

the goal for which to make. The goal was and is—speech, language, and lip-reading to the deaf, for the deaf, and by the deaf, not as ornamental toys but as solid instruments for their intelligent use and practical benefit throughout school and life.

The number of pupils on the roll at the beginning of 1903 was the same as that at its close: viz., sixty-four—thirty girls and thirty-four boys. One intelligent little fellow had to be sent home by order of the Medical Officer owing to a serious bodily complaint, but his place was soon filled by the arrival of another pupil equally bright. One other addition to this year's roll was that of a girl of thirteen, whose loss of hearing was only of recent date, and who, on the recommendation of an up-to-date aurist, was at once sent to us for the express purpose of being taught lip-reading, thus preserving her already acquired speech.

All parts of the colony contributed their quota to the number of scholars—15 came from Otago, 12 from Canterbury, 2 from Westland, 2 from Nelson, 1 from Marlborough, 7 from Wellington, 4 from Taranaki, 10 from Auckland, and 1 from Hawke's Bay.

Owing to the crowded state of the institution and to tuberculous tendency in four of the pupils a cottage had to be rented in another part of Sumner. Much benefit was derived by this measure. One of the rooms in this cottage was made use of as a class-room for the teaching of the special class of dormant-hearers referred to in my last year's report.

The somewhat laborious task in the lowest or preparatory class-room was carried on with much patience. Its ten pupils, all deaf and mute little children—that is, ignorant of sound and language—went through their exercises with credit to their teachers and pleasure to themselves. They all vied with one another in learning sounds and letters. In a few weeks the quickest of them would slowly articulate “sh-ee-p,” “s-aa-p,” “h-oo-p,” &c.; others would take longer time. In ten months all of them were able to pronounce all the letters phonetically—to say aloud slowly but intelligently—as well as write scores of words. Not elaborate words, but such as are used to signify common objects, a collection of which is kept on the walls, and to express such actions as run, lift, go out, stop, move, &c. They were also ready to be taken through such exercises as—

Who?—Tom, Mary; that man, that boy; he, she, I, you, we.

What?—That is a boot, a hat, an apple, a house, a tree, chalk.

Does what?—Run, he runs, I run, we run; lift, you lift, &c.; put on, you put on, &c.

Where?—On the form, on the table, in the room, there, &c.

With the word “When?” ideas would be brought out as such are indicated by the words “now,” “soon,” “after.” For instance: Write now?—No, after. Go out now?—No. When?—Soon.

The highest class, consisting of eight boys and two girls, read during the year a number of stories from the Royal Readers, No. 3, Sequel to No. 3 and No. 4, and also the History of England from the time of Julius Caesar to the reign of James I. In addition to this one hour a week was devoted to newspaper-readings, the British and foreign cablegrams, reports of experts on the water-power of New Zealand, meetings of local bodies, produce notes, and general news being usually selected by the teacher as reading-matter. The children of this and of other classes take a very keen interest in the newspaper, and out of school-hours eagerly peruse its columns to get some knowledge of current events. The geography taught to this class comprised the physical, political, and social geography of the British Islands and of Europe, special attention being paid to its commercial side. The elementary-science course included lessons on the pressure of the atmosphere as deduced from a study of the syringe, the suction-pump, force-pump, and barometer; lessons on the phenomena of nature including the solar system, the movements of the sun and planets, day and night, the seasons, the phases of the moon, the attraction of gravity, the tides, and the eclipses of the sun and moon. The expansion of bodies by heat and contraction by cold was exemplified by a study of the thermometer and of the electric fire-alarm which is installed in the building. The scientific classification of animals was also treated of. The class worked through the latter part of the Southern Cross Arithmetic Standard III. and part of Standard IV. The general work done by the class comprised miscellaneous examples in the four rules, and sums in the various weights and measures, and a drilling in the use of money.

With regard to the special class of pupils—now six in number, all boarded out—referred to in last year's report as possessed of some slight degree of hearing, then dormant, their progress in speech and understanding has been marked to a degree. They not only soon learnt to say or read aloud a number of words in common use, but in one year they learnt to ask all sorts of questions in a natural tone of voice, to verbally compose little sentences with ease, and to write short simple letters without being prompted.

Beyond pointing out that such results as I have referred to in these three classes are possible only under the pure oral method, excluding entirely the use of artificial signs, either alone or in combination with articulation, there is no need at present to further enlarge on the work of the school.

I would only state, in conclusion, that, whilst I do not wish to give it out to the world that the institution at Sumner is a model one, or to assert that the work as carried on there is perfect, still I do say that the work done there is very creditable, the greatest want being some provision for teaching the boys a trade during the last two years of their schooling. As to our mode of teaching the deaf pupils to *think in English by means of spoken words*, I believe there is no other feature of the establishment equal in value to it in promoting the permanent well-being of the deaf-mutes of this colony.

I have, &c.,

The Rt. Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

G. VAN ASCH.