

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION : SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.

[In continuation of E.-4, 1907.]

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

No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

School for the Deaf.

THE school reopened with 71 pupils on the roll—36 boys and 35 girls. During the year 4 boys and 1 girl were admitted and 1 girl left the school, thus the number belonging at the close of the year 1907 was 75—40 boys and 35 girls.

The increase in the population of the Dominion, the enactment making the education of deaf children compulsory, and the fact that it is now the practice to admit pupils at an earlier age than formerly, must all have the effect of adding to the number of children to be provided for, and the question of making additions to the residential accommodation at Sumner is now under consideration.

The expenditure on the institution for the year 1907 was: Salaries of Director and teachers, £1,589 13s. 3d.; Matron and servants, £859 6s.; housekeeping, £957 7s. 10d.; travelling-expenses (including transit of pupils), £161 6s. 1d.; school material, £6 16s. 8d.; clothing, £26 16s. 3d.; medical attendance and medicines, £29 11s. 8d.; water-supply, £114 5s.; boarding-out of pupils, £126 18s. 11d.; general maintenance of buildings, and furniture, £289 0s. 11d.; laying-out of grounds, erection of dairy and fowlhouses, £788 2s. 10d.; sundries, £162 6s. 2d.; total expenditure, £5,111 11s. 7d. Deducting parents' contributions, £538 4s. 4d., the net expenditure was £4,573 7s. 3d.

No. 2.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR.

SIR,—

School for the Deaf, Sumner, 24th April, 1908.

I have the honour to lay before you my report for the year 1907.

After the summer holidays sixty of the preceding year's pupils—thirty of each sex—returned to the school, and eleven new pupils—of whom six were boys and five were girls—were admitted, making a total of seventy-one at the commencement of the school year. Some weeks later, by the admission of four boys and one girl, the number on the roll was raised to seventy-six. In May one of the older girls was removed, her parents wishing her to take advantage of an opportunity open to her of learning dressmaking in her native town. There were no further changes until the end of the year, when the number on the roll was seventy-five, including forty boys and thirty-five girls. Three boys and two girls were boarded out, one boy and one girl lived with friends, and the other sixty-eight children resided at the school.

Of the new pupils, two were of special interest. One was a lad of fourteen, who had lost his hearing five years previously owing to an attack of meningitis. It cannot be too often repeated that at such an age, if the art of lip-reading be not acquired, the loss of hearing is quickly

followed by the loss of speech. Hence it is important, and doubly so with young children, that in all cases of loss of hearing as little time as possible should elapse before proper instruction in lip-reading is given. When the boy in question was placed under our care his speech was rapidly becoming unintelligible, and his mental faculties were becoming dormant. Probably in another year's time he would have become a mute. There is no doubt that these five wasted years have greatly added to the disabilities under which this unfortunate boy labours. The other case was that of a little girl of eight, who, in addition to her deafness, has the double burden of being almost blind. Her education will necessarily proceed at a much slower rate than that of the other children; but, by making use of her sense of touch and of the little eyesight she possesses, it has been found possible to instruct her by articulation methods, and she can now make use of a few words. It was gratifying to find that the parents of some of the new-comers had made good use of the instructions given to them for the home treatment of their children prior to admittance.

Fourteen of the seventy-six pupils came from the Auckland Provincial District, three from Taranaki, one from Hawke's Bay, eighteen from Wellington, two from Marlborough, eighteen from Canterbury, two from Westland, and eighteen from Otago.

From the significant fact that for some years such thickly populated centres as Oamaru, Nelson, Napier, and others have sent no pupils to the school, one is led to fear that there may be neglected deaf-mutes in these districts. The pupils, past and present, of the school serve to a great extent to give publicity to the school, and it is remarkable how often they have been the direct or indirect means of bringing us in touch with new cases. This particular form of advertisement is lacking in the districts referred to, but meanwhile every effort is being made to insure that the compulsory clauses of the Education Act with regard to deaf-mutes are enforced. The information contained in the census returns, and in the reports of the police and of the truant officers, are proving of great value in this respect. Nevertheless, the number of deaf-mutes attending school here is considerably lower in proportion to the population than it is in many other countries. For example, Denmark, with a population of less than two and a half millions, has 334 deaf children attending school.

