THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

PROTECTION OF AUTHOR'S COPYRIGHT

TO TURN THE KEY

THE HISTORY OF DEAF EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Pauline Ann Stewart

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Master of Education

at the University of Otago, Dunedin,

New Zealand.

August 1982

ABSTRACT

On the 10th March 1880, the Sumner School for the Deaf and Dumb was established. It was the first school for hearing impaired children in the world to be totally funded by the Government. In 1942, a further school was established in Auckland to cater for the hearing impaired children in the northern half of the North Island. During the 1960's and 1970's unit classes for hearing impaired children were developed in ordinary schools. As well, many children with hearing losses were educated in normal classrooms, often with specialist help.

In 1879 the Government sought an expert from England. The methods he brought to New Zealand at this time were innovative. They remained in favour for the next sixty years. In 1940 the Government again sought an expert from England. The principal chosen devoted thirty-three years to education in this specialist field.

The provision of education for hearing impaired children in New Zealand has not been without problems. The need for very small classes, highly competent specialist teachers, buildings to cope with wildly fluctuating rolls and satisfactory institutional care were but a few of the problems educationalists in this specialist field were forced to face. As well, children were often admitted at an advanced age and withdrawn at an early age. The provision of pre-school education proved particularly problematic. Some problems were resolved. The solution to others proved more elusive. The successes and failures of this educational enterprise are examined in the present thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer most sincerely thanks Associate Professor J.D.S. McKenzie, Supervisor of this thesis, for his guidance and critical appraisal. His constructive suggestions and advice have considerably improved the theoretical and grammatical quality of the text.

I must also express my gratitude to Mr & Mrs H. Long, Auckland, for their generous assistance with reminiscences and photographs.

Further, I wish to acknowledge the assistance given by the many people interviewed during the course of my study, including Mrs M. Allen, Mr A.B. Allen, Miss A. Allott, Miss E. Chambers, Mr & Mrs L. Charman, Mrs D. Grant, Mr & Mrs H. Long, Mrs M. Pickering and Mr J. Stevens. The assistance of Mr S. Bartlett, van Asch College, and Mr A. Young, Kelston School for the Deaf, is also acknowledged.

The writer wishes to thank Mrs Win Blair for the typing of this thesis.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement given by my husband.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Abstract		ii
Acknowledgments		iii
Table of Contents		iv
List of Tables		v
Introduction		1
Chapter 1.	In the Beginning	3
Chapter 2.	The School is Founded	26
Chapter 3.	Growth & Innovation	63
Chapter 4.	The School Consolidates	98
Chapter 5.	New Blood & Rubella	130
Chapter 6.	Provision for Deaf Education beyond Sumner	190
Postscript		213
Bibliography		215
Appendices		220

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Age of Children Seeking Admission to School for the Deaf from 1906 - 1916	Page 66
Table 2	Increases in Attendance at Schools for the Deaf in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and New Zealand between 1895 and 1910.	95
Table 3	Roll Increases at Sumner and Titirangi Schools for the Deaf	143
Table 4	Roll Increases at Titirangi between 1942 and 1950	198
Table 5	Day Pupils and Boarders at Auckland and Sumner Schools.	206

INTRODUCTION

New Zealand's attempts to provide services for hearing impaired children appear to have begun in 1873 when the Hon. De Renzie James Brett, a member of the Canterbury Provincial Council, sought information from his council on the plight of the deaf, dumb and blind in New Zealand. Within seven years a small, oral, government financed school for the deaf was established at Sumner, Christchurch. From small beginnings in 1880, the services available to hearing impaired children have expanded to include a wide range of educational provisions. The problems of providing specialized education and care for the hearing impaired population in New Zealand are examined in this thesis.

Chapter 1 contains a brief historical sketch of deaf education throughout the world prior to 1880. In Chapter 2 initial attempts to secure the services of an overseas expert in deaf education, and the establishment of the Sumner School for Deaf-mutes are outlined. Chapter 3 describes the innovative directorship of the second director, Joseph Edward Stevens, from 1906 - 1923. Following this period methods became entrenched, differing little from those in vogue at the time of the school's inception. Many factors, including the effects of the depression, contributed to this static period in the history of deaf education, described in Chapter 4. In 1940, new blood was sought from overseas. The principalship of Herbert Pickering, from 1940 - 1973 saw a multitude of new developments in this specialist field. The far reaching provisions introduced during Pickering's time are examined in Chapter 5. During this time circumstances forced the authorities to establish a side school at Auckland in 1942.

The development of this enterprise is outlined in the final chapter.

In its efforts to provide for the needs of hearing impaired[1] children throughout the country, New Zealand was faced with many problems. An attempt is made to examine these problems in the light of social factors prevailing at the time; problems imposed by the sparsely populated nature of New Zealand, the sudden influx of large groups of rubella-deaf children, the difficulties of attracting, training and retaining specialist teachers and of providing suitably equipped buildings.

A study of provisions in this specialist field of education reveals the necessity of accepting change as an integral part of any educational undertaking. Over the years the emphasis in educating the hearing impaired child has shifted from being solely concerned with teaching the child to speak, to concern with its total educational, psychological, emotional and social development. This thesis attempts to examine the success of these efforts over the past one hundred years.

---

1. Over the past one hundred years various terms have been used to describe persons with a hearing loss. Throughout this thesis the term current during the period being discussed is used. All the terms employed however, describe children with a substantial hearing loss. The term "Deaf and dumb" was used to refer to this group of handicapped children until 1907 when the term "deaf" was preferred by educationalists. During the 1970's the term "hearing impaired" has found favour. It has been usual to refer to children with a moderate or slight hearing loss as being partially deaf, but in recent years the term "partially hearing" has also found favour.

CHAPTER 1

In the Beginning

It is written in the Scriptures, "And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb or deaf or the seeing or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?"[1] This reference to the deaf, one of the first we appear to have, is also one of the few that remains concerning the plight of the deaf prior to the eighteenth century. For whilst there have always been deaf persons from the earliest ages of the world, reference to them has been singularly meagre and imperfect.

As far back as the fourth century Aristotle proclaimed that all who were born deaf were consequently dumb. There is no evidence that Aristotle recognised the relation of speech to hearing, or that dumbness was a developmental consequence of deafness. It is concluded from his teachings that speech was a natural phenomenon and not an acquired art, and that the congenitally deaf were incapable of learning speech. It is supposed that the stern and utilitarian Spartans doomed all deaf and dumb children to death, compelling their parents to cast them, with the sickly and deformed into the caverns of Mount Taygetus. The laws of Solon allowed neither the insane nor idiots, nor the deaf and dumb to hold any kind of property, even when bequeathed to them. In an historical sketch of the deaf and dumb, published in 1863, James Hawkins contends:

> Through ignorance and indifference to their actual nature, thousands of these poor afflicted human beings have had to drag out their weary pilgrimage of life, neglected,

---

1. Exodus. (Chapter 4, Verse 11).

> despised, rejected of men and shut out from every impulse of sympathy. Thus degraded to the level of swine or oxen, thousands of them have crept in mental darkness, through a strange and unkind world, 'dull and comfortless' to the grave.[2]

There have, however, been some rays of light in the history of the education of the deaf. Over twelve hundred years ago a Yorkshire bishop, St. John of Beverley, taught a deaf-mute boy to read lips. The Venerable Bede, a student of the bishop, recorded this event. Nevertheless, the notion that the deaf were beyond education prevailed until the sixteenth century. In 1501, Jerome Cardan, the son of an Italian lawyer, entered the University of Padua at the age of 21 with no previous education but with a brilliant brain and radical ideas. His genius allowed him to advance quickly to the forefront of his chosen profession, medicine. He also studied mathematics and became eminent in this field. Cardan foresaw the possibility of substituting the work of one sense for another. In one of his many writings "Paralipomenon" he outlined how he had been influenced (probably by the writings of Rudolph Agricola 1443 - 1485) to propose that the deaf could be taught to "hear" by reading and to "speak" by writing. Cardan had grasped that writing could be associated with speech, and speech with thought - i.e. that sounds were not needed to bridge the gap between writing and ideas. Although there is no evidence that Cardan taught, his theories paved the way for the correction of the more glaring fallacies about the deaf and their educational capacity.

---

2. J. Hawkins. The Deaf and Dumb. London, Longman, 1863 Page 6.

One of the first efforts at regular instruction of the deaf appears to have been made by a Spaniard, Pedro Ponce de Leon, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of San Salvador at Oña, Northern Spain, who was born in 1520. In 1578 in a legal document he wrote:

> In this home of Oña I have had for my pupils, who were deaf and dumb from birth, sons of great lords and of notable people, whom I have taught to speak, write and reckon; to pray, to assist at the Mass, to know the doctrines of Christianity and to know to confess themselves by speech. Some of them also learn Latin and Greek, and to understand the Italian language; and one was ordained and held office and emolument in the Church and performed the service of the Canonic Hours.[3]

Besides recording his own methods in the oral education of the deaf, Pedro Ponce de Leon also had his methods recorded by Morales, the historiographer to Philip II. It is recorded that Ponce de Leon began by first teaching his students to write the names of objects; following this the students were taught to articulate; i.e. to produce sounds. This involves synthesizing sounds into words. Finally practice was given in the association of the written word to its spoken form. There was no attempt to teach lipreading, but writing was repeatedly stressed. Above all, Ponce de Leon insisted on verbal language rather than the use of a manual alphabet for spelling words. He most successfully educated, among others of the Spanish nobility, two brothers and sister of one of the Constables of Castile, as well as a son of the Governor of Aragon. As a philosophical teacher he must have been an expert. Far from confining his pupils to the mechanical

---

3. Cited by M. Goldstein, Problems of the Deaf, U.S.A. Laryngoscope Press 1933, Page 14.

accomplishments of ordinary writing of thoughts and the reading of language, he taught them also to converse in various languages, to reason upon philosophical subjects and to become accomplished men and women.

Soon after Pedro Ponce de Leon's death in 1584, Juan Pablo Bonet, also a Spanish priest, educated another member of this same house of Castile - a child who had become deaf at four years. Much of Bonet's information was probably obtained from friends of his pupil, who would no doubt have liked Ponce de Leon's highly successful system perpetuated for the benefit of their friends and relatives. In Madrid in 1620 a book by Bonet was published on the teaching of deaf-mutes. Most historians attribute the material in this book to Bonet,[4] but it is felt by one at least that the material in this book upon which the French[5] and Americans originally based their deaf education actually originated with Ponce de Leon, but was modified by Bonet and thus presented to the world with his own name on the title page as author. In the book Bonet advanced speech as the basis of education of the deaf and the exclusion of signs other than the manual alphabet (finger spelling). The importance of lipreading was also stressed.

In Europe in 1648 the first book devoted to the art of lip-reading was published - "The Deaf and Dumb Man's Friend" by John Bulwer M.D. In this work he proposed a method of communicating

---

4. eg. K.W. Hodgson, The Deaf and their Problems, London, Watts & Co. 1953, also Goldstein, op. cit.

5. op. cit. J. Hawkins. Page 8.

by the hands and recommended the establishment of special schools. In 1662 in Oxford, England, an eminent professor of geometry, named Dr. John Wallis, analysed the speech sounds and noted how speech organs were used to create sounds. He considered the formation of all sounds used in articulate speech and described the position of various organs during the formation of each sound, maintaining that if organs were placed in certain positions, and breath issued from the lungs, speech would occur whether or not the person heard it himself. His ideas were published in a book entitled "Granmatica Linguae Anglicanae" (a Grammar of the English Language).[6]

The first advocate of a purely oral method of teaching the deaf was a Swiss physician, John Conrad Amman, who migrated to Holland. In Amsterdam in 1692 he produced a book "Surdus Loquens" (The Speaking Deaf). The significance of this work cannot be overestimated as it laid the foundation for the exclusively oral method and was quoted by Dutch and German advocates of the oral method over one hundred years later.

During this evolutionary period in the early stages of deaf education, "method" had not reached the stage of importance it later was destined to occupy. Progress in pedagogy was mainly by individual effort and resourcefulness of groups of teachers in various parts of Europe. The eighteenth century produced three important developments in deaf education. Firstly there occured

---

6. Cited by M.A. Goldstein. op. cit.,Page 24.

a greater public awareness of the deaf and their needs, and from this greater awareness, a sympathy for their plight. The causes of deafness still remained a mystery however, and Hawkins contends that even in the 1860's, "nine out of every ten mothers of congenitally deaf children attribute their being so to powerfully operating causes upon the mind during gestation."[7] A second important development was the establishment of state-run schools. These schools were not however fully government financed, charitable donations being still required for their maintenance. Third, and perhaps most importantly, debate began in earnest on the two distinct teaching methods for the deaf - the oral method and the manual method - a debate which is pursued with equal vigour 250 years later.

The two important figures about whom the "methods" question revolved were Abbe Charles-Michel de l'Epée who was born in Versailles, France on 24 November 1712, and Samuel Heinicke who was born on 10 April 1729 in Nautzechutz, Germany. De l'Epée was nearly fifty years of age before he became attracted to the plight of the deaf. He taught two deaf sisters at his own home after their teacher died. His initial object was to train the afflicted girls so that they would not grow in ignorance of religion. It is believed he went to Spain to study the language of that country and familiarise himself with the contents of Bonet's work. He returned to Paris and opened a school at his own expense for the poor deaf and dumb, including the two sisters whose case had

---

7. op. cit. J. Hawkins. Page 8

aroused his initial interest. Some years later the school received the official patronage of the Government. De l'Epée's method concentrated on methodical signing (using signs and the manual alphabet), his main aim being to instruct as many poor deaf children as possible in the time he had available. He saw time spent in teaching speech as largely wasted time that could be more profitably used to build up a store of knowledge about the world around the child.[8] He saw no purpose in speech and felt the manual method of signs offered the shorter route to communication. With few exceptions this system was adopted in France and other European countries - the exceptions being Holland and Germany. In France however, by 1886, only five out of seventy schools still practised the method laid down by de l'Epée. Skills and method used by de l'Epée were willingly shared with other teachers, in contrast with most teachers of this period who guarded their methods jealously. De l'Epée died in 1789 but his method was ably carried on by his successor, the Abbé Sicard. The school started by de l'Epée continues today in the former Seminary of Sant Magloire in France.[9] The aim of the two educators was not to astonish the world with the sudden conversation of a dumb child but to convert the pupil to become a rational and moral being.

By 1780 Samuel Heinicke, the apostle of oralism in Germany

---

8. Le Directeur, Federation Nationale Des Instituts De Jeunes Sourds et de Jeunes Aveugles De France/Stewart. 5 January 1982.

9. Le Directeur, Federation Nationale Des Instuts De Jeunes Sourds et de Jeunes Aveugles De France/Stewart, 5 January 1982.

and a most formidable opponent of de l'Epée, was vigorously advocating a purely oral system - one in which speech was taught (articulation) and the lips were read (lipreading). Writing in conjunction with articulation and lipreading was not encouraged, as it was felt to utilise time more profitably spent on articulation.[10] As a qualified teacher, Heinicke started a school at Leipsic, being the first of its kind over which government patronage was extended. By the end of the eighteenth century there were five schools for the deaf in Germany using Heinicke's methods; methods that could perhaps have been influenced by the writings in Holland of John Amman, eighty years previously. Heinicke insisted his pupils continuously watch the lips of others so they could follow conversation around them. Central to his method was the notion that deaf children must learn to "think" orally rather than in signs. In an exchange with de l'Epée Heinicke summarised his methods as follows:

> My pupils learn distinctly and intelligently to read and speak aloud; whether awake or dreaming, they think in terms of articulate speech; everyone can converse with them by speaking slowly; the written language depends on their spoken language even though they do not hear it, but perceive it through some other equivalent sense. True, in the beginning, there is a pathetic monotone, but in two or three years their speech becomes good; intelligible and eventually they even learn to declaim.[11]

The oral method, whereby a systematic training in speech, articulation and lipreading is established owes its origins, therefore, to Heinicke. In all, five letters were exchanged between

---

10. Le Directeur, Federation Nationale Des Instituts, De Jeunes Sourds et de Jeunes Aveugles de France/Stewart. 5 January 1982.

11. op. cit. M. Goldstein. Page 34.

de l'Epee and Heinicke. In these letters the strengths and weaknesses of the respective systems were set forth - strengths and weaknesses which are just as topical today as they were two hundred and fifty years ago. The strengths of oralism revolve around the fact that it allows the deaf child to be a participating and communicating member of the society in which he lives. Its weakness is that not all children seem able to learn by this method and if they do not succeed at oralism they may find that they can communicate with no-one. The advocates of the signing method see 'signing' as a vehicle by which all children can learn to communicate and learn a wide range of language, thus allowing the child to discover more effectively the world around him. Half-way between these two methods today is the 'combined' method (total communication) which aims to utilise the strengths of both methods by combining lipreading, articulation and signing. The inherent weakness in this semmingly ideal marriage is that the deaf child tends to concentrate on the less arduous task of signing at the expense of the very demanding task of lipreading and articulating.

In England, Daniel Defoe appears to have inspired the foundation of the first deaf school in the eighteenth century with his writings about a deaf-mute man. In a literary production called 'Duncan Campbell's Life and Adventures' he described a person called Duncan Campbell who could read, write and converse with people despite his lack of hearing. Thomas Braidwood, of Edinburgh, had previously founded a school there, but later in 1785 moved the establishment to London. Dr Joseph Watson, a nephew of Braidwood, became associated with his uncle's

activities, and in 1792 founded a school in London which still progresses to this day. Although now oral in its method, it previously used a combined lipreading and signing form of teaching. All methods used were guarded jealously by Braidwood and his associates, who ran the institution on a purely business basis. Braidwood had begun by teaching the son of a wealthy merchant. He knew little about the manual system but incorporated the public knowledge of this method with an oral approach, utilising lipreading and writing. As word of his success spread his school expanded and after he died in 1798 his work was continued by relatives. In all, the Braidwoods maintained a virtual monopoly on the education of the deaf in the British Isles for a period of fifty-nine years.

During this period of supremacy by the Braidwood family, Dr Thomas H. Gallaudet of America visited Dr Watson seeking training and information on the education of the deaf. He received an unwelcome reception and travelled across the channel to France, where the Abbe Sicard, the favoured protege and successor of Abbe de l'Epée received him warmly and welcomed the opportunity to share his methods for teaching deaf children. Dr Gallaudet returned to America in 1816, and in 1817 teaching began at the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Hartford, Connecticut, using the manual method which has maintained a strong hold in America to this day. Originally established as a private institution this school received recognition from Congress in 1819 and was granted permanent funding.

In 1843 the Honourable Horace Mann and Dr Samuel G. Howe

made a tour of Europe visiting schools for the deaf. These noted educationists returned to America advocating the superiority of the oral method as practised in Germany. As a consequence of this the Clarke Institution for the Deaf at Northampton, Massachusettes, was founded in 1867, as the first oral school for the deaf in America. America however, was among the last of the developed countries to provide relief and educational opportunities for this handicapped group. (See Appendix A).

While both oral and manual methods became firmly established in America, by 1850 the combined oral-signing method (as used by the Braidwoods) had fallen into disuse in England - most teachers by then practising the signing method only. In 1859 there came to England from Holland a young man named Gerrit van Asch. He was twenty-three years of age. At the age of eighteen years he had begun teacher training in deaf education in Rotterdam. In his holidays he had travelled to Germany and France to visit schools for the deaf. It is probable that during his visits to Germany, van Asch met teachers trained by Samuel Heinicke, the pioneer of the oral system who had died in 1790. Similar methods were used by Dr David Hirsch, van Asch's tutor. Hirsch, a Jew, had opened a school using the oral system in Rotterdam in 1853. Van Asch was one of his first teachers. Within a short period - four and a half years - van Asch proved himself a competent oral teacher of the deaf. In England word had spread of the highly successful school established by Hirsch using the oral method. It was the custom for wealthy Jewish businessmen to engage private tutors for their deaf children. Van Asch was recommended by Hirsch.

Gerrit van Asch in Manchester, 1859.

> I was invited by agreement to come to England from Rotterdam by wealthy merchants in Manchester who made special investigations from the authorities in Rotterdam as to my suitability for the instruction of their children. One of the prominent surgeons in Rotterdam who had deaf children at the school in the Institution at the time, I think, had something specially to do with my going to England.[12]

As a competent oral teacher he quickly perceived how decayed the English system had become. He himself impressed with his ability. When his assignment was finished in Manchester, he set up his own establishment at Barnet, Hertfordshire, and later in Kensington, London. In 1865 the Quarterly Journal of Science published an article by van Asch on the state of deaf education in England.[13] He lamented the fact that the teaching of speech had become a rare occurence in England and urged reform of deaf education. In 1866 he married an English woman, Emmeline Isabella Drury. Between 1867 and 1878 a total of seven children were born to the couple. Besides his teaching van Asch toured, giving lectures and demonstrations in his specialised field. One such lecture was reported by the Manchester Guardian on the 2nd April 1868. At this lecture he detailed his methods and gave demonstrations using pupils he had taught. The suspicion that still surrounded the oral method in England can be appreciated by reference to an abstract from the reported comments of Sir James L. Bardsley (President of the Ear

---

12. Commission of Inquiry into Deaf-Mute Institution, 1892. National Archives Le/1/1893/113.

13. Cited by A.B.Allen, They Hear with the Eye, Wellington, School Publication Branch, 1980

Institution) who chaired the lecture in Manchester:

> The Chairman said....he was not so familiar with Mr van Asch's system of teaching the deaf to understand, or the dumb to speak, or rather imitate speaking, as to be able to give an opinion on it, but the meeting would be able to judge for itself by the expositions and illustrations he (the lecturer) would give. Before consenting to preside at the lecture, however, he thought it necessary to enquire whether his methods in the least interfered with the medical and surgical treatment of the ear. He not only found that it did not, but that, on the contrary, his mode of instruction began after the utmost surgical aid and appliances had failed in restoring the sense of speech and hearing.[14]

Van Asch proceeded with his lecture outlining his philosophy on the education of the deaf.

> The deplorable state of mutism he ascribed not to malformation and imperfections in the localities of the larynx. The deaf mute of tender age differed in no wise from his fellow creatures in the functional arrangement of the auricular organs. The question was not however, whether a dumb child was in possession of the power to force into action the various sets of muscles concerned in the production of sounds, but in such a manner and degree as would enable the organs of speech to perform the articulations for the construction of language. In Holland and Prussia this matter had been proved long ago, but in England and America a contrary opinion prevailed one, among other reasons, being that the language of the land was not adapted for such a purpose. He therefore came before them to give them an opportunity of judging whether that opinion was in harmony with the practical results.[15]

For twenty years he continued his work in England, probably amid much apathy and suspicion from both the public toward the deaf and their needs, and from teachers of the signing method who had much to lose if oralism took root. Other teachers who

---

14. Manchester Guardian., 2 April 1868.

15. Manchester Guardian., 2 April 1868.

advocated oralism, eg. van Praagh[16] began to arrive in England, but van Asch is acknowledged as the person who introduced the oral method, with its emphasis on articulation and lipreading, and the exclusion of all signs. By 1879 when the New Zealand Government sent word to Sir Julius Vogel, the agent general in London, that a person was required to establish deaf education in New Zealand, a definite swing towards oralism was evident in England, although most teaching was still being carried out in institutions advocating the signing method.[17]

First reference to the deaf had been made in New Zealand in 1873 when the Hon. Colonel Brett asked the Canterbury Provincial Council about provisions being made to educate the deaf, dumb and blind in New Zealand. In 1874 he again made reference to the plight of the deaf, pointing out that deaf education was being undertaken in England and France. With no money available, however, no action was taken. In 1876 the provincial councils were abolished. The new central government passed the 1877 Education Act the following year. This new act made education free, secular and compulsory for all children, between five and fourteen years of age.[18] The Premier, Sir George Grey, advocated provincialism in educational matters, so when Colonel Brett requested aid in 1878 for a scheme to service all deaf children in the colony

---

16. William van Praagh was trained by David Hirsch in Rotterdam. He came to England in 1868 to teach by the oral method in a Jewish Deaf and Dumb School.

17. K.W.Hodgson. op. cit., Page 243.

18. Handicapped children were exempt from school attendance under the Education Act (1877) but they were not specifically excluded from education.

he was told to arrange for this on a provincial basis.[19]

There was however, a gentleman sitting in the House of Representatives who had championed the cause of the deaf and had been an outstanding superintendent of Canterbury during the provincial days. In a speech in the House of Representatives on 15 August 1878 William Rolleston said:

> He thought they (the Government) might now confer a great boon upon the public at large by bringing into the country an expert in teaching the deaf and dumb, whose services would be available for persons of all classes, and who might be connected with one of their existing educational institutions.[20]

He cited the case of a young deaf child who was sent to Victoria to be trained but had died soon after arriving. He maintained it was imperative to engage someone well versed in the oral method - a method already being tried at the Clarke School for the Deaf in Massachusetts. Rolleston had established that according to the 1874 census there were 57 deaf persons in the colony - and 25 of those were under 15 years of age. He expected there to be a greater number than this at the time of his speech (1878). He went on to say:

> The greatness of the Government was shown by its capacity for dealing with matters affecting even the smallest number of the community. The importance of the subject was measured not by the number affected

---

19. Many countries eg. America, required substantial contributions from parents toward the cost of educating deaf children. Sir George Grey advocated education for the handicapped along similar lines in New Zealand.

20. NZPD., 1878, Page 257

> but by the wider consideration of the duty of the state to its individual members. He had lately heard it said, 'It cannot be doubted that the colony possesses inexhaustible resources. It is true that nature has bestowed upon it the most lavish gifts, but the bounty of nature must be matched by the beneficence of institutions and the equity of our public policy.' When he heard those words he thought of this subject.[21]

Further debate followed on the subject. Sir George Grey wound up the debate with a promise to set aside money in the supplementary estimates - money which was not used until 1880.

William Rolleston continued to press for the establishment of a Government run oral school. He also championed the establishment of a Committee of Christchurch and Dunedin residents to press for an "educational" institution rather than one run along charitable lines. On 19 May 1878 the Christchurch Press endorsed Rolleston's call for a "Government run institution."[22] Rolleston's persistence and pressure on the appropriate authorities finally produced results for on 7 November 1878 Sir George Grey wrote to the Agent-General in London, Sir Julius Vogel, and authorised him to set about engaging a suitably qualified teacher who had proved himself to be highly skilled in the art of teaching deaf mutes by the articulation method.[23]

The Government did send some deaf children to school in Melbourne during the 1870's, and some were being educated privately at Charteris Bay, Lyttleton Harbour, by a Miss Dorcas Mitchell

---

21. NZPD., 1878. Page 257.
22. The Press 19 May 1878.
23. AJHR., 1879, H-17, Page 1.

during this period. Miss Mitchell was an Englishwoman well-versed in the manual (or signing) method. She had taught in New Zealand since 1870, having previously taught at a deaf and dumb school in England for six years. At Charteris Bay she taught the four deaf children of the Rev. R.R. Bradley, M.A. as well as a small group of private pupils. Hearing of Hon. Colonel Brett's proposal in 1874 to establish a school, she wrote to Colonel Brett offering her services as a teacher. Several Government officials interviewed her and a great deal of correspondence passed between the Government, the Education Department and Miss Mitchell from 1874 until 1880. The Rev. R.R. Bradley offered land in 1879 so that a school could be established with Miss Mitchell as lady principal.[24] This proposition was accepted in principle; the Government agreeing to rent the land, pay a subsidy on money raised for the building of the school and provide a subsidy for pupils enrolled. During 1879 the Government invited Miss Mitchell to visit Dunedin to rally support for the deaf. Miss Mitchell's trip was undertaken at government expense. Mr Ballance, the Minister of Education, and Mr John Hislop (Inspector) both communicated their confidence in her ability.[25] The reason for this trip while applicants were being interviewed overseas is unknown, but Miss Mitchell faded from the scene soon after. She was awarded £75 compensation in 1881 for services rendered.

Meanwhile, in England, applicants were being called for the

---

24. AJHR., 1879, H-17, Page 5.

25. AJHR., 1879, H-17, Page 4.

position of director of the proposed School for the Deaf in N.Z.

The appointment embraced certain terms including those that:

1. The appointment be for three years from the date of the teacher's arrival in New Zealand.
2. Inmates must be welcomed into the Teacher's own home as pupil boarders.
3. The teacher accept a salary of £600.
4. Deaf-mutes would be directed to the school by the Government or other governing body.

The salary offered (of £600) was an extremely handsome one. At this time the Inspector General of Education was himself receiving a salary of £606.13. 4.[26] Fifty years later when the fourth director (T.F. Chambers) assumed office the salary he received was £615 per annum, less £50 for board and residence - a total net salary of £565. The New Zealand Government was indeed seeking a highly competent person to establish its educational services for the deaf in 1879, and were prepared to pay an attractive salary to engage a competent practitioner.

Sir Julius Vogel formed a committee and engaged Dr. Edwin Abbott[27] and Mr Walter Kenaway, his secretary, to help in the selection of a suitable applicant. On the 18 June 1879 Vogel wrote to the Colonial Secretary informing him that he had engaged Mr Gerrit van Asch to proceed to New Zealand as a teacher of deaf-mutes.[28] There had been seventeen applicants for the position; Twelve of those applicants taught by the combined method (signs with some articulation), four had no special knowledge of teaching the deaf,

---

26. AJHR., 1881, E - 1. Page 8.

27. Dr. Edwin Abbott was a noted educationalist, resident in London.

28. AJHR., 1879, H- 1. Page 1.

and one, (Gerrit van Asch) taught by the German oral system. The Committee enclosed a special report on their reasons for the selection of van Asch:

> ... The degree of excellence to which children attain under this system (the oral system) varies with their intellectual ability. The advocates of the system contend that it is applicable to all children not idiots, and that there is no disparity in the results under this system than there is under the other systems in which they maintain that it is equally found that the ability of the afflicted children widely varies. On the other hand the advocates of the systemised - signal system, or, as it is variously called, the French system, declare that the percentage of children capable of acquiring the German system is very small, and that the French system, and no other, is capable of imparting to such children the requisite instruction. ... Our opinion lies between the two extremes. There can be no question that the German system is the most beneficial in its results. It may win for the afflicted deaf-mutes lives comparatively unembittered by their misfortune. Under this system a deaf-mute may enjoy all the pleasures of easy and constant interchange of ideas with those with whom he or she is intimate, may, to a minor extent, enjoy the same advantage with strangers, and may become advanced in education, not to say exceptionally intelligent... we are convinced that under the French system there is far greater danger than under the German system that deaf-mutes should shun the society of those who are not deaf, and thus, by congregating together, should in many cases increase the natural and inevitable disadvantages arising from their affliction... we are strongly of the opinion that the number of those who are capable of learning by the German system is very largely in excess of that which the professors of the combined system are prepared to admit... They (the professors of the combined system) teach articulation and lipreading as a mere accomplishment, devoting half an hour or an hour a day to it; by the German method it is the sole medium of communication. The children, under the German system, think in words; under the French, or the combined system, they think in signs... To be of use, the German system must be taught most thoroughly in its integrity without intermixture with the French system, We are not, however, convinced that the French system can altogether be dispensed with for pupils of an unusally low order of intelligence. But each should be kept distinct; and, in mercy and humanity to the child, the German system should be used where it can.

> A careful consideration of these facts led to the inevitable conclusion that the superior position should be given to the professor of the German system and we selected the only applicant we had under the system - the only gentleman, moreover we believe, available for the purpose throughout this country... There were certainly none amongst the candidates, excepting Mr van Asch, whom we could have deemed ourselves justified in selecting... He has a thorough knowledge of the German system, and the results, as witnessed by ourselves on his pupils, are astonishing in the extreme... we deem him very suitable for the position he will have to occupy. By his means the German system will take firm root in New Zealand, and the French system, if hereafter required, can be superadded with little cost and inconvenience as occasion may arise. Had a commitment been made with the French system, it would have been difficult to replace it or amend it as has proved to be the case in this country. (i.e. England)[29]

Van Asch left England for New Zealand on the "Scottish Prince" in late 1879, travelling via the Continent. The New Zealand Government had contributed the sum of £10 towards van Asch visiting some of the best deaf schools in Europe, to study the latest methods and appliances in use. He also received full payment for his expenses to New Zealand.[30] With van Asch's appointment the hopes of many for the provision of free education for the deaf in a school funded completely by the central government were soon to become a reality.

In retrospect several factors combined to give New Zealand a most advantageous beginning in her attempts to provide special educational facilities for a section of the New Zealand school population.

---

29. AJHR., 1879. H - 1. Page 2 - 3.

30. These expenses amounted to £421. 1. 3. AJHR., 1880, H - 1A. Page 48.

Firstly, in 1879, when New Zealand began to look for someone to establish deaf education in this country there was a marked upswing in support for the German (oral) method in England. Although there were only two or three private schools (of which van Asch was principal of one) using exclusively the oral method, many advocates of the French (signing) method were attempting to introduce some articulation and lipreading. A college for training teachers of the deaf in the oral method had also been established under the auspices of Mr St.John Ackers, a strong promoter of the system. Had New Zealand sought a teacher even a few years earlier when the exclusive use of the French system was in vogue, the history of deaf education in New Zealand could well have been very different.

Secondly, van Asch when appointed was 43 years of age, and had a family of seven children. He was well known in professional circles for his innovative work. He was also ambitious, having moved from his native Holland to attain prominence in a foreign land. Not content merely to teach when he ventured to New Zealand, van Asch also developed interests in farming and commerce. The reasons he applied for a position in New Zealand are not known; perhaps he had reached a stage in his life when he sought adventure; perhaps he felt he had achieved all he could in England and he felt he could give his large family greater advantages in a faraway land. Whatever the reason, it was fortuitous for New Zealand that such an innovative and mature educator applied for the position.

Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, there was in New Zea-

land a man who had sufficient insight, forcefulness and knowledge concerning the education of the deaf, to demand that the government not only provide funds so that ALL deaf children could be educated but also insist that the oral method be employed in the school. William Rolleston, more than any other, could therefore be said to have shaped the beginnings of deaf education in this country. His insistence on what he felt would be in the best long term interests of the deaf was critically important. It is to be doubted that prominent citizens would have thought of demanding anything more for the deaf than that they be housed and taught by any method a teacher cared to employ.

CHAPTER 2

The School is Founded

On his arrival in New Zealand van Asch was informed that a property, known as Beach Glen, had been leased at Sumner, Christchurch, for the school he had been engaged to establish. The previous owner, Mr C.L. Wiggins, had used the property as a boys' boarding school. A prospectus had been issued by the Secretary to the Education Department, Mr John Hislop, on the 4 February 1880. It set out the objects of the proposed Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, namely:

1. To train young deaf mutes (below 12 years, and in some cases over that age) to utter articulate sounds and to read spoken language from the lips of their teacher.
2. To employ this acquired power of speech as a means for the instruction of the pupils - first, in the understanding and use of easy language, and in reading and writing; and, at a more advanced stage, in English composition, geography, history, arithmetric, drawing, elementary science etc. The result of a complete course of instruction, as herein indicated, will in almost all cases be to enable the pupil to read with thorough comprehension, and to hold oral conversation with relatives, friends and even strangers.
3. To impart to the pupils a good moral training, and to teach them habits of industry, with a view to the increase of their own happiness, and to their becoming, as far as is consistent with their natural defect, useful members of society.
4. To render effectual assistance to children who, from fever or other causes, have lost the sense of hearing, and who would in consequence become wholly dumb.
5. Arrangements will be hereafter made, as far as practicable, for affording to boys, before the completion of their course of instruction, an opportunity of learning a trade or of acquiring a practical acquaintance with gardening and farming. Girls will receive thorough instruction in household economy, needlework, etc.[1]

---

1. AJHR., 1880 H-IE, Page 1.

Further information was supplied for prospective parents:

> The pupils will board with the Director and his wife, and will be under their care and direction. Every pupil on entering should be provided with a supply of clothing for at least a half-year's wear. Every article should be plainly marked with the owner's name. Each pupil is also expected to take the following articles: Two dessert forks, and one spoon; six table napkins; two pairs of twilled sheets; two bath towels; and four hand towels.
> The charge for board, lodging and education is at the rate of fifty pounds (£50) per annum, payable to the Director half-yearly in advance.
> The parents, guardians or friends of deaf-mutes within the colony who are unable to pay the whole or any portion of the cost of their residence at the Institution, are invited to communicate with the Hon. the Minister of Education.[2]

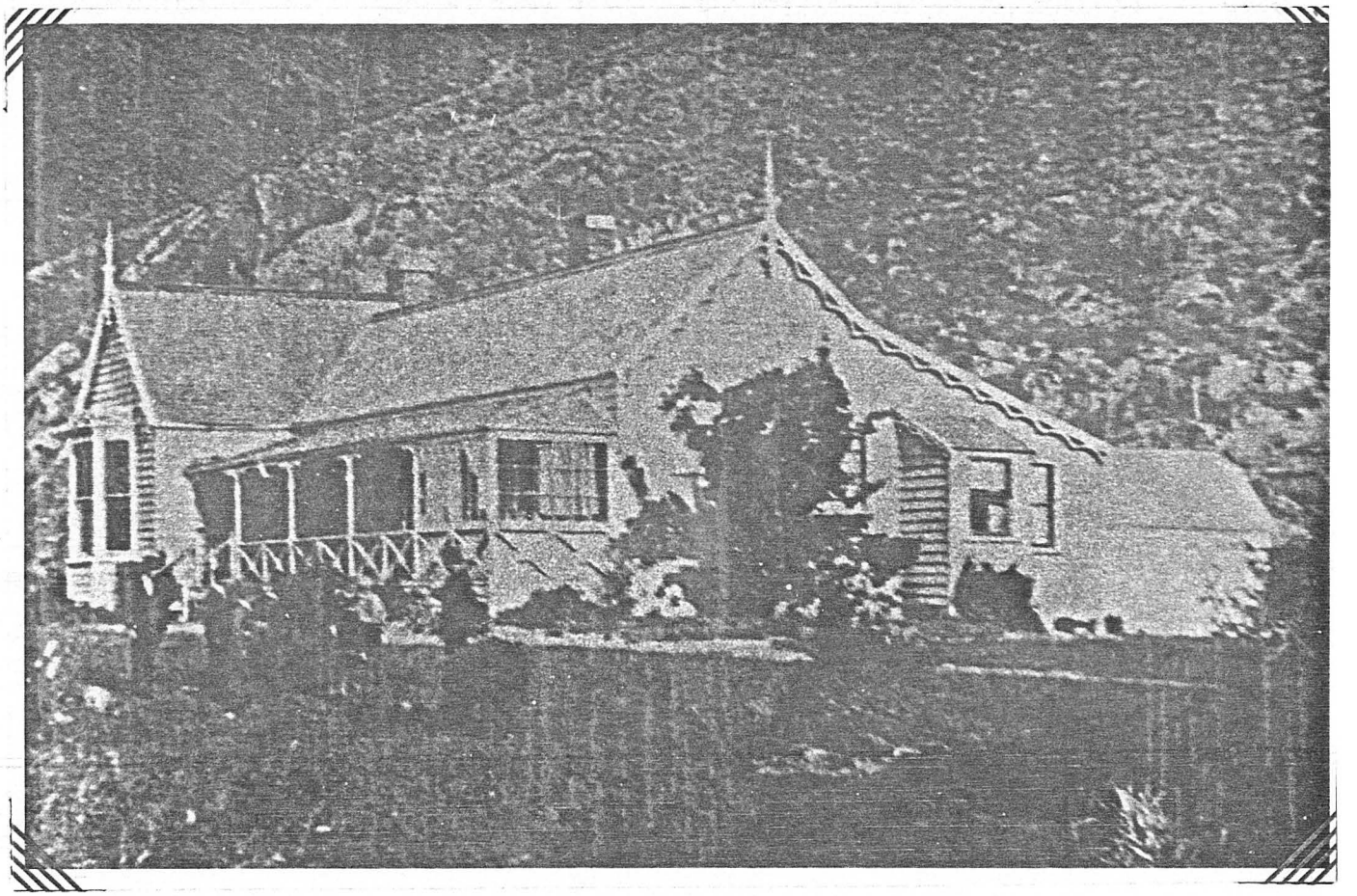
On 10 March 1880 the school officially opened under the direction of Gerrit van Asch. There were five pupils, this number increasing to ten by June 1880, when the Director made his first report to the Minister of Education. In his report van Asch briefly outlined his method of teaching his pupils to speak. No record of his methods appear to have survived , but it is possible to piece together material from a variety of sources in order to form a comprehensive picture of those methods.

In a book published in London in 1863, van Asch has marked in his own handwriting passages outlining the articulation method:

> At the commencement...of his labours, the teacher himself has to consider what a simple vocalised sound actually is, as noted by a single letter (a); and he has to be particular in understanding the nature of the vibrations of the chordæ vocales, or the vocal organs concerned in the formation and production of this letter as a sound. This accomplished, as regards this one, he has then to familiarise himself in the same way with the other vowels, or simple sounds, e, i, o, u, taking care that the external positions of the mouth etc. be as visible as possible to his pupil, and that each sound be made with a

---

2. Ibid.



Beach Glen. The First School. 1880

slow and firm enunciation, without the slightest grimace. If he is satisfied of the certainty of producing the same sound by the same action and position of the organs concerned in performing it in himself, he should then take a pupil (an intelligent and confident one always preferable), and write upon a slate the first and simplest of sounds (a). He should then call the child's attention to it, and show him how he artificially utters it, repeating the illustration several consecutive times. The child will undoubtedly imitate him, but the imitation probably will be in motion only, and innocent of any degree of sound. Still, as the child attempted it, he should be encouraged in the same manner as if he had successfully accomplished it. The next thing is to make him cognizant of sound being required - no easy matter, one would imagine, seeing the deaf have no more idea of actual sound than the blind have of positive colour. But a teacher of the deaf is supposed to be aware that his pupil, if unconscious of sound, is not insensible to vibration. He should take the child's finger, and place it on the thyroid prominence, or Adam's apple (where voice commences), of his own (the Teacher's) throat, and slowly and firmly sound that letter (a) which he wishes to elicit from the child. If this be repeated several times, so much the better for the pupil's comprehension, for he will be considerably perplexed by the first few lessons. When the teacher is satisfied his pupil is sensible of the vibration, he should quickly convey the child's finger to the thyroid prominence of its own throat, direct attention to the inflexion of the lips, and repeat the utterance once more. If the sense of the vibration (which is caused by the rush of air from the lungs acting upon the cartilages of the trachea etc.) still exist in the boy's finger, he will feel this vocalised breath, imitate it in consequence, and the desired sound or letter of the alphabet will be elicited. A sensible teacher, when this step has been accomplished, would express himself to his pupil in an unrestrained manner, and encourage him, even by some trifling present, to continue the repetition of this same single sound until it can be done instantly, and without labour or fatigue. If the teacher finds his pupil possesses the right materials - a clear tone of voice, intelligence etc. to work upon, he should then proceed to the next of the simple sounds (e), a letter which the child, by the same sort of showing as before, will perceive to be only a modification of the same voice, through a different position of the mouth, etc., in forming it. Thus, in this simple manner, by the same equally simple process, may each sound or vowel be imparted to a child, till every one can be audibly articulated. And be it known, that to teach deaf and dumb persons to articulate words, is a process that required no particular talents, no long and special training, but a very great deal of patience and kindness.

Every step gained is a footing and help to the next; therefore, when the difficulty of teaching the vowel sounds has been surmounted, the teacher should next endeavour to give his pupil a knowledge of the powers of the consonants; or, as Dr. Watson's 'Instructor' says, 'Those positions and actions of the several organs employed in their formation, without the addition of any distinct vocal sound.' With this knowledge also acquired, he should then join these consonants to the vowels, forming, by the connection, syllables, or that elementary combination of words which furnishes the storehouse of our vocal language, thus:-

Sounds.	fall	far	fat	fate	e	ae	o	ewho	oo	ae
	a	a	a	a	e	i	o	u	w	y
b	ba	ba	ba	ba	be	bi	bo	bu	bw	by
c	ca	ca	ca	ca	-	-	co	-	-	-
d	da	da	da	da	de	di	do	du	dw	dy
			etc.	etc.						
				a	e	i	o	u	-	-
b	"	"	"	ab	eb	ib	ob	ub	-	-
c	"	"	"	ac	ec	ic	oc	uc	-	-
d	"	"	"	ad	ed	id	od	ud		
			etc.	etc.						

Also the prefix and affix of ch, gh, gn, ph, sh, th, etc. etc., to the vowels, all of which must be taught in the same manner. The teacher should daily exercise his pupil in these combinations of the vowels and transmutations of the consonants, until they have taken a firm root in the memory, and can be articulated at sight, and without the slightest hesitation. From syllables, the teacher should conduct his pupil to simple names of objects, always resolving the latter into the former, according to the sound; until (like syllables) the formation of spoken words has become settled in his mind, and he can orally read off any matter without any such vicarious aid being required: thus-

Body,	phonetically equal to	bo-de
Head,	"	had
Face,	"	fas
Nose,	"	noz
Eye,	"	i
Lip,	"	lep
Book,	"	bwk
Slate,	"	slat

How do you do?
Haw dw u dw?

Are you happy?
Ar u ha-pe?

The great secret of success lies in a very small compass, a little attention to the simple elements of

spoken language being all that is required. A teacher (as Holder, Wallis, Braidwood and Watson had done) has only to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the various organs concerned in the pronunciation or vocalisation of words, and which it is impossible theoretically to describe, such as the labials, or those letters formed by the lips-b,f,p,(ph), v,w; dentals, or those formed by the teeth-d,t,(th),s, z,c,j; palatials, or those formed by the palate-c,g, (ch),k,g,; the denti-palatial, that formed by the teeth and palate, x; the aspirate,h; and the liquids, l,m,n, r. Articulation being one of those most tedious things a deaf and dumb scholar has to learn, the least impatience or ebullition of temper on the part of the teacher materially militates against his progress in it. But if he be an intelligent scholar, with a good natural tone (not noise) of the voice, and not discouraged, he may succeed in uttering, audibly and distinctly, a great number of words, and even sentences, in the space of three or four months' time.

It must, however be borne in mind by those directly or indirectly interested in the elementary instruction of these children, that it must be done individually, so that to give each child a proper (daily) chance of learning, no man of ordinary abilities should have more than twelve pupils in a class. He is unable to do justice to more than that number at any time. In teaching articulation he can, occasionally, teach them collectively; but then (as vision travels in right lines), no more should be assembled in the segment of a circle, of which he is the centre, than those who can distinctly see his mouth; so that each child is able to repeat or write, mot a mot, the respective vocalised words, composing the lesson. If a child be daily exercised in articulation during his continuance at school, or until his organs of speech have become sufficiently pliable, there will be no danger of his ever losing this invaluable auxiliary, the importance of which he will the more and more appreciate when he returns home, and has to mix with persons not conversant with his normal mimic language.

An able and industrious teacher may make many of his pupils competent, in time, to audibly articulate any colloquial phrases, and to read aloud in a firm and distinct enunciation from any book. It is in these pupils that we find the tongue of the deaf and dumb unloosed, and of whom we can say, with the Psalmist, 'Behold, they speak with their mouths.' Anxious parents find language addressed to them by hitherto speechless children, in those endearing strains which filial affection and secret intuition so instinctively prompt them to utter.[3]

---

3. J. Hawkins, "The Deaf and Dumb" London. Longmans 1863 P. 68 - 73

In his first report to the Minister of Education, van Asch explained that his most advanced pupils were able to audibly enunciate words such as ba, bee, oak, beef etc. As well they were able to write and lipread. Five hours per day were set aside for instruction, the majority of that time being spent in endless repetition of sounds and words.

Visitors began to journey to Beach Glen to view the results of van Asch's labours. Among the callers was a reporter from the Lyttleton Times who reported that the system used involved:

1. Reading from the lips of the teacher.
2. Imitating the muscular movements and producing the consequent sounds.
3. Writing the sounds.
4. Reading them.[4]

In his second report to the Minister in 1881, van Asch developed further aspects of his method:

> Special regard is ... paid to the choice of matter. Sentences are carefully selected for their simplicity. To make the matter clearer – if, for example, the object 'dog' were under observation, the teacher's proceeding might be somewhat thus: Pointing with an inquiring face to the dog as a whole, and then to the parts of its body, he would ask, "What?" and the pupil would answer (in words more or less distinct, of course), "a dog," "eyes," "ears," "legs," "a back," "a tail," "hair," etc. If, the same course being pursued with other parts less prominent to the sight, the pupil were to indicate by gesture, or by the word 'no', that he was ignorant of the name, the teacher would, after repeating the question, supply the words "a skin," "a neck," "flesh," "bone," "a back-bone," "ribs," "teeth," "a tongue," " a jaw," a jawbone," always taking care that the names follow, not precede, the indication of the parts referred to. To an experienced teacher the task of pursuing the subject by further explaining to the pupil "hearing," "sight," "feeling," etc., is very fascinating; but with a young class he must restrain his own eagerness, and lead them on to another equally interesting and necessary. The dog might

---

4. Lyttleton Times, 5 May 1880.

> be a large one, and, if so, the teacher might, with a special view to a practical illustration, attempt to lift the dog on to the table. The failure would undoubtedly be accompanied by roars of laughter, and the opportunity ought to be seized by explaining to the children that, in answer to the question how the dog is, we say "heavy," large", etc. In a similar way, other names denoting colour, size, condition, etc. as black, white, long, sharp, quick, soft, hard, gentle, fierce, etc., may be elicited, and sentences composed with the pupils thus: What? A dog. How? Black. The dog is black. What? A tail. How? Long. The tail is long. Teeth, white. The teeth are white, etc. Further intellectual exercises are: What is the dog doing? Or simply, What doing? Standing. Where? On the floor. Under the table. The dog is lying under the table. And again, with a view of giving a notion of words denoting time: The dog is running now? No, will run after. The dog is eating now? No, will eat this afternoon.
> Having practised the pupils in noticing other objects in a like manner, the master may write out on the blackboard short descriptions, in which the pupils should assist, thus: That is a dog. The dog is black. He is large and strong. He has four legs. He can walk. He can run and jump also. The dog has two eyes. He can see. He is looking now. He has two ears. He can hear. The dog has a mouth and a tongue. Can he talk? No, he cannot. He can't talk, but he can bark, etc. Whatever the subject matter under consideration may be and whether the process of dealing with it be analytical or synthetical, the means ought to be simple, the manner cheerful and the treatment thorough.[5]

From accounts of his methods it would appear that simple nouns and verbs were not taught in any planned way until the end of the first year or beginning of the second year, after the basic sounds and combinations of sounds had been mastered. Van Asch states:

> The first year is occupied by the teaching of articulation pure and simple, alphabet lip letters, and easy words and the names of a few objects. At the end of four years they (the children) would go through four of these books (word books) containing lessons formerly prepared by me and so changed as to be applicable to New Zealand;[6]

---

5. AJHR., 1881, E8. Page 3.

6. Commission of Inquiry into the Management of the Sumner Institution for Deaf-Mutes. National Archives Le/1/1893/113. Page 57.

Object lessons were often used to stimulate interest, eg. a lesson on words beginning with 'b' would find van Asch with a boat, a loaf of bread and a boot in his classroom for demonstration purposes. Words introduced were written into a word book. Mime and drama were often employed to convey new ideas and words. As the students advanced in their studies, question and answer sessions were used to extend the range of language of the children.

Van Asch's efforts were obviously appreciated by parents and professionals alike. The Inspector-General, Rev. W.J. Habens, in particular, paid four visits within ten months and praised van Asch as a teacher with "ability of a high order."[7] Mr J.H.Pope, (Inspector of Native Schools 1880-1904) acting on instructions from the Inspector-General, also visited the school on 13 June 1881. In his report he stated:

> One cannot but regard the results achieved here as a masterpiece of the teacher's art. The ordinary teacher merely does the best that can be done with the materials ready to his hand, but he who succeeds in teaching the deaf-mute to utter and understand speech is in the truest sense of the word, an artist. He does not merely combine skillfully: he creates.[8]

By the beginning of 1881 twenty-one pupils, ranging in age from six years to niheteen years had enrolled at the Deaf and Dumb Institution. A visiting medical officer, Dr. H. H. Prins, was appointed to report on the health and management of the institution. As well, a lady assistant-teacher was engaged to assist with the teaching, to help Mrs van Asch with the training of the girls

---

7. AJHR., 1881. E8, Page 4
8. Ibid. Page 5.

in domestic economy and to supervise the children in one of the residences. The salary received for this position amounted to £11.5.0. the director's salary being maintained at £600. The total expenditure on the institution for its first full year of operation amounted to £1,509.6.0. Parents contributed as their circumstances allowed. A total of £263.8.8 was recovered from this source in the first year.

As the number of admissions rose, problems surfaced which required administrative decisions. While numbers remained small, and all were at the beginning of their education, classification of pupils posed few problems. By 1882, however there was considerable disparity in the attainment of the twenty-four pupils at Sumner and van Asch decided to divide the pupils into five ability groups. These groups were taught by van Asch and his assistant teacher. It was obvious to van Asch that further staff were required to cater for individual needs. While hearing children were being educated in large numbers, using similar material irrespective of ability, van Asch was advocating a concept many years ahead of his time. Also ahead of their time were his ideas on deductive reasoning in the area of Social Studies. He saw the children's journeys home at holiday time as excellent opportunities for the pupils to build up information about the world around them. Using this information, the older children were expected to be able to deduce further information and so enlarge their knowledge;

> By learning the geography of this colony I do not mean that the deaf child should be taught how to enumerate and point out on a map the names of rivers, capes,sounds,mountain peaks, etc., but rather that he should be assisted in systematising what he himself has seen of the country's surfaces and the people's doings; that he should be so

> instructed as to be thoroughly clear what rivers, seas, plains, mountains, bush, harbours, railways, towns, villages, breakwaters, offices, steamboats and telegraphs are, and to be able to give examples from one's own knowledge, where they are and their use, so that it is safe to teach him by induction, the idea of others which he has not seen.[9]

Always conscious of his professional isolation van Asch endeavoured to keep abreast of latest developments through correspondence with his contemporories in Britain and on the continent, and through subscriptions to publications such as "Organ der Taubstummen Anstalten in Deutschland", a German periodical. He enclosed the report of an important conference on the deaf (The Milan Conference held between 6-11 September 1880) with his third annual report to the Minister of Education. The conference declared the oral method to be superior in all respects to the sign method for the education and instruction of the deaf and dumb. Not only was the oral method seen as superior, but the simultaneous use of speech and signs was seen to be detrimental to the acquisition of speech lipreading and to the acquisition of ideas. The most favourable age for admitting a deaf child to school was declared to be between eight and ten years. At least seven years of education was seen as desirable for the deaf child. The maximum number of day children who could be taught by one teacher using the oral method was deemed to be ten children. The congress, endorsing as it did van Asch's own views on the education of the deaf, was widely reported by him.

By 1883 the roll at Sumner had increased to thirty-one pupils. Two assistant teachers were employed, but van Asch

---

9. AJHR., 1882. E4. Page 1.

considered this inadequate, quoting the Milan Conference declarations to support his case for a further assistant. Not content however, to focus all his attention on the thirty-one pupils enrolled, van Asch lamented the fact that there were more deaf children in the colony than those receiving the benefits of an oral education. According to Census figures taken in 1881 (Appendix B) there was a total of seventy-two children under the age of twenty years - many more than the number enrolled at Sumner. Lack of funds could not have prevented the parents of these children from seeking education. Although the government charged £40 per year, this fee was more often than not reduced or waived altogether, so that all who sought help were admitted to the institution, whatever their circumstances. One can only suppose that, apart from very remote areas where there was no knowledge of the institution, those not admitted were withheld by parents unwilling to part with their handicapped children. Undoubtedly there were many (perhaps as many as half the deaf children in the colony) not being educated by van Asch. The numbers of deaf children entering the institution at Sumner however began to present van Asch with a further problem. Accommodation became taxed to the limit. Up until 1884 three detached houses had been used for accommodation. A separate schoolroom was also used. In 1885 it was found necessary to rent a fourth house. Leases on the original three houses were due to expire in 1886. Van Asch urged the authorities to find more suitable accommodation for the expanding school.

At about this time, the gentleman who had leased Beach Glen to the Government (Mr C.L.Wiggins) offered to lease larger

premises known as "Sumner College". The lease was set for a period of five years at a rental of £360 per annum. Van Asch was not altogether happy with the prospect of crowding large numbers of deaf children of both sexes under one roof, but lack of suitable alternatives forced him to waive objections. On many occasions he had expressed a wish that the Government purchase land and buildings closer to Christchurch so that pupils could be closer to factories, and thereby have an opportunity to learn trades. The Government had decided to buy land at Riccarton but rescinded this proposal in 1885. With the leasing of "Sumner College" van Asch appears to have accepted the inevitable fact that his future was to be in the Sumner Valley.

On 1 January 1886 all the girls and the small boys moved into Sumner College. Twelve of the older boys and two assistant masters continued to occupy a house some distance away. This arrangement was later reversed and by 1892 the girls had returned to Beach Glen, all the boys having moved to Sumner College (later to be renamed Boys' House). Sumner College was a five year old two storied building, containing two bathrooms, seventeen bedrooms, a dining room, four sitting rooms, four schoolrooms and a kitchen area. Surrounding the college was 5.5 hectares of land. 3.2 hectares of the land was attached to the Institution proper. There were also some roads included in the land leased by the Government. In addition, van Asch himself rented privately from Mr Wiggins approximately 2 hectares.

With the question of accommodation resolved, van Asch turned his attention to educational problems surfacing in the school. Of particular concern was the increasing number of children with

below average mental capacity enrolling at the Sumner Institution. Most were given a trial. Van Asch seems sensitive to their plight when he writes in 1887:

> In the case of the two or three children in the institution whose mental capacity is much below the average it is impossible to get more than a fair result, but the training should, for all that, not be regarded as of little value to them, for the personal and careful attention which they, with the rest, daily receive has a most humanising effect upon their whole being. Appropriate training sets in vibration the mechanism of such children's torpid minds, strengthens and directs their will, and assuredly saves them from a life-long condition of utter ignorance and melancholy stupor. But for such a process of mental exercise their being trained to perform any kind of bodily labour would be much more difficult, if not altogether hopeless. The teaching of very slow children, in a young institution like ours, has other advantages not to be forgotten. It involves increased care and self-control on the part of the young teachers. It affords them special opportunities to test their own teaching-powers, and makes them observant as to individual peculiarities. By having dull mutes in a class the master is forced to try various ways of improving them, and on some occasions, with distinct advantage to himself, discovers that want of success may be as much the result of his own ignorance or haste as of the tardy and peculiar nature of the child's intellect.[10]

A further trend was the increasing number of pupils who had lost their hearing after first acquiring speech. Van Asch asked: "Can it be that our changeable climate is somewhat severe on the organ of hearing?"[11] He believed this to be the case, being even more convinced in 1887 than he was in 1880 when he had first referred to it in his report to the Minister of Education. One hundred years later we accept that frequent virus attacks causing blockages in the eustachian tube (between the ear and the nose)

---

10. AJHR., 1887. E4. Page 1

11. Ibid.

build up pressure on the eardrum causing it to rupture. Frequent ruptures of this nature often cause impaired hearing. By 1892 van Asch was able to outline in greater detail his findings in this area. Using a simple formula, he showed that of the forty-one pupils on the roll, fifteen had actually at least half their hearing, twelve had some degree of hearing, and the remaining fourteen were totally deaf. (Appendix C). This large percentage of partially deaf children was not peculiar to New Zealand but could be found in most deaf-mute schools in countries with a damp or variable climate.[12] Today it is acknowledged that there are two types of deafness: conductive deafness (i.e. some mechanical block in the hearing path) and perceptive or nerve deafness (i.e. damage or failure to develop of the tissues of the organ of Conti). Conductive deafness may be caused by wax in the ear canal, fluid in the middle ear, inflammation or abscess in the ear (otitis media), perforation of the eardrum, scarring or adhesions or new bone formation, so that movement in the ear is restricted. Many partially deaf pupils (such as those referred to by van Asch) suffered from conductive deafness. Perceptive deafness, on the other hand, is caused by the failure to develop the organ of Conti (or auditory nerve) due to hereditry causes, damage from the rubella virus or damage to the auditory nerve by meningitis. The observations of van Asch in this area of causation indicates his perceptiveness in matters relating to deafness.

In 1886 a report on state education in Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Belgium and the United States of America, including a special report on deaf-mute instruction was presented to parliament. The report, undertaken by R.Laishley,

---

12. AJHR., 1893. E - 4, Page 2

made several suggestions on ways to improve deaf education in New Zealand.[13] Compulsory education for the deaf was seen as essential. It was also suggested that the central boarding school at Sumner be closed and mixed day schools using the pure oral method be established in each large centre of population, which could contribute six deaf-mute pupils. These day schools would be under the same roof as the ordinary school but in a separate room. Each class should have a specially trained female teacher and when the number of pupils reached ten, an assistant would be appointed. Where the parents of a child did not reside in such a centre of population arrangements should be made to obtain board, at a suitable private home where no other deaf-mute resided. If this was not possible the teacher could receive the pupil in her own home and be given an allowance for board. To oversee the various classes around the country, a competent expert, such as Mr van Asch, should be engaged to act as superintendent of the network of day schools, using his time to train teachers, visit schools, examine and inspect classes and report regularly to the Minister of Education. In order to implement the scheme it was suggested that in the first instance, a group of specially trained teachers be brought out from England. The programme to be followed at these schools would be similar to that at Sumner, but drill and gymnastics would also be taught and kindergarten exercises would be given to young children. It was felt that as far as was practical, general education provision should be adopted with regard to religious instruction, medical supervision, protection of children, local government teachers, subjects of instruction, scholarships and certificates of proficiency, and

13. Laishley, R. Report upon State Education in Great Britain... including a special report on deaf-mute instruction. (N.Z.). Parliament Journals. Appendix to the Journals E.12, 1886).

Gerrit and Emmeline van Asch, 1895

holidays and recesses. Overall it was felt that it would be of great benefit to the deaf children if they could practise speech with normal people and live in a normal environment rather than in an institution. Further, it would go some way to reducing the very large cost associated with such an institution - the education of each pupil costing approximately £86.4.1 in 1886 with only £9.6.5 on average being recovered from the family. Had these very far reaching measures been adopted the course of deaf education in New Zealand may well have been very different. The report evidently found no favour with van Asch, for it was not implemented and none of the suggestions were acted upon in the wake of the report.

In matters relating to the management of the institution however, van Asch began to experience problems. Each year the expenditure of the school had risen sharply until in 1889 van Asch's salary and his payment from the Government for the board of pupils were suddenly reduced without official explanation.[14] The great expense of this institution (which reached £3633.0.3 in 1890) was questioned in parliament.[15] A period of retrenchment was being experienced by other branches of the Education Department, and the use of large sums of money to educate a small number of pupils (42 in 1890) was criticised by those who wanted a greater share of the education vote.[16]

---

14. AJHR., 1889, E - 4, Page 1.

15. NZPD., 1890, Volume 69, Page 442.

16. A.G. Butchers, Education in New Zealand. Dunedin, Coulls, Somerville, Wilkie, 1932, Page 79.

It was not only from outside the institution that questions about van Asch's management were asked. Within the institution, increasing disquiet was felt with the administration of deaf education. On 14 July 1892 van Asch discovered that definite charges were to be laid against him by a teacher at the school, Mr Herbert Edwin Crofts. The charges related to financial mismanagement, forcing students to do menial tasks and harsh discipline. Although the court did not uphold these charges, finding in favour of the director,[17] a Department of Education Commission of Inquiry was convened to investigate all aspects of the conduct of the school.[18] The Commissioners appointed, Herbert William Brabant, resident magistrate, and J. Veel Colbourne-Veel M.A. secretary to the Education Board of North Canterbury met at the School for Deaf-Mutes from 25 October to 4 November 1892. In all, five main charges had been made against van Asch, namely:

1. That the Director of the institution and his daughter had received private pupils without the sanction of the Education Department.
2. That the boys in the institution were employed to do farm work and other work for the Director's private benefit and that far more attention was paid to the house and garden than to their education. As well, the boys were worked too hard.
3. That the Director contracted with the Government for the board of the children and that he had at times supplied improper food.
4. That no provision was made for teaching trades despite the fact that the prospectus of 1880 had listed this as an object of the institution.
5. That while the total to the Government for each

---

17. AJHR., 1892, E - 4A, Page 1.

18. NZPD., 1892, Volume 78, Page 263.

> pupil was about £80 per annum, no commensurate results were obtained for the large expenditure incurred.

On the first charge van Asch did not deny that he had private pupils. Most of these private pupils lived at van Asch's house, receiving extra attention. For this the pupils' parents paid between £20 and £60 extra per annum. Some of these private pupils were taught at times by van Asch's two daughters, Miss Annie van Asch, and Miss Catherine van Asch. In all, van Asch received £180 over and above his salary of £600. He argued that he thought he was entitled to enter into such arrangements with private pupils. It was the opinion of the Commission however, that the system of taking private pupils was radically wrong and should be discontinued immediately. It was felt to be incongruous that he should accept payment from the Government for the training of deaf children and also receive direct remuneration from parents.

On the second charge it was not found that the boys were worked too hard. Although it was felt that some tasks were not suitable for the boys to undertake, eg. housework such as scrubing floors and washing clothes, the Commission felt that much more attention could, in fact, be given to the gardening and farming operations - the garden, in particular, showing that no great amount of care had been bestowed on it. It was also recommended that the future employment of the boys, both in and out of school, should be governed by regulations drawn up by the Education Department.

