

avoid danger from fire. It would, no doubt, be safer if electrically lighted. Should the erection of a new Boys' Home be decided on, it should not be designed so as to accommodate a greater number of boys than the present building. I have repeatedly stated my conviction that the school in point of view of numbers is already too large. There is every indication that the number of deaf children in the Dominion will continue increasing, and to provide for this increase a preparatory school for young deaf children should be established in the near future. To it children might be admitted at an earlier age than under present conditions is desirable. After two or more years at the preparatory school they should be transferred to the main school, which would then contain no pupils unable to speak. Thus the tendency to resort to signs on the part of the pupils would be largely diminished. In previous reports I have pointed out other benefits that would be derived from the establishment of such a preparatory school. Instruction in it should be carried on as much as possible in the open air, and abundant use made of kindergarten methods.

The appearance of the school-garden during the year reflected credit on the gardeners, and the educational value of an æsthetic environment was apparent. The grounds are artistically laid out and planted, and contain a large and varied collection of trees and shrubs, as well as flowers. Thus plenty of opportunity for nature-study is provided, and has been made use of in open-air lessons. Even the little children evince considerable zeal in learning the names of and in distinguishing the different kinds of trees and flowers. The names of many common flowers present difficulties in articulation, which provide excellent and agreeable practice for deaf children interested in nature-study, and by their selection necessary articulation lessons may be relieved of much of their drudgery.

The annual picnic of the school was held at Diamond Harbour, and our thanks are due to the Lyttelton Harbour Board for kindly granting the use of their tug to convey our party from and to Lyttelton, and also to Miss Stoddart for the use of her grounds on the occasion.

The school is also indebted to the members of the Canterbury Automobile Association for their kindness in taking the pupils for a most enjoyable outing to Rangiora.

We have also again to thank Messrs. Fuller and Sons, of the Colosseum Pictures, for their kindness in admitting us to their matinees. The pictures have been greatly appreciated by the children, who have derived much profit as well as pleasure from them.

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

J. E. STEVENS, Director.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

28th May, 1912.

I have the honour to report that no serious illness occurred in the School for the Deaf at Sumner during the year 1911. But we have had rather more than usual of the chronic tubercular ulcers and tubercular bone-disease. We badly want more tents for these cases, as also for isolating any other infectious cases. It is desirable that one member of the staff should be a trained nurse. Open-air classes have been instituted by the Director with great benefit to some of the pupils.

The food is excellent, besides being varied judiciously and well cooked; and all the domestic arrangements reflect credit on the Matron. Most of the pupils seem very bright, happy, and healthy, and much attached to their teachers, who are devoted to their work. We are indebted to the Borough Council for the recent erection of dressing-shelters on the beach, so that the pupils have now much more facility for sea-bathing, from which they have derived great benefit.

I have, &c.,

W. H. SYMES, M.D.

The Secretary for Education.

No. 6.—SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS, OTEKAIKE, OAMARU.

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL.

SIR,—

Otekaieke, 30th May, 1912.

I beg to submit the following report of the administration of the affairs of this school for the year ending 31st March, 1912.

ADMISSIONS, DISCHARGES, AND DEATHS.

Number of children in the school on 1st April, 1911	..	..	..	47
Admitted during the year	..	..	..	25
Discharged during the year	..	..	..	4
Died	..	..	..	1
In the school on 31st March, 1912	..	..	..	67
Ages of boys in the institution on 31st March, 1912 :—				
From 5 to 10 years	..	..	..	8
„ 11 „ 16 „	..	..	..	39
„ 17 „ 21 „	..	..	..	14
Over 21 years	..	..	..	6
Ages of boys admitted during the year :—				
Between 7 and 16 years	..	..	..	18
„ 16 „ 21 „	..	..	..	6
Over 21 years	..	..	..	1