At the end of the year four boys and eight girls were removed from the school. Three of the boys, having made excellent progress in lip-reading and in general knowledge while here, are now having their education completed at public schools. It is not expected that they will be able to compete there on equal terms with ordinary boys, but that by co-education with the hearing they will be better equipped for their life struggle in a hearing world. One of the chief drawbacks of a large institution is the tendency of its inmates to adopt those peculiar habits of thought and of language that are technically known as deaf-mutisms, and which only constant intercourse and association with hearing persons will entirely remove. It is for the avoidance of these habits that the system of boarding out is advocated. The fourth boy has obtained suitable employment, and is now learning a trade. One of the eight girls referred to was removed on account of her delicate health. She is now being educated with satisfactory results by a governess at her own home. Three of the others were of advanced age, and are among those pupils often referred to in previous reports, who, for various reasons, were not sent here till much later in life than should be the case. All three, however, had made very good progress during the few years they were here. The other four girls had been the usual time at school, and the progress they had made was satisfactory. Besides the ordinary school course, the seven girls last mentioned had received a practical training in needlework, cooking, laundry-work, and general housework. The boys who left had been taught to milk, and to use carpenter's tools and garden-tools.

Though not quite so good as last year, the general health of the pupils has been excellent. We were fortunate in escaping the more serious epidemics prevalent last year, but the work of a few of the pupils was interrupted owing to attacks of whooping-cough and of chicken-pox.

To cope with the large influx of new pupils, and to take the place of the teachers who left the staff during the preceding year, two new teachers were put into training. Owing to a still further increase in numbers being expected, two additional teachers were advertised for at the end of the year. The work of the school will for some time continue to suffer from the too great preponderance of untrained teachers on the staff. Under the circumstances this has been unavoidable; but as time goes on this defect should disappear. Meanwhile only by unwearying patience and by unflagging zeal on the part of the teachers can the high standard of work set up in the past be maintained.

The contract for the laying-out of the grounds of the school was completed in the spring of the year. The work has been designed and carried out with great taste, abundant use being made of the natural features of the grounds. The beneficial effects of a beautiful environment are already noticeable, and the facilities which will in future be available for nature-study cannot fail to have marked results in developing habits of observation among the pupils and in forming their characters.

The annual picnic and sports of the school were held at Diamond Harbour. Our thanks are due to the members of the Lyttelton Harbour Board for their kindness in placing at our disposal the steam-tug "Canterbury" to convey the children there, and also to Mrs. Stoddart, who kindly lent her grounds for the occasion.

As there is every reason to expect that the number of the pupils will continue to increase, and as the present buildings are already becoming overcrowded, the necessity of making provision for future needs is urgent. It has frequently been pointed out that the education of the deaf cannot be carried out with the fullest degree of success in very large institutions. The deaf should not be herded together. On the contrary, they should be separated as much as possible from persons similarly afflicted, and should be brought into association with hearing persons on every opportunity. The present number of pupils is, in my opinion, the largest that should be tolerated in any one institution. The experiment of receiving pupils at an early age has quite

fulfilled the expectations of the Director. It is found that the vocal organs are more plastic in early life, and consequently that articulation when taught then is more natural in tone and more pleasing to the ear. Of course, not so much progress is to be expected in one year's time with these very young pupils as with those received later in life; but the earlier awakening of the dormant faculties is of vast importance. Having regard to the success of this early training, I have therefore to recommend that, as soon as may be, a preparatory school should be opened at which deaf children might be received even at an earlier age than they are now. Probably it would be advisable to have this preparatory school in one of the large centres, so that any children living in the locality might attend as day-pupils. After spending two or three years according to their capacities at the preparatory school, they should be transferred to the main school at Sumner. Eventually, when our population has increased sufficiently to justify the establishment elsewhere of a similar school to the Sumner one, a system of classification of the pupils after leaving the preparatory school or schools would become possible. Such a system of classification should be based on the hearing-powers and mental faculties of the pupils.

