circle, but that she could now also enter into, and in a great measure participate in, the cheerful society of others."

86. Have you any independent reports of the Government Inspector? What you have been quoting are remarks of your own Director, if I rightly understand?—Yes.

87. We should like the report of some one who visits the institution, not merely the head of the institution?—Here is a report by Mr. J. H. Pope to the Secretary for Education in 1883. He says: "I visited the Sumner Institution for Deaf-mutes on the 1st 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,

* The backbone of the course of studies consists in a series of lessons, which I compiled for my pupils while in England, between the years 1859 and 1879. These I have slightly altered so as to make them applicable to the somewhat different requirements of New Zealand children.—G.V.A.

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 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 recognising 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; so far as I can see, everything is going on very satisfactorily." And here is another report by Mr. Habens, the Inspector-General, in 1885.

88. Was his report favourable or not?—Yes, entirely satisfactory; but it refers to details with which I need not trouble you. After that, we have no other report in these papers by any one visiting the institution. The Inspector-General visits the institution every year, but no report is sent up by the Inspector; the reports here are only the reports of the Director and the medical officer.

89. Then have you any report of the medical officer showing whether the condition of the deaf and dumb children improves or not?—I have nothing here by the medical man showing the condition of the children.

90. I suppose you do not take in any weak-minded children. Is there any provision made for weak-minded children in the colony?—No, except, of course, the lunatic asylums. We have dull children, but we have no imbeciles.

91. Are the children of a low physical type generally?—No. Of course they improve greatly after a year's work in the institution. Our pupils are much the same as the average of English deaf-mutes.

92. Are there any cases of consanguinity in marriage on the part of parents that you know of?—There is one case, I think.

93. Any case of two in a family being deaf and dumb?—Yes; we have four cases now in the institution of two in a family.

94. *Mr. Van Oven.*] Do you mean eight children?—Yes; and, with regard to one child who left us about a year ago now, in that family there are six children deaf out of seven children.

95. Are the parents deaf and dumb?—No.

96. *The Chairman.*] Did Mr. Van Asch come to the colony on his own responsibility, or was he sent for by the Education Department?—He was sent for by the Education Department.

97. You told us that you visited the Australian Colonies: what deaf schools did you visit there?—I visited the institution for the deaf and dumb in Sydney, and another in Melbourne, and another in Adelaide. Of course all three institutions are institutions for the blind and the deaf and dumb all together. I have here a report of the institution in Sydney, and also one of the institution in Adelaide, but I have not a report of the Melbourne institution.

98. Are they, in those Australian institutions, teaching the deaf and dumb on the same system as yours?—No. In Sydney they are trying to start a class on the oral system; but the other children are taught on the old manual system.

99. Was the standard of education good or moderate?—Fairly good.

100. Would they compare favourably or unfavourably with those taught on the oral system, as far as general education is concerned?—From what I saw, I should say they would not compare favourably with those taught on the oral method.

101. They are both on the same system—on the manual system?—Yes. In the institution in Adelaide they are now trying to introduce the oral system entirely. I do not know what they will do in that way; they have great difficulties to contend with in trying to introduce it.

102. Is the education in those Australian institutions provided by the State?—No; I believe they are all benevolent institutions. I am not able to speak from actual knowledge of the fact, but

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.

135. Then, to a certain extent, the Adelaide institution is a combined institution?—To a certain extent.

136. And you consider that it is impossible to give good oral teaching in a combined institution?—Yes, I consider that perfectly impossible.

137. Therefore, supposing, for instance, you had a separate house for the children to be taught on the oral system, and they mixed with those taught on the manual system in the playground and in their drill exercises, and that they were accustomed on those occasions and at religious services to attend to signs or the manual alphabet, you think that would be destructive of the effect of oral teaching?—I believe it would.

138. Did you see, practically, in Adelaide that such an effect was produced by the mixture of the two systems? Did you yourself consider from what you saw that that effect was produced?—I did not see that institution in full working order.