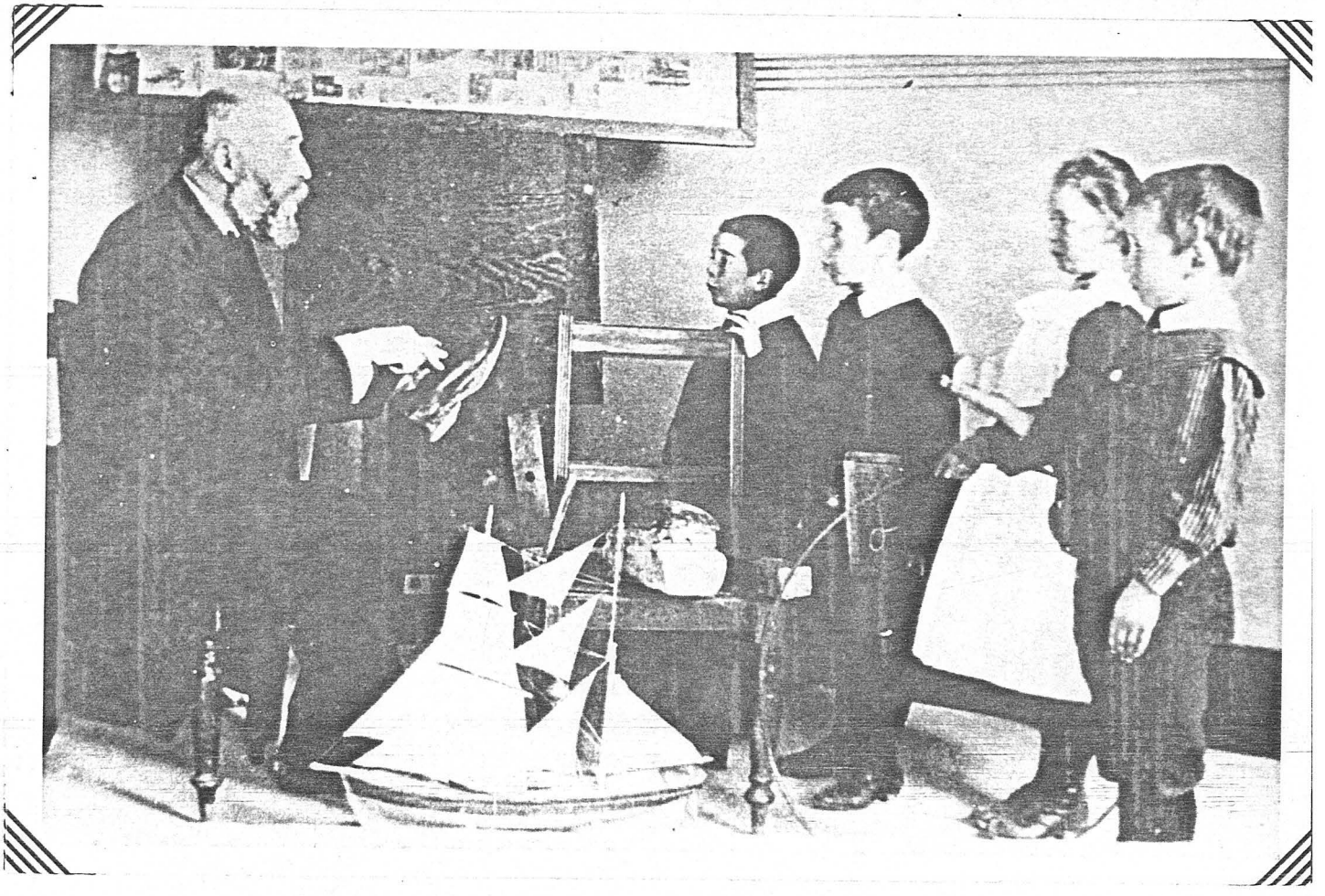
As to the third charge, that of allegedly supplying improper food, it was found that, for a time in 1891, salted mutton from van Asch's own farm (a property at Lincoln supervised by his son)

was a staple part of the diet. Complaints were made by the teachers about the lack of variety of meat and the lack of sufficient vegetables. Van Asch however, had by the time of the Commission of Inquiry in 1892, given notice that he no longer wished to contract for the board of the pupils, and the Government had to accept his notice to relinquish this task. One of the assistant teachers, Mr Ted Stevens (later to become the second director) had complained about the food and spoken to Mr Crofts, "with a view to (Crofts) taking him as a boarder into (his) private home."[19] Stevens was in a difficult position at the inquiry as he was courting van Asch's third daughter, Elsie. Nevertheless he spoke up about lack of variety of the food and his objections to having been served salted mutton over a period of several weeks.

The fourth charge was that no attempt had been made to teach trades, even though this had been an objective laid down in the prospectus. To be fair, van Asch lamented, on numerous occasions, the fact that he had no facilities to teach trades. However, he felt that his first duty was to teach the children to speak, not to teach them a trade. He had refused to allow a boy to learn milking on the grounds that a learner practising on his cow might injure the cow. The Commission strongly recommended that a site be chosen for a permanent school near a large town or railway station so that trades could be learnt. Farming should also be taught on land attached to the school. Girls should be taught

---

19. Commission of Inquiry into the Management of the Sumner Institution for Deaf-Mutes. National Archives Le/1/1893/113. Page 59.



A Language Lesson: Gerrit van Asch teaches the sound 'b'

sewing, cutting out, cooking and laundry work.

The main charge against van Asch was that "no commensurate results have been obtained for the large expenditure on the institution amounting to about £80 per annum for each child."[20] Whilst the commission felt that the amount of £80 was large, it was also of the opinionthat the cost per head of a boarding school education must be more than in the case of an ordinary school. That some parents of means were prepared to pay even more than £80 to send their children overseas (eg. to Melbourne to a school using the manual method) suggested to the Commission that those parents must consider the education worth the money. The Commissioners felt however, that by careful management it would be possible to reduce the cost per head. This question of results obtained however, was taken by the Commissioners to encompass a far wider concept - that of the ability of the Director, the quality of the education and the management of the school generally.

As to the director's competency and the education given at the institution the commissioners were of two minds on these important issues. Whilst they found parents grateful for the benefits gained by their deaf children, the commissioners themselves were not so enthusiastic about the standard of the children's education. They found some of the children very difficult to understand when one was unaccustomed to the speech of the deaf. After hearing all the evidence they expressed the

---

20. Report on School for Deaf-Mutes, AJHR., 1893. E - 4A. Page 2.

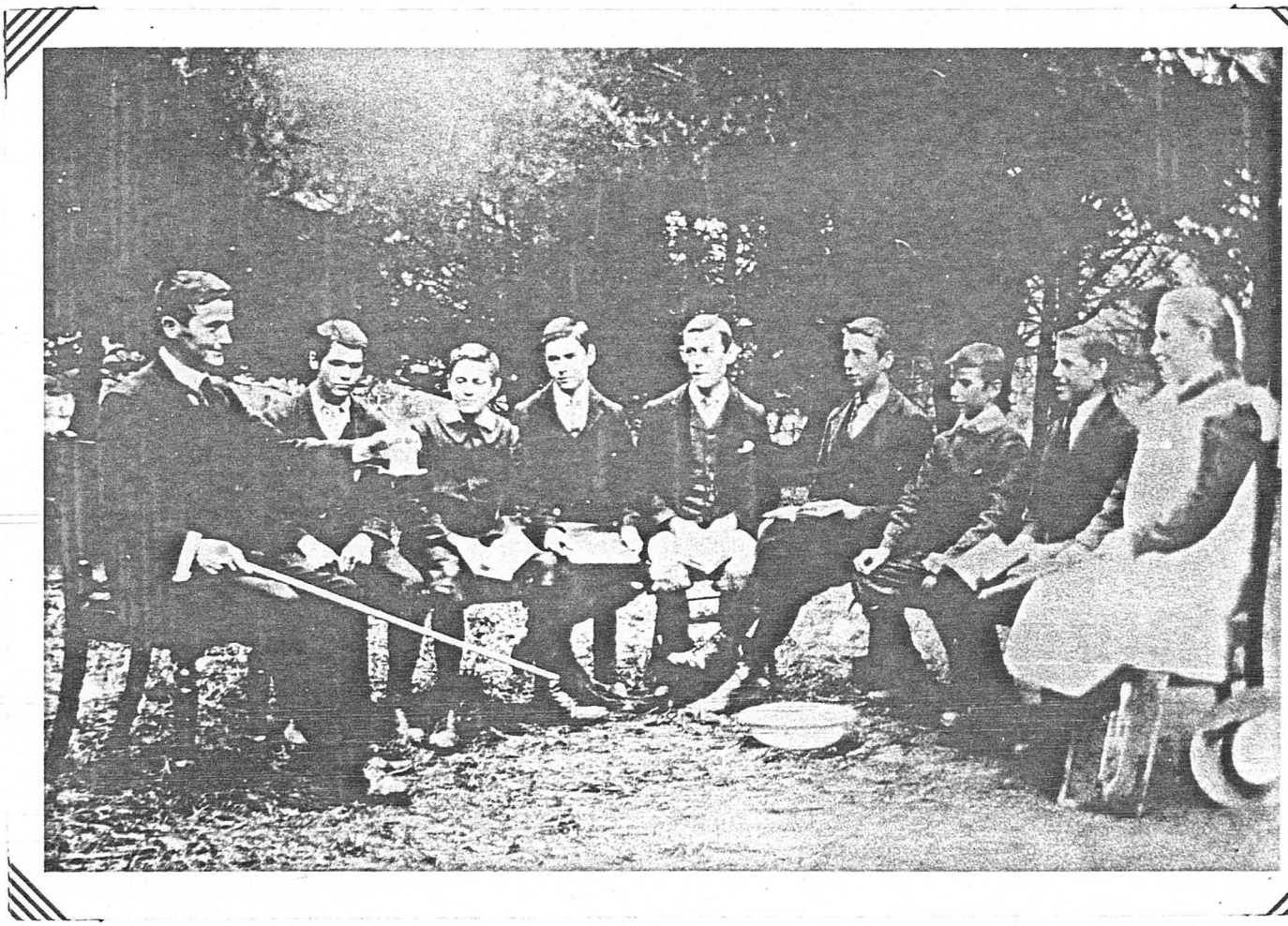
thought that they may have expected too much, but were still not satisfied that as much was being done by the teachers, in the area of articulation, as was possible. The Commission was not alone in its uneasiness about the standard of articulation. As early as 1885 W.J. Habens (Inspector-General) had expressed reservations about the standard of articulation being achieved.[21] It must be remembered that much was expected of van Asch at a time when he was constantly being called upon to defend his methods. He was however, a very highly paid public servant with the reputation of being an expert in his field. Without modern amplification equipment van Asch's task would have been extremely difficult. Van Asch himself was forced to state during the inquiry, "It is impossible to make deaf children articulate as clearly as hearing children can. That is a physical impossibilty."[22]

Overall the Commission expressed itself reasonably satisfied with the education offered at the institution. They were not however, at all satisfied with the general management of the enterprise. It was found that no proper record had ever been kept of admissions and discharges, of parentage of the chidren, address, state of health, promotion from class to class, or reasons for promotion. The main body of the register supplied had never been used although some rough incomplete notes had been made in an index. No progress records were kept of pupils. Arrangements made by van Asch for the supervision of pupils were questioned,

---

21. AJHR., 1885. E - 4. Page 4

22. Commission of Inquiry. Page 74.



A Science Lesson taken by Mr Stevens, 1902

eg. a young female was in charge of the main building, Sumner College, at night and this was thought to be a most unsuitable arrangement.

In dealing with the technical and practical education of the children, the Commission found that these had not been sufficiently attended to. It was pointed out that the Government had undertaken to give this type of education and it was felt that van Asch should determine the occupational interests and capabilities of each child and act accordingly. It was also felt that drill, gymnastics and ordinary games should be taught to the children. On balance therefore, the Commission was critical of the education available at the Institution for Deaf-Mutes, although it conceded that the task of teaching deaf-mutes was a most difficult one.

As an innovator van Asch had given satisfaction but it was in the area of administration that problems arose. Crofts (the teacher who had first complained to the department about the education being offered at Sumner) was an experienced teacher by the time he was asked to leave Sumner by van Asch in 1892. He had started teaching at the institution in 1884, one year before John Charles Allan, who had been promoted to first assistant ahead of Crofts (even though Crofts had received a higher salary than Allan and had been in charge during van Asch's frequent absences from the school). Crofts had visited leading institutions overseas in 1888 in an endeavour to further his knowledge of deaf education. He was praised by van Asch in 1886 for his co-operation and willingness to promote the welfare of pupils in

every way. During the Commission of Inquiry, Crofts had reported how he had been asked to give evidence in England before the Royal Commission on Blind, Deaf and Dumb, concerning education of the deaf in New Zealand. The evidence he gave was sent to New Zealand and completely revised by van Asch. When he (Crofts) had offered suggestions to van Asch during his later teaching years he reported he had been told to "mind his own business". The possibility of professional jealousy on van Asch's part cannot be denied. Again, personal animosity by Crofts in being passed over for promotion was evident. Van Asch's position as director was a most favourable one in all respects. Even world authorities such as Mr St John Ackers (of London) had reportedly commented that "They would like to be in (van Asch's) shoes".[23] Accordingly van Asch had everything to lose if it were shown that he had been professionally negligent. The fact that he received up to £180 in total for private boarders each year over and above his handsome salary of £600 and that his own farm had supplied the salted beef complained of, could have been most damaging to his credibility. His skill as an educator however, overcame the potentially damaging predicament he found himself in.

Following the inquiry applications were called for a steward and matron to control the boarding establishment. In January 1893 Henry Buttle, a farmer from Waikato and his wife were appointed. Mrs Buttle had tqught at Sumner for two years from 1882 - 1884 before her marriage. Relieved of all but educational

---

23. Commission of Inquiry, Page 67.

duties van Asch was now able to concentrate his attention on the task of educating the growing number of deaf-mutes - by 1895 the number having reached 45.

School began for these children at 9 o'clock continuing through until 4.00pm. with a break for lunch from 12-2.00pm. On Wednesday afternoons the boys did gardening and the girls sewing. On Thursday afternoons some of the older children did drawing. After school they played marbles, football or tennis. Sometimes a skipping rope was made of flax. A magic lantern was used on several occasions. Long walks were often taken. Cricket was thought to be too dangerous for deaf children. The children in 1892 were divided into ability groups and taken by the teachers in rotation. Each teacher took a room containing two classes for one week, then moved to the next room to take each classroom in succession. One can only wonder at the rational behind such a curious system, but it was still in vogue, with some modifications in 1897. Occasionally van Asch took one of these classes in rotation. From 1880 - 1889 he had taught some of the children in the school, but from 1890 onwards he reduced the number of hours he taught in the classroom - spending his time supervising teachers (of which there were four in number - Allan, Crofts, Stevens and Miss van Asch). It had been alleged by Crofts at the Commission of Inquiry that according to records kept by him, van Asch was away from the school altogether for a total of 110 hours out of a period of 270 hours. Be this as it may (and no direct reference was made to this allegation in the Commission's report) van Asch was interested in the education of the younger children,

often taking the beginners for articulation exercises. One difficulty with van Asch's arrangement of classes was that during one week a teacher might have seven children in her class, and the next week as many as eighteen children. Whilst lip-reading was taught the whole time, lessons were also given in writing, reading, arithmetric, geography, elementary science and drawing. Drill and calisthenics were introduced in 1897. Technical education, consisting of gardening, milking cows, sewing and elementary woodwork were begun after the Inquiry. Scripture lessons, published by the American Society for the Deaf and Dumb were also given. On Sundays the children went for walks or read.[24] Trips were also taken to such places as the Agricultural Show and Lyttleton Harbour. A six week holiday was taken at Christmas and two weeks were taken during the winter. Van Asch preferred to have all new admissions arrive at the beginning of the year so that all could be taken through the same exercises for the first year. The emphasis moved from articulation exercises to language acquistion in the second year.

Whilst many visitors came to view the work at the institution, only the Inspector-General or his appointed representative were permitted to enter the classroom as of right. There was no local superintendent or authority above van Asch. All other visitors, including parents, were shown over the institution and then allowed to observe the method used via a demonstration in a

---

24. A copy of the 'Graphic' was available, for example.

front room set aside for this purpose.[25]

Pupil numbers continued to climb gradually during the 1890's although van Asch often lamented the fact that children were admitted too late, or not admitted at all. He was also critical of parents who withdrew their children before the child had benefitted fully from the training available. Commenting on a parent who had kept a fourteen year old at home against van Asch's wishes, he complained, "the combined efforts of the State and the school may be defeated by such unwise acts on the part of the parent."[26] He believed the younger children should be separated from the older ones, so that the younger children would be less influenced by the older ones and so the older ones could live with normal families.

When time permitted van Asch visited families with young deaf children to advise them on the handling of their children. His advice was to teach the child to walk upright, to run and hop, to throw and catch a ball, to lace up a boot, carry a glass of water etc. As well the deaf child should be encouraged to blow up a paper bag or a bladder and to have access to a slate and pencil. It was often found by van Asch that young deaf children were over-protected - a situation he viewed disapprovingly.

> A deaf child of four, five or six years of age ought to be at play as much as possible in the open air. He ought to be looking at milking, at gardening, at operations in the work-shop, in the kitchen, in the wash-house etc. He should be allowed to pull a flower, feed the fowls, handle a duster

---

25. Commission of Inquiry, Page 75.

26. AJHR., 1895, E - 4. Page 2.

> or a brush, bring tools, wash his face and hands - in short he ought to be treated as an ordinary child of sense; for be it remembered, instead of getting knowledge through hearing other people talk, sing or read, his only source of acquiring a smattering of information is by watching and imitating the sensible action of others.[27]

Even after the turn of the century much public ignorance and suspicion surrounded the deaf and their needs. Van Asch chided antiquated medical practitioners who encouraged families to hold out false hopes with regard to the eventual recovery of the deaf child's hearing. These men tended to encourage the children to go to the local village school rather than the Institution for Deaf-Mutes. Only after the child had experienced repeated failure were they sent to van Asch. Many of these children were what van Asch termed "dull hearers" - children who had some residual hearing. They usually made favourable progress at Sumner, especially if they were of average or above average intelligence. By 1904 he had devised a scheme whereby six of the dull hearers were boarded out with families so that they could converse regularly with hearing people. He felt this development pointed the way for the development at some time in the future of day schools for the deaf in the three other main centres of New Zealand.

Of great delight and satisfaction to van Asch were the visits of old pupils to the school. On his staff he had a woman specially directed to correspond with the old pupils, a service greatly appreciated by the pupils. In 1980 van Asch sent out

---

27. AJHR., 1895, E - 4. Page 3.

questionaires to the parents of ex-pupils in order to ascertain the employment they had gained and how well they had fitted into society. Most parents expressed satisfaction with the education received. A variety of jobs were being undertaken by the ex-pupils - gardening, fishing, farming, housekeeping being the most common. Other ex-pupils however, had gained employment as blacksmiths, dressmakers, shoemakers, tailors, linotypists, carpenters, cabinetmakers and jewellers. Van Asch advised the parents and friends of these children to speak to them constantly and to provide books and newspapers in order to enrich their lives. It seemed that although there was little trade training, the education at Sumner was offering the children opportunities to find a place for themselves as self-supporting members of the community.

By 1898 there were five teachers as well as van Asch at the school. Two of these teachers were uncertificated and three were certificated (having taught for five years under van Asch and shown themselves competent teachers of articulation). The work was often found to be arduous by applicants for positions. As well, those trained at Sumner could not move into other branches of education. Van Asch realised the demands made on his teachers when he wrote:

> The difficulties of the teacher of deaf-mutes are too great and too manifold, his work too special and too intellectual, and his task too noble and too gigantic (to be rewarded by his salary). His chief reward must flow from a deeper and purer source. The pleasing looks of his pupils, their innocent expressions of admiration for his zeal and power, their gratitude for his sympathy, their appreciation of his tact and talent to enter into their inward life - these are the real rewards; these are the substances which, in kind, repay him better than either gold or economics.[28]

---

28. AJHR., 1898, E - 4, Page 2.

He referred particularly to two teachers of merit, Mr Stevens (later to become his son-in-law and the second director) and Mr Allan, commending them for their great success in the art of teaching and training the deaf children and encouraging them to persevere in the study of the "deeply-hidden misfortune of deaf-mutism.[29] Six months later however, he dismissed Allan, his most experienced teacher. Allan had begun teaching in 1885 and with thirteen years of experience, he was van Asch's longest serving staff member. Despite having fewer years of service, he had been promoted ahead of Crofts in 1892. Although no reason for Allan's dismissal has been found, on 19 April 1899 van Asch attacked statements made by people implying that only the bright and intelligent applicants were admitted. Possibly Allan had been one of these critics. The vacancy created by his departure was filled by van Asch's son, Henry, then twenty-one years of age. Over the years all of van Asch's daughters - Emmeline, Catherine, Elsie and Annie - had taught at the school for varying lengths of time. Emmeline, the only daughter to remain unmarried, retired in 1906, having taught for a period of seventeen years.

By 1899 van Asch had reached the age of sixty-three years - his whole professional life having been spent in the teaching of deaf-mutes. In many respects he compared the work "to the pushing and dragging of a heavy load on an upward grade".[30] Two important

---

29. Ibid.

30. AJHR., 1901, E - 4, Page 2.

developments were still ahead of van Asch however - an increase in pupil numbers due to compulsory education for the deaf, and the construction of a large new building to house the school. In 1902 the Sumner Institution experienced a large influx of pupils due to the compulsory clause in the "School Attendance Act 1901".[31] This clause compelled parents to send their deaf children to a school for deaf-mutes.

In order to cope with the increased roll, plans were drawn up for a new large brick building to accommodate the children. A site of about four hectares at Riccarton had been purchased in 1890 but the decision to move to the site was indefinitely postponed the following year. In 1899 Boys' House (formerly known as Sumner College) was purchased by the Government together with five hectares of land. Up until this stage it had been leased. As well, additional land adjoining Boys' House was purchased, bringing the total land area to seven hectares. The sum of £4,933.6.3 was paid for the land and buildings. An epidemic of diptheria at the school in the first half of 1899 pointed to the

---

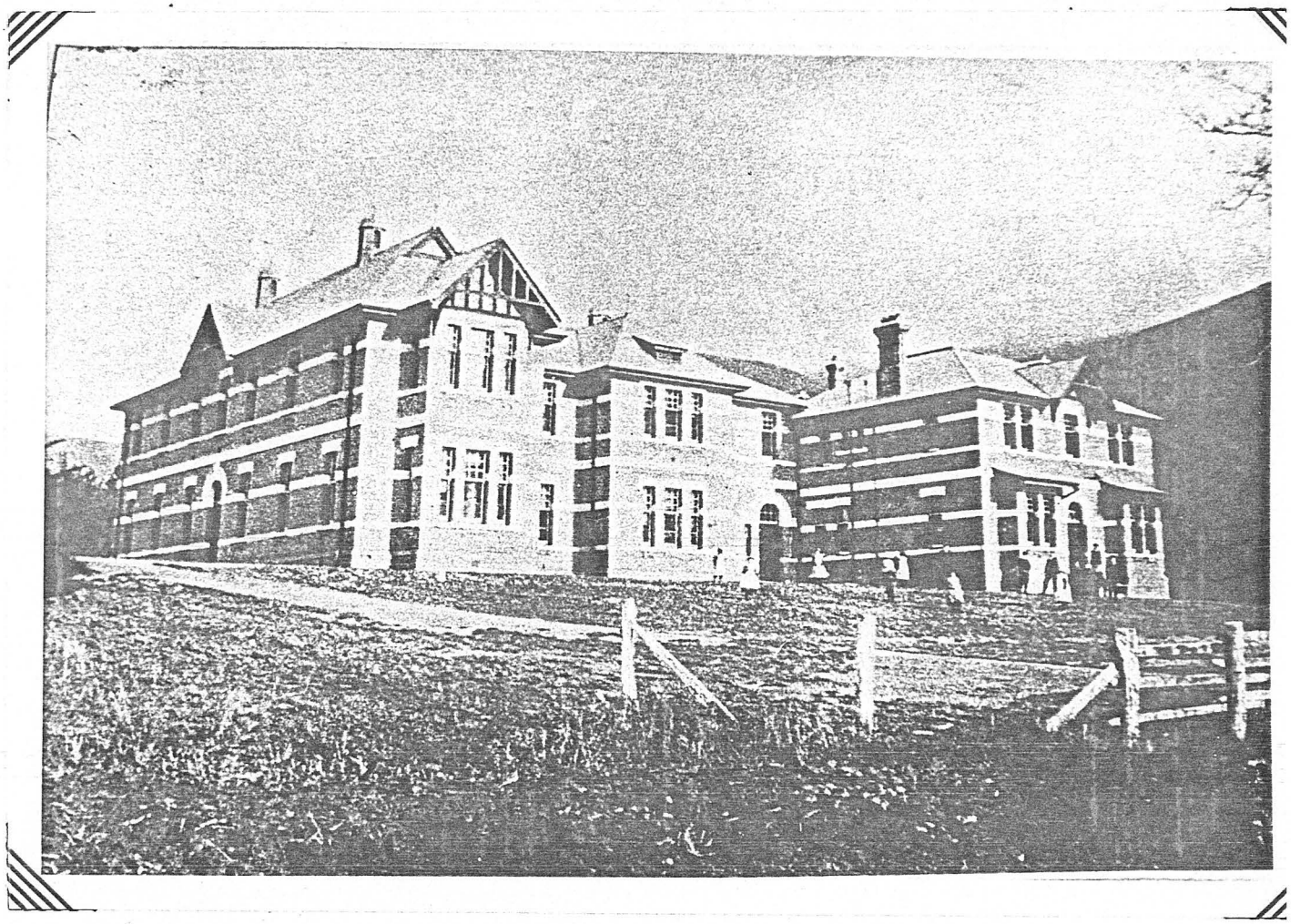
31. Clause 21: (1) School attendance Act 1901. It shall be the duty of the parent of any blind or deaf child between the ages of 7 and 16 to provide efficient and suitable education for such child.

(2) If the parent of such child is unable to do so (provide education themselves) he shall give notice to the Minister of his inability, and thereafter shall send the child to such institution for the education of blind or deaf children as the Minister may direct, and shall contribute to the cost of the maintenance and education thereat of the child as may be agreed between such parent and the Minister.

urgent need for new accommodation when faulty drainage was held responsible for causing the epidemic. Boarding facilities were taxed to the limit and any sickness had swept rapidly through the school over the years. (Appendix D). A new building was desperately needed on a high site, less prone to flooding and with better drainage. Van Asch was consulted regarding the plans. Five classrooms were to be built on the second floor to give air and light for lipreading. A girls' wing (and a boys' wing built later) were separated by the director's office and accommodation. Because of the fire danger the building was to be constructed of brick with Oamaru stone facings. The first stage (the girls' wing and the director's office and accommodation) was built at a cost of £14,604. The Main Building, as this impressive structure became known, was first occupied in February 1906. After labouring in leased accommodation for twenty-six years van Asch was robbed of the opportunity to enjoy the impressive quarters built for the director. On 21 September 1905 he wrote to the Minister of Education informing him of his wish to retire on 31 March 1906. Ill health during 1905 had forced the decision upon him. While the girls moved from Beach Glen to their new dormitories in the Main Building at the beginning of 1906, van Asch and his family moved to a two-storied house in Sumner which was to be his retirement home. In a letter to his son Gerrit, dated 4 February 1906, van Asch describes the "chaos and discomfort of the removal".[32] Beach Glen had been his home for 26 years.

---

32. Gerrit van Asch (sn)/Gerrit van Asch (jn) 4 February 1906. (Copy in possession of writer).



The Main Building 1904.

On 31 March, four months before his seventieth birthday, Gerrit van Asch retired as Director of the School for Deaf-Mutes. He had taught deaf children for a period of fifty-two years, having introduced the oral method into both England and New Zealand. The Inspector-General of Schools (Mr G. Hogben) wrote in his annual report to Parliament:

> It is twenty-six years since the institution was opened, with Mr van Asch in charge. During that time he has laboured assiduously and faithfully in the work of the institution, which is to render fit for ordinary society a whole community of unfortunate persons who, however great their natural ability, would, without skilled instruction, be quite undeveloped mentally. The colony was specially fortunate in having secured at the outset an expert who has not only done first-class work himself, but has trained a staff of teachers capable of carrying on the work so well begun. Mr van Asch's influence for good over his pupils did not end with the lessons in the classroom, or even when the pupils left the school for the work of life; they found in him not merely an able instructor, but a life-long friend. It is not much to say that they owe to Mr van Asch's faithful work the most valuable humanising influence with which they have come into contact.[33]

Van Asch travelled overseas on his retirement touring both the Continent and England. He died in England on 3 March 1908 and was buried in London.

---

33. AJHR., 1906, E - 4, Page 1.

CHAPTER 3

Growth and Innovation

Joseph Edward Stevens became director of the School for Deaf-Mutes on 1 April 1906. It is probable that Stevens was highly recommended for the position by van Asch. He was the longest serving staff member, besides being an extremely competent teacher of the deaf. To all his friends, relatives and colleagues he was known as 'Ted'.

Stevens was born at Campbelltown (later renamed Bluff). Both his parents were pioneer teachers of the Clyde school, moving there from Campbelltown in 1872. Besides teaching at the Clyde school for a period of 35 years, Mrs Stevens bore 14 children, ten of whom survived at the time of her death in 1934. Following his primary schooling at Clyde, Stevens won a junior scholarship in December 1881, a feat accomplished by only 1% of children who had passed the Std 6 examination. Such was his talent that he gained the highest marks in the Otago Junior Scholarship examination for that year.[1] He travelled to Dunedin Boys' High School (later renamed Otago Boys' High School) to take up the Scholarship in 1882. In December 1883 he was awarded a senior scholarship and he continued his high school studies until December 1886. Not only had Stevens demonstrated considerable talent by winning such prestigious awards but two other members of his family also won scholarships- "extremely high odds in such a select educational group"[2].

---

1. A total of 51 candidates sat for this examination in Dec. 1881. Stevens received 638 marks from a possible total of 750 over a wide range of subjects.

2. David McKenzie: Scholars & Mobility - An Account of the Operation of the Scholarship Scheme in Otago 1878-1889. The Australian & New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Vol. 17 No. 1. March 1981.

Joseph Edward Stevens

With two scholarships and five years of high schooling completed, career prospects for Stevens would have been very favourable. He chose teaching and applied for a position on the staff of the Institution for Deaf-Mutes at Sumner. At about this time teaching positions were becoming more difficult to procure in Otago. A few years earlier a great shortage of teachers had been experienced, but the position was different by the time Stevens sought a career. It is doubtful that a talented lad such as Stevens would have had great difficulty in securing a position in Otago however, since he also passed his Junior Civil Service Examination (1886) and his Matriculation Examination in 1886.[3]

In May at the age of 18 years he commenced his duties under van Asch at Sumner. Two years later (in 1889) while teaching at Sumner he passed his Senior Civil Examination.[4] By 1897 he had been promoted to the position of senior master. He courted Elsie, van Asch's third daughter for many years and was finally married by the Rev.C. A. Gosset on 30 March 1899 at the Sumner Anglican church. By the time of van Asch's retirement in 1906, Stevens' teaching career had spanned a period of nineteen years.

On assuming the directorship, Stevens was immediately called upon to cope with a staffing crisis. As well as van Asch's departure he was forced to contend with the resignations of Miss Emmeline van Asch (after 17 years teaching deaf children) and Mrs Annie Fisher (nee van Asch) who had taught the class of partially deaf children since 1902. The loss of three experienced teachers

---

3. Otago Education Report, 1895.

4. Ibid.

was felt severely by the school. To further complicate the serious staffing problem the roll of the school rose dramatically. This was partly due to Stevens' decision to lower the age of entry from seven years to six years. He initiated an active recruiting campaign, mindful of the fact that with such a large proportion of inexperienced teachers in his school, the standard of work would slip temporarily. This act of lowering the entry age however fully lived up to Stevens' expectations. A year later (1908) he outlined how he had found that:

> the vocal organs are more plastic in early life and consequently...articulation when taught...is more natural in tone and more pleasing to the ear.[5]

The lowering of the age of entry did not automatically guarantee that deaf children would be admitted at the optimum age. Year after year, in his annual reports, Stevens lamented the fact that many entrants, particularly those with some remnant of hearing were admitted too late and withdrawn too soon.

TABLE 1

Age of Children seeking admission to School for Deaf from 1906 - 1916

51 children	over 8 years of age
30 children	over 10 years of age
11 children	over 12 years of age
4 children	over 14 years of age
2 children	over 16 years of age

Source AJHR., 1916, E-4 Page 1.

In 1907 schooling was compulsory for deaf children from 6 years to 16 years, although children were permitted to attend beyond 16 years in several cases. Many parents however, still

---

5. AJHR., 1908. E-4, Page 2

Mr Longuet's Class 1908

preferred to keep their deaf children at home; this being the case particularly with parents of partially deaf children. The parents of these children usually sought medical advice and dubious remedies to help cure the deafness. Not until these failed to improve the child's hearing, and continued failure was being experienced at the local village schools, did parents seek admission to Sumner. When the child's speech improved parents were apt to think hearing had been restored and to question the child's continued placement at Sumner. Stevens quoted the advice of Dr Kerr Love, an eminent Glasgow aurist, concerning the deaf and attempts to cure their handicap:

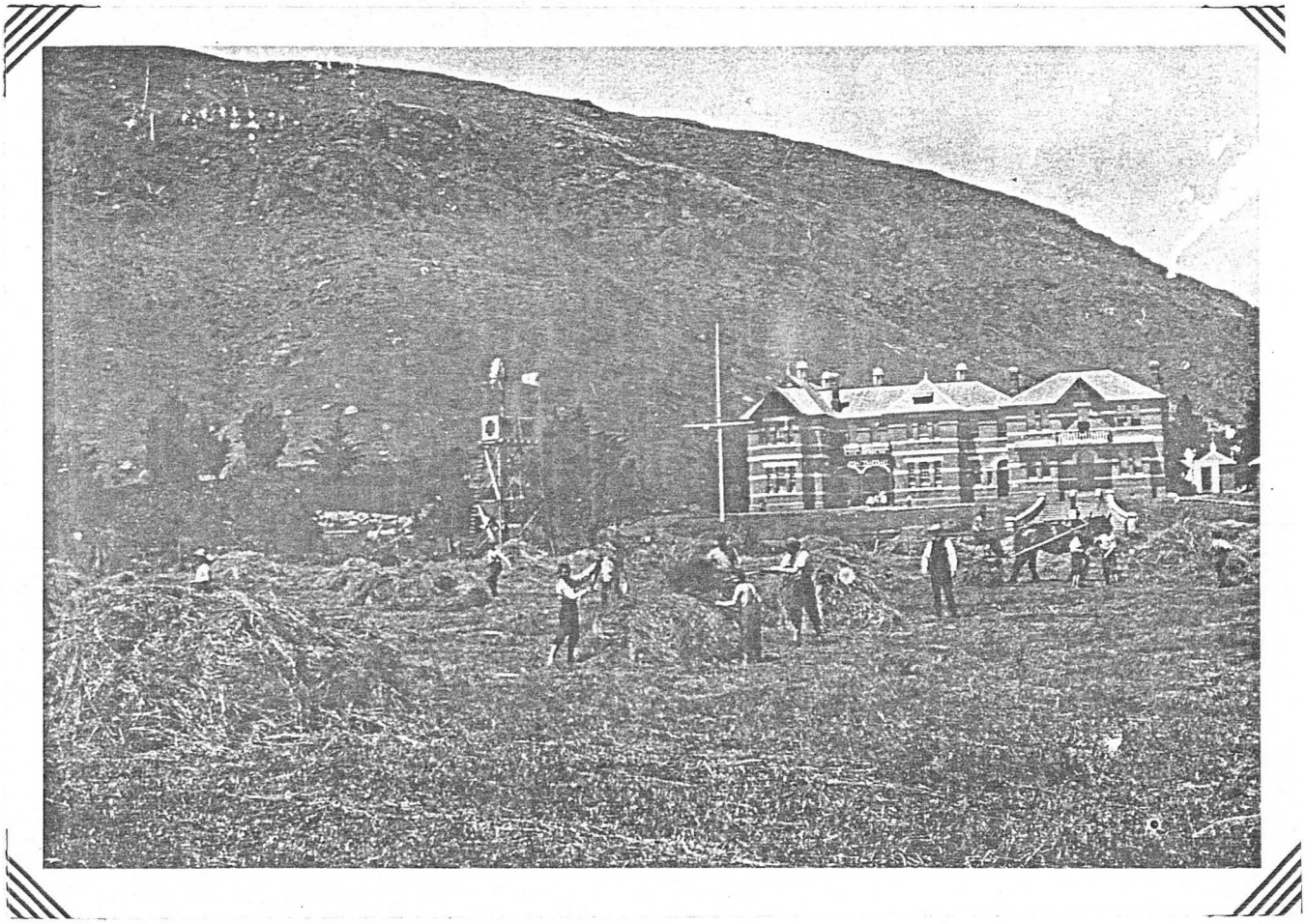
> If your child has been born deaf, or if illness has caused loss of hearing and speech, the hearing will never return. The exceptions to this statement are so few as to be not worth considering in thinking of the future of your child. The only thing to be done is to educate him.[6]

Stevens realised that part of the problem was the reluctance of parents to board their partially deaf children in a large institution such as that at Sumner. He concluded that some other educational provision was needed for this particular group of children.