In conclusion, I wish to bring under your notice the desirability of altering the official designation of the school. In a school where all the pupils are taught to speak, and where speaking children who have lost their hearing are taught lip-reading, the present title of the school is misleading. It would be much more expressive of its functions if it were known as "The School for the Deaf."

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. E. STEVENS, Director.

No. 3.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 8th June, 1908.

I have the honour to report that the year 1907 has passed without serious illness in the school. Three mild endemic outbreaks have occurred, succeeding each other in the following order: In June and July, influenza attacked 2 boys and 15 girls; in August, whooping-cough attacked 1 boy and 5 girls; in October, chicken-pox attacked 7 boys and 4 girls: the total number of cases was 10 boys and 24 girls.

The new building erected for the girls is excellent, but is so full that no room can be found for isolating or treating cases of sickness.

The boys' building is also quite full, and more accommodation is wanted. It provides only two baths for 40 boys, 5 members of staff, 3 maids, and 1 man. The shower-baths in both buildings should be supplied with hot water. A separate hospital cottage is much needed.

Mrs. Crawford has rendered excellent service as honorary nurse, her long training and experience being of the greatest value to the institution.

The Secretary for Education.

I have, &c.,

W. H. SYMES, M.D., B.Sc.

No. 4.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR.

Mr. J. E. Stevens.

DEAR SIR,—

23rd April, 1908.

I received your note inquiring about my son Robert and my other deaf children. In reply, I have to state that we did not send Robert to a public school. We thought, as he was such a strong boy, that he was quite able to go to work. He gets 10s. per week, and is giving every satisfaction to his employer. We will endeavour to give him some suitable trade as soon as possible. We presume that he received the full course of training at Sumner, but would be glad to be certified on this point.

William, my eldest son, was ten years at Sumner, and has been at home thirteen years. He is a tailor by trade, and has been earning full wages in a first-class shop for years. He seems to have no difficulty in getting on with his shopmates, and does all his business in the city, travels all over the province trout-fishing and shooting.

John, my second son, was also ten years at Sumner, and speaks very well. He has the same trade as William, and earns full journeyman's wages in a good shop. He learned drawing at Sumner, and he improved himself in the art at home and learned painting, so our home is decorated by pictures drawn and painted by him. He is a member of the Y.M.C.A. Hockey Club, and enjoys company very much.

Amelia, my daughter, was ten years at school. She is a good letter-writer and a great reader. She has not been so fortunate with her trade. She went as an apprentice to the tailoring in a factory, and served her full time, but as soon as she was able to earn £1 5s. per week, she and others with her were put off and younger girls taken on. She has not been able to get a permanent place at her trade since, and yet we hear a great cry about the scarcity of female labour. A trade is no use to any one unless you can earn a livelihood by it. The consequence is that she has had to learn another trade, and only earns very small wages at present.

I would like to take this opportunity of saying that the institution at Sumner has been an unspeakable blessing to my family. But for the education which they received there, I really don't

know what would have become of them. They would have grown up like animals or little better, but now they are as happy as can be. They enjoy themselves in a great many ways, take a keen interest in all the important questions of the day, and read the newspaper before breakfast as eagerly as if they were business people.

I asked William the other night if he was forgetting the lip-reading. His reply was, "That is impossible." Then I said, "Have you learned to read lips better since you left school?" He said, "Just the same." So you see that your work is solid and lasting. It is impossible to estimate the value of the work done at the institution. Only those who know something of the terrible affliction of deafness can have a faint idea. I feel very grateful to the late Mr. Van Asch, yourself, and to the teachers at the institution for all their kindness and for the very great interest they have taken in my children the many years they were at school.

I hope the institution will continue to prosper in the future as it has done in the past, and so be a blessing to all who are afflicted with deafness.

I have no hesitation in saying that I think it should be compulsory to send deaf children to the institution and to be kept there until the Director considers them fit to leave. I consider that it is cruel to allow a deaf child to grow up in ignorance when such blessings are within reach.