139. *Admiral Sir E. Sotheby.* Is the institution confined to the English population, or is there anything done for the Natives who are deaf and dumb?—We have only at present come across one case of deafness amongst the Maoris, a child in the extreme north of the Island, a son of a Maori chief in the Thames district, and the father did not like the idea of the child leaving him; he could not be induced to allow the child to come to the institution.

140. The Native children go to the elementary schools?—Yes. They have separate Maori schools for their ordinary education.

141. What part of New Zealand is Sumner in?—It is about eight miles from Christchurch. Christchurch is in the Canterbury District.

142. Is it a matter of any difficulty for children to come from Wellington, Auckland, the Thames, and that part of New Zealand?—They come by boat.

143. But I suppose the children come more from the neighbourhood than from the north part?—No. I have the statistics here giving the number of children each year from the different districts. In 1883 we had—from Auckland, 7; from Hawke's Bay, 1; from the Wellington District, 2; from the Otago District, 10; and from the Canterbury District we had 10.

144. Nelson?—We had none from the Nelson District. The next year—from Auckland, 7; Taranaki, 1; Hawke's Bay, 1; Wellington, 1; Canterbury, 10; and Otago, 11.

145. Have you visited any deaf and dumb institutions in England since you have been here?—I visited the institution in Fitzroy Square, and the Doncaster Institution, and the institution in Henderson Row, Edinburgh; and one public institution in Glasgow, and also a small private institution in Glasgow.

146. If it is a fair question, how do you consider your institution stands in comparison with those you have visited?—I could not compare many institutions I have visited in England with ours, as in most of them, more or less, the combined system is used. I consider our institution compares very favourably with the one in Fitzroy Square, and also with Miss Griffith's private school in Glasgow.

147. *Mr. Van Oven.* The latter are a better class of children, I suppose?—Yes.

148. *Admiral Sir E. Sotheby.* You said there is no religious education at all in the Sumner Institution?—There is no religious education at all.

149. You have spoken about that, have you not, or Mr. Van Asch has spoken about it?—I have never spoken about it officially.

150. Would there be any objection, according to the feeling of the colony, to introduce any religious education?—For myself, I do not think there would be.*

151. But I suppose it is the wish out there that no religious education should be introduced in any school?—Yes.

152. The pupils may seek it where they can?—Yes.

153. Do you know if any of these children go to any place of worship?—The assistant-master in charge takes them to church occasionally—the Church of England. The girls go in charge of a lady.

154. And where do you place them in the church?—They generally sit near the middle of the church with me.

155. And are they able to understand what the minister says?—No; the children could not possibly understand, from the lips of a man they had never seen before, a sermon straight off; their knowledge of the English language alone would not allow them to understand it.

156. Those are the children, I presume, who have been only a short time with you, but you have some children that have been eight years with you?—At the time I left we had four children who had been eight years with us.

157. Would those children understand what is said by the minister?—No, they would not understand what is said from the pulpit. They would understand if one went into the place with the full intention of speaking to them as deaf-mutes; but a total stranger, and at that distance from them, they would not be able to understand.

158. Supposing that children had been educated on the combined system, and went to a church where the preacher preached on the sign-manual system, could they understand then?—He would only be able to communicate with them in the ordinary language of the deaf—that is, the English language simplified.

159. And would they understand him?—Yes; they would understand him.

160. Then are you not in favour of anything like a combined system?—No.

161. Then you would deprive those children entirely of having any satisfaction out of going to church?—Not at all. Those children are perfectly capable of understanding a sermon just as well

* I think there would be, at any rate on the part of Roman Catholics. The parents of Roman Catholics have asked me personally not to let their children attend the church, and I carry out their wishes in this respect to the letter.—G.V.A.

as the other children if you make the language what they can understand; but you would be obliged to have a man that is working among the deaf to preach to them, in the same way that you have a man who is used to the sign-manual system to preach to the deaf in that system: they would not understand a sermon in Westminster Abbey. If they got a man who had been teaching among the deaf, and he knew what kind of a congregation he had got before him, he would be able to make them understand him. Of course the children taught on the old manual system could not understand anything unless the man in the pulpit used his fingers.*

162. Have you a Board over your institution?—No, it is entirely a Government institution.

163. Have you ever heard out there whether there is any advocate for teaching the combined system?—No, I have never heard it mentioned.