From the earliest days of his directorship Stevens had also been admitting not only deaf and partially deaf pupils, but pupils who had speech defects or problems of stammering as well. As early as 1916 he realised that some form of help was needed for these children but other than admitting them to the School for the Deaf, no educational provisions existed for them. In 1917 he

---

6. AJHR., 1923, E-4, Page 7.



Trade Training - Haymaking 1912

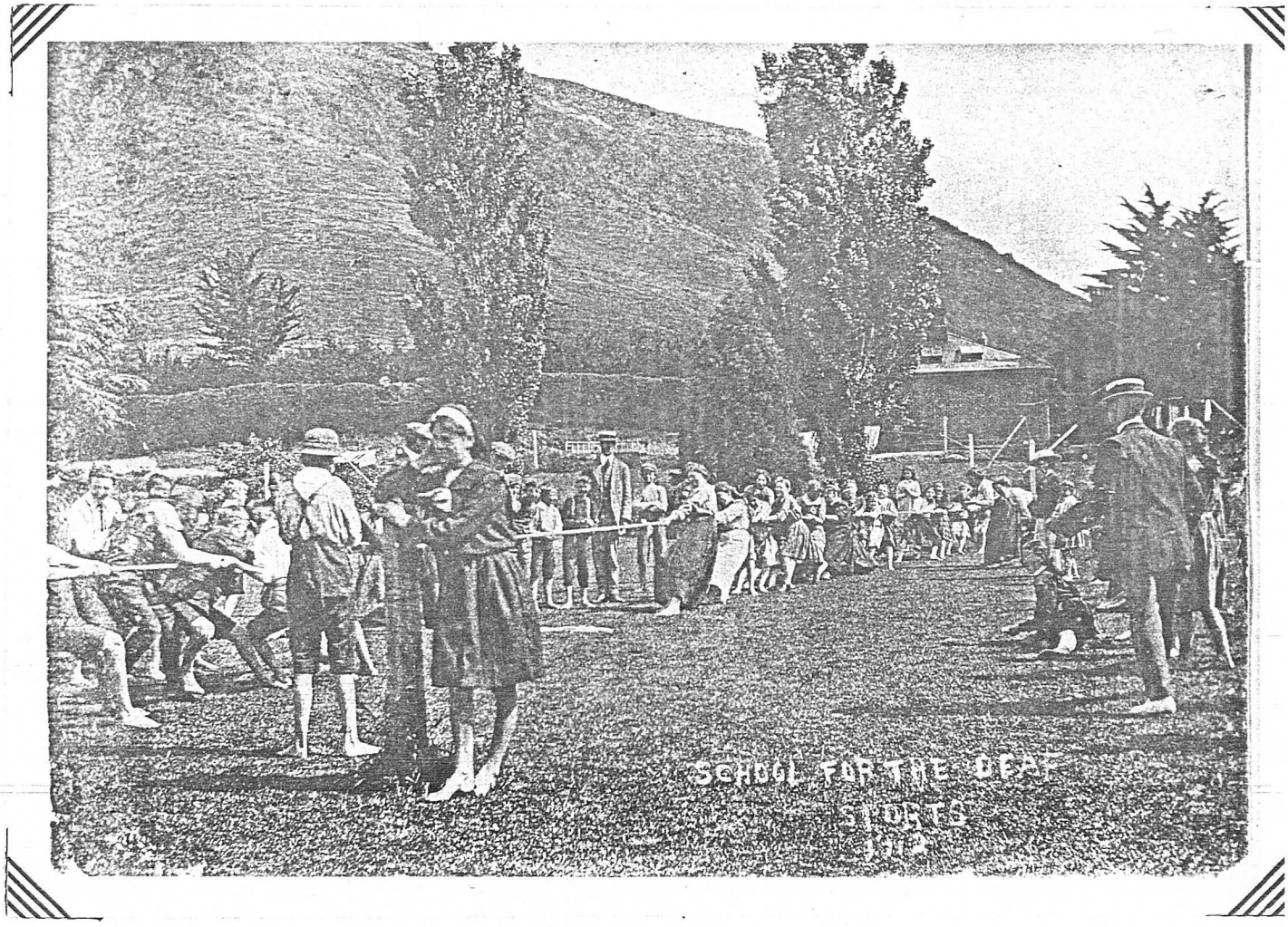
admitted into the school a small number of stammerers and speech defectives. Some boarded at the school and some were day pupils, living at home or with relatives or friends, in Christhcurch. In the main he undertook their training himself but at times he expected his teachers to accept this extra burden. By July 1919 he had persuaded the Department of Education to circularise the Secretaries of the Education Boards throughout New Zealand concerning cases for a proposed class for partially deaf and speech defective children. The Education Boards were requested to:

> send in a return showing the numbers, ages and standards of children in their cities and suburban schools; or known by the teachers of those schools to be living in the vicinity; who were:
>
> a. partially deaf or hard of hearing,
> b. stammerers,
> c. children who had lost their hearing after having learned to speak but whose speech had not yet disappeared,
> d. children with defective articulation not due to mental deficiency.[7]

The first official "Special Class for Speech" was started at the Thorndon Normal School, Wellington, in February 1920. Stevens was careful to send a very experienced teacher of the deaf to organise this class and liaise with various educational groups. In 1921 Auckland and Dunedin speech classes were started. All these classes were attended by children who were hard-of-hearing, children who had lost their hearing but not their speech, children with defective articulation and children who stammered. Adult deaf were taken for lipreading at evening classes. These speech classes allowed Stevens to send back home several partially

---

7. The Education & Training of Speech Therapists. Wellington, Department of Education, 1978.



Sports Day Sumner 1912

deaf children who had had to board at Sumner; a move which relieved the acute accommodation problems he was experiencing. By 1937 these speech classes had begun to evolve into speech clinics. For those children whose hearing was not impaired enough to warrant inclusion in a speech class, special help and consideration was sought by Stevens. He travelled through-out New Zealand lecturing to teachers and parents on the special conditions necessary for the education of the hard-of-hearing child in the normal classroom. On these trips away from Sumner he also tested deaf children and gave parent guidance.[8]

Stevens visited many schools in his search for children with speech defects and hearing problems. His neice, Mrs Cora Grant (née Stevens) recalls one visit made by her Uncle Ted to the Timaru Primary School in 1921. She was a Std 4 pupil. Her sister was in the same classroom. Stevens entered the classroom and commented, "I've got two little neices in here. Would they please come to the front of the class?" Mrs Grant recalls how he shook hands with them and asked them if they were being good little girls. He proceeded to give a talk to the class on speech therapy and "got a child who had a great stammer and had a pencil and he made him put his tongue out and he put the pencil on the back of his tongue and made him say 'ah'. He told him never to try and speak before he had opened his mouth widely."[9]

---

8. J.E.Stevens, Advice to Parents for the Home Treatment of Young Deaf Children. Wellington, Govt Printer 1917.
9. Mrs Cora Grant (née Stevens) interviewed Christchurch May 1981.

During these visits to schools Stevens chided teachers who refused to make concessions for hearing-impaired children in their classrooms. He repeatedly explained how important it was for children to sit at the front of the classroom in a good light.

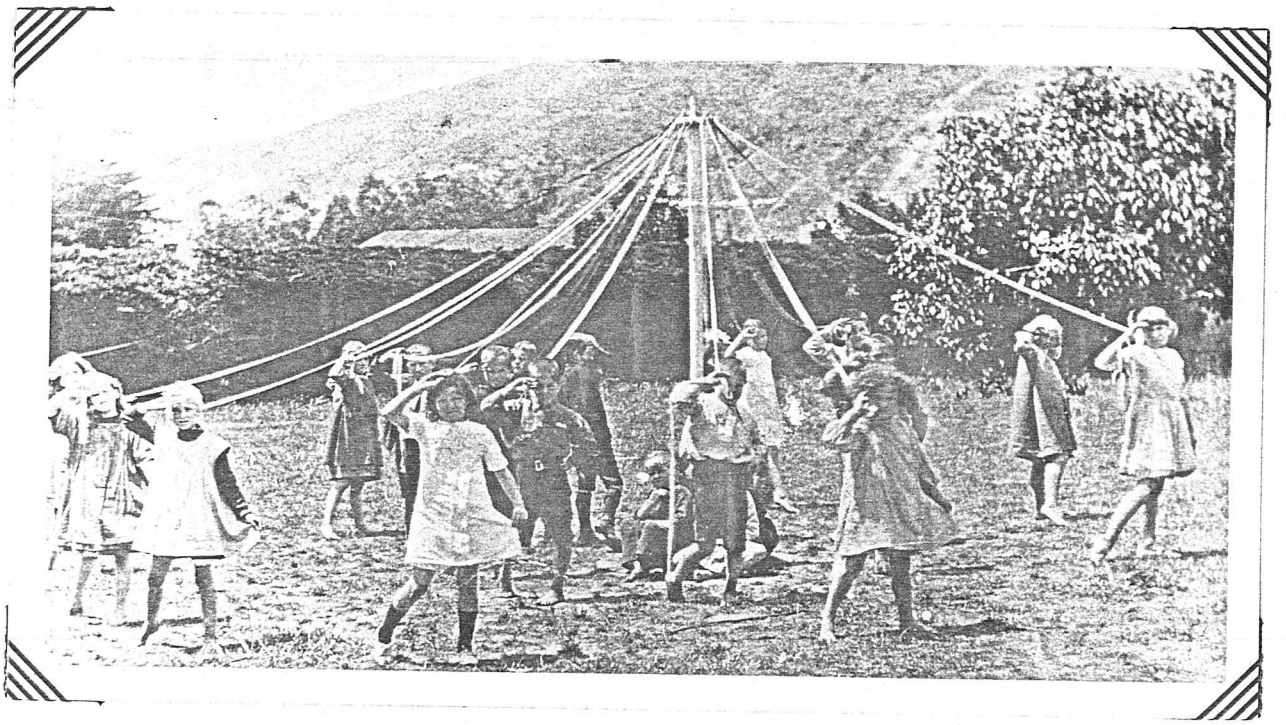
> The extent to which partial deafness interferes with education does not appear to be appreciated as much as it deserves especially by parents, who cannot without great difficulty be made to see that a child that cannot hear the ordinary tones of the voice at a distance of a few feet is quite incapable of being taught efficiently along with normal children under public-school conditions. It is astonishing too, how serious deafness may go undetected for years. By picking up a little skill in lipreading and by watching the faces and the movements of the teacher and the other pupils a clever deaf child may for a time keep up more or less with the others in the class. A duller child is likely to be set down as feeble-minded or punished for wilful disobedience. Continual discouragement, aggravated by the ridicule resulting from incorrect or absurd answers to imperfectly heard questions, together with the constant effort to catch amid the clatter of the class-room the words of the teacher, may set up a serious condition of nerve-strain and an aggravation of the defective hearing. The miseries of the partially deaf child may also be increased by defects in the enunciation of the teacher or in the accoustics of the classroom, and even a comparatively slight degree if deafness may thus become a tremendous hindrance to education.[10]

Many children who were assessed as slow or feeble-minded in normal classrooms turned out, on closer inspection, to be partially deaf and in need of specialist help. For the severely deaf early admission to Sumner was recommended.

One particular problem encountered in deaf children seeking admission to the School for the Deaf, was the unavailability of instruments to measure the intelligence of children. Stevens' inability to differentiate between feeble-minded children seeking admission and those who were non-lingual due to a deprived

---

10. AJHR., 1918, E-4, Page 12



Maypole Dancing at the School for Deaf (circa 1913)

Cutting Soap for the Laundry

background, caused him much anxiety. The Education Act of 1914 had sought to define those classes of handicapped children who were eligible for admission to Sumner.[11] In theory this was an admirable move, but without instruments to measure intelligence it proved to be difficult to attain. Parents would often try to enrol their non-lingual children at Sumner rather than other institutions, eg. Special Schools, as they felt less social stigma was attached to a deaf child.[12] Usually children were given a trial and the less able removed to another institution, eg. boys were transferred to Otekaike Special School.

A circular entitled "Advice to Parents for the Home Treatment of Young Deaf Children" was prepared by Stevens in 1917. In it he suggested methods which could be used by parents to help their deaf pre-schoolers:

> They should be taught from early infancy that the mouth is the organ of speech; and it is here that the opportunity of the mother rather than the teacher comes in. When a mother discovers her child to be deaf she should not on that account stop talking to him; on the contrary, she should talk to him, if anything, more than she would if the child could hear, and just as she would talk to him if he were a hearing baby. The other members of the family should do the same. The mother should direct the attention of the child to her mouth when speaking, and should avoid the use of signs and motions of the hands; she should use no more of these than she would to a hearing child; she should say over and over again to the little deaf child just the sort of things that mothers say to little hearing children. By constant repetition the child will gradually attach meaning to the movements he sees made by his mother's lips and may even make some attempts to speak himself.

---

11. Education Act, 1914. Clause 127 (1) This section of the Act specifically defined various classes of handicapped children.

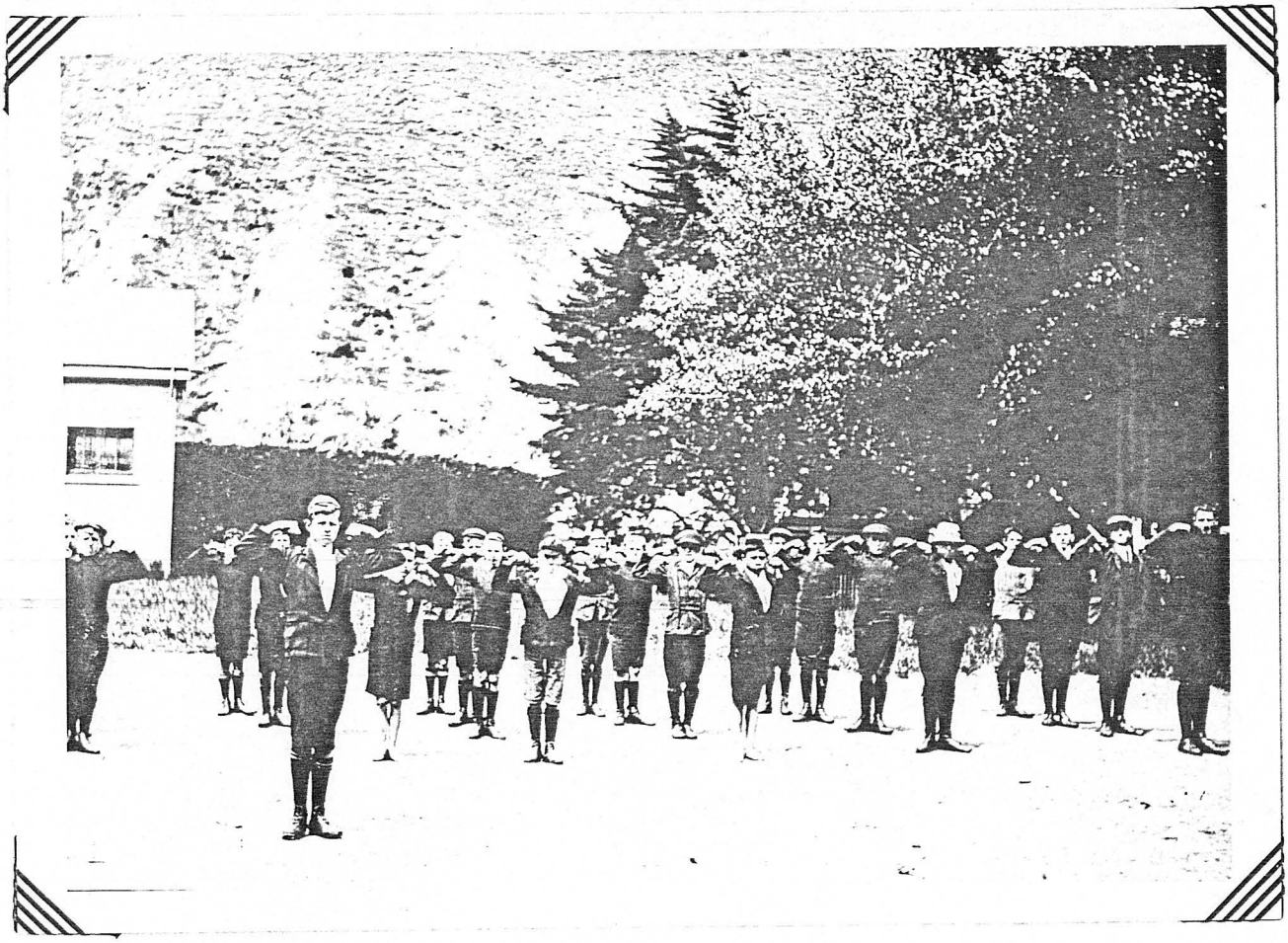
12. Miss Enid Chambers (daughter of the 4th principal) reports that this practice was evident even during the principalship of her father from 1930-1940. Interviewed Christchurch May 1981.

> The child should be encouraged to use his voice, to shout, to laugh and crow like other babies. He should not be checked even should the resulting sounds be harsh and unpleasant. Should he have any hearing every attempt should be made to develop this. This can be done by means of musical instruments, gramaphones, etc., or by the voice. The child's ears should never be shouted into; but the mother, with her mouth beside the child's ear and holding a mirror so that the child may see both her mouth and his own, should speak to it plainly and distinctly and let the child imitate what she says.
>
> As the child grows up his other senses should be trained by means of suitable occupations. The worst possible thing for a young deaf child is to have everything done for him. Being unable to talk he must be given something to think about or his mind will not grow with his body. His parents should try to interest him in his surroundings and early teach him to be useful. He should be taught to dress himself, to fold and put away his clothes, to hang them up, to sort out spoons and forks, to assist in laying the table, to feed the chicks, and to make himself useful in various little ways. He should not be kept too long at the same occupation, but as long as he is interested in it, it will usually be found profitable to continue it. Among other occupations that he may be likely to take pleasure in are sorting and threading coloured beads, playing with plasticine, folding or tearing paper, making paper boats, dressing dolls, playing with blocks, drawing with chalks or crayons, colouring pictures with crayons, copying writing, making pot-hooks or noughts and crosses on a slate, moving his tongue about before a glass, winding wool, playing shop, blowing soap-bubbles, gathering and arranging flowers etc. He should be encouraged to play with other children, provided that the latter do not tease or annoy him; his brothers and sisters will be his best teachers. His teeth should be attended to by a good dentist, and his general health should, of course, be taken care of.
>
> With careful and intelligent home training of the kind I have suggested, the mind of the young deaf child, instead of lying dormant during the years between infancy and school age, will grow in a natural way, and when the child does go to school the work of his teachers will be made easier and the results in the way of speech and general education will be much better than otherwise would have been the case.[13]

Based on present day knowledge of preschool guidance Stevens' advice to parents was most enlightened. His insistence on the

---

13. J.E. Stevens, Advice to Parents for the Home Treatment of Young Deaf Children. Wellington, Govt.Printer 1917.



Physical Education at Sumner 1913

need to develop independence, curiosity and perseverance in the young deaf child are felt to be equally important today. Emphasis placed on the role of the family by Stevens is valid, in the light of modern child care studies. In short, his advice would be as appropriate today as it was in 1917 when written.

Throughout his directorship Stevens actively encouraged all deaf children who were able, to live at home or board with friends and relatives near Sumner, rather than board in the institution. He felt large numbers of children should not be hoarded together with similarly handicapped children. He saw one of the chief difficulties of a large institution such as Sumner as being the tendency of the inmates "to adopt those peculiar habits of thought and of language that are known as deaf-mutisms, and which only constant intercourse and conversation with hearing persons will entirely remove".[14] This reference by Stevens to the institutionalisation of the deaf appears to be the first we have in New Zealand to the dangers inherent in employing this practice. For those pupils not able to attend as day pupils Stevens initiated a scheme of weekend, fortnightly or monthly visits home in 1910. Up until that time only Christmas and mid-year holidays were taken. The journeys home, usually without an escort, were felt to be of particular benefit to the deaf children, affording as they did, the opportunity of developing dependence, a wider range of language and new topics for discussion with friends and family. For

---

14. AJHR., 1908, E-4, Page 2

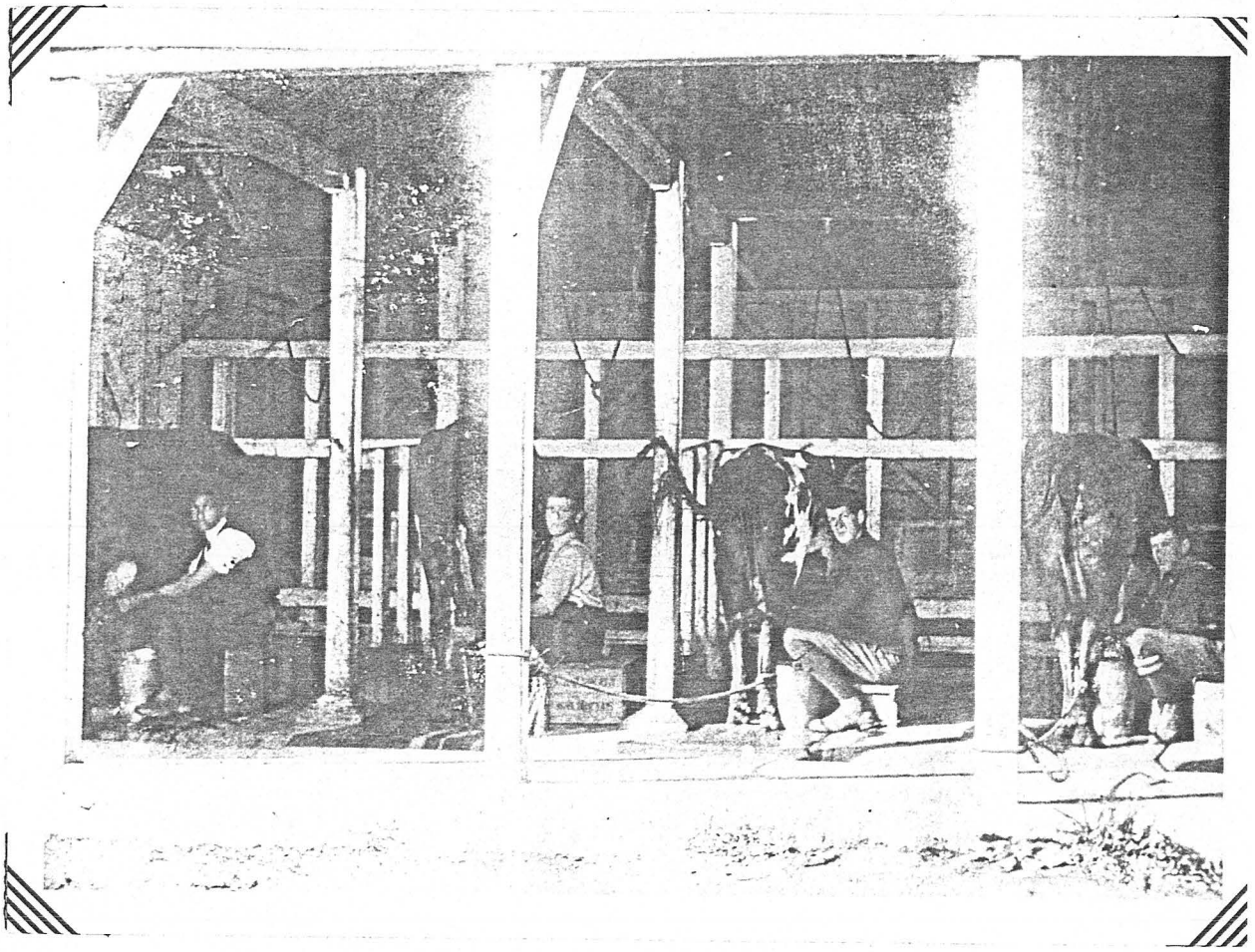
those who had no alternative but to board, a matron, assistant matron, teachers-in-residence and domestic staff undertook their care. The concept of a steward and matron had been abandoned in 1903, to be replaced by a matron and teachers-in-residence. For housemasters (and later housemistresses) the hours were long and the duties wide ranging. The Assistant Director of Education, Mr Caughly, outlined the duties to Stevens in 1917:

> A definite understanding should be made with reference to the services to be rendered by the domestic staff, to the Housemaster and his family. These duties should be confined to purely routine ones such as bedmaking and the weekly room cleaning. In regard to meals, it is to be a rule that except on special occasions, such as sickness, or stress of weather, meals should be taken with the children and at regular hours. At meals attention should be given to the training of the children in table manners and conversation. The housemaster is to be charged at the rate of £30 per annum for the board of his wife, but it is to have the board of his youngest child, if under five years, free and is to pay at the rate of £12 per annum for each other child up to the age of nine years, and thereafter £20 per annum. The Housemaster and his assistant should have the care of the boys at all times when they are not under the care of a day-teacher, and should be responsible at all times for their safety and good behaviour. The Housemasters should give their personal attention to the moral and physical training of the boys under their care. The wife of the Housemaster... is expected (to) interest herself generally in the welfare of the pupils."[15]

From his earliest days as director Stevens endeavoured to introduce a more varied, child-centred emphasis to the curriculum. Nature study and games were added to the children's school programme. Despite these additions Stevens rigorously endorsed van Asch's analytic methods. Those methods, stressing as they did the gradual development of language through the learning of isolated

---

15. Letter, Caughly/Stevens 30 July 1917. (Copy in possession of writer).



Trade Training: Milking 1914

sounds, the construction of sounds into words and the grouping of words into sentences were the cornerstone of the educational programme at the School for Deaf. To question this method of teaching the deaf, so it seemed, would be to question the basic philosophy of the institution since its inception.

On 5 September 1911, Dr Alexander Graham Bell visited the school accompanied by his wife who was deaf. Bell's mother had also been deaf and had been educated at home by the oral method, as there were no oral schools available in America at that time. Bell had developed an interest in the deaf and their problems and had taught visible speech (phonetics) in a school run by a Miss Hull. To this school came Mabel Hubbard for speech training. She was later to become his wife. By 1874 Bell had begun to transmit a few sounds on apparatus he had developed. The Bell Telephone Company was formed and Bell was awarded the Volta Prize in memory of the "Father of Electricity". The money from the prize was used to establish the Volta Bureau, an organisation for the dissemination of information concerning the deaf. Such was Bell's great influence in the area of deaf education over the years, that when a term was needed to name the unit of intensity in the scientific testing of hearing, the term 'decibel' was agreed on in memory of Bell's contribution to the aid of the deaf.

While Bell was not opposed to the use of silent methods (i.e. the manual alphabet) he preferred oral teaching and was far ahead of his time in maintaining that children should acquire whole words and phrases first and improve their articulation as their vocabulary increased. In a public criticism of Sumner's

methods,[16] Bell contended that the method of instruction using isolated words eg. Place---the---book---on---the---table, had been superceded in the United States by the use of phrases eg. Place---the book---on the table. Stevens vigorously defended his word-by-word methods, claiming that phrasing

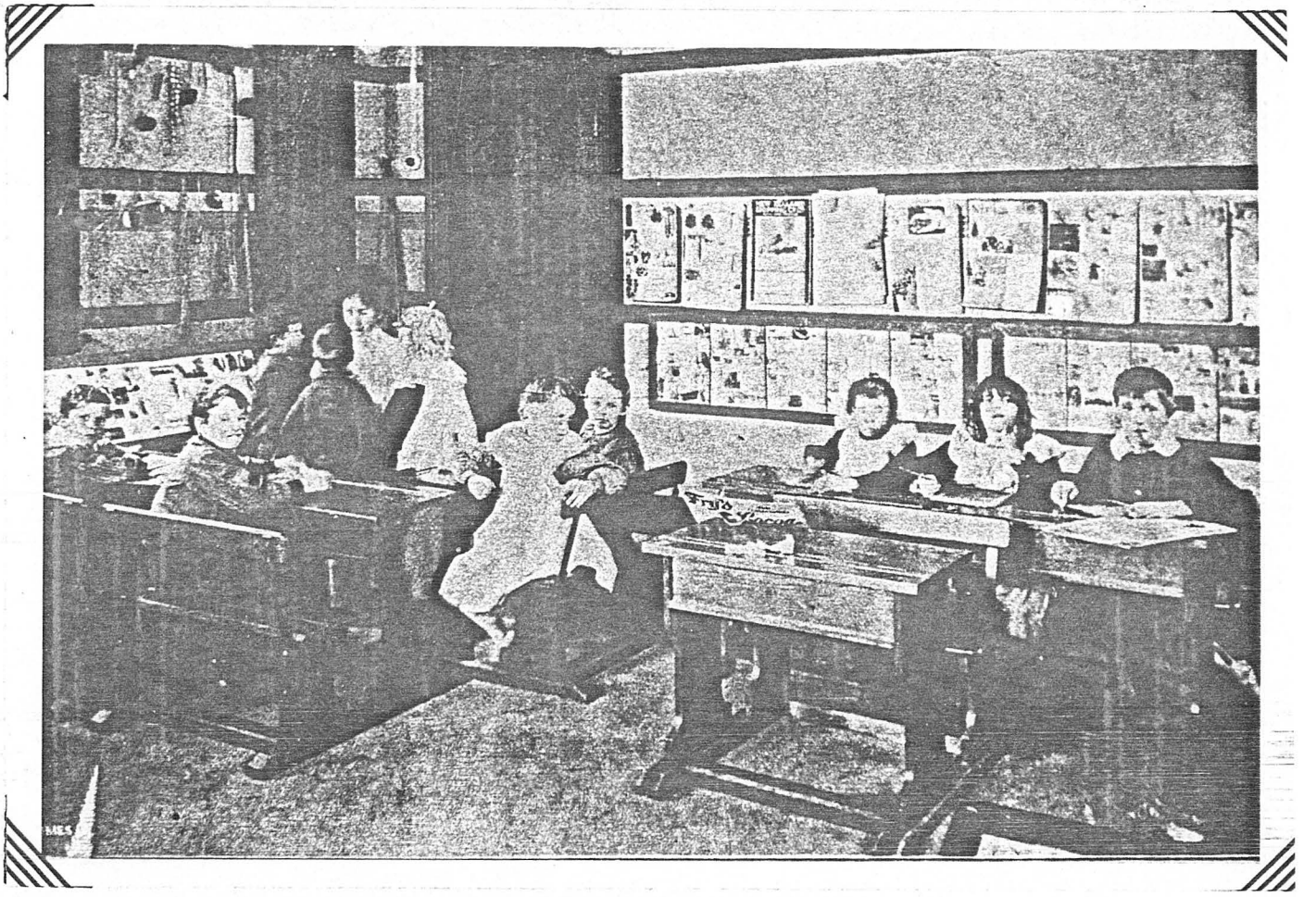
> should only be applied after the elements of speech have been established....The method that has been followed at Sumner since the opening of the school by the late Mr G. van Asch in 1880 is practically that made use of in the most successful schools for the deaf in Germany and Holland. In the earliest stages of instruction the elements of speech are taught singly at first and afterwards in combination as h-oo-p, hoop. Later on, the word-by-word method is applied, and easy sentences containing only simple words are taught. These are pronounced word by word as noticed by Dr Bell. Later on polysyllables are brought into use, and the children are taught to speak and read in phrases. A simple phrase such as 'on the table' presents no more difficulty to a pupil when taken as a whole than does a common word such as 'vegetable'.[17]

This pedagogical debate was not merely a superficial academic exercise. If the phrasing of words was seen to be superior to the teaching of articulation exercises in the early stages, van Asch's method introduced thirty years previously would appear to be obsolete. Stevens' reply to Bell's criticism appears to have satisfied those interested in deaf education, for the matter of method remained closed for more than two decades. Overall Bell considered the school the best of its kind he had seen since leaving the United States. His trip had taken him via Australia. He expressed delight with the able work done by the staff and the

---

16. Lyttleton Times, 6 September 1911.

17. Lyttleton Times, 7 September 1911.



Miss Jane Reid's Class, 1914

genuine affection which was shown by the children for their teachers.