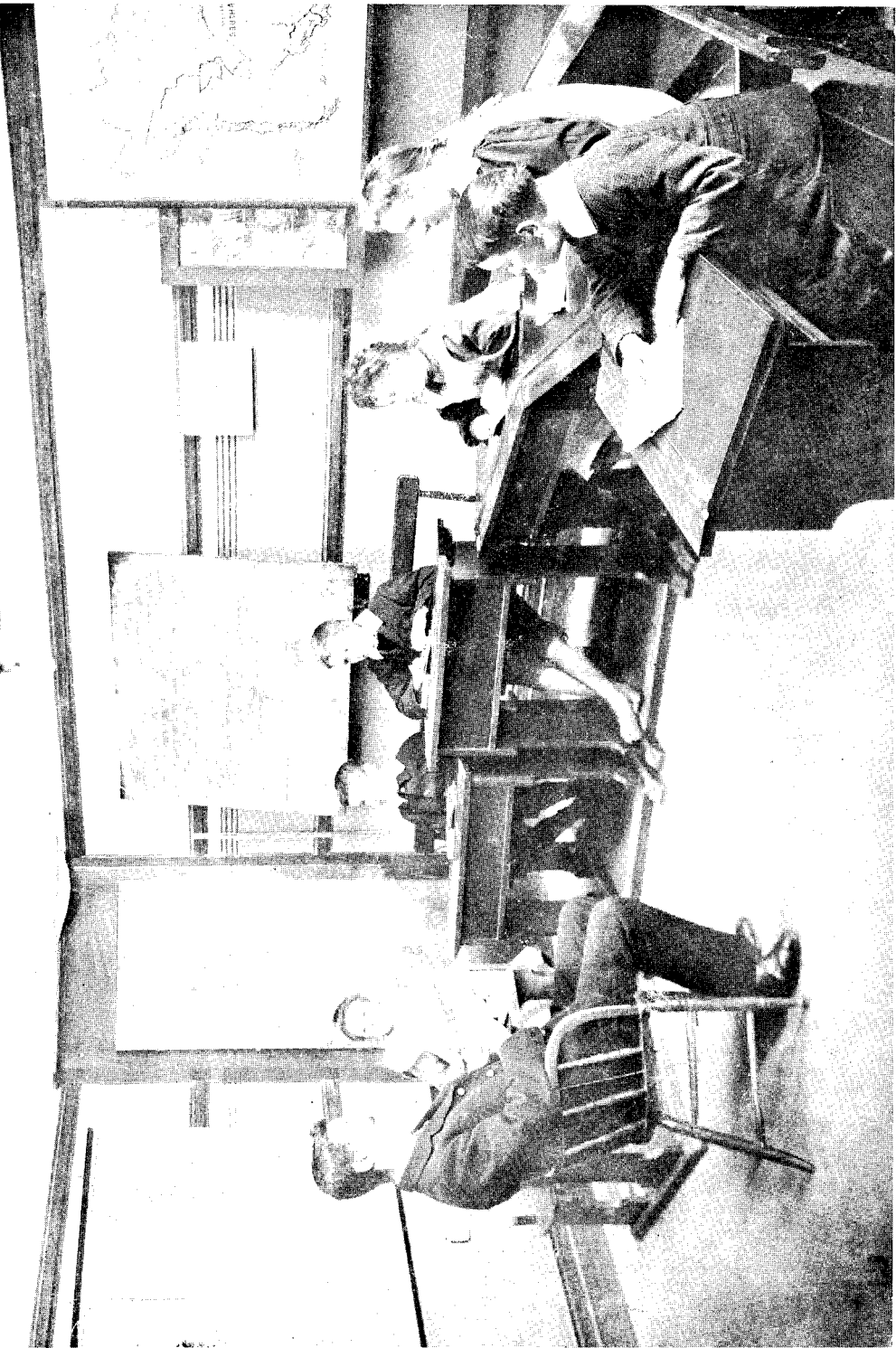
I shall be glad to answer any questions at any time or do anything within my power for the benefit of any deaf child, or to further the interests of the institution with which my four deaf children have been for so many years connected.

