

extremely pleased with the progress I have made, and so are all my friends, and they think that lip-reading is a wonderful thing. . . . We are having very hot weather in Gisborne and, as we have had no rain for a very long time, our tanks are dry, and the scarcity of water is getting rather serious. . . . I was deeply grieved on reading the sad news of the death of Captain Scott and his party: it is indeed very sad. Their death came as a sudden surprise to me. When I read it in the paper I felt the deepest sympathy for Mrs. Scott and the relatives of the brave men who perished with their leader. . . . My Sumner school flowers have grown splendidly and rapidly. I have done lots of crocheting here and I take a keen interest in it. I like living in the country, which seems to thoroughly agree with me. I have lots of books here, and I am very fond of reading. I am reading "Nancy Stair" now, which is a pretty story. It was written by Elinor Macartney Lane. . . . With kindest remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Stevens, and also to your staff and pupils, I remain, yours sincerely, I—D—."

One girl was kept away during the whole of the year, her parents having placed her under medical treatment with the view to her deafness being cured. After some months it was found, however, that no improvement in the child's hearing could be brought about, and her return to the school was arranged for. A boy, also, who should have been admitted in 1910, was kept at home for the same reason. No benefit resulting in his case either, it was arranged to have him admitted to the school in 1913. Similar cases frequently occur, and it seems a pity that the education of such children should be delayed to no purpose, particularly as the treatment might just as readily have been given at Sumner as at their homes, Christchurch aurists being as fully qualified as those in other parts of the Dominion.

The school was visited during the year by a number of ex-pupils who appear to be getting on well. Letters were received from many others or from their parents. One of the latter writes: "Nellie is still getting on famously at dressmaking. She is well on in her second year now, and is thought very highly of by her employers, as she is, I am told by them, a quick and neat sewer, and has artistic taste for the fancy designs put on the dresses. She talks well too, and is understood all right by the many friends she has made about here." She enjoys good health, and seems to be happy and contented with her lot in life."

There were some changes in the personnel of the teaching staff. Mr. L. F. Regnault was appointed on probation as assistant teacher in April. At the end of August Miss J. Waterston left to be married, and Miss H. McEwen was appointed in October in her place, also on probation. At the end of the year Mrs. Comerford handed in her resignation. The latter had been five years and Miss Waterston had been two years on the staff, and both gave promise of becoming in time excellent teachers, and their removal was a loss to the school. One of the greatest difficulties in the way of our work is that, owing to frequent changes in the teaching staff, classes have to be entrusted to insufficiently experienced teachers.

Good progress was made by the contractor, Mr. Calvert, in the erection of the new wing, which should be ready for occupation early in 1913. The present congestion in the schoolrooms will then be relieved, and should an epidemic of sickness occur we shall be better able to cope with it than we have been in the past. The additions to the kitchen block also being made will provide suitable accommodation for the domestic staff.

I have, &c.,

The Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington.

J. E. STEVENS.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 22nd May, 1913.

I have the honour to report that the health of the staff and pupils of the School for the Deaf has not been very good during the year 1912.

The Matron died on the 26th December. She had suffered from pleurisy for several years, and latterly further complications ensued. Some other members of the staff were absent for several weeks through illness. One boy, A—C—, a chronic patient from hereditary disease, has been ten years in the school under great difficulties for the staff, but had at last to be sent home in August as quite unfit for the school. An epidemic of scarlatina occurred in April and June. Two boys and five girls were sent away to the infection hospital at Bottle Lake, and returned in good health. I attended the first case within a few hours of its commencement, but had no means of isolating it. Various forms of tubercular disease have occurred, as is usual in this class of children, of whom six have required special treatment. A slight epidemic of influenza occurred in October, affecting twelve pupils. Several mild forms of skin-disease have occurred.

Classes have been conducted occasionally in the open air, and I recommend that this practice should be further extended if possible.

The new wing is almost finished, and I notice that there is no lavatory accommodation for the sick ward. I would also recommend a double instead of a single door at the entrance. The septic-tank effluent has always been very offensive. I still recommend that it should be disposed of by irrigation from a high tank, in the same way as has been so uniformly successful at the old building.

The Secretary for Education.

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