The discovery of a former pupil's exercise books allows us to examine the work produced by pupils during Stevens' time as director. Annie Charman (nee Ashley) started school in 1911. She was nine years of age and travelled from Timaru to begin her lessons. In 1916 at the age of fourteen years she studied in science such topics as heat clouds, the thermometer, the barometer, a seed bed, wheat germination, plant food, the surface of the earth, gales, moraines, glaciers, evaporation etc. In her exercise book she wrote a paragraph on evaporation:

> I have seen water vapour rising from the ground after a shower. The heat of the sun converts the water in the soil, sea water, the water of lakes and rivers into water vapour. The air absorbs water almost as a sponge does. I have noticed that ink in an unused ink-well dries up. A great deaf of evaporation takes place from the sea. The water vapour, being lighter than air, rises. There is always a great deal of vapour in the air. When the air becomes cold the particles of vapour run together to form fog particles[18].

Whether Annie understood what she wrote at the time is unknown, but the beautiful notes in carefully executed hand-writing bear witness to the fact that Stevens expected splendid work from his students. Annie's carefully preserved Current Affairs Diary of 1916 provides delightful snippets of information about day-by-day happenings at the school and outside of it. In March 1916 she writes, "Beryl's uncle came to see her and he gave her and Eunice 2/6 each. How I envied them".[19] In April she writes:

---

18. Exercise book belonging to Annie Charman (nee Ashley) 1916. (Copy in possession of writer).

19. Ibid.

> Mr Stevens presented Miss Howlett with a travelling rug and a greenstone pendant from the staff....We all said 'goodbye' to Miss Howlett, who sails for 'Dear Old England' on Friday week. We hope she will have a safe and pleasant voyage.[20]

And later on the 25th April 1916 she writes:

> It was ANZAC Day and all the children had a half holiday in honour of the brave soldiers who fell at Gallipoli a year ago. We feel very sorry about that, and we also feel very proud of them. 'God Save the King'.[21]

In June she continues:

> It was the King's fifty-first birthday. Also Mr Trinder's and Ethel's. We hoisted the flag in honour of King George.[22]

As well in June she writes:

> We heard about the great naval battle in the North Sea which took place on Wednesday. Lord Kitchener and his staff were drowned in "H.M.S. Hampshire" off the Orkney Islands. We all mourn his loss, for he was a very good, wise and powerful leader.[23]

For the younger children the methods and topics used varied little from those advocated by van Asch. Whenever weather permitted lessons were taken out-of-doors, a development Stevens viewed as being important for the health and well-being of the pupils. Games, gymnastics, drill and dancing were all enjoyed. Annual examinations were conducted by a representative of the Education Department.

In 1921 the Department of Education published a series of lessons on language for Junior, Intermediate and Senior deaf pupils. They had been written by Stevens. Entitled "Course of

---

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

Hair-Washing in the Institution (circa 1914)

Lessons for Deaf Children" this publication became the basis of the language curriculum for the next twenty years.[24]

Out of school sports were played by all pupils. Stevens enjoyed gardening and golf himself and encouraged the deaf children to pursue a number of outdoor activities. Netball, cricket and football were all popular with the pupils. An Annual Sports Day was held for friends and relatives. Annie Charman (née Ashley) outlines the programme followed in 1916 in her school diary:

> The Annual Sports of the School for the Deaf at Sumner were held in the school grounds yesterday. The earlier part of the afternoon was devoted to races and athletic events after which the rain came on. The remainder of the programme was held indoors. The scholars danced old English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh dances, also a Sailor's Hornpipe and various country dances.[25]

An annual picnic was also held at Diamond Harbour, Burnham or some other area suitable for a group of deaf children. In 1910 the theatres in Christchurch invited the deaf children to attend the Saturday matinées free of charge. The small deaf children received a stamp on their wrist as a means of identification. They were often taken to afternoon tea as a treat after the moving pictures. Bathing also proved popular. The breakers at Sumner and Taylor's Mistake lured the children in warm weather. Other activities included the making of "shavees" from soap for use by the laundresses on Monday mornings, the making of sweets

---

24. A copy of this publication has proved unprocurable.

25. Exercise Book belonging to Annie Charman (née Ashley) 1916. (Copy in possession of writer).

for the Red Cross and the knitting of garments for soldiers during the war. The highlight of the year was usually a motor car ride and picnic. For those who had left school a deaf club was formed in 1922 by J. T. Kinnear. Its aim was to provide companionship and assistance for the deaf ex-pupils.

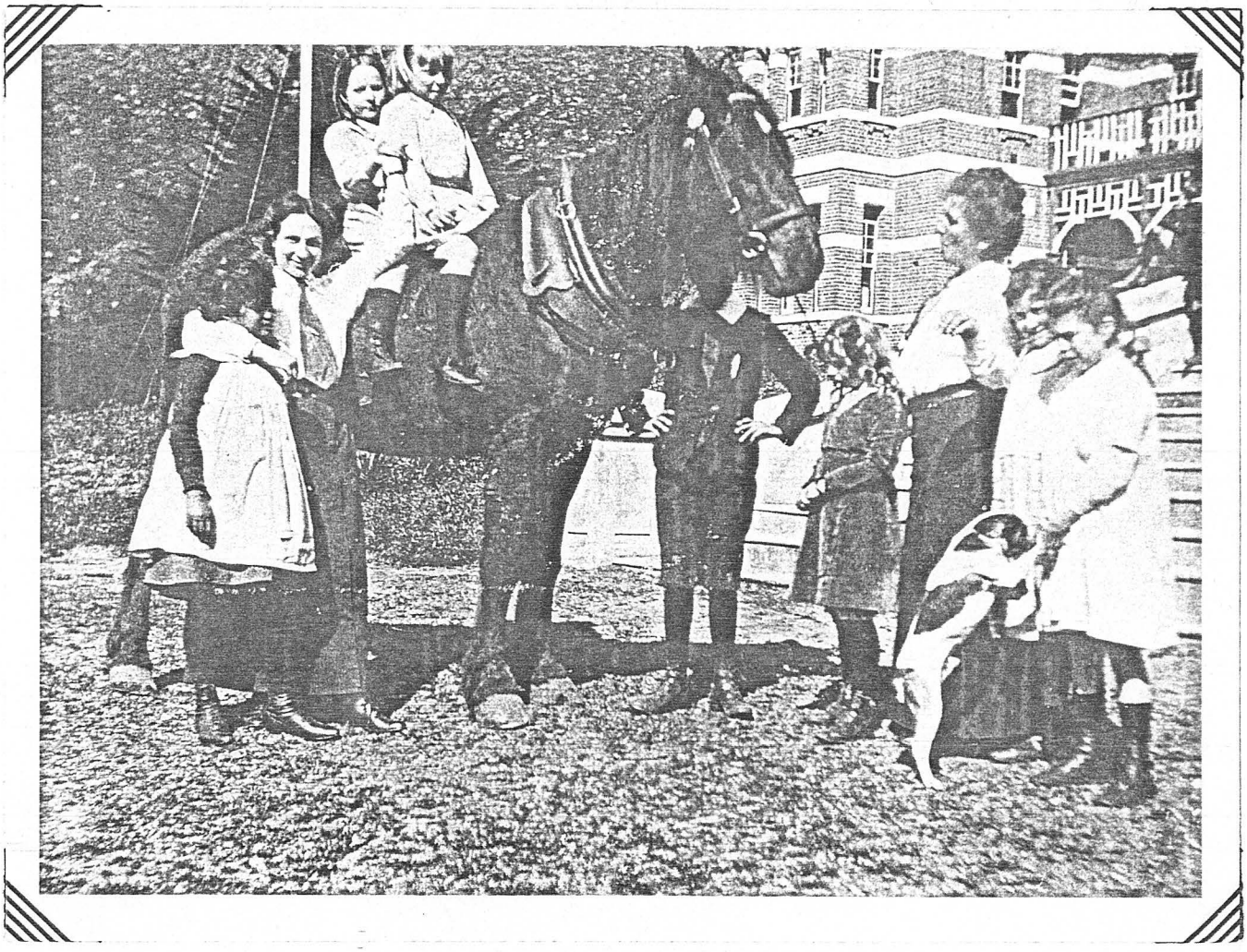
As the roll rose during the early 1900's accommodation became taxed to the limit at the institution. Between 1912 and 1914 over £4,000 was spent on increased accommodation, when a further wing was added to the main building. In 1918 an open air dormitory was built to accommodate thirty boys. It was not built in time however, to be used during an influenza epidemic - tents were set up in order to isolate serious cases and help contain the spread of the virus through the cramped accommodation at the Boys' House.

The cost of running the school increased each year. By 1918 the net expenditure had risen to £3,625. With 104 pupils the average annual cost per head amounted to £34.17.1. Although much higher than the cost per head for education in a normal school it compared favourably with deaf education in other countries.[26] It also compared favourably with the comparative cost of upkeep at other special schools within New Zealand. At the Otekaike Special School for Boys, for example, the annual cost per head amounted to £60.10.0. (Appendix E).

In the area of trade training, Stevens showed a much greater

---

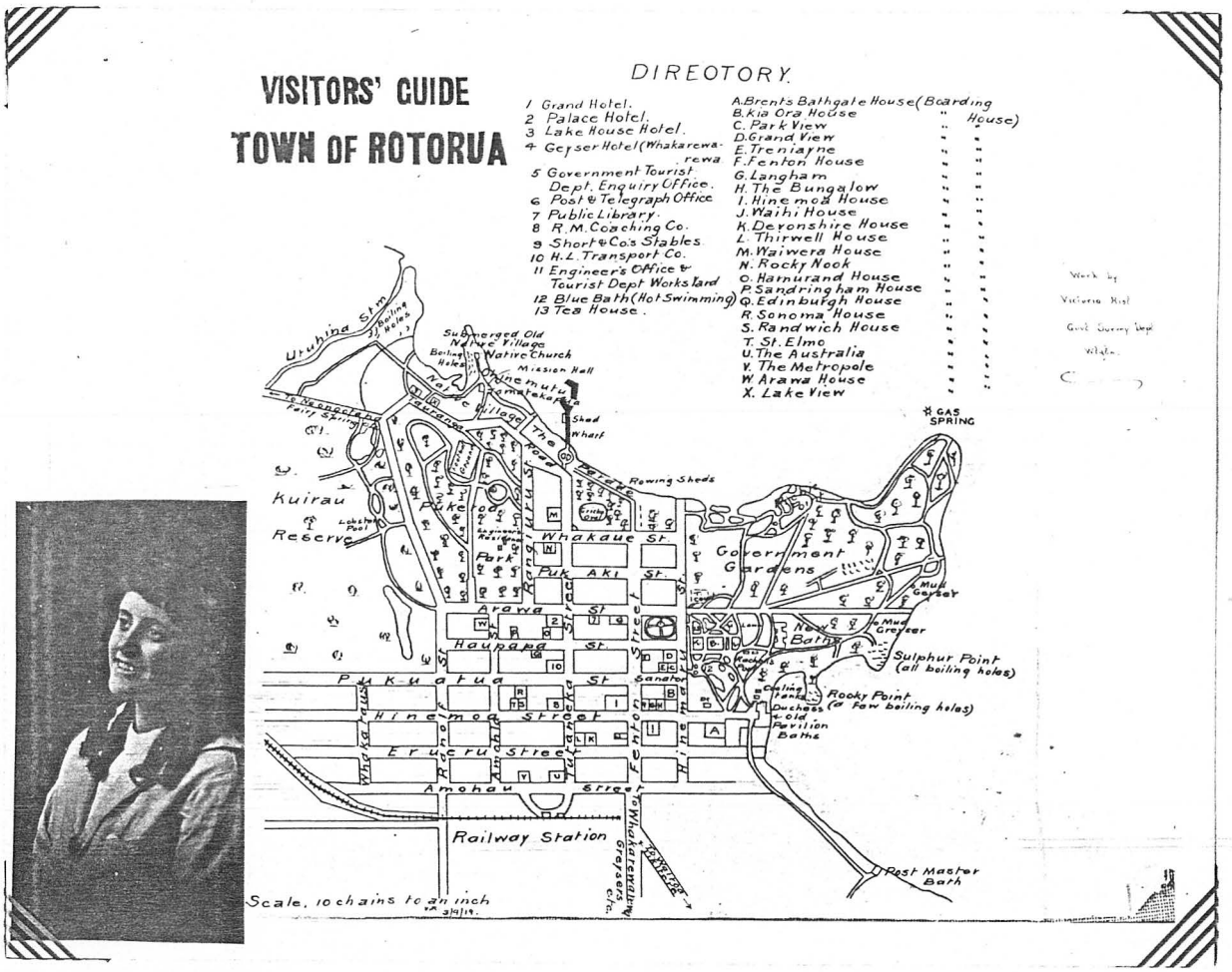
26. In England it was estimated that it cost £75 to educate a residential deaf child. In America the cost was $500 per year. Source: Hodgson, 1953 op. cit. AJHR., 1919, E-4, Page 10.



Miss McEwan, Miss Paul and Children during an
Outdoor Lesson (circa 1915)

interest than his predecessor. For girls classes were held in dress-making, cookery, laundry work, general housework and domestic economy. For boys farmwork (including milking and hay-making) woodwork and gardening were taught. The farm and garden proved a lucrative business for the school, realising the sum of £574.2.3 in 1918. This amounted to one eighth of the cost of operating the school. Produce from the farm was exhibited by the boys at the Dunedin, Timaru and Ashburton Agricultural & Pastoral Shows. In 1917 Stevens arranged for fourteen of his senior boys to attend woodwork instruction at the Christchurch Technical College. He was delighted with the results of this innovation and in 1918 he increased to fifteen the number of boys attending the Technical College. The classes at the Technical College were in addition to the classes in woodwork at the school. Although he helped the senior deaf children find suitable employment there was no employment scheme or follow up programme for ex-pupils. Some found excellent employment eg. in the Government Survey Department but others found suitable employment difficult to find especially after the war when the soldiers returned to civilian life.

One of the greatest problems experienced by all principals of the School for the Deaf until the 1940's was that of professional isolation. Whilst latest developments could be followed through educational periodicals there was little contact with professional peers. In 1913, however, Stevens was sent to England and Europe to visit schools for the deaf and to attend the Conference of Teachers of the Deaf held in Glasgow. He also attended meetings of the College of the Teachers of the Deaf in London and met with



Work by Victoria Rist. Government Survey Department, Wellington, 3 September 1919.

Inset: Victoria Rist

distinguished men and women in the field of deaf education, such as Dr Kerr Love and Mr B. St. John Ackers. In a report of his trip to the Secretary of Education he wrote:

> My coming in contact with such a large number of teachers and other experts was of the greatest professional value to myself.[27]

For many weeks Stevens travelled all over Britain visiting a total of twenty schools. A further ten schools were visited in Germany, Holland, France, Italy and Australia. Of particular interest to Stevens was the debate still raging in Europe between the supporters of the oral method and the supporters of the manual method. His travels served to further his own belief in the absolute superiority of the oral method for a wide range of deaf children of all ages. He reported that in some schools he visited:

> There is too great a tendency on the part of teachers particularly in the early stages of oral instruction, to despair with regard to cases that present special difficulties and that the temptation to get rid of such difficulties by removing the unfortunate children to the silent class is one that is ever present.[28]

A particular highlight of Steven's trip was a visit to the Henry Worrall Infant School at Manchester. This school was a branch of the Royal Schools for the Deaf. Miss Irene Goldsack (later Ewing) was teacher-in-charge of this experimental unit from 1912 to 1919. She had been permitted to formulate and employ her own methods and principles. The programme followed was child-centred, the language used, informal. According to A. W. G. Ewing:

> The children who were usually admitted at the age of five were led to accept lipreading and speech as a way of living. Activities and interests, natural to ordinary children

---

27. AJHR., 1914, E11, Page 3

28. Ibid.

> of their age...were the basis of the education. Spontaneity and initiative in activities and in talking were greatly encouraged. This was at a time when it was usual for teachers of the deaf who taught orally, to drill their beginning pupils in speaking with punctilious pronunciation, a limited vocabulary of words and phrases that they, the teachers prescribed...Speech and language at the Henry Worrall Infant School were developed as part of their mental growth as a whole. The learning of words was never presented as an end in itself.[29]

This experimental programme, using methods not generally in vogue, captured Stevens' imagination. From the time of his visit to the unit in 1913 until his retirement in 1923, he begged the government to establish a similar preparatory school using "Kindergarten Methods". His pleas were of no avail. With the constraints imposed on spending due to the first World War, resources were stretched to the limit. His dream of a separate school to classify, assess and educate young deaf children was never to become a reality.

On 29, 30 and 31 July 1913 Stevens attended the Biennial Conference of the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf in Glasgow. He presented a paper on the Education of the Deaf in New Zealand. He was thanked by the chairman (Dr Kerr Love) a highly respected and widely acclimed world authority on deaf education. After general discussion on the paper it was felt that the publishing of the paper in the Report of the Conference,

> Would act as an incentive to them (educators) to try and get better conditions (in England) for the education of the deaf.[30]

---

29. A.W.G.Ewing. The Education of the Deaf, History of the Department of Education of the Deaf. University of Manchester 1919-1955 in British Journal of Educational Studies Vol. 4, 1955-1956.

30. Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Conference of the National Association of the Teachers of the Deaf. Glasgow, 1913, Page 102.

Provisions for the deaf in New Zealand were obviously highly regarded. Stevens contributed much to the general discussion at the conference. When one delegate stated that he felt that method was not of much importance and that a good live teacher without any method would produce better results than a poor teacher with the finest method ever endued, Stevens said he felt that:

> One remark of the last speaker seemed very extraordinary - .... a live teacher without a method. If ever there was such a teacher he must have been at the beginning of his career. He could not conceive of anyone without a method; if he had not one to begin with he would evolve one. Every teacher, he believed, had a method. About thirteen years ago they (the Sumner School for the Deaf) did away with the articulation chart and introduced a system of teaching words by a picture method along with the oral method. By the use of a scientifically arranged set of pictures they were able to double their first year's output. They (the children) were not more quiet or more alive than the year before; that convinced them that a great deal can be done by method.[31]

Stevens' ability to think clearly and express himself admirably was demonstrated when the conference moved to a discussion concerning the difficulty of teaching verbs. Stevens contended that:

> Personally he had found no difficulty in giving children a big vocabulary of verbs. One could have a set of pictures signifying verbs. For instance, take such a verb as 'feel' which was one of the easiest. They (the teachers) had in their series of pictures, a man feeling in his pocket, and a boy feeling in a bag. The children were taught the word 'feel' and they were shown the picture which had the word written underneath. They (the teachers) found that the child had no more difficulty in remembering a verb conveyed in that way than a noun. The same with 'to cry' or 'to run'.[32]

---

31. op cit. Page 125

32. op cit. Page 126

A School Play (circa 1915)

An interjector from the floor, "How about growth?"

> The intelligent teacher was always glad to meet with difficulties. One could illustrate growth by showing plants at different stages. In teaching deaf children however, one did not look out for the difficult things, but began with the easy and went to the more difficult.[33]

Following the conference Stevens sailed for New Zealand. He had found the contact with others working in his field of education immensely stimulating. All that he had seen during his absence from Sumner reinforced his faith in the superiority of oralism. He felt New Zealand was well placed among the leading nations in her educational provisions for the deaf. Certainly in respect of roll numbers, New Zealand's efforts were admirable.

TABLE 2

Increases in attendance at schools for the deaf in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and New Zealand between 1895 and 1910.

	1895	1910	Percentage Increase
England and Wales	2,630	3,495	32%
Scotland	524	618	18%
Ireland	547	540	-
New Zealand	46	101	120%

Source: Hodgson 1953 op. cit.
AJHR., 1895, E-4
AJHR., 1910, E-4

After a total of thirty-six years spent in the education of the deaf, Stevens retired as Director of the School for the Deaf on 28 February, 1923. Nearly seventeen of those thirty-six years had been spent as Director of the school. At the age of fifty-four years he was the youngest director either before or since his term of office to seek retirement. He was an extremely effective

---

33. Ibid.

administrator, his records, in particular, being a great deal more meticulous than those of his predecessor. He was also an enthusiastic innovator, despite the difficulties and constraints imposed by the war years. The steps he took in the areas of trade training, speech therapy, classes for the partially deaf and non-residential schooling were progressive. In general the children loved him for his good humour and fairness. He was well liked by his staff for his consistent efforts to further the cause of deaf education and for his conciliatory manner. In a letter to the Principal of the School for the Deaf seven years after his retirement he wrote:

> You will find most of your difficulties arise out of petty staff bickering and jealousies. I had to fight them all the time. They are no good to anybody and should be rooted out. Harmony is essential to team work.[34]

Although he spent some time away from the school on lectures, assessment visits and the like, his first concern appears to have always been the welfare of the deaf children at Sumner. In 1923 on the eve of his retirement he wrote:

> It is only those who work among the afflicted who know the calls that the work makes upon those engaged in it and the amount of self-sacrificing devotion that it entails. The only adequate reward for it is in the work itself and this, those engaged in the work, reap fully.[35]

On his retirement Stevens and his wife travelled to England. He toured the continent and revisited New Zealand several times. When his wife died in England in 1952 he finally returned to New Zealand where he died in 1953. He was buried in Clyde.

---

34. Stevens/Chambers, 19 September 1930 (Copy in the possession of the writer).

35. AJHR., 1923, E-4, Page 7.

CHAPTER 4

The School Consolidates

For two decades following the retirement of the innovative Stevens, deaf education continued along similar lines to those laid down by the school's founder, Gerrit van Asch. During his period as Director, Stevens appointed a senior teacher, James Melville Balfour Crawford, to the position of first assistant master. On Stevens' retirement, Crawford became the third director of the School for the Deaf. He was fifty-one years of age and had taught at Sumner for a period of thirty years prior to his appointment as director. No attempt seems to have been made by the Education Department to introduce new blood into the institution at this point; the Department being content to act on Stevens' recommendation that Crawford be appointed to the position.[1]

Crawford was born in Dunedin in 1872. He attended Mornington school and Otago Boys' High School. In 1893 at the age of twenty-one years, Crawford began as a student teacher under van Asch. During Crawford's period as an assistant teacher he studied part-time at Canterbury College (later the University of Canterbury). In 1912 he graduated with a B.A. degree. As well as teaching and part-time study Crawford undertook duties as a housemaster. His wife (the former Miss Ewart) had been matron of the Timaru Public Hospital and during 1907 and 1908 acted as an honorary nurse at the School for the Deaf. The couple had no children.

---

1. Mr Strong (Permanent Head, Education Dept)/Hon Minister of Education, 15 January 1930, summed up the situation thus, "Since 1897 no attempt has been made to introduce new blood, and the institution has to some extent suffered from that fatal inbreeding that I discussed with you....some time ago."

Prior to Crawford's promotion to the position of director he had spent his entire professional life in the narrow field of deaf education. He saw the aim of the school, as far as the curriculum was concerned, as being "to equip the pupils with a general education as similar as possible to that given in the ordinary school."[2] He felt the school must also provide the pupils at Sumner with the type of education that would allow them to find employment and become self-supporting members of the community. The fact that only two ex-pupils sought his assistance to gain employment in a period of five years convinced Crawford that, "the lines on which the pupils' education was conducted are such as to equip these young people to obtain employment on leaving school."[3] In 1924 he carried out a survey of the occupational status of fifty ex-pupils. The results showed that most were gainfully employed. The positions held included those of a tailor (at £4 per week), a cheese factory hand (at £3.19/- per week, a glassworker (at £4 per week), a boat repairer, mail sorter, cabinet maker and printer. Girls usually found positions in dressmaking, millinery and book-binding. Many ex-pupils were engaged in farming occupations.

Life at Sumner during these years (1923 - 1930) appears to have been rather austere. Crawford is remembered by pupils he taught as being a rather harsh disciplinarian who demanded total committment to lessons.[4]

---

2. AJHR., 1928, E-4, Page 17.
3. Ibid.
4. Among those interviewed were L.M.Charman (interviewed Christchurch May 1981) and H.A.Long (interviewed Auckland, December 1981).

James Melville Balfour Crawford

The school was closed by the Education Department from February until 3 May in 1925 due to an outbreak of infantile paralysis (poliomyelitis). Although the teachers continued to attend, it was considered prudent not to bring large numbers of deaf children into a confined situation during such an epidemic.

Little in the way of play equipment was provided for the children, although a small amount of apparatus was purchased by the school in 1925, the purchase being made possible by the accumulated interest on Bequest Funds. Out-of-school hours were spent practising sport; usually cricket, football or netball. Long walks were also felt to be beneficial to the child's wellbeing. Within the classroom the programme concentrated on speech-training, reading, arithmetric and writing. For the top class arithmetric was progressing at the Std. 4 level, special attention being given to money, weights and measures. Reading was taken from the school journals (Parts II and III), the Std. 4 Pacific Readers and the daily newspapers.

> The daily newspapers are freely used in the classrooms and the children are kept in touch with current topics. It is the teacher's purpose to stimulate the pupil's power of thought and expressions along as many lines and in as many different ways as possible and to teach him to reproduce the news of the day and his views thereon in his own simplified language. In addition the language used in everyday conversation, the various colloquial expressions which are not found in text books, the language of the farm, dairy, garden, workshop, laundry and the general household, the special terms used in connection with the various games, competitions and outdoor recreations have all to be coordinated in the classroom, the uses of thereof frequently practised, the various forms paraphrased and by constant drill and repitition the deaf child daily grapples with the intricacies of English as it is written and spoken.[5]

---

5. Annual Report, Principal, School for the Deaf 1929.

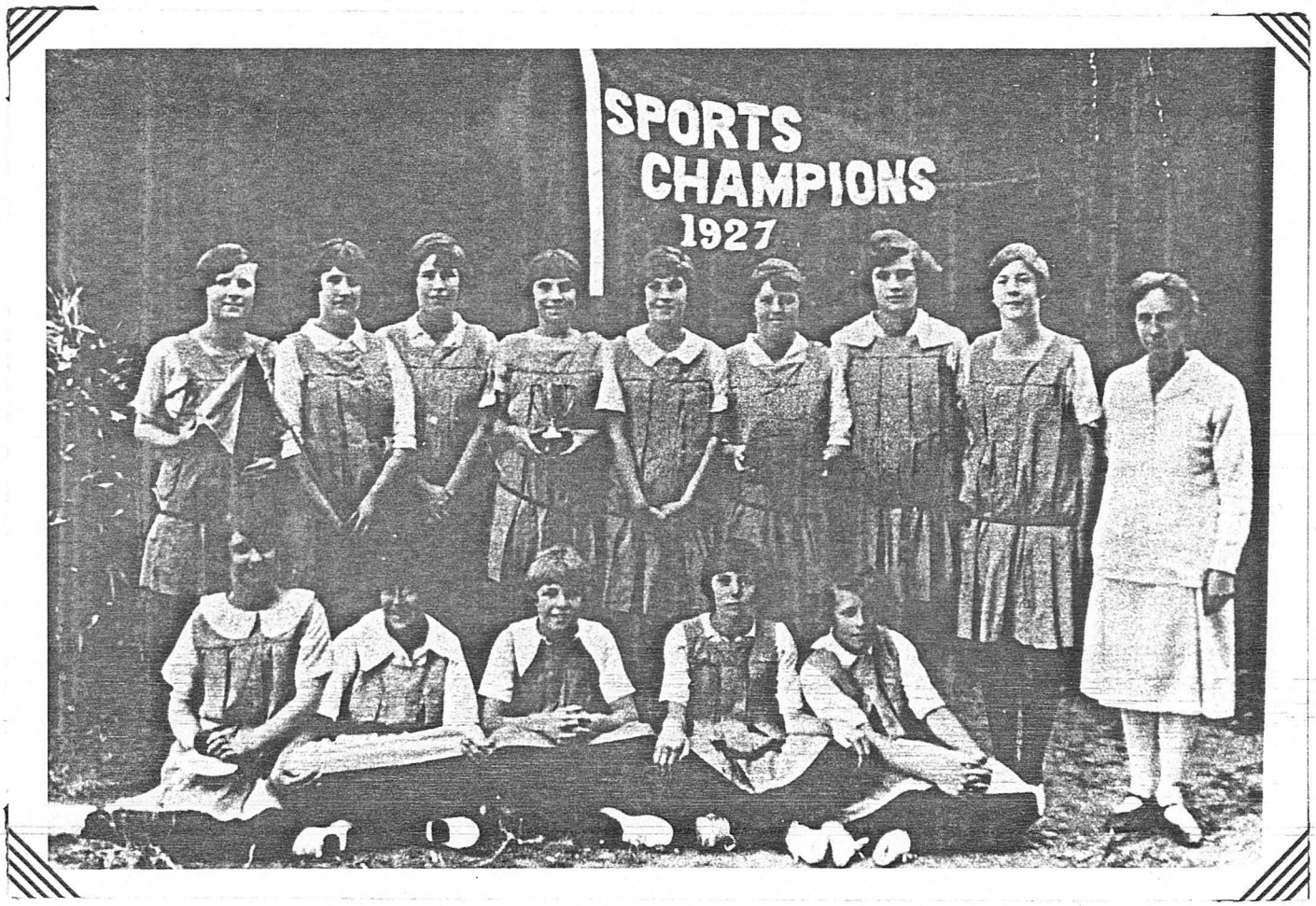
The only contact the pupils had with hearing children was during an infrequent sports meeting or educational visit away from Sumner. These contacts were felt to be invaluable however in spreading information about the deaf and their capabilities. Crawford himself was immensely proud of a team of girls who won the Rotary Club's College Cup at the Annual Sports held by the Christchurch Girls' Sports Association. As over two hundred competitors took part, Crawford's delight in their achievement was well-founded.

Besides general school activities, gardening, woodwork, laundry work, housework, cooking and sewing were offered at the school, but overall the emphasis was on an academic curriculum, emphasing the importance of speech teaching.

The supervision of the speech classes in the main centres, which had been so central to the provisions Stevens made for all types of deaf children (eg. partially deaf, severely deaf) was a role relinquished with regret by Crawford. Although over the years Crawford had found these classes a great strain on Staffing, requiring as they did, his most experienced and proficient teachers of the deaf, he felt that the Director at Sumner, possessing expert knowledge on the education of handicapped children, should supervise these classes. In 1923 a total of seventy children attended the three speech classes in Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland.

In 1929 however, the Education Department decided to transfer the control of these classes to the Education Boards. Crawford was vehemently against such a move. He wrote:

> Had this system not been satisfactory from a technical point of view I think my predecessor, Mr J.E.Stevens or I



Miss McEwan and the Girls' Sports Team - 1927.

> would have known where the weakness lay. No complaint has reached me from the Department, or from the Boards through the Department, that the system by which these classes have been carried on has been unsatisfactory. These special classes were started to relieve over-crowding here and because it is better from an educational point of view, to separate hard-of-hearing and speech defect cases from the deaf; but cases are frequently met with where only time will tell, whether the child should be here, or at a special class, and that is in itself a reason that the control of the deaf and the hard-of-hearing should be under the control of the Director of this School....I tell the Department most seriously that its decision has deprived these classes of the mature consideration, on the advice and the guidance of the acknowledged expert, the Director of this School, I say that the proper classification of pupils will suffer.[6]

Although Crawford' case was strong for the retention of these classes under the control of the director at Sumner, the Education Department over-rode his objections and removed the control of Special Classes to the various Education Boards. In later years the number of children with speech defects exceeded the number of hearing-impaired children in these classes. It would seem to have been logical, therefore, for the Education Boards in the various areas to assume control of these speech classes.

During the last year of his term as director (1929) Crawford was plagued by illness. Early in the year he had undergone a serious operation. In his absence Mr Alfred Cowles, an inspector from the Education Department, had undertaken an inspection of the school. The inspection took place over three days (6 - 8 February). Although Cowles felt the tone of the school was good, he was critical of many aspects of the work of the institution. He reported to the Director of Education:

> The work is carried out on stereotyped lines and teachers are given only limited freedom to carry out their own

---

6. Crawford/Director of Education, 12 September 1929. (Copy in possession of the writer).

plans. The work is of a special nature and recommendations are made with some diffidence. It seems that the pupils require a wider experience entailing a greater stimulation.

Reading is carried out on formal lines, the children receiving little stimulation. One lesson of two pages lasted for a fortnight - in all about seven hours. It seems impossible that interest in the lesson could be sustained for so long a time.

History is read from "High Roads" the pupils finding the language so far beyond their comprehension as to make lessons boring and unproductive of much good. I suggest that a larger quantity of simpler reading matter be provided and that history and similar subjects be treated from the "story" standpoint.

Arithmetric: This subject appears to be fairly well handled. A tendency to give difficult problems and unpractical sums has been checked. I suggest that the pupils would make progress more easily if money processes were worked out practically and with paper coins, if weights and measures etc. were carried out practically.