Use this as you please.

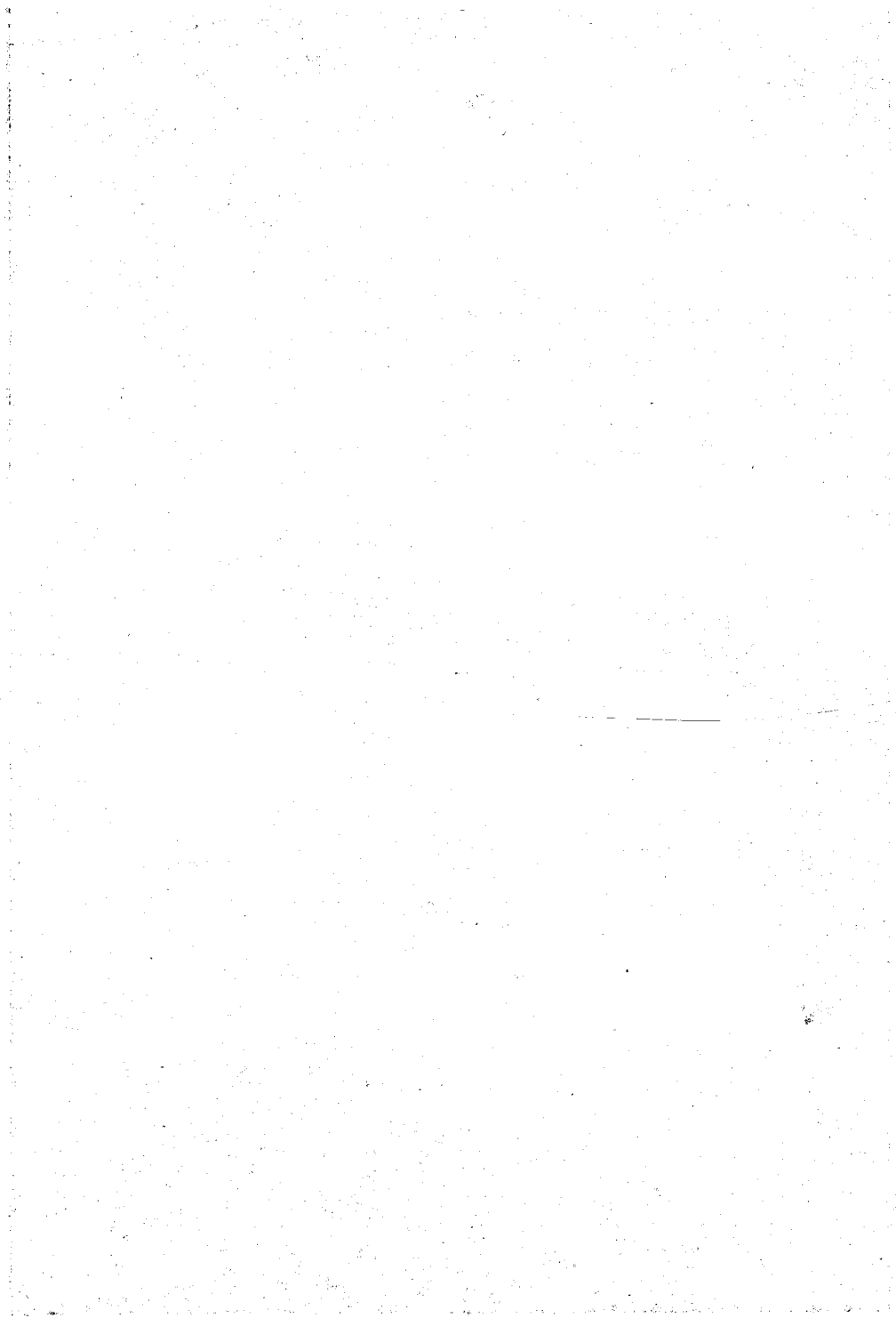
Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing, including blocks (1,000 copies), £12 2s. 6d.