164. They stick to the oral system?—Yes, and nothing else.

165. Is yours the only institution in the whole of New Zealand for the deaf and dumb?—It is the only one.

166. And how long ago have these institutions been established at Sydney and Adelaide?—I am not able to say.

167. I suppose when you went there you found an old-established system?—Yes.

168. They have been teaching on the sign manual?—Yes.

169. And have only lately introduced the oral?—Yes.

170. Just the same as in this country?—Yes, it appears to me to be just about the same, the working in Australia and the working in this country.

171. Are there no blind institutions in New Zealand?—None at all.

172. Are there in New South Wales?—Yes; there is one in Sydney, one in Melbourne, and one in Adelaide; they are all combined with the deaf and dumb.

173. Then they are large schools?—Yes, very large institutions.

174. How many have they?—I am not able to say. I visited them all, but I do not remember the numbers in each institution.

175. Are your classes in separate rooms or merely screened?—They are in separate rooms.

176. And you advocate that?—Yes.

177. In order that they should not hear each other talk?—In order that neither teacher nor pupils may be interrupted by other work going on around them.

178. What is your salary?—My salary at the present time is £175.

179. Does Mr. Van Asch do anything more than being the Director of that institution?—No.

180. He gets his House and £600 a year?—Yes.

181. *Mr. Van Oven.*] Have you any rent to pay?—No, not now.

182. *Admiral Sir E. Sotheby.*] Where were you trained?—Under Mr. Van Asch in New Zealand.

183. And where did he get his experience?—In Rotterdam for rather more than four years, but he got most of his experience in England.

184. Do the deaf and dumb pupils perform all the domestic duties of your institution?—We keep three servants in the house.

185. And there are only forty children?—Forty-three.

186. And is it necessary to keep three servants?—But in that house the Director and all his family live as well as the deaf. The institution is split up in this way: We have three distinct buildings; in one building the Director and his family live with the girls and six of the youngest boys in the institution; and, with regard to the other two cottages, I have charge of one, with some five or six boys during the night, and the other assistant with a matron has charge of the other.

187. How would you propose that the deaf-mutes should communicate with those who are not deaf in the dark?—A deaf-mute taught on the oral system would not be able to communicate in the dark except by natural signs. I believe that two deaf children getting together, taught on the oral system, thoroughly understanding natural signs, would be able to make each other understand what they were saying.

188. Then you are rather an advocate of natural signs?—No, I do not advocate natural signs at all. I simply say that they would use them.

189. Would it not be an advantage to enable them to communicate by pressure of the hand?—I do not know. I do not see that there would be any great advantage in it.

190. You often talk to people in the dark, I suppose?—I suppose I do.

191. Would you deprive the deaf-mutes of the possibility of being able to communicate with their friends and neighbours in the dark?—No; but if you want to carry on communication with any one you do not generally look out for a dark place; you are not anxious to get out in the dark to talk to him.

192. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] Is it not usual at ordinary institutions to forbid talking at night amongst the pupils?—I think so.

193. If a deaf person were ill, is there anybody in the room who could strike a light and speak to one of the deaf taught under your system?—There is always somebody close at hand.