Handwork and Drawing etc; These subjects receive little attention as it is thought that the time for Speech Training cannot be spared. I suggest that if handwork, drawing, colour work, nature study were taken, the children's horizons would be widened, the inflow of ideas would be increased interest in the world that is only seen by these children would quicken their minds and increase their desire to speak and to read speech. I saw one lesson given that confirmed me in this opinion. A cooking lesson was given - subject, scones and meal loaf. As a cooking lesson it was excellent - as a language lesson it was even better - for the girls asked questions and generally conversed about the work going on in a much more animated fashion than they did in a formal language lesson. The boys were doing woodwork were less successful. These lessons, I understand, are taken once a week and by only a few children.

Drawing: A little drawing is done; the quality is not good or of the right kind. Drawing should be treated as principally a means of expression. At the best, these children will never have command of sufficient speech to fully express their ideas - few normal people are so blessed - and an added means will surely be of great benefit to them. Colour work should also form some part of the training. The deaf are cut off from music and some experience in the detection and use of colour will help to relieve the drabness of their lives. More might be done with pictures. The walls are, in most cases, bare, little attention being given to interior decoration. Some form of projector - a lantern or better still - the Epidiascope - might be provided.

The lessons appear to be so long as to weary the pupils, but I am informed that in the case of the deaf, lessons must

An Out-of-Doors Language Lesson taken
by Mr H. Williams - 1940

> be about 40 minutes in length. Even normal children and adults become fatigued by close attention for 40 minutes. I therefore suggest shorter lessons and more frequent intervals in the open air.[7]

While Cowles agreed that the main aim of the school - to teach the deaf to speak - was the right aim, he felt that a much greater variety of lessons would widen the child's horizons and initiate a desire for speech on the part of the children. In retrospect his conclusions were probably a valid assessment of the education provided by the school. The entrenched methods, which had been in vogue since the school's inception, were defended by the experienced staff at the school. Any new methods would only take root if new blood was introduced to the institution.

On Crawford's return from sick leave Cowles again visited the school to discuss the report with Crawford. He agreed to alter certain points in the report. Crawford however wrote to the Director of Education on 12 August 1929 outlining his objections to the final report:

> The aim of the teaching is to give the children such a general education as will enable them to take their places as useful members of the community. The curriculum approximates as near as maybe to that of a primary school, allowance being made for the enormous handicap which the deaf mind suffers from. Deafness from the point of view of intellectual growth is the worst affliction that can befall a mentally sound child. Its mind is entombed. The essential problem is to teach the deaf child to speak, to understand the meaning of the language taught and to use that language, not only in reference to the immediate

---

7. Report of Alfred Cowles, Inspector Education Department, 27 February 1929. (Copy in the possession of the writer).

subject taught but to use the language taught in general terms and in reference to general ideas.

An increasing knowledge, grasp and the use of language develops the power to think. Language and thought progress pari passu. The one is to the other as the arch of a tunnel is to the tunnel itself. An average hearing child of four has as much language as for ordinary purposes will carry it through life. A deaf child has none. The burden of the work is in all subjects to teach the language and the meaning of the language used in presenting the facts.

The report states - 'Reading is carried out on formal lines, the children receiving little stimulation. One lesson of two pages lasted for a fortnight - in all about seven hours etc.'

It should be understood that by reading is meant reading with the necessary speech correction, and comprehension. If a reading lesson were carried on 'on formal lines', as the report says, the process would be about as informative as if I picked up a book on Spanish and read it. From my knowledge of Latin I would get the meaning of some words and I would make a guess at others and thus I might get a glimmering of the sense. Here reading means the explanation of the language as well as its pronunciation.

It is not possible to give a great deal of time to drawing. Every morning from half an hour to forty minutes is taken up in all classes with speech exercises and conversation on topical subjects such as, in the upper classes, newspaper items. If even that time could be spared there would be more time for drawing. But considering the enormous disadvantage which the deaf labour under, it is not possible to do in the ordinary school hours, every subject of a primary school syllabus. As a matter of fact drill is taken outside the usual school hours. The drawing taught last year was mostly pastel work of common objects, leaves and simple flower forms. The highest class did some geometrical drawing. I am not at all sure that even if time allowed that it would be wise to stress drawing as a subject. Instead of its being an aid to expression I know it would be used by many children as a substitute for speech and would thus become a very undesirable accomplishment. When I became Director I found that, except in one or two of the higher classes, no drawing at all had been done.

The report states: 'More might be done with pictures'. Last year I bought about eighty pictures suitable for composition work. Pictorial Education and the Auckland weekly news are taken. The pictures from the Auckland Weekly are kept in such a form that they can be taken from room to room as required. This is better than attaching them to the walls of the school rooms.

The report states that: 'the lessons appear to be so long as to weary the children'. The length of any lesson

> is left largely to the discretion of the teacher, forty minutes being about the time devoted to each oral lesson in all but the younger classes. If lessons were made shorter than at present there would be too much lack of continuity in the matter taught and this would mean an amount of repetition which would certainly weary the pupils. Quite a lot of teaching is done out of doors.[8]

Crawford's comments illustrate the rigidity of his thinking regarding the education of the deaf. His lack of contact with normal children, his rejection of the value of subjects such as drill and drawing and his defence of the long lessons given to even quite young children possibly resulted from the fact that his entire professional life had been spent in this narrow specialist field.

On 10 December 1929 the Parliamentary Recess Education Committee on Educational Re-organisation in New Zealand visited Sumner. Colonel T.W. McDonald (M.P. Wairarapa) as chairman of this committee sought from Crawford a report on the problems associated with teaching the deaf. Crawford furnished the committee with an outline of the work undertaken at Sumner. He wrote:

> The essential problem in the education of deaf children is the development of the meaning of language and the encouragement of its use. The acquisition of a vocabulary and a knowledge of grammatical forms are not enough. The connotation of words, their meaning in different senses and their elucidation in the form of ideas, form the teacher's chief difficulty. The figurative nature of the English language complicates the problem.[9]

During Crawford's years as director increasing disquiet had

---

8. Crawford/Director, 12 August 1929. (Copy in possession of the writer).

9. Crawford/Parliamentary Recess Education Committee. Report on School for the Deaf, 14 December 1929. (Copy in possession of the writer).

been felt in the Education Department concerning the outmoded education being offered at Sumner. When Crawford's health failed in 1929 the need "to secure the services of someone who would modernise the institution and bring its work into line with what was done in other countries"[10] assumed some degree of urgency in the eyes of the Education Department.

Despite Crawford's heated defence of the methods employed at Sumner, the Education Department decided, upon his resignation, to advertise in England for a new Principal for the School for the Deaf. The position was to carry a salary of between £615 and £665 less £50 for quarters and lighting.[11]

By the time of Crawford's retirement on 31 December 1929, rumours began circulating within the school that the Education Department was casting its net wider than the Staff at Sumner in its efforts to replace the director. The staff at Sumner were extremely concerned. Since their only avenue for promotion was within their school correspondence ensued between Mr Sullivan M.P. (who had been approached by the staff to represent their interests) and the Minister of Education, concerning the plight of the teachers at Sumner. Sullivan's letter was referred to the Head of the Education Department who wrote to the Minister of Education:

> We have been aware for some time that their methods are out-of-date, and there is no-one in New Zealand who has

---

10. Strong/Minister of Education, 15 January 1930, National Archives E/19/16/48. (Copy in possession of the writer).

11. Strong/Public Service Commissioner, 17 December 1929, National Archives. (Copy in possession of the writer).

> first hand knowledge of the most recent developments in the education of deaf children. In special appointments of this kind the only way to keep our system in line with modern movements is to import specialists from the Homeland....All the members of the present staff have been trained under Mr Crawford and to appoint one of these as Principal would be simply perpetuating the old fashioned methods of the past.[12]

On the 23 December 1929 Mr T.F. Chambers was informed by letter that the Public Service Commissioner had approved of his appointment as Acting Principal at Sumner. His salary was raised to £565 per annum.[13] The prospect of the appointment of a principal from outside the ranks of those at Sumner prompted a joint letter of protest to the Education Department. In the letter the staff wrote:

> We, the undersigned members of the staff, School for the Deaf, Sumner, view with grave concern the fact that the Education Department contemplates filling the position of Director of this school, rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr J.M.B. Crawford, by the possible appointment of an applicant from outside New Zealand.
>
> We would respectfully point out that we were specially selected from Training College students and trained for the teaching of the deaf by Mr G. van Asch who was brought out from England by the Government of his day to establish a Special School in New Zealand, and to train suitable teachers to carry on the work of the future.
>
> During our lengthly period of service we have been favourably reported on from time to time and have always endeavoured to adapt ourselves to the requirements of our special work. Mr van Asch was recognised as a leading educationist in the teaching of the deaf, and it was he who introduced into England the pure oral system having been brought over from Holland for that purpose. This system which has always

---

12. Strong/Minister of Education, 15 January 1930. National Archives E/19/16/48. (Copy in possession of the writer).

13. Director of Education/Chambers, 23 December 19291. (Copy in possession of the writer). The net salary of £565 in 1930 was £35 less than the salary of the 1st Director in 1880.

been in vogue in our school is considered by eminent authorities throughout the world to be the most efficient means of educating the deaf and of bringing them as far as possible into line with their hearing fellows.

We claim that the results obtained by our methods have been highly successful. In support of this contention we have the testimonies of various leading men. No less an authority than Dr Alexander Graham Bell, one of the first oral teachers of the deaf in America, inventor of the telephone, founder of the Volta Bureau for collecting and disseminating information about the deaf, and for the proming of the teaching of speech to them, a prodigious writer on the subject and the author of the noted work 'The Mechanism of Speech and Dictionary of English Sounds' whilst touring New Zealand paid a visit to this school. On that occasion he highly complimented the staff on the results obtained and assured us that our methods were not only up-to-date but were far ahead of those in many leading institutions in other parts of the world.

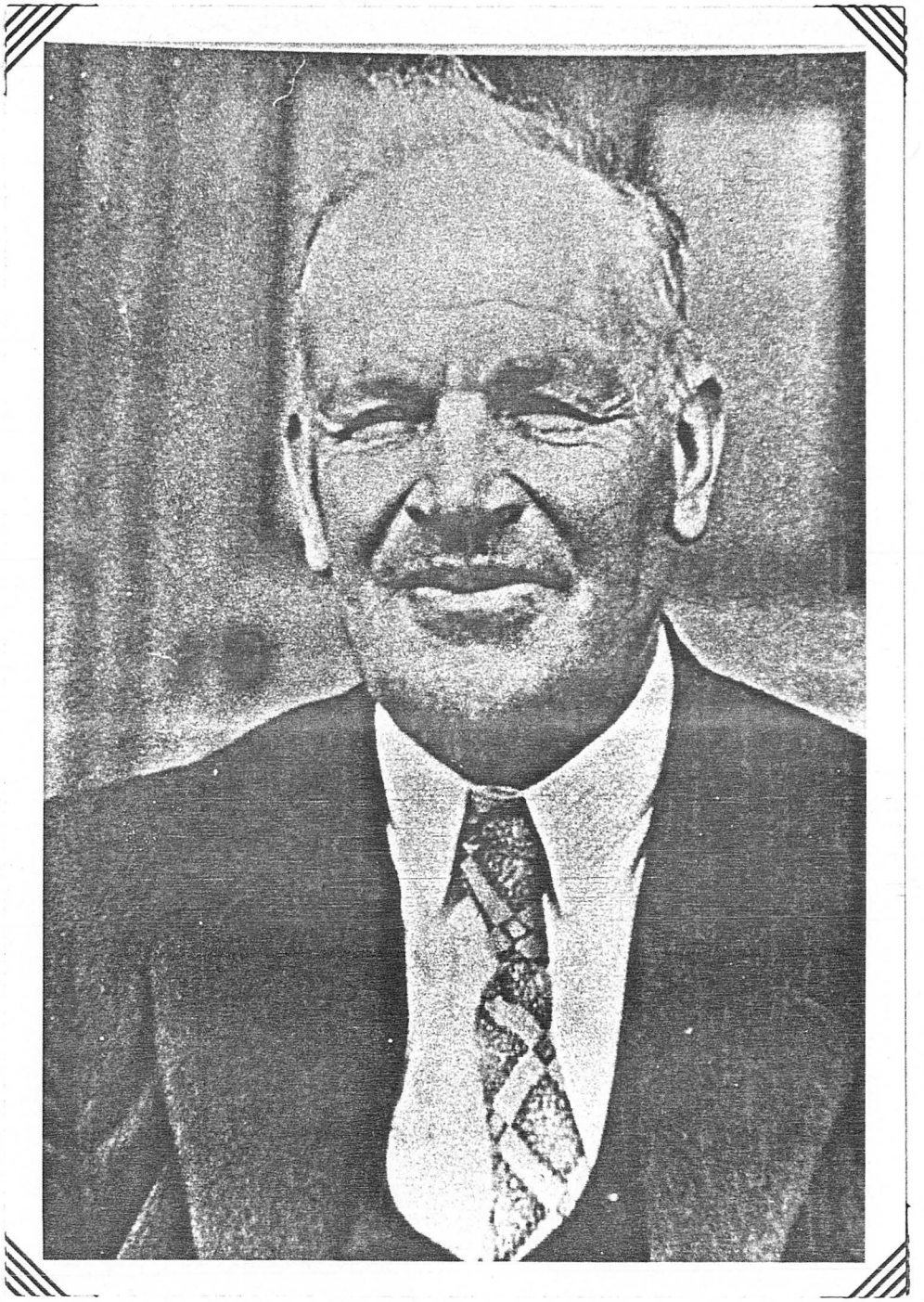
At different times visits to England and the continent have enabled us through the medium of Mr Stevens, Mr L.F. Regnault (at present on the staff) and Miss J. Reid to keep in touch with the work carried out in England and elsewhere. In addition we have at present an English teacher in the person of Miss M. Richards, who has had experience in various English schools and also in an institution for the deaf in Hobart, Tasmania. Mrs Trinder, a teacher of wide experience in England, was also a member of the staff here.

Professor Adams, a leading English educationist of world-wide repute when lecturing throughout New Zealand some few years ago, expressed himself in appreciative terms and stated in no uncertain way that he was greatly impressed by our work. As late as December of this year the school was visited by the Education Committee set up by the present Minister of Education, the members of which will no doubt make mention of their visit in their impending report.

No serious fault has ever been found with our work, hence we are at a loss to understand the possibility of promotion being with-held from us who have served the Department so faithfully and so well and for such a lengthy period. As our only chance of advancement in our profession is in our own Special School, the only one of its kind in the Dominion, we beg respectfully to ask for that promotion which we consider only just and right.[14]

---

14. Staff of the School for the Deaf/Education Department. Date unknown. (Copy in possession of the writer).



Thomas Frederick Chambers

The Education Department remained unmoved and the position was advertised in England. By May 1930 a thirty-five year old Englishman had been selected. He was, however, never to take up his position as principal, for on 22 July 1930 Chambers was informed by telegram that he had been promoted to Principal as from 16 July 1930.[15]

The reason for this change of direction on the part of the Department is unknown but it may be assumed that events outlined in a letter from the former director, Mr Ted Stevens, to Chambers precipitated the change on the part of the Department. Stephens wrote:

> I had no great doubt that on Mr Crawford's retirement the position would naturally revert to you and paid little heed to rumours that I heard to the contrary. It was only on returning to England about the middle of May that I was informed at the H.C's (High Commissioner's) office that the position had been advertised in England and one of the applicants actually selected. This was a man of thirty-five years of age, trained in one of the over-grown institutions in England; one that I had visited in 1913 and in which I had been unfavourably impressed, especially with the oral work. I could only shudder at the probable consequences. What would happen to the work in the school with the fine senior assistants from yourself to Regnault all having to submit to such an indignity. It was only after my interview with the H.C. that I found out from his secretary that the appointment had not yet been confirmed and I breathed more freely.
>
> I immediately went to an old friend, the Secretary of the Association for the Deaf here, and made full enquiries as to the appointee. There was nothing personally the matter, but my friend shared my opinion about the school he was trained in, and that was enough for me. I went straight to the office. The H.C. was away but I saw the secretary and filled him with what I thought of the whole matter, and in fact went into it very fully. I do not know what recommendations were made in consequence of what I had to say. It is quite possible, of course, that things might have turned out as they have without my intervention. But had I not done all

---

15. Telegram, Education Department/Chambers 22 July 1930. (Copy in possession of the writer).

> in my power to prevent such an appalling calamity to the school as what apparently was at one time on the point of taking place, I should have never forgiven myself.
>
> England is a very wonderful country and there are many admirable things in it, but it would be very difficult to select in England anyone more capable of carrying on the work at Sumner than a local man. The oral work in England has never been at a very high level - they have had difficulties to surmount that we never had. There are a fine lot of hard-working people in the work and far be it from me to disparage them. Still, I should not like to have to select one to run Sumner.[16]

Thomas Fredrick Chambers accordingly became the fourth director of the School for the Deaf at the age of fifty-one years. Chambers' father had died when he was three years of age and his mother, an early advocate of greater rights for women, was a powerful influence in his life. He attended Sydenham Primary School, West Christchurch School (later to become Hagley High School), Christ's College and Christchurch Boys' High School. During 1897 and 1898 he taught as a pupil teacher at St Alban's Primary School. He passed his Matriculation Examination in 1899 and was appointed as an assistant teacher by van Asch, commencing duties on 15 May 1899. The reason he chose to teach the deaf is unknown, but his daughter, Miss Enid Chambers[17] contends that his interest in the deaf was aroused through knowledge of his deaf great grandmother. On 3 April 1906 the Education Department awarded him a certificate on the completion of his training "in the art of instructing deaf-mutes by the articulation method".[18] He had served a seven year apprenticeship. Chambers married Miss

---

16. Stevens/Chambers 10 September 1930. (Copy in possession of writer).
17. Interviewed Christchurch, May 1981.
18. Certificate of Thomas Frederick Chambers 3 April 1906. (Copy in possession of the writer).

Agnes Cecelia Gemming in 1910. From 1907 until May 1910 when she married, Mrs Chambers had taught at the School for the Deaf. She had arrived from Auckland where she had taught a small group of deaf children in a private capacity. Her interest in, and knowledge of deaf children was invaluable to Chambers during his years as housemaster and later as Principal. Their first child, Enid, was born in 1911. Two more children, Marjorie and Noel, were born in 1914 and 1922 respectively. From 1 July 1917 until 6 May 1921 Chambers was a teacher in residence. He had purchased a home in Sumner which was let during his time in residence and during his time as Principal from 1930-1940. The Principal was expected to live in quarters set aside for him and his family in the Main Building.

Chambers was a kind but authoritative man. He was passionately interested in physical fitness, roaming the hills behind Sumner in all weathers. Usually a group of deaf children accompanied him on these trips. He preferred to walk over the hill to Lyttleton rather than catch a tram to Christchurch city and a train to Lyttleton. He sympathised with the young deaf children so far away from their parents and homes, and often visited the dormitories of the small deaf children to settle them at night. From the older children he expected excellent behaviour and high standards in all that they attempted. Enid Chambers remembers the happy full days of her father's period at Sumner. (Appendix F).

While acting as Director pending his appointment as Principal, Chambers presented the annual report of the school for

the year ended 31 March 1930. With uncertainty sourrounding the position of Principal, Chambers defended the standard of work at the school, quoting overseas authorities who had praised the school:

> The standard of work set up in former years was well maintained. Of this standard independent testimony is available. At the annual conference of the National College of Teachers of the Deaf held at Brighton, England, in August 1929 Mr F. G. Barnes, an eminent English teacher, who had recently toured America, South Africa, Australia and called in at Auckland on his way home, read an interesting paper on, 'The Deaf of the Empire". Speaking of New Zealand Mr Barnes says, 'the school was closed during the time I was in New Zealand and I did not undertake the long journey merely to see empty buildings. Founded in 1880 through the efforts of Mr van Asch of Manchester and London, who secured Government support in establishing the school on a liberal and efficient standard this school has for nearly fifty years had a high reputation for excellent oral work. In Auckland I met an experienced British teacher from Boston Spa, now on the staff at Sumner and her opinion co-incided with that of others on the high standard of oral work this school is maintaining. I have had other testimonies of the same kind, and in Vancouver was shown an ex-pupil of the school, said by the American teacher in charge to be one of the best oral pupils she had met.'
>
> The girl referred to by Mr Barnes left New Zealand for Vancouver after being at the Sumner school for seven years. She was by no means one of our best pupils, being about equal in proficiency to our deaf child of average attainment. It is very encouraging to find such whole-hearted appreciation of our work from those engaged in similar work abroad.[19]

Soon after the confirmation of Chambers' appointment as Principal, the school was again inspected by Alfred Cowles. During this visit on the 16, 17, 18 September 1930, Cowles praised the care provided by the school and noted an improvement in the appearance of the classrooms. He suggested several improvements of a minor nature which he wished to see actioned, eg. in reading Cowles felt more silent reading for pleasure should be encouraged.

---

19. Annual Report, Principal School for the Deaf, 1930. (Copy in possession of the writer).

At the time of his visit slates were still being used and it was suggested these be abandoned along with the heavy writing and the backhand style in evidence. Whilst more attention was being given to handwork (needlework, woodwork, gardening, milking Etc.) by the time of his second visit, Cowles felt that individual records should be kept, and even greater emphasis given to these areas. As well Chambers was cautioned against admitting imbecile grade deaf-mutes on trial, a practice Chambers continued to follow for fear of turning away deaf children who could make some progress at Sumner. Without suitable non-verbal I.Q. tests, Chambers felt compelled to err on the side of the young deaf pupil. Overall in the area of speech "the most important subject of all,"[20] Cowles expressed pleasure. He paid tribute to the skillful and patient work of the members of the staff in this phase of the work.

At the time of Cowles' visit there were eleven teachers on the staff as well as the Principal, Chambers. The roll stood at 114 in 1930, giving a teacher/pupil ratio of 10.5. This was reasonably satisfactory in terms of the requirements of a deaf child. In terms of the teacher/pupil ratio in normal schools at that time it was very favourable, for in many schools up to fifty children were educated in one class. It is significant that during both Crawford's and Chambers' periods as principals, lack of teachers was never mentioned in reports of the school. It was frequently mentioned during van Asch's directorship. On the basis

---

20. Report of Alfred Cowles, Inspector, Education Department, 4 December 1930. (Copy in possession of the writer).

of roll numbers the institution cost the state £52.12.0 per pupil, a considerably greater cost that other branches of education, even considering the fact that Sumner provided mainly residential education. (Appendix G). In 1933 of the 120 pupils at the School for the Deaf only 13 were day pupils.

The school programme, with its rigid analytic method of teaching speech came under increasing scrutiny during the 1930's. Some of the younger teachers began to question the methods used,[21] but there seem to have been sufficient modest innovations to quell any groundswell of discontent. Educational visits were undertaken to places of interest eg. Aulesbrooks factory. Other activities such as silk art work and pewter work were introduced. A greater variety of articles were produced in woodwork.[22] Indicative perhaps of the constraints imposed on education during the depression years of the early 1930's, one teacher purchased a lathe for the boys' woodwork at his own expenses and taught numerous children in his out of school hours. Power tools were also introduced. Unemployed labour was used in several areas around the school, eg. gardening, but the boys were still expected to participate in these activities.

The problems relating to teaching in such a narrow field of education were never more apparent than during the 1930's .

---

21. Reference to this point is made by A.B.Allen in "They Hear with the Eye". Wellington, School Publications Branch, Dept. of Education, 1980, Page 64.

22. In his annual report for the year ended 31 March 1939 Chambers reports that dining chairs were constructed. As well, screens and dinner-wagons were made.

Professional isolation continued to plague the school as it had done since its inception. Lack of finance in schools during this period (the early 1930's) further accentuated the problem. Teachers, for example, were asked to provide the money required to purchase material for the staff library. In 1929 a new Primary School Syllabus had been issued to all schools. It sought to liberate teachers from the dull formal teaching aimed solely at passing the annual Proficiency Examination. Experimentation in cultural subjects and a more creative approach to such subjects as English, were encouraged. Sumner however failed to implement this new found freedom of method. The teachers sought to defend the need for formalism in the teaching of speech and other subjects to the deaf. Miss Dorothy Malcolm, a teacher at the school from 1928-1938 poignantly captures the thrust of the method when she recalls:

> You start off with the action and print the word you have used and get the learner to say it as you do, using your lips. Practise it over and over and then use another word and continue. After a while, emphasis the initial sound and repeat and get the learner to copy the sound - pot-p,p,p and so it goes on.[23]

In 1936 three pupils were awarded their Proficiency Certificates. Two were awarded their Competency Certificates. Achievements of this nature were rare however, and seem only to have been accomplished by the most able pupils.

Sport had continued as it had done progressively over the previous fifty years, to play an important part in the life of the school. The pupils were actively encouraged to mix with their

---

23. Malcolm/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of writer).

hearing peers. Hockey became a popular sport when staff members with expertise in this area began to coach the children. Through sports the children endeavoured to prove that their hearing constituted their only handicap, and that in some other areas they could compete on equal terms. Occasions such as the winning of the 'A' grade hockey competition promoted by the Christchurch Primary schools were a source of great delight to both pupils and staff alike. A tennis court and gymnasium were constructed with funds from the interest on an earlier bequest to the school. But for funds of this nature, it is doubtful if additional facilities would have been introduced at Sumner during the depression.

Post school placement of pupils continued to be a rather haphazard affair with the parents of pupils being expected to find employment for the deaf child in his home town. During his last year as Principal, Chambers set up a scheme to help pupils find jobs they would like and to which they were suited. The scheme was run in conjunction with the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education and the Vocational Guidance Service together with Placement Officers in the Labour Department. Chambers, with his excellent knowledge of each child recommended jobs the child would be capable of carrying out and the Placement Officers in each town sought suitable jobs. Follow up visits were made to assess the suitability of the position found for the deaf child.

During 1934 the Education Department contemplated the possibility of commencing the teaching of deaf children at an earlier age than was customary. The first director had admitted children

at seven years, the second director had lowered the age to six years. On 31 August 1934 the Minister of Education wrote to Chambers asking for his comments on a proposal to lower the age still further. Considering the matter Chambers replied:

> ....the school course begins with articulation and writing and our experience goes to show that six or seven years of age is the best time at which to start pupils. Those who advocate tuition for the deaf at an earlier age support the idea of a nursery school and that is of course just what its name implies. Such a school if it were to cater for children from any distance would have to be a residential one, and the parents would obviously be parted from their offspring at an age to which the average person would object. The nursery school would of course be a boon to some mothers and would doubtless benefit those children who do not have the amount of parental attention which is their due. It would also serve to ameliorate the mental anguish of unfortunate parents when they find that their children are deaf, and consequently dumb and whose natural desire is to see something attempted at the earliest moment. The fact however remains as our experience in Sumner shows that six year olds or seven year olds straight from their homes soon catch up with and hold their own in speech and writing and school work generally, with those who have been admitted at an earlier age. Teaching speech to a congenital deaf mute at the age of three years I consider to be impracticable. At this stage, speech naturally voiced can be produced only under the guiding influence of the ear, the process being mostly subconscious. With the congenitally deaf, articulation can be taught only as a conscious mental effort, the process requiring an amount of concentration on the part of the pupil, not to be expected or desired from a very young child. The most that could be attempted in the way of language would be to familiarise the wee mite with oral expression as much as possible. It could possibly be taught to recognise such words as 'father', 'mother', 'bath' etc. and to carry out a few simple commands given orally and without being able to say them ~~or~~ to understand their import. Such an introduction to the more serious task of producing the sounds and bringing into play the mechanism of speech would of necessity be very limited in its scope.[24]

Chambers' love and compassion for small children who would need to be plucked away from their parents, his rigid formal

---

24. Chambers/Director of Education, 8 September 1934. (Copy in possession of the writer).

First Group Hearing-Aid - 1936

training and the lack of hearing aids,[25] forced him to these conclusions. He was however, in this matter, at variance with the opinion of the second director, Stevens, who advocated the commencement of training as young as three years of age for mentally sound deaf children.

Although staffing at Sumner was particularly stable during Chambers' years, difficulty began to be experienced in recruiting teachers to this sphere of educational activity. As early as 1930 Cowles had made reference to the fact that "the long apprenticeship and the small chance of advancement tend to exclude the most desirable teachers."[26] Students from Christchurch Teachers' College spent short periods ranging from two to five weeks at the school, observing and studying methods of speech training and methods of teaching language to the deaf. Some of these students later applied for positions at Sumner, but dissatisfaction was felt at Sumner over gradings and salaries. On 20 June 1936 Chambers wrote to the Director of Education pointing out the futility of continuing to grade teachers of the deaf along the lines of primary school teachers.

> As a matter of fact the longer they are employed in this special school the more they get away from primary school work and, consequently, the less fitted they are to undertake such work. Their grading would seem to imply otherwise. Some colour is given to the contention of the younger members of the staff that primary teachers are better paid than teachers here by the fact that (one primary teacher)

---

25. Two hearing aids and an Autiometer were used for the first time in 1936. In 1939 a group hearing aid was installed at Sumner.

26. Report of Alfred Cowles, 4 December 1930. (Copy in possession of the writer).

> recently appointed is to receive a higher salary for her work here than (two teachers of the deaf) whose grading marks are better and who have both had longer teaching experience. The difference is small and perhaps some slight adjustment could be made.[27]

Grading continued however but salaries were cut along with other public servants during the 1930's due to economic constraints imposed by the government. Before cuts, salaries of senior teachers were in the region of £350.

During the 1920's and 1930's considerable pressure was exerted on the Department of Education by a group of Auckland parents, to establish a school for deaf children in Auckland. Parents became increasingly reluctant to send their young deaf children to be educated in Christchurch. In 1929 Crawford had written:

> I am aware that the question has been raised of establishing a day school in Auckland. There are here ten pupils from Auckland and its environs and they are at different stages of progress. It would be quite impossible for one teacher to teach ten children in three or four classes.[28]

Pressure increased during the 1930's a nd in 1936 the Department felt that a longer mid-year holiday would quell opposition. Chambers was asked:

> Whether it would not be advisable for Sumner to observe the same period as the public schools, namely four weeks, to be taken between the middle of June and July. Also it is considered advisable, if you have not already done so, to discuss the matter with the teachers of the school in order that should there be any question asked in future, you would have the teachers 'on side'.[29]

---

27. Chambers/Director of Education 20 June 1936. Copy in possession of the writer).
28. Crawford/Parliamentary Recess Education Committee. Report on School for the Deaf 14 Dec.1929. (copy in possession of the writer).
29. Superintendent, Child Welfare Branch of Education Dept/ Chambers, 31 Oct. 1936. (Copy in possession of writer).

In June 1938 the school commenced an extended mid-year break for pupils. This broke with a long tradition going back to the founding of the school, when a long break was taken at Christmas and two short breaks during the year. Children who lived close to the school were able to go home during the year but many were absent from their homes for long periods.

This concession with regard to holidays did not quieten the more vocal Auckland parents however. They remained unhappy with the need to board their young deaf children in an institution hundreds of miles from their homes. Although the institutional staff were stable[30] the disadvantages associated with the institutionalization of young handicapped children were deplored. In response to the need for educational provisions for the young deaf child in Auckland, the New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing began a local school for deaf children in Myers Park, Auckland. Initially this school was intended for partially deaf children over the age of five and deaf children under the age of five. The school was small with two teachers undertaking the education of the children. In a letter to the Senior Inspector of Schools, Auckland, the Director of Education wrote:

> The question of admissions to the Auckland School should be considered by the Department....Some of the pupils at present receiving instruction at Myer's Kindergarten are cases which should be at Sumner,and not in a class for hard of hearing children. A difficulty lies in defining what constitutes a hard of hearing person. Many so called deaf children are now known to have residual hearing, which is insufficient to allow development of language by normal means, i.e. they rely upon lipreading for the acquisition of language. Such children, though

---

30. In 1938 the Matron, Miss C. M. Leary, retired after 25 years of service at Sumner.

> retaining some hearing, should be educated at Sumner.
>
> There is a group of children whose hearing is defective to such a degree that they require for their education special arrangements or facilities, but not the educational methods used for the deaf children without naturally acquired speech or language. A class for the hard of hearing should deal exclusively with children from this group.
>
> It is evident that some parents of deaf children who reside in Auckland will prefer to have their children day pupils at the Auckland School, rather than send them to Sumner, where they would be away from home for long periods. I sympathise with their point of view, but I do not think it would be politic to allow the Auckland School to become a school for the deaf in fact as well as in name.....[31]

With the establishment of this splinter group of deaf children in Auckland and the Education Department's knowledge, through annual inspections, of the rigidly analytical methods used at Sumner, the impending retirement of Chambers no doubt presented an excellent opportunity for the Department once more to cast its net wider in its search for a replacement. During 1939 the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, along with the Canterbury Members of Parliament, visited the school. The Minister of Education, Mr H.G.R. Mason, also visited the school. On 4 April 1939 the Assistant Director of Education wrote to Chambers advising that he was coming to discuss "certain matters in connection with your school".[32] It is certain that Chambers' retirement was discussed and it is probable that the question of his replacement was also touched upon. Chambers had reached the age of sixty years and had over forty years of service. He did not however wish to retire

---

31. Director of Education/Senior Inspector of Schools, Auckland, 6 February 1941. National Archives E 52/1/1.

32. Assistant Director of Education/Chambers, 8 August 1939. (Copy in possession of the writer).

and asked for an extension of time. It is possible that this request suited the Education Department, as it provided them with time to look overseas for a replacement for Chambers. In August 1939 the Assistant Director wrote:

> When last I was in Christchurch I raised with you.... the question of your retirement. After carefully considering your representations, the Public Service Commissioner has agreed to extend your period of service to 31st March 1940. You will, I am sure, realise that your retirement is only the result of general policy and in no way reflects upon you personally. The Department is very grateful to you for the long and efficient period of service you have given, both as Assistant and as Principal of the School for the Deaf.[33]

Although Chambers had been granted a temporary reprieve, rumours once again began circulating (as they had ten years earlier) about the appointment of a new principal. The first assistant, Mr L. Regnault, had been trained under Stevens, and had a period of twenty-eight years of educational service, all spent in deaf education at Sumner. Although an excellent teacher, his appointment as Principal would have robbed the Department of the opportunity to introduce new blood into deaf education in New Zealand. To pass over the teachers at Sumner however, would almost certainly cause dissatisfaction among this highly specialised group of teachers. In the end the Education Department decided to override the protests of the staff and on 23 August 1939 the Assistant Director of Education wrote to Dr A.W.G.Ewing, head of the Department of Deaf Education, University of Manchester, advising him of the impending vacancy.[34] Dr Ewing was asked to help

---

33. Assistant Director of Education/Chambers, 8 August 1939. (Copy in possession of the writer).

34. Assistant Director of Education/A.W.G.Ewing, 23 August 1939, National Archives E19/16/48. (Copy in possession of the writer).

a committee, to be formed by the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, to recommend a new principal. The staff at Sumner learnt early in 1940 that an appointment had been made in England.