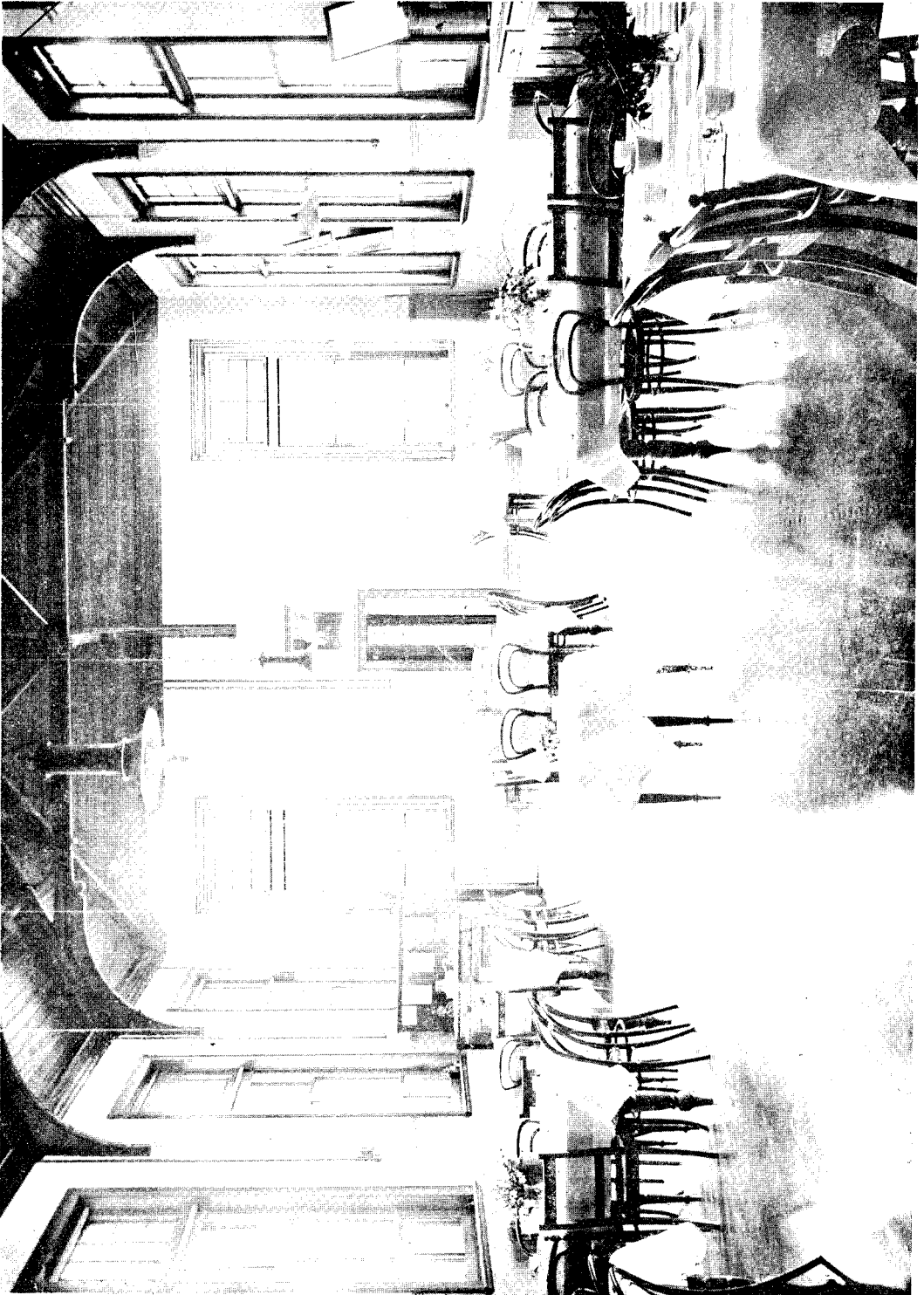
By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1908.

Price 6d.]

