

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: SCHOOL FOR DEAF-MUTES.

[In continuation of E.-4, 1901.]

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

No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

THE inclusion in the School Attendance Act of last session of provisions dealing with blind and deaf children marks an important step in the education of these unfortunate members of the community. Hitherto many parents, either through carelessness or wilfully, have neglected to send such children to the institutions maintained for their special instruction; but now the Minister of Education has the power to enforce attendance, due provision being made for a contribution by parents towards the cost of maintenance or for free admission where parents are not in a position to contribute. The immediate consequence is an unusual increase in the number of candidates for admission to the Summer School for Deaf-mutes, a fact which renders all the more urgent the need for new buildings. It is accordingly a matter for satisfaction that the plans have been completed, and a contract has been let for the erection of a portion of the buildings. In the design it has been arranged that the dormitories shall be on the ground floor, although raised somewhat above the level of the ground; this, together with special contrivances, will, it is hoped, take away even the remotest danger to life in case of fire. The class-rooms will be on the first floor, and, although such an arrangement may possess a few slight disadvantages, the arrangement has the great advantage that it will enable the rooms in which instruction is given to be extremely well lighted, always an important point in teaching children on the purely oral system.

As regards the adoption of that system, it is a matter for congratulation that this colony from the first adopted the oral method of teaching, in which children are taught to converse by watching the lips of others. In America, where manual and mixed methods were at first largely in vogue, they are being