Chambers continued at Sumner throughout the first term of 1940. His term as Principal had not been particularly innovative, due in part to the economic recession experienced in New Zealand during the 1930's. As well virtually the whole of his career had been spent in the narrow field of deaf education. Despite this lack of innovation however, Chambers had been an efficient caring teacher and a capable administrator. He finally retired on 31 July 1940.

CHAPTER 5

New Blood and Rubella Waves

On 11 May 1940 Herbert Pickering left England to take up his new position as Principal of the School for the Deaf at Sumner. Dr C.E.Beeby's letter seeking Dr A.W.G.Ewings assistance in the appointment of a new principal for Sumner[1] resulted in Ewing recommending Pickering for the position. Born on 9 November 1908 in Whitby, Yorkshire, Pickering had been educated at the Whitby County School. On completion of his schooling he had enrolled at the University of Manchester. During his University course he had been invited by Professor Ewing to undertake the course in deaf education at the completion of his B.Sc. degree. The Education of the Deaf Department at the University of Manchester had been established in 1919.[2] It is probable that not more than 100 teachers had graduated by the time of Pickering's course. The lecturer in charge was Irene Ewing (nee Goldsack).[3] According to A.W.G. Ewing:

> She gave to the course of training for teachers of the deaf three notable characteristics. The first was the direct and intimate relationship into which she brought the theoretical or academic and the practical or school practice of the course. She made their interdependence clear and unmistakable. The second was the individual care and consideration that she gave to the abilities, personalities and potentiality as a teacher of every one of her students. The third was her own supreme ability and skill as a demonstrator and teacher of deaf children of any age.[4]

---

1. C.E.Beeby (Assistant Director of Education)/Dr A.W.G. Ewing 23 August 1939. National Archives, E19/16/48. (Copy in possession of the writer).
2. Prior to this date the training of teachers of the deaf had been carried out by two small private colleges.
3. In 1913 the second principal of the Sumner School for the Deaf, Mr T. Stevens, had been very impressed with her work with kindergarten age pupils.
4. A.W.G.Ewing. The Education of the Deaf:History of the Dept.of Education of the Deaf. University of Manchester 1919-1955 in British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. 4 (1955 - 1956) Page 109.

Mr & Mrs Herbert Pickering, 1940.

In a book published while Pickering was at Manchester University, Irene Ewing outlined her philosophy on the education of the deaf. She asked:

> How are spontaneity and initiative toward the comprehension and use of normal language to be developed in children who cannot hear its spoken form? Not be drilling them in lip-reading or speaking a teacher-selected vocabulary, for no two children really want the same word.[5]

Children, according to Ewing, should be encouraged to lipread sentences rather than single words and never lists of meaningless words chosen by the teacher as a suitable means of measuring progress. Indeed it seems that Irene Ewing was an inspiration to her students.

In 1931 at the completion of his course in deaf education, Pickering graduated with his Teacher's Diploma and University Certificate for Teachers of the Deaf. From 1931 to 1939 he taught in Manchester at the Royal School for the Deaf. At the time of his appointment to Sumner, he was a senior resident master, having been promoted to that position in 1936. Despite his appointment to a senior position, Pickering had his sights set higher. According to his wife, Mrs M. Pickering,[6] he could see few avenues for further promotion in England. When the position of principal in New Zealand's School for the Deaf was drawn to his attention by Ewing, Pickering applied successfully. He married a week before his departure for New Zealand in 1940 and spent his honeymoon travelling on a cargo ship to his new position. Also on board were two young deaf children whom he supervised and gave lessons to.

---

5. I.R.Ewing, Lipreading. Manchester. Manchester Press 1930.

6. Interviewed in Christchurch, July 1981.

On his arrival at Sumner, Pickering was met by the retiring principal, Tom Chambers, who had stayed on to administer the school until the arrival of the new principal. The atmosphere at the school on Pickering's arrival was tense. The expereienced senior teachers who had anticipated promotion had been passed over in favour of a young foreigner. War was raging and many of the staff were under stress. Pickering and his wife moved into the staff quarters at the end of Boys' Home in the middle of winter 1940. A year later they were able to move into a new principal's residence.

The methods brought by Pickering to Sumner differed markedly from those in vogue at the school. Pickering's methods, stressing as they did a more balanced and less analytic approach, owed their origins to the teachings of his mentor, Irene Ewing. Although single words were used and taught, they were also put into sentences in order to demonstrate the natural order of words in phrases and to give a more natural pattern of language to the children. There was less emphasis on the teaching of isolated sounds. The intrinsic interests of the children were considered important in selecting language to teach. Events and experiences of importance to the child were capitalized upon. Instead of the teachers selecting the words the children should learn in order to get through a prescribed course, the teacher selected words a child wished to learn or showed an interest in. In all teaching the main words were emphasised within a phrase or sentence eg. PUT the POT on the TABLE. In short, the lessons were geared to the needs and interests of the child in his everyday contacts with the world.

Many of the staff however, had the traditional analytical methods formally ingrained in them and believed these were the best methods to get across to the child the vast number of words he needed. Miss Dorothy Malcolm taught at the school from 1928 until 1938, with many of the teachers who were teaching when Pickering arrived. She recalls her days at the school during this time in a letter to the writer:

> The best way to treat the deaf is to speak slowly with a lovely bright smile on one's face...We were a very happy busy community...I lived with the girls and interested them in art, sewing, dressmaking, knitting, embroidery work, folk dancing and basketball. A display of work was always on at the end of the year function.[7]

When Pickering began his work at Sumner the roll stood at 105 pupils. Of these 15 were day pupils. He was very aware of the advantages to pupils of commuting to school daily and a decade later he instituted a bus service for these children. The average age for admission for the congenitally deaf in his first year as Principal was 6.7 years. This was to fall significantly during his time in control at Sumner.

Pickering's first year progressed with a stable staff, smoothly, both in the boarding and teaching spheres. In retrospect it is probably fortunate that his first year was such a year, for seldom again, during his thirty-three years in deaf education was he to experience a year of such stability. He introduced some minor changes to the school such as toy-making and re-arranged gardening classes. A.B.Allen[8] (firstly a psychologist and later a

---

7. Malcolm/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer).

8. Interviewed at Christchurch, May 1981.

senior inspector attached to the school) recalls how these vegetables produced in the school gardens later came to be known as "Pickering's Golden Harvest" because of the expense incurred in their production. Generally however, Pickering used this year to get the "feel" of deaf education in New Zealand.

During the year the school was ordered to close by the Public Health Department following the death of a girl pupil from diptheria. Three further cases made satisfactory recoveries. From a pupil's point of view, times may have seemed rather grim. Mrs Eileen Long (nee Holwell) a boarder at the school from 1935 - 1941, remembers that institutional life for her was rather harsh. The staff

> ...told us not to write our letters to our parents about our health. (The sub-matron) was not popular because she used (to give) everyone of us a tablespoonful of senna pods on Saturday mornings. Same spoon for all of us. If a bad boy or girl turned up in front of her she gave them more than one tablespoonful of that horrid liquid.[9]

She recalls, even forty years later, that the remedy took little time to work.

Indeed, from the point of view of social-emotional development, the practice of removing young deaf children from their homes for very long periods of time in order to educate them, was a questionable one. It is common nowadays to question the

---

9. Long/Stewart, 21 June 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer). Also interviewed at Auckland, November 1981.

practice of institutionalising children.[10] Normal social development is dependent on early bonding and attachment behaviour. A multiplicity of caretakers in an institution does not predispose the child to form strong affectional bonds. This is, perhaps, an even greater problem with a hearing impaired child who lacks a working command of language. Recent research[11] supports the desirability of an education within the community. There were, however few alternatives available to parents of handicapped children in the early 1940's.

As well as his duties as Principal of the School for the Deaf, Pickering was asked to make a survey of the existing speech clinics so that he could select one as a suitable training centre. According to Saunders:

> The demand for speech therapy had so increased that it became apparent that existing staffs would need help and that new clinics should be established. At that time there were clinics at Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin only. Mr Pickering's choice fell on Christchurch and in 1942 the first three students were selected to undergo a year's special training as speech therapists.[12]

---

10. See for example
M. Bowlby, Child Care & the Growth of Love, Middlesex, Penguin Books 1977.
also M. Rutter, Changing Youth in a Changing Society: Patterns of Adolescent Development and Disorder. London, Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1979.
M. Rutter, Maternal Deprivation Re-Assessed, 2nd. Edition, Middlesex, Penguin Books Ltd. 1981.

11. Witherford, H.A., Wilton, K.M., Parsons, M.B. Effects of Residential School Attendance on the Social Development of Hearing Impaired Children. N.Z.J.E.S., 1978. Vol. 13, No. 1.

12. M.E.Saunders. Looking Back with Joy. New Zealand Speech Therapists Journal, 1971, page 50.

Part of the course in the years that followed consisted of lectures by Pickering on deafness. Having selected the venue and witnessed the establishment of a course for speech therapists. Pickering himself must have pondered at length on the need to have similarly trained teachers of the deaf. No doubt he realised his own methods and philosophy would have little effect until he was able to train personally teachers in those methods. This development however was not to become a reality until 1943.

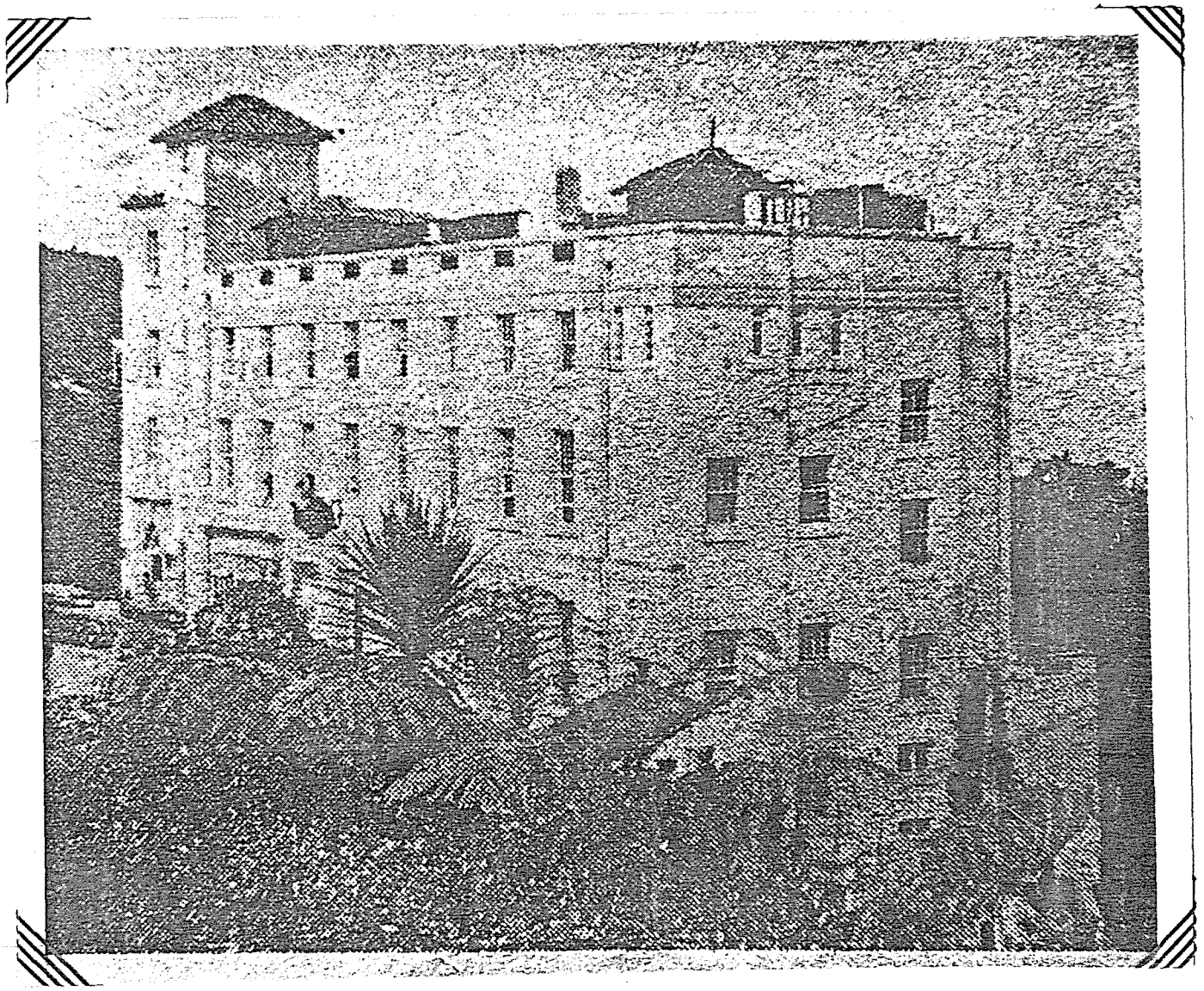
At the end of 1941, the deaf pupils packed their bags to head home for the Christmas holidays. Little were they to know that they would be the last group of deaf children to be educated under one roof in New Zealand. For sixty-one years deaf education had been confined to the one site with pupils travelling from all over New Zealand to the institution. Immediately the children were dispatched, however, the Army authorities occupied the school premises. A few days previously (on 7 December 1941) the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbour and all establishments of the kind that housed the deaf children were progressively commandeered. Pickering was faced, after merely seventeen months as Principal, with the prospect of no buildings in which to carry on his work. Eventually it was decided to split the school, as no suitable buildings large enough to house all the children, could be found. On 9 March 1942 a temporary school was opened in Christchurch for 27 day pupils. By 2 May, boarding pupils were able to be admitted. A property known as Te Kohanga Maternity Hospital in Fendalton Road, Christchurch, was leased for these South Island children. It was not ideal but it was the best that was available.

To further complicate matters, soon after the school resumed classes, the day pupils under fourteen years were directed to remain at home due to an outbreak of infantile paralysis. This exclusion from classes lasted for a short period. The North Island pupils meanwhile were in limbo. Some attended schools temporarily, some received no schooling, and some were helped at home. In September 1942, 63 pupils were directed to the Titirangi Hotel, Auckland, where a school and boarding establishment were opened. Included in this number of pupils beginning at Titirangi were children from the Myers Park School - established by parents who had refused to send their young deaf children to Sumner. The responsibility for this Auckland school was vested in Pickering until 1946 when a separate principal was appointed. From 1942 until 1946 Pickering divided his time between the Sumner School and the Auckland school. He was considered the Senior Principal and Advisor to the Department.

Once the majority of deaf children were again receiving schooling, Pickering's thoughts turned to the problem of trained teachers. He had, in 1942, begun to feel the effects of a problem that was to plague him year after year for most of the time of his administration - the lack of specialist trained teachers of the deaf. Up until this time a five year probation "on-the-job" apprenticeship system operated with a certificate issued at the end of the five year period.[13] Unless these teachers had previously

---

13. Copy of Certificate of T. Chambers (in possession of writer).



The former Titirangi Hotel which housed the Auckland School for the Deaf, 1942

trained to teach in a normal school (and few had) they could not transfer from a class of deaf children and were therefore destined to spend their teaching career in the sole school for the deaf. The problem of lack of stimulation and new ideas, even of lack of contact with normal children often led, as has earlier been shown, to the teachers becoming isolated in their professional life. In 1942, despite a difficult year for deaf education, Pickering selected three students to train in Auckland as specialist teachers the following year. This course lasted for one year following the normal Teachers' college course. At the completion of the course in 1943 these trained teachers of the deaf were able to teach in either schools for the deaf or normal schools. One of the students chosen by Pickering to undertake the first deaf course was Miss Jeanne Edgar. In correspondence with the writer[14] she recalls that lectures were held in a small staffroom. Subjects studied were anatomy, lipreading, speech and history of deaf education. Pickering spent six months at Titirangi to train the students that year (1943) and six months at Sumner. When he was not lecturing, the students spent all their time in the classroom learning how to teach deaf children. The scene had been set for the training of specialist teachers and rarely, even during the years of desperate teacher shortage, did Pickering waiver from his policy of permanent appointments for specialist teachers only. This policy, of permanent appointments for specialist teachers only, meant that only a trained teacher who had trained for one further year as a specialist teacher of the deaf could be appointed to a

14. Edgar/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer).

permanent position at Sumner. Any other trained teacher appointed to the School for the Deaf without specialist training in the deaf, could only be appointed as a relieving teacher. This policy was maintained at great cost by Pickering over the period of his administration. Staff shortages were a constant problem and relieving teachers were often not predisposed to stay for any length of time at Sumner if a permanent position came up elsewhere.

About this time another of Pickering's special interest areas in deaf education began to surface. From his observations and enquiries it had become apparent that a large group of deaf children would soon require education in a school for the deaf. He had begun the practice of home visits for some young deaf children. He floated the possibility of establishing a nursery school (probably along the lines of those he had seen operating in Manchester) but many years were to pass before his hopes became a reality.

In the meantime the roll rose dramatically - from 126 in 1943 to 175 in 1944. Pickering felt that he could give no satisfactory explanation for this sudden increase. Later however, it would become obvious that the crippling effects of a rubella epidemic were surfacing. A Catholic School for the Deaf was opened in 1944 in Wellington (later moved to Fielding) and this catered for 15 pupils; relieving slightly the pressure on Sumner and Titirangi.

At the end of 1943 the Army agreed to vacate the Sumner School for the Deaf. Whether Pickering hoped to close the Titirangi school and transfer pupils back to Sumner so that all deaf

education could be concentrated in one area, is unknown, but the massive increase in pupil numbers combined with strong parental pressure made the retention of Titirangi inevitable. Whilst Titirangi was far from ideal as far as buildings were concerned, it helped spread the load of deaf children to be educated. Besides the problem of buildings, there was also a critical staffing problem. At Titirangi, for example, in 1943 there were seven teachers but only three were trained to teach the deaf. At Sumner the situation was much better. Of the six teachers employed, five had specialist training. By the beginning of 1944 however, the situation had reversed. The three trainee teachers for the first course in 1943 had joined the staff at Titirangi, but the roll increases and staff changes had left Sumner with four relieving teachers in a total staff of ten. Moreover, domestic staff were becoming difficult to obtain. Long hours and low pay were not conducive to attracting competent staff.

Children began to pour into Sumner. Facilities in all areas were stretched to the limit. A total of 33 children were admitted to Sumner alone in the 12 months ending 31 March 1944. Their average age was 5.34 years. The school was experiencing the impact of the 1939 rubella epidemic. Pickering was needed in many quarters; at Titirangi to oversee the running of the school and to train the new recruits, and at Sumner to administer the school and to advise parents of pre-school children. He also acted as policy adviser on deaf education for the Education Department. The skills of the 36 year old Englishman were tested indeed during the early 1940's. His reports to the Department, even at this

stage, were full and detailed, although in later years they became even fuller, and more meticulous. The powers that be certainly knew in detail about the administration of deaf education at Sumner.

At times Pickering must have wondered when the flood of pupils into his schools would end. In the 12 months to 31 March 1945, a further 52 deaf children were admitted to both of the schools. The combined rolls had now risen to 215. To appreciate the impact of so many children being admitted within such a short space of time, one only needed to note that the roll had risen by over 100% in less than five years.

TABLE 3

Roll Increases at Sumner and Titirangi Schools for the Deaf

Year	On Roll at 31 March	Admitted during the Preceding Year
1940	105	23
1941	117	26
1942*	110	15
1943	126	34
1944	175	76
1945	215	52

* School was not in full operation owing to war evacuation of premises.

This influx of pupils created many problems - staffing and lack of space being the most pressing and obvious. Pickering always tried to give the young deaf children experienced teachers as he felt this to be important. But with so many infant deaf children he found it hard to give every class a teacher, let alone a trained specialist teacher. His pupil-teacher ratio was about one teacher to ten children; higher than he would have desired. He lamented the

short length of service given by many of the teachers he had trained and the lack of male teachers. Every year he trained teachers, thinking the number would be sufficient to replace teachers resigning and every year he seemed to be short of specialist teachers and forced to employ relievers. With rising rolls and the relatively short length of time female teachers gave after certification, his problems were accentuated. In later years he noted that if each teacher had given three year's service after training his staffing problems would have been practically non-existent! When the school broke for the Christmas holidays at the end of 1945 however, one long-serving teacher retired after 41 year's service. Mr L.P. Longuet, a teacher who had served under every director broke the last remaining link with the first director, Mr G. van Asch. Could the relatively short length of service given by staff from Pickering's time on, be attributed to the greater preponderance of female staff? Could it be that the family or community feeling of the school was lost as the roll increased so dramatically? Perhaps the strain and the intense effort involved in teaching the deaf forced people to give up earlier than in previous periods. Or was it that once Pickering's dream of establishing a course for specialist teachers of the deaf came to fruition, he created another problem for himself - namely a group of competent teachers with dual qualifications who were in demand for the additional skills they could bring to general classroom teaching? In later years this specialist qualification together with the experience of teaching handicapped children helped many teachers on their climb to the desirable positions in education.

In retrospect, perhaps all four factors contributed to his problem but the last, the ability to transfer and hence not to be tied to the institution, could have been the most critical.

By March 1946 no less than 84 pupils ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the total school population) had been born between 1 July 1938 and 30 June 1939. In his 1946 report Pickering referred to the rubella epidemic for the first time:

> From conversation with parents it appeared to be more than coincidence that in many cases the mother had contracted either measles (morbilli) or German measles (rubella) in the early stages of pregnancy. To obtain more definite information on this point a questionnaire was forwarded recently to all parents of young deaf children admitted or waiting admission to the Department's schools. Of 103 replies received no less than 59 mothers had morbilli or rubella in the early stages of pregnancy. Forty-four of the children concerned were born between 1/11/38 and 31/7/39 with smaller but well defined groups in 1941 and 1943. Recent medical research in Australia reveals the high incidence of congenital defect (heart disease, buphthalmous, cataract, deafness and mental deficiency) among children born of mothers who contracted rubella in early pregnancy. It is suggested that the rubella is of a previously unknown type.[15]

Although this reference by Pickering in 1946 to a rubella epidemic is the first note in New Zealand of the disease's debilitating effects, the connection between rubella and congenital birth defects was made in Australia in 1942.[16] It is probable that waves of rubella swept throughout the world prior to the epidemics in 1939-40, but this epidemic was the most severe ever recorded up to

---

15. Principal's Report, Summer 1946.

16. C.Swan, A.L. Tostevin, B. Moore, H. Mayo & G.H. Barham-Black. Congenital Defects in Infants following Infectious Diseases during pregnancy with Special Reference to Rubella. Medical Journal of Australia. 1943 Vol.2 Page 201.

that time.[17]

In 1946 parents of pupils at the school expressed the wish wish to form a parent's group. After discussion with Pickering a Parent-Teachers Association was formed. Pickering later maintained it had been formed by a group of parents who felt dissatisfied about the organisation and running of the school. A.B.Allen reports that one parent of a pupil at the school at this time commented:

> A section of the parents questioned Mr Pickering's qualifications even to the extent that investigations were carried out in England searching into his background. The type of teaching being done at the school was questioned. The result of this was that the P.T.A. collapsed and the teaching staff became very inward looking.[18]

Pickering himself recorded his antagonism to the first P.T.A. and his suspicions about its purpose. There seemed:

> a tendency among some members to regard meetings of the Association as an opportunity to criticise both the Department and the school. The future attitude of the Principal and his staff towards the Association will depend upon the extent to which parents are prepared to co-operate with the school.[19]

Parents felt the P.T.A. was a legitimate vehicle to voice their anxiety about the conditions and education their children were receiving at Sumner. Pickering however, felt their criticisms were personal attacks on himself, the school and the Department. This antagonism toward the care and education of the deaf children had begun to simmer beneath the surface as more and more young deaf children were admitted to Sumner. The PTA collapsed in 1947.

---

17. Edith Whetnall & D.B.Fry. The Deaf Child, London. Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1964.

18. A.B.Allen. They Hear with the Eye. Wellington School Publications Branch 1980. Page 79.

19. Principal's Report, Sumner 1947. Page 4.

It was to be ten years (1957) before a new P.T.A. was formed. But then Pickering had complete control of the new P.T.A. and it was a very formal organisation.

By 1947 the staffing position in the boarding school had become critical. There was also an acute shortage of boarding space. Pickering had made an effort to alleviate the boarding space problem by instituting a special bus service for Christchurch children so that more could attend as day pupils. But some admissions had to be deferred, probably up to ten in number, becase there was just not enough space for the children. By July 1947, however, Pickering was forced to take action on the staffing issue. His move was bold. He decided to take his most competent senior teacher, Miss E.M. Woods, to serve as acting matron. By October he felt the institution was running smoothly enough to appoint a new matron, Miss E.M. Williams. His action in seconding a most highly competent teacher to the position of matron demonstrates the importance he placed on good institutional care and yet Pickering rarely encouraged meetings between hostel staff, teachers and parents. While Pickering himself had a superb knowledge of each child and his family history, he actually discouraged teachers from having contact with the families of their classes. This attitude was obvious even in later years. Teachers were not actively encouraged to associate or liaise with hostel staff. Since there seems to have been no professional reason for his attitude, it is assumed he felt that his own excellent personal knowledge of each child was sufficient.

But while Pickering himself, at this point was reasonably happy with the functioning of the institution, the parents continued to voice discontent behind the scenes. At times

liaison between home and school seemed to be sadly lacking. One pupil admitted during 1947 was Ann Allott.[20] She recalls how she became very ill but her parents in Invercargill were not informed. On a weekend visit to relations in Christchurch, the family doctor was called because of the poor state of health she was in. She was sent to run around the block by the doctor and then examined and put to bed. The next day at dawn, she was flown home to Invercargill. On the journey home her legs and arms began to swell. She was taken to hospital with rheumatic fever and was off school for nearly two years. Having been told she was not permitted to write home saying she had been sick while in residence, her parents had been shocked by this episode.

Years later in 1954, Pickering was moved to comment:

> In retrospect it is clear that throughout the 1940's the unstable conditions which prevailed created an insecure environment which was not in the best interests of the pupils.[21]

The changing nature of the top institution staff must have, indeed, severely undermined the quality of the care available to the young deaf children. The magnitude of the problem can only begin to be gauged when one considers that between 1943 and 1948 (5 years) there was a total of eight matrons in control. As well, the housemaids and domestic staff were changing constantly. The effect of this instability on small deaf children miles away from families with little language for communication is likely in some cases to have been traumatic.

---

20. Interviewed at Invercargill, June 1981.

21. Principal's Report, Sumner 1954.

Meanwhile parents of hearing impaired children in Dunedin and Wellington pressed for educational provisions in their respective areas. Pickering however, did not favour the establishment of classes for partially deaf children away from Sumner. In a letter to the Otago Education Board he wrote:

> On available evidence I do not favour the establishment of classes for hard of hearing pupils in the main centres because in the largest cities the number of cases would be small. In this school, at the moment, there are not more than five hard of hearing pupils from Otago. All other pupils from Otago would, even with an ideal classification, be placed in a school for the deaf such as Sumner.
>
> The history of the speech and hard of hearing class in Auckland suggests a further danger. Whereas in Dunedin, work was more and more concentrated on the speech defective pupils involving clinical work, in Auckland the teacher concerned herself more with the hard of hearing and ceased to provide for the speech defective pupils. At one state there was a class of hard of hearing pupils, but ultimately, giving way to pressure from parents who made no distinction between deaf and hard of hearing, the more seriously deaf cases were admitted. In effect the class intended to deal with hard of hearing and speech defective pupils became a small school for the deaf dealing with the same varying types as the Sumner school but without the facilities for organisation into groups of approximately equal attainment.
>
> Parents rarely make the same distinction between the deaf and hard of hearing that is clear to a teacher of the deaf, and would be certainly more concerned to place a child in a school nearer to home than to ensure that the pupil was placed in an environment most suitable to his type and degrees of deafness.
>
> The solution to the problem appears to be the establishment of a separate boarding school for hard of hearing pupils in the same districts and under the same control as the present schools for the deaf. This would ensure that geographical considerations did not influence parents in their attitude towards pupils' admissions and that the decision as to which school a child attended would be made by the principal of the schools.

---

22. Pickering/Otago Education Board, 3 December 1946. National Archives. (Copy in possession of the writer).

At the request of the Wellington Education Board, Pickering examined the number of cases that would be eligible for a partially hearing class in Wellington. He advised that the number of cases did not justify the establishment of a special class.[23] He also recommended that a discussion of the problems of measuring hearing would be opportune. Pickering seemed reluctant to develop classes away from Sumner during this period, preferring to oversee classes at Sumner.

During his first decade in office, Pickering had many people visit his school. In the middle of 1948, the school and the deaf community seemed to have received great pleasure from the visit of Miss Helen Keller, the deaf-blind American. She was accompanied by her companion, Miss Polly Thompson. In Christchurch they visited the Sumner School for the Deaf and attended a reception at the Deaf Club. (The Deaf Club had been established in 1922 by a former pupil of the school, Mr John T. Kinnear). At the school Miss Keller visited each room, touching the children as they were introduced and running her hands gently over their hair and faces. The publicity associated with the visit of Helen Keller was probably of great value to the deaf children at a time when the handicap of deafness was often misunderstood.

Regular visits were also begun by a psychologist, Mr A.B. Allen. These visits were undertaken to examine and report on abnormal or difficult children. According to Allen[24] Pickering was

---

23. Pickering/Director of Education, 7 November 1950. National Archives. (Copy in possession of the writer).

24. Interviewed at Christchurch, May 1981.

Miss Helen Keller, her companion Miss Polly Thompson
and the oldest and youngest pupil at Sumner, 1948

sceptical about the value of psychological testing at first, but once he accepted its value he was an enthusiastic advocate of classifying children by this method.

During 1950 the school had a visit from Drs A.W.G. and I.R. Ewing. The pleasure this visit afforded Pickering can be imagined. He had trained under these world authorities in deaf education twenty years earlier in Manchester. In his report for the year of 1950 Pickering wrote:

> While the visiting experts found much to praise and admire in standards of work achieved, they also criticised particularly the lack of nursery school facilities and the inadequate attention so far given to auditory training with the partially deaf.....apart from much helpful advice received from Dr and Mrs Ewing it should be placed on record that the whole staff obtained inspiration and stimulation from their visit.[25]

Pickering's skill as a principal must have created a favourable impression during the Ewings' visit, for Allen outlines a meeting between Dr C.E. Beeby, the then Director of Education, Lewis Anderson, the then Superintendent of Child Welfare and the Ewings. At this meeting the Ewings told Dr Beeby:

> that it was their considered opinion that Herbert Pickering had turned out to be, of all their former students, the best principal of any school they had seen.[26]

Pickering himself obviously obtained great stimulation from the visit. The professional isolation associated with his position must have been felt acutely at times, and there were few contacts

---

25. Principal's Report, Sumner, 1950.

26. A. B. Allen. op cit. Page 66.

with other professional deaf administrators (such as the Ewings afforded.)[27]

The Ewings visited the two State schools for the Deaf in Auckland and Sumner, and the Roman Catholic School for the deaf (St.Dominic's) at Wellington between 25 September and 2 October 1950. They had conferences with the Director of Education, his staff and the principals of the Schools for the Deaf, as well as meetings with the New Zealand League for the Hard of Hearing in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. In their report to the Hon. R.M. Algie, Minister of Education, on the State schools for the Deaf. the Ewings wrote:

> It is an outstanding feature of these schools that from their establishment their aim has been to give every deaf child the opportunity of learning to understand speech through lipreading and to talk. In both schools we found among the teaching staff complete unanimity in working to fulfil this aim. In neither school have we found any evidence of a deaf and dumb tradition.
>
> We were informed that the majority of the 300 pupils in the two schools were first admitted after the age of 5 years and a considerable proportion after the age of 6 years. Up to the present time, each school has provided in a single unit for the education, both of children who are without speech on admission and also for partially deaf pupils who unable to make satisfactory progress in an ordinary school,but have some naturally acquired speech. There is no separate kindergarten unit. Taking these circumstances into account, we consider the standard of achievement throughout the schools as a whole to be very good indeed, as regards both lipreading and the desire to talk. We found the pupils confident in their contacts with us as visitors, and spontaneous in their use of speech. Under these headings we consider the attainment of the pupils at Sumner to be better than that of those in any other all-age school for the deaf that we have ever visited.

---

27. Pickering was able to attend various conferences on deaf education but most of these occurred during the latter part of his career. In 1958, he visited the University of Manchester as New Zealand's representative at the International Congress on the Modern Treatment of Deafness.