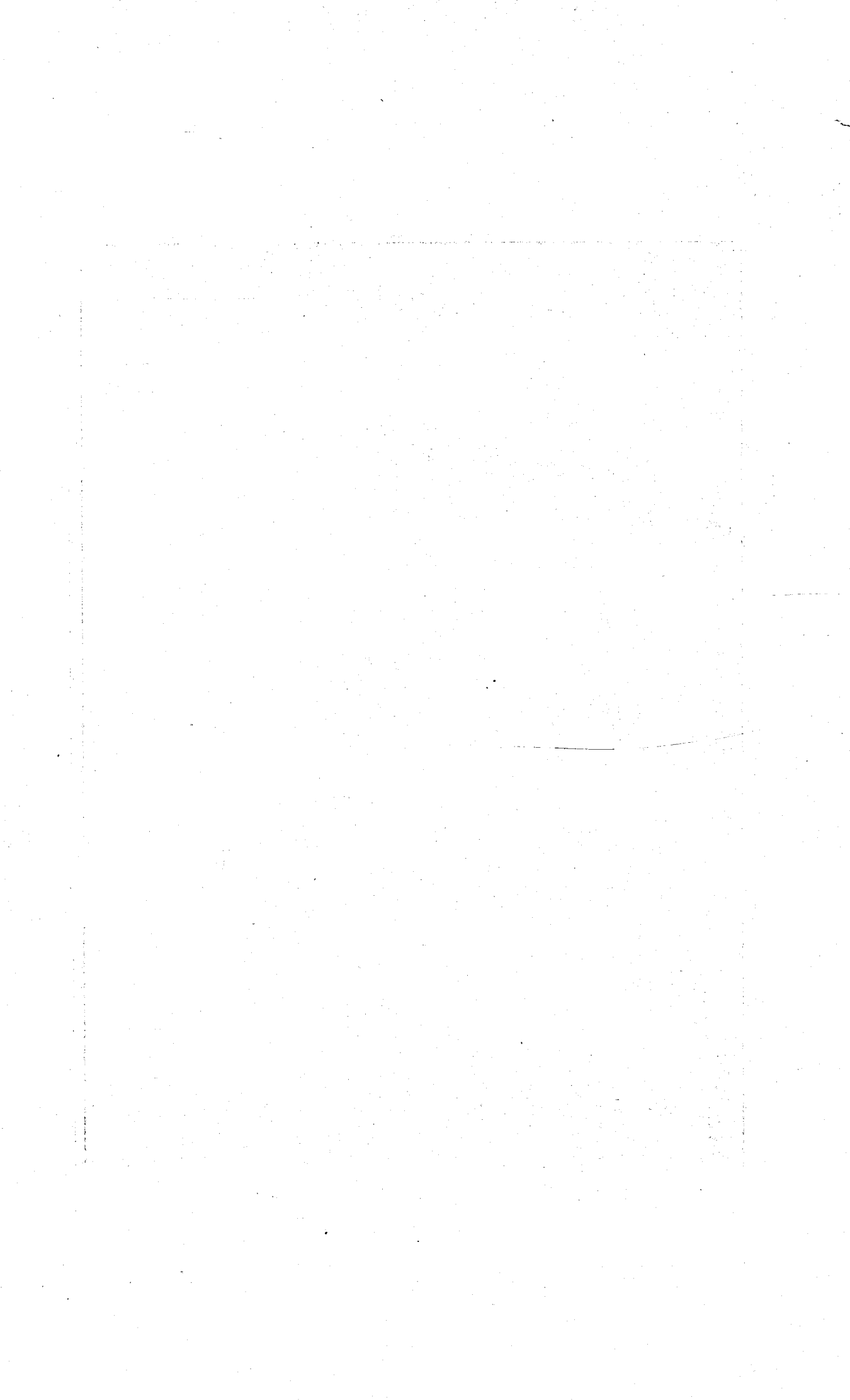


A CLASS-ROOM.