* Is this the point? Is it not rather what method will give these afflicted children the best chance to benefit from religious services carried on either in the ordinary way or in the extraordinary or special way? In reply, my experience in England leads me to say that all deaf-mutes properly educated in the oral system prefer attending the Church of England services with the hearing community, and get there—not from the preacher's lips, but from the reading of the church service along with the hearing congregation—at least as much benefit as deaf-mutes who attend even a special service conducted by means of dactylology. As a matter of fact, all the deaf children of Christian parents whom I educated in England attend the parish church with their friends, and my remark applies to them. In regard to the second part of the question, I am of opinion that holding special services for the deaf and dumb in chapels of their own is, from a moral and social point of view, a very questionable practice. But if ever special services must needs be held, let there be separate services for women and separate services for men. And again, if such special services are considered necessary in the case of the deaf, who read the lips, I further maintain that special preaching to speaking deaf-mutes will, in its results, at least hold its own with that carried on by manual signs.—G.V.A.

194. Who would be capable of striking a light and communicating orally?—Yes.

195. With reference to your pupils attending religious services, in answer to Sir Edward Sotheby you said that they could not understand a sermon in Westminster Abbey. Is it not a fact that they must see the mouth of the speaker before they are able to understand?—Yes.

195A. Is it not a fact also that in ordinary preaching the mouth is not always visible to the congregation; sometimes the head is down, and sometimes it is turned on one side and sometimes on the other?—Yes.

196. And that is just the same as it would be if you took an ordinary book and held it before a sighted person, and then every now and then turned the book the other side, or turned it in front so that he could not see it?—Just so.

197. You said that the deaf on the sign-manual system could understand a sermon specially delivered in that system even at a distance. That would require somebody specially versed in that particular system, would it not, to give a particular service to the deaf?—Certainly.

198. The majority of those you have met with in the world are not conversant with that system?—No.

199. The majority that you meet with are conversant with ordinary speech?—Yes.

200. It is therefore more easy to imagine that a deaf person taught on the oral system would have the opportunity of attending an oral service, even if he understood it imperfectly, than he would be able to attend a service specially for deaf-mutes on the sign-manual system?—Yes.

201. *The Chairman.*] I suppose in New Zealand your churches are not so large as Westminster Abbey?—No, not quite.

202. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] Is it not also a fact that those taught under the pure oral system can understand not only—as you said in answer to a question—if the speaker or if the preacher is using language suited to their capacity and looking straight at them, but is it not also quite possible for a parent or a relation of a deaf child to sit near that child and to interpret in plain and simple language what the preacher or lecturer is saying?—I do not know.*

203. Have you not done that yourself? When you go to church with these deaf children do you not interpret what is going on?—I may tell them in a simple way the heads of what is going on at the time. I could not explain it to those children at the same time that the man is speaking; I could not keep up with him.

204. But you could give a short outline of what he is saying?—Not at the time; I could not keep going fast enough.

205. I will put it in another way. Is it because your pupils are, some of them at any rate, those who have not got sufficient language to enable you to keep up with the preacher?—It may be that of course. I have got twenty children, and they are of different standards.

206. You have got the whole of those children?—Yes. If I had got three or four or six all in the highest state of proficiency, then it would be different altogether.

207. Now let us come to what it would be in after-life; take those who are orally taught, and have gone through their course of education: is it not possible for those deaf-mutes to get the benefit of ordinary religious services by coming with their parents or friends to church, and letting those parents or friends speak without voice to them, so that they may get the benefit of what they cannot see on account of the movement of the preacher?—I dare say it is quite possible in the case of those whose instruction has been finished.

208. Then, in fact, those who were taught under the oral system would have a very much better chance of getting the benefit of religious services than those taught under the sign-manual alphabet, who could only get it by going to some place where there was a special preacher in that system?—I believe so.

209. Have you any idea how many special services are held for the deaf-mutes in England?—I have no idea.

210. But at any rate a very much less number than would be held every Sunday for ordinary congregations?—Yes.

211. Again, take the question of religious instruction: could not any ordinary minister of religion prepare for confirmation or otherwise instruct those leaving school in a high standard, or before they have left school, on the pure oral system?—He could, undoubtedly, if they were properly taught.