> We were impressed by the high personal qualities of the teaching staffs of the two schools and by their grasp of essential principles involved in the education of deaf children. We are informed that Mr H. Pickering, Principal of the Sumner School, has been responsible for the selection and training of the teachers for both schools and would congratulate the Department on the degree of success that he has achieved. We were also full of admiration for the way in which Mr Pickering has aroused the interest and secured the co-operation of the Matron and Domestic Staff in furthering the children's use of lip reading and speech out of school.[28]

There were however some areas which the Ewings had grave reservations about; namely the lack of pre-school education for the deaf children and the lack of auditory education given to the children. They wrote:

> In both schools, as at present organised, there is a complete absence of specific provision for the education of young deaf children at the kindergarten stage. There are scarcely any facilities for auditory training. Throughout the two schools, in our opinion, the curriculum is too narrow and there is a need to provide, for the pupils within each age range, a greater variety of interests, activity and experience, both in the classroom and during out-of-school hours. In neither school is there a library, and we feel that greater stress should be laid on the need to develop in as many pupils as possible, capacity to read for pleasure and information.[29]

They recommended that:

> In view of the outstanding success resulting from the provision of earlier training and education for deaf children in nursery and kindergarten schools in Britain and the United States of America, urgent consideration be given to the need for establishing kindergarten schools for the deaf in association, first with the School for the Deaf at Sumner and later, with the proposed new School for the Deaf at Auckland.
>
> That classrooms, equipment and out-of-door facilities be provided to enable the modern combination of varied free activities with educational techniques to develop comprehension of speech through lipreading and part-hearing and the encouragement of spontaneous attempts to talk.

---

28. A.W.G. Ewing and Irene R. Ewing/Minister of Education. Report on the Education of the Deaf in N.Z. 1950. National Archives. (Copy in possession of the writer).

29. Ibid.

> That the need for attendance of deaf children in special Kindergarten Schools be formally recognised and that permissive attendance be encouraged from the age of three years.
>
> That children be retained in the special Kindergarten Schools up to the age of seven years to ensure continuity in educational treatment and progressive adaptation of the training given to their needs under the same teaching staff.[30]

It was to be 1955 before this recommendation was implemented. Besides a lack of pre-school facilities the Ewings felt that there was an urgent need to establish some form of advisory service for parents of pre-schoolers. This suggestion was not implemented until 1957 when the first four visiting teachers of the deaf - later renamed advisers on deaf children - were trained.

Of great concern to the Ewings was the fact that many partially deaf as well as severely deaf children were being educated in the same environment. It was possible in England for those children to be educated separately; a development the Ewings favoured strongly. They therefore recommended to the Minister of Education:

> That the existing provision of two special schools (each of which admits both deaf and partially deaf children) be re-organised to provide units at Sumner and Auckland, whose aim will be to fit as many of their pupils as possible to enter normal schools after a period of full-time special educational treatment that includes a combination of auditory training with training in lipreading.
>
> That admission to these new units be open to promising oral pupils who have passed successfully through the proposed Kindergarten Schools for the Deaf and also, in suitable cases to partially deaf children whose handicap has been ascertained through the proposed surveys of hearing.
>
> That other deaf pupils be organised in units to be described as "Oral Schools for the Deaf".
>
> That the classification of pupils into these groups be made by the Principals of the Schools on the basis of systematic rankings of the abilities and achievement of the pupils, and that the co-operation of the School Psychologists of the Department be sought to institute the use of suitable mental tests.

---

30. Ibid.

> That both in the Primary Oral Schools and in the Oral Schools the curriculum be broadened by the use of activity methods and by the provision of wider and varied experiences as a basis for the development of speech and language among the pupils: a more extensive provision for reading and the establishment of school libraries is also recommended.
>
> That, in the Primary Oral Schools, the curriculum be planned to approximate very closely to that of ordinary Primary Schools.[31]

These recommendations led later (1954) to the establishment of units for deaf children in ordinary schools.

In the light of our knowledge of deaf education today, the Ewings' report was an enlightened document. Many of the problems outlined by them, eg. the lack of pre-school guidance, were problems felt acutely by parents. The problem of the education of partially hearing children had been a particularly difficult question - many parents preferring to have their children educated in local schools rather than board them at Sumner. One can appreciate the reluctance of parents to send their young partially deaf children to board at Sumner. Many parents shifted to Christchurch to enable their children to attend as day pupils. Pickering often admonished parents who refused to send their partially deaf children to Sumner. He also laid part of the blame at the feet of education authorities for persevering too long when the children should have been given specialist teaching. In his 1952 report he stated:

> It is clear that until there is a planned scientific programme of ascertainment of loss of hearing in children attending public schools, followed up by expert guidance, we shall make no headway toward solving this difficult problem of partially deaf children entering school several years later than would be considered reasonable.[32]

---

31. Ibid.

32. Principal's Report, Sumner, 1952.

These thoughts were expressed several years before the advent of planned hearing tests in schools.

Numbers admitted to Sumner continued to rise. The situation became desperate. By 1952 the authorities had been convinced of the need for additional classroom space. A new block of four classrooms (specially designed for the use of group hearing aids) and a cooking room were constructed. The high school today uses these same buildings. It was now possible to provide for more appropriate educational and auditory experiences using these improved facilities. In 1950 a new dormitory wing to accommodate 20 boys had been built at Boys' House. This had only accentuated the lack of teaching space so the new classrooms were a very welcome addition to the school, and meant that classes no longer had to take place in workshops and playrooms as had been the case. Jeanne Edgar taught at Sumner from 1950 to 1954. She remembers:

> (There was) very little play equipment. We made most of our own teaching aids. I taught the 'basics', 3 to 5 years, and made curtains for my classroom. I also made sleeping mats for the children to rest on the floor etc. We had little help from the Department in those days, despite frequent requests. Always, during my teaching years, I had to train students as well.[33]

Of the 181 children at Sumner in 1954, a total of 49 were day pupils, the remaining 132 being boarders. Official approval was given by the Department to admit three year old children as day pupils although these children had been unofficially admitted by Pickering for ten years. Day pupils were also admitted in 1954 to a Special Class for the Partially Deaf which had opened at Thorndon School, Wellington. This class was the forerunner of

---

33. Edgar/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer).

many such units throughout the country which were established by Pickering, in response to a recognised need.

The school programme continued in its "language and experience method". Group work and nature study were given added emphasis. There were few teaching aids but every opportunity was taken to capitalise on events and experiences which came the children's way. Such experiences are remembered today by ex-pupils as high-lights of their days at Sumner. Ann Allott[34], for example, remembers vividly lollies being dropped from a top-dressing plane on to the school paddock for the excited pupils in 1952.

By the end of 1954 Pickering was able to survey new accommodation and classrooms to accommodate his deaf pupils. Problems were again looming however in the staffing sphere. In previous years when space and staff had been short, Pickering had doubled up some classes in an effort to cope with the problems he had. Behaviour problems had often been evident when he had taken this course. With classrooms now available however, he needed to find suitable staff. He was faced with finding a total of ten specialist teachers out of a total of twenty teachers for the following year - a daunting task for any principal but an even greater problem where specialist staff was involved. Each year he had trained teachers, but their numbers had never been sufficient to cover the resignations at Titirangi and Sumner. To add to an already difficult situation his most highly respected teacher trainer, Miss E.M. Woods, died at a young age in December 1953. He had had to

---

34. Interviewed at Invercargill, July 1981.

assume control of the course in the third term 1954 because of her sickness and now he was faced with the task of training teachers again in 1955. In 1954 Pickering had selected eleven students to train but only six took up positions at the school. In 1955 the position was more favourable, and the ten selected students all took up positions in 1956. However just when Pickering felt he could see the possibility of a full staff in 1955, three of his specialist teachers were involved in a motor accident, necessitating various lengths of absence from duty. Non-specialist relievers were again called upon to help in the school. This problem of providing specialist teachers for the deaf was to plague Pickering for nearly thirty years.

For the children at the school, sport continued to play an important part in their life. Out of a total of 60 boys, for example, 55 were playing competitive team sports (hockey and football) on Saturdays. Basketball teams were supported enthusiastically by the deaf girls of all ages. Cricket and swimming were popular in the summer. All children were vigorously encouraged to participate in this area where they could compete on an equal footing with hearing children. The teams participating often won their competitions. A marching team was formed towards the end of 1953, receiving much Press publicity. The team performed creditably in several open competitions. Many invitations were received for the team to give demonstrations over the years although Pickering declined most of these. The reason for this is not recorded, but it is possible that many of the invitations received would have interfered with the school work of the pupils, and therefore been unacceptable to Pickering. One trip he did consent to

Girls' Marching Team, 1957.

however, occurred in 1957 when the team travelled to Australia (amid much publicity) to compete and demonstrate their skill. The publicity engenered by this visit pleased Pickering enormously. He was satisfied that the public, in this way, were able to perceive the achievements and normality of the deaf.

A good deal of new Sonotone equipment reached the school at the end of 1954. There had been a Sonotone group aid at the school for 15 years but acoustic conditions in the classrooms were unsuitable for its use. As well, teachers were not really conversant with techniques for using it. However in 1954, four group hearing aids, an audiometer (for testing hearing) and a sound level meter (to record sound level) were received. Pickering commented:

> We have as yet much to learn about the use of high amplification group aids but reports from overseas inidcate clearly the much greater emphasis which is now being given to auditory training.[35]

In an article written by Ngaire Wilson in the "Souvenir Programme of the 75th Anniversary of the School," the initial use of these aids is explained:

> Recent years have seen great developments in the field of hearing aids and the Sumner School for the Deaf has not been slow to take advantage of this progress.
>
> This year the first of four group hearing aids has been installed at the school and is being used by a class of ten children. The group hearing aid is not semi-portable equipment to be moved from room to room, but is permantly fixed in a classroom with special acoustic properties.
>
> Special furniture is fitted in a semi-circle to allow for more efficient installation and to give all children a good view of the teacher for lipreading. Mounted on each desk is an individual control unit to enable each child to regulate the intensity of sound received by each ear, to his needs. Four microphones are mounted at regular intervals around the semi-circle. In the past it was considered sufficient if the children could hear the teacher's voice. Now it

---

35. Principal's Report, Sumner 1954.

is recognised that in teaching the deaf child it is important that he should hear his own voice and the voices of other children. These four microphones can be switched on to enable the children to hear their own and each other's voices.

Within the semi-circle is the teacher's table housing the main control panel, amplifier and microphone.

The number of children that are completely deaf to all sound is relatively small. This group hearing aid is powerful enough to enable the very severely deaf child to respond to sound. Many children received their first experience of sound greatly amplified by the group hearing aid and not in all cases was the experience regarded as pleasurable. Encouragement and careful training are necessary in the guidance of the deaf child to a pleasant and profitable use of such a hearing aid as this.

It must not be thought that the use of a group hearing aid enables the child to hear a clear pattern of speech. For many children the hearing of a perfect speech pattern is an impossibility. With training however, children can make increasingly better use of the hearing they have. Improvement can be seen after a comparatively short period of training with the group hearing aid.

Training in listening is given younger children with another new aid, a desk fitted with four sets of earphones. With this four children can be given experience in listening to sounds and voices.

It is important that anyone training a child with defective hearing should know the extent and nature of the child's hearing and it is for this end that audiometer testing is undertaken. A recent acquisition from overseas is an audiometer. With this equipment children are tested and their hearing loss on each frequency recorded.

Acquisition of modern hearing aid equipment is making children more 'hearing aid conscious' and we can look forward to improved use of residual hearing and a consequent improvement in the speech of the deaf.[36]

Individual hearing aids were issued under the 1949 Social Security Scheme, to children Pickering felt could benefit from an individual hearing aid. In essence however, this meant that only partially deaf children obtained aids and the moderately to profoundly deaf children who could also have benefitted were denied this opportunity. Aids however, were a very new experience for the teachers at Sumner, who had much to learn about their operation.

---

36. N.Wilson. New Zealand Deaf Club's Souvenir Programme 1955. Page 53

For many ex-pupils, pupils and staff the highlight of 1955 was the 75th Anniversary celebrations of the founding of the school. The anniversary should have been held in March 1955, but was held in conjunction with the Deaf Club Convention at Labour Weekend. The celebrations included a roll call, march past and formal speeches, together with a ball and a picnic. The main speakers at the official ceremony were Mr Pickering, the Mayor of Christchurch, Mr R.W. MacFarlane, the M.P. for Lyttleton, Mr H.R. Lake, the Director of Education, Dr C.E. Beeby, and the Presidents of the Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland Deaf Clubs. An official visitor was Mrs K. Menlove, the daughter of the first Director, Mr G. van Asch. She had been present at the opening of the school in 1880.

By March 1957 a significant trend had developed regarding the proportion of day pupils to boarders receiving their education at the Sumner School for the Deaf. In 1946 there were 128 boarders with only 15 day pupils. By 1957 there were 97 boarders with 54 pupils travelling daily to classes. As he did throughout his career at Sumner, Pickering realised the importance of, and endeavoured to provide the very best institutional care available. He was therefore shocked to discover that the housemaster, appointed several years earlier, had been guilty of indecent assaults on pupils. Parents however rallied around the school in the wake of the undesirable publicity which resulted, showing their confidence in the school and its administration. After a prison sentence was imposed on the housemaster recriminations began, his appointment being seriously criticised on the grounds that he had already had

Mrs Rose Carr's Infant Class, 1956

convictions for theft. It was decided after this sad incident that only married housemasters would be employed. The number of teachers in residence was increased as an interim measure until suitable married housemasters could be attached to the school.

In order to provide extra emphasis on vocational skills for the older deaf pupils, full time manual training instructors were appointed in 1957. Pickering hoped this added emphasis would encourage more pupils to stay after they reached the age of 15. Some did, but although the Education Act clearly intended that children should continue at school beyond 15, many left at that age. Part of the problem seemed to be that two years post-primary education was a necessary prerequisite to apprenticeship in certain trades. The outcome of this misunderstanding was that some parents sought admission to post primary schools because attendance would qualify their children for certain trades.

In 1957 a group of parents went so far as to enrol their deaf children at post primary schools for 1958. The parents were encouraged to reconsider their move and all children returned to the school. Although the matter of two years post-primary training was not fully resolved, added emphasis was placed on manual training and job placement. Independent officers of the Vocational Guidance Service were co-operative and helped give advice but were not always able to assist in the placement of pupils. It was usual for parents of non-urban pupils to arrange employment in the local area when schooling was completed.

A scheme was implemented at this time (1958) whereby a vocational guidance officer visited a leaver when he was

established in a job in order to report back to Sumner on how the leaver was progressing in his/her employment. Often, though, it was the initial placement that proved difficult, as acceptance by the employers of handicapped youngsters was not always forthcoming. For many years Pickering was plagued with no satisfactory system of post school placement. In 1962 however, a scheme was developed to give older pupils work experience in selected jobs, and this proved popular with parents and children.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's the acute specialist staffing problems disappeared (albeit temporarily). For the first time since the inception of the specialist course there were more first year teachers awaiting an appointment than there were positions available. Many of those trained in 1958 were lost to deaf education as they were absorbed into the field of general education when no positions arose in 1959. A two year clause was in operation by 1960 whereby students taken straight from college and thence to the deaf course, were required to teach in a school for the deaf for a two year period. This however was not able to be enforced. Usually ten students were trained though this varied from a low of six in 1960 to twelve in 1964. At the conclusion of the course some left to teach in Auckland and others were offered positions at Sumner. For 18 years students were drawn directly from the Teachers' Colleges including a small number of kindergarten teachers, but in 1961, for the first time, students were drawn from the general field of teaching. The course was reduced from one full year to only two terms in 1961. As early as April 1961 Mr Pickering expressed serious doubts about the wisdom of

excluding students direct from Teachers' Colleges. He commented:

> At this stage of their training there is little evidence that the wider background of the present groups gives them any great advantage over previous groups recruited from College. For this reason the Department's decision that the training period should be reduced to two terms only seems particularly unfortunate and even at this date it may be desirable to reconsider this question.[37]

The following year a mixture of college students and experienced teachers were selected but the length of the course was still left at two terms for the teachers from the general field, much to Pickering's disappointment. It was not until 1964 that the full year of training was again a reality. Generally, Pickering was less than completely satisfied with the trainees recruited from the general field. In 1965 he reiterated his earlier misgivings about these students:

> Our trainees recruited from the general field have not, as a rule adjusted themselves as well to the special work as recruits direct from colleges. The reason for this may well be that the best practitioners in the general field are not attracted to our work.[38]

The training programme of teachers of the day was of great interest and concern to Pickering. He realised the importance of having well qualified and enthusiastic teachers in deaf education. Even after he relinquished his position as teacher trainer in 1952 to Miss E.M. Woods (an outstandingly successful New Zealand teacher who had undertaken post-graduate work at the University of Manchester) he continued to take a part in the development of the teacher trainees. When Miss woods was forced to retire from this

---

37. Principal's Report, Sumner 1961.

38. Principal's Report, Sumner 1965

position due to ill health he again assumed control of the training course until the appointment in 1956 of Miss Pickles, an English educator of the deaf.

At the beginning of 1961 however, one area of staffing at Sumner that did worry Pickering was the home economics position. The previous teacher had begun her seventh year in that position, although with falling numbers in the upper school, it had become a part-time position. The position was advertised for over a year but because of a national shortage of home economics teachers there were no applicants. Pickering's wife, Mrs Muriel Pickering, had spent eight years as a home economics teacher of deaf children in England before her marriage. Pickering however, was adamant that he did not wish his wife to be on his staff at Sumner. Mrs Pickering recalls:

> He didn't like the idea of me being on the staff as well. However, eventually he decided that it really wasn't part of the school - it was quite a separate sort of thing, and I'd take it over temporarily until he found someone. He never found anybody. I did it for twelve years. I enjoyed it very much.[39]

An experiment was initiated in 1957 where experienced teachers were selected to train as Visiting Teachers (later to be designated as Advisers of Deaf Children). This was a totally new concept in deaf education, and was initiated to provide for the early detection and assessment of deafness and guidance to parents. Miss Pickles, who trained these visiting teachers, had worked in this area of pre-school guidance in England before her appointment as Lecturer in Deaf Education in New Zealand. Two such visiting

---

39. Interviewed at Christchurch, July 1981.

teachers were appointed in Auckland in 1957 and the two associated with Sumner School were appointed in February 1958. The visiting teacher service had many problems in its initial years; isolation of practitioners, long distances to travel to cases, suspicion about the work it would undertake on the part of some Government departments, who felt their services were being duplicated. Five additional visiting teachers were trained in 1959 and for many years to come, as the need arose, more teachers were selected and trained. At various times during the years, visiting teachers, under the control of the Sumner Principal, met to discuss policy and practices and there were also opportunities occasionally for meeting at a national level. Pickering infrequently undertook a 'tour' with one of the visiting teachers. In most areas their presence was welcomed, but in Wellington, for a great number of years, a degree of antagonism and suspicion was evident possibly because the service was launched rather hurriedly and the visiting teachers were unprepared for many of the problems they were expected to face. Moreover, in Wellington, in particular, some services which the visiting teachers were expected to provide were already being provided by other agencies. In 1962 Pickering was able to reflect on this service initiated to cater for the needs of the deaf not resident in the school at Sumner:

> In retrospect it now seems that we launched the Visiting Teacher service in too haphazard a manner and both in Dunedin...and later in the North Island, I found there had been some unfortunate oversights in making contacts and establishing relationships.[40]

---

40. Principal's Report, Sumner 1962.

There were however, many advantages with the visiting teacher service. Parents of young deaf children could be given guidance and support, hearing aids could be fitted at an earlier age, partially hearing children in ordinary schools could be supported and helped (as could their teachers) and assessments of deafness in particular children could be made. It was also due to the Visiting Teacher service that the school was made aware of the numbers of children requiring admission to the School for the Deaf. By the end of 1964 well over 400 children were under the supervision of the four visiting teachers attached to the Sumner school.

While the number of cases was large, the amount of time available for each case was, of necessity, limited. After his return to New Zealand from Manchester University, Mr Parsons, (who in 1965 replaced Miss Bodle as Lecturer in Charge of Education of the Deaf) outlined guidance work with pre-school children in England, in a lecture to the visiting teachers. Pickering concluded, after hearing of the latest developments overseas, that the approach adopted to pre-school training in New Zealand was "far too casual and optomistic...our demands of the parents are to be more exacting."[41] Pickering felt that parents should be given more help by visiting teachers and that parents should carry out more planned activities with their deaf children. Time was at a premium because of the number of parents seeking help for their children, and visits were, of necessity infrequent to individual cases.

---

41. Principal's Report, Sumner, 1965.

For those parents who were able to move to Christchurch more was available in the direction of pre-school assistance. The nursery class,officially begun in 1955 (although it was unofficially operating for several years before that date), was experimenting with a "parent-helper" scheme. On a roster basis the parents of young deaf children were encouraged to come and work with the children and teachers. Guidance was given to parents and the parent and child received mutual benefit from this arrangement. In view of Pickering's earlier antagonism to parents' involvement through the P.T.A. organisation, it is interesting that he should have encouraged the development of the parent-help scheme. It is probable that these parents had little criticism of the school for their children were fortunate enough to be day pupils. It is also probable that he saw great benefit to the children in this close home/school association, whilst he saw the P.T.A. organisation as a group potentially critical of the organisation at Sumner.

The waves of admissions and withdrawals at the School for the Deaf continued, the trends in roll numbers being more predictable with the availability of figures from the visiting teachers. From a high of 181 pupils in March 1954 the roll fell to a low of 85 pupils in March 1961. This fall off in roll numbers had been caused by children from the 1939-40 rubella outbreak enrolling during the early 1940's and with drawing during the late 1950's. Thus in 1945 nearly half the school population was under seven years, while in 1956-57 most of the roll consisted of older children. Working conditions became more congenial in the early 1960's and Pickering took time to reflect in his report of 1961.

He became more objective in regard to the problems associated with educating vast numbers of children in large groups. He wrote:

> While numbers rose rapidly from 1944-45 those responsible for administering schools for the deaf were perhaps too close to the scene to appreciate fully some of the inevitable consequences of the problem. We must realise that within the first few of those years the school suffered the loss of all its most experienced personal. In such circumstances it is not likely that many of the pupils fulfilled their true potential, notwithstanding that in the period under discussion we had on our staff teachers of great promise who worked diligently and conscientiously. Honesty compels that we should admit to a lowering of educational standards in those years.[42]

Pickering's enjoyment of his role in deaf education during the early 1960's is evident in his annual reports. He had great hopes that the school would never again be called upon to cope with such a vast influx of deaf children:

> We have grounds for hope that maternal rubella will never again cause deafness (and other disabilities) on the scale that it did in an earlier period. Thus in a recent epidemic of rubella, gamma globulin injections were used liberally... It will be a great disappointment and possibly something of a surprise if the treatments provided have not gone a long way towards achieving their aim...We are, I think, entitled to assume that it is very unlikely that we shall ever again have to provide for large groups of maternal rubella cases and we may even anticipate the complete elimination of maternal rubella as a cause of deafness.[43]

Little was Pickering to know however, that as he wrote these words a rubella epidemic was claiming the hearing of large numbers of children to be born throughout the country in 1960. During 1962 the parents of many young deaf children began to ask for help. Pickering discovered:

> ...there is a very large group of deaf children, ages approximately 2 - 4. The four visiting teachers associated

---

42. Principal's Report, Summer 1961.

43. Principal's Report, Summer 1960.

> with this school have under their supervision something like 60 - 70 cases of deaf children in the age group referred to above.[44]

Forewarned of the impending problem of large numbers of deaf children, Pickering was able to plan for their admission, a course of action which was denied him when the influx of young children from the 1939-40 epidemic poured into the school.

A further new development was initiated by the Education Department, albeit against Pickering's express wishes, when a class was started for deaf children at Wellington at the beginning of 1960. The Clifton Terrace Unit was the first for deaf children although a unit for partially hearing children had begun at Thorndon school (and later at Te Aro) as early as 1954. Later in 1960 a further unit for severely and profoundly deaf children was started at the Linwood North school in Christchurch in co-operation with the Canterbury Education Board. The very receptive headmaster of the school where this unit was sited, was Mr Jack Stevens, the nephew of Mr Ted Stevens, the second Director of the School for the Deaf from 1906 - 1923. A class was accommodated at Linwood North School for six years until lack of classroom space forced its closure. The teachers at the Christchurch unit remained on the school for deaf staff and the children remained on its roll.

By 1962 Pickering felt able to comment on the progress made by the Linwood unit. He was satisfied with the work undertaken by the children but commented:

---

44. Principal's Report, Sumner 1963.

> Administratively there have been no serious problems, but there are sufficient of a minor nature for one to feel grateful there is responsibility for only one such class and not several.[45]

Within eight years however, he was to have, not one, but eleven units under his wing outside the Christchurch area and many more within the immediate area, eg. Hagley High, Redcliffs.

At the end of 1963 the first small profoundly deaf children from the 1960 epidemic began to enter the school. Pickering was required to weigh up the odds of admitting young deaf children to Sumner for specialist training or allowing them to remain within the family circle:

> In deciding to admit several children over three years of age we have weighed up carefully the 'pros' and 'cons' in each case and made what we believe to be the best decision in the insterests of the particular children. We are not unmindful of what some parents have proved able to do through home training, but for many deaf children the specific kind of help obtained through a specialist teacher provides them with the optimum opportunity. It should be noted that in many places overseas there is a long tradition in favour of deaf children entering nursery school at or soon after three years of age.[46]

A teachers' aid was appointed to assist with the small children while the teachers took individual lessons. Clearly she was needed. The roll rose dramatically - from 85 in 1961 to 155 in 1968 - and still it continued to rise. Teachers of the deaf were employed in kindergartens in Dunedin and Invercargill where young deaf children were on the roll. Pressure was mounting for Pickering to establish more unit classes in outlying areas, eg. Dunedin. Of the 25 admissions in 1954 no fewer that 11 were under five years of age. In 1965 there were 27 admissions and 23 of

---

45. Principal's Report, Sumner 1963.

46. Principal's Report, Sumner 1963.

of these were young deaf rubella cases. Many of the teachers were young and inexperienced, but still expected to act as Associate teachers, and train student trainees. Senior positions in the school were upgraded in an endeavour to give a better career structure in the school. Additional teachers were approved where sufficient numbers of multiply-handicapped children could be identified. In an effort to identify these children the woodwork instructor, who had passed Stage III Psychology at University, was called upon to carry out psychological tests as there was a severe shortage of psychologists available for this task.

Just as Pickering began to come to grips with the influx of pupils from the 1960 epidemic he received news of a further outbreak. Gradually it became clear that the 1964-65 outbreak would probably be the worst in the history of deaf education. Many children from the 1960 epidemic were enrolled by 1965 but a significant number were being given a trial in the ordinary schools around the country. Usually this merely delayed by one or two years their inevitable admission into the School for the Deaf. Even with these late enrolments not yet presenting themselves at Sumner, in 1965 no less than 25 children enrolled were under five years of age.

Of the value of having children in an ordinary school (but part of a deaf unit or class) Pickering expressed mixed feelings in many of his reports. He felt that even if the deaf children did not fully integrate out of the classroom with hearing children there was some value in their being part of a normal hearing society. A class was established at Sumner Primary School and

classes were also arranged elsewhere. In the Wellington area in 1965 there were three classes for severely deaf children and one for partially hearing children operating at Te Aro School. Fifteen children attended these classes and the staff had the assistance of a teachers' aid. This teacher-pupil ratio was far more favourable than at the main school but there was a greater age range of children to be taught in the Wellington units.

By 1967 a high school class was established at Hillmorton High School in Christchuch. The group of several deaf girls for this unit was very carefully chosen. They achieved academic success (some passing School Certificate and one passing University Entrance) and several were included regularly in the school's A grade hockey team. A second group admitted to the same school in 1969 were not as academically orientated and caused Pickering far more problems than did the first group. It seemed that the success of these unit classes often depended on the group of children in the unit and the teacher chosen to teach the unit. Subjects in the high school for which the children combined with hearing children usually included home science, typing, art and craft, physical education and games.

It was decided in order to cope with the 1969-70 influx of young deaf children from the 1964-65 rubella epidemic, that wherever a sufficient number of children existed, a unit would be established rather than admit these children as boarders. The numbers needed to start a unit were flexible but generally there were between nine and twelve pupils in each class. However some units

Cheryl Herd and Rachael Hussey at Hilmorton High School

1969

were started with a much smaller number. In Gore, for example, five children were to start in the unit but one small deaf member was killed in an accident. The unit still opened with four pupils and a trained specialist teacher.

Pickering's plans for units were well advanced by 1970 when he was pleased to report there was a trained teacher in every unit, something he had not earlier dared to hope for. He was disturbed, however that in Education Board units there would be at least five first year teachers of the deaf. Later in 1971 he admitted that in spite of their lack of experience these teachers had measured up well to the challenge thrust upon them. But although he could breathe more easily over the 1970 Christmas vacation in the knowledge that each unit class had a trained teacher, he realised the precarious position he was in if even one teacher of the deaf, from an Education Board unit, resigned. When this happened his hands were often tied and a teacher from the general field was employed to complete the school year. Occasionally he sent his Infant Mistress from Sumner around the various units to report on teachers and to help lessen the isolation they felt.

From a teacher's point of view the units were either a great success or a rather dismal failure. Some teachers preferred to stay at the main school, but those who ventured to the units had many problems to solve. The professional isolation was often felt acutely. Not only was the teacher expected to run a successful classroom, but also he was required to give parent guidance, to speak at meetings and generally to be an ambassador for the cause of deaf children. With tact and diplomacy one was expected to

gain acceptance for a totally new concept in the ordinary school. Not all teachers wished to have the deaf children integrated with their hearing class, and not all general teachers proved suitable for this type of combined teaching. The specialist teacher with her very small class of deaf children was sometimes looked upon suspiciously by some general practitioners with their large classes of children. But for many, the units were an unforgettable experience where new methods and ideas could be tried, where there was wonderfully close co-operation with parents and where much joy was to be gained from watching the small deaf children one was teaching gain in confidence.

The units themselves were well-equipped with carpeted floors to combat noise, auditory equipment, teaching materials and other equipment one needed. The Inspector in charge of Special Education in each Education Board area had overall control of the education provided in each unit. Equipment that was not provided by the School for the Deaf or Education Boards was invaribly supplied by the Parent's Association in each region. These groups were usually extremely supportive and, in the writer's case, paid the full expenses to enable her to attend the 1971 Australasian Teachers of the Deaf Triennial Conference in Brisbane, Australia.

For children in normal schools who had hearing difficulties (usually partially hearing children) the Department of Education had approved the appointment of itinerant teachers from 1964 onwards. It was not possible to find applicants for these positions but a teacher was directed (the first case of direction) to Dunedin. Individual children receiving help were taken from their classrooms

and given speech lessons and help where difficulties had arisen in class. A similar appointment was made in Invercargill in 1968. The combined roll of the itinerant teachers in Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill had grown to 42 pupils by 1970.

In 1965 Pickering had made mention of a 'new' approach in teaching young deaf children. This was the advent of the Auditory Training Unit. This unit consisted of two microphones, a set of headphones and an amplification unit. More that any other piece of auditory equipment it allowed the child to hear his own voice. Very few of the children born in these rubella epidemics were totally deaf (perhaps 2 - 5%) but most had some very small degree of residual hearing. While hearing aids were fitted (often to babies as young as nine months), older children from about eighteen months on could put on the headphones provided with the Auditory Training Unit and the parent or teacher could speak normally into a microphone. The amplified speech could be 'heard' by the child through the headphones. The children generally loved the speech trainer as they could see and hear speech patterns. The results achieved in this individual work were far superior to those received in group work.

In the School for the Deaf even more generous staffing scales were approved for children with handicaps additional to their deafness - one teacher for 5-7 pupils in 1966. Many of the children born during these rubella epidemics did have handicaps in addition to their deafness. Some had motor co-ordination problems, visual problems, heart defects and the like. Whereas children born deaf due to hereditary factors usually had only deafness

to cope with, this was not usually the case with rubella deaf children. Most of the rubella deaf children were not classified as cases with special handicaps additional to deafness however. This classification was usually reserved for children with severe additional handicaps.

A new approach to the training of teachers was brought into effect when Mr M. B. Parsons became lecturer in Education of the Deaf at the beginning of 1965. His work in parent guidance and the teaching of young deaf children was innovative and exciting. The writer recalls the stimulàtion and sense of dedication that Parsons embued in his students. Standards were exacting and the courses run by Parsons were very demanding, but his enthusiasm and techniques almost seemed contagious -such was his ability to impart his skill and knowledge. Most students, the writer included, felt they could have listened to the sole lecturer the following year all over again, and still have been absorbed in his lectures. Today, seventeen year later, Michael Parsons seems still to capture the imagination and dedication of his students. Subjects studied during the course by the students included language development, speech, reading, history and philosophy of deaf education, audiology and hearing aids, curriculum methods, accoustic phonetics, physics of sound, accoustics and mechanics of the ear, ear nose and throat pathology and neurology. As well frequent classroom practice in units and at the School for the Deaf was given, and a familiarisation trip to Kelston was undertaken during the year. When trainees were at Sumner on teaching practice, Pickering took the lectures on the History of Deaf Education.

A further appointment in 1965 was that of Mr A.B. Allen as Inspector of Schools with full-time responsibility for special education. He spent many years in the Psychological Service and was well known to both staff and pupils at Sumner. He recalls that when he joined the inspectorate he saw Pickering in a very different light - namely that of administrator rather than Principal. He recalls, that in spite of a good relationship with Pickering over nearly twenty years and in spite of being the inspector supervising the school:

> It was still three years before I was accepted sufficiently to be given a personal copy of his annual report, even though I had