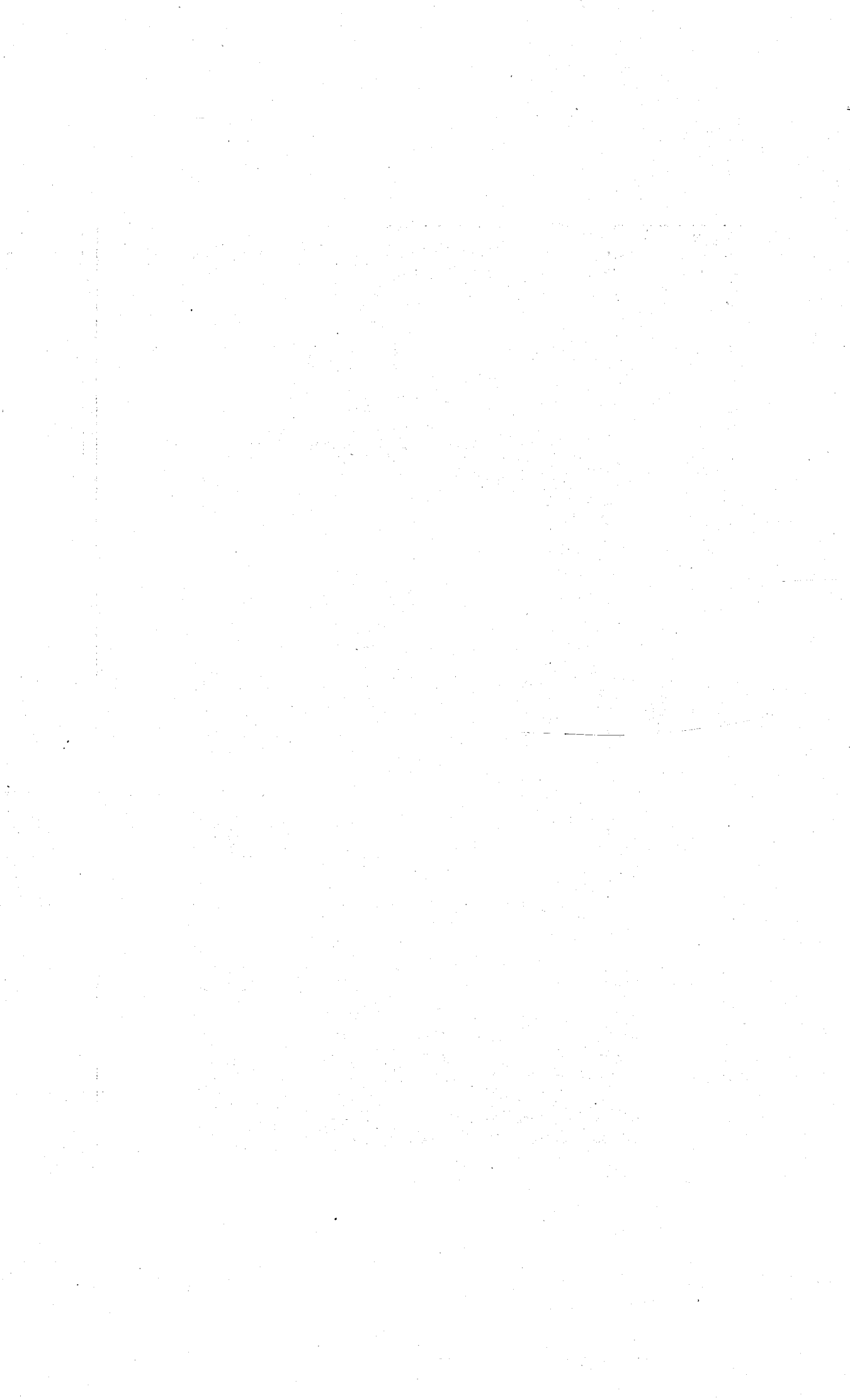


THE DINING-HALL.





A DORMITORY FOR GIRLS.





NEW BUILDING, CONTAINING DIRECTOR'S HOUSE, CLASS-ROOMS, DINING-HALL, AND GIRLS' QUARTERS.