212. That he could do in a comparatively short time?—Yes, when he has got used to the children. What I mean is this: I do not think it is possible under the pure oral system for a child to go into a lecture-room or a church and sit down and understand from the man's lips what is said to him.

213. *The Chairman.*] That is not so much, if I understand you, from any inability to read the lips as because those taught on the oral system, in common with those taught on the manual system, have not so large a vocabulary as the ordinary hearing public?—Just so.

214. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] And also because they cannot see the lips of the preacher or speaker the whole time?—Yes. Of course I thoroughly believe in the oral system myself; it will do a very great deal, but it will not put deaf children on a level with hearing children.

215. In your opinion no system can do that?—No system can put them on a level with hearing children.

216. But do you consider that the oral system is that which gives the deaf the greatest facility of intercommunication with their fellow-creatures?—Yes, I do.

217. Now, to go to one or two other questions, do the ministers of religion ever make an effort to teach in your school?—No.

218. You are aware that Mr. Van Asch was educated at Rotterdam, where the system was for

* I think the deaf and dumb should worship in the church, and be taught out of it.—G.V.A.

the minister of each denomination to attend during certain hours in the week and to give instruction to those of his own persuasion?—Yes.

219. So far as you know, has any representation been made to the Government on behalf of your institution that, as the Chairman said, inasmuch as this is not a day-school, where the pupils can get religious instruction at home, but is a boarding-school, where they are the whole year with the exception of their holidays at Christmas, there should be some relaxation of the rule, and that the ministers of religion should be allowed to come to those of their own persuasion?—I do not believe that any representation of that kind has been made.

220. Now, you spoke of natural signs. Would you kindly describe what you mean by natural signs? Just give us one ordinary natural sign.—(The witness beckoned with the forefinger.)

221. Have you seen a good many signs in schools conducted upon the sign-manual system which are called by the teachers of that system natural signs, which you yourself could not understand?—I have seen a great many signs used; I should call them natural signs, but I do not know what the teachers call them themselves.

222. Would you call that (putting down the thumb) a natural sign?—I do not know that. I do not call that a natural sign: that is an artificial sign.

223. Then, in your opinion, the phrase “natural sign” is made to mean different things by different speakers?—It is so.

224. But in the profession all signs which are derived from some natural action are called natural signs?—That may be; but the teachers with us are strictly prohibited to make use of these imitations of natural actions.

225. However little of the original natural action it is thought necessary to preserve?—Yes.

226. You use these natural signs, which are practically gestures, how long in teaching?—For as short a space of time as we possibly can; we do away with them as quickly as we possibly can.

227. For instance, when a child knows the word “come,” would you continue to use the beckoning sign?—No.

228. Then, in fact, as soon as you are able to give spoken language you do away with the sign?—Yes. But you will bear this in mind: that the teacher of the deaf, who is teaching on the pure oral system, is bound to sign—he cannot help himself; I mean a little, not a great deal—just as a lecturer or preacher does.

229. It is a certain amount of action accompanying the words, in fact?—Yes.

230. But you do not make any signs which ordinary hearing people would not understand?—No.

231. *Mr. Van Oven.*] Nor do you make those signs intentionally?—No; involuntarily.

232. *Mr. St. John Ackers.*] Is drawing taught in your school?—It has been taught since February, 1888.

233. Are accurate tables kept in your school with regard to the causes of deafness, consanguinity of the parents, deaf relations, and so forth?—I have not seen any.

234. Has that been one of the suggestions made to the Government from your school?—I believe that that suggestion has been made by Mr. Laishley.

235. You spoke of the schools in the Australian Colonies you visited being of a charitable character: do you know whether the ordinary education of those colonies is gratuitous for the hearing children?—I do not know.

236. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything else you would wish to tell us?—No.

237. You have not visited the institutions on the Continent, have you?—I have not; I am going over next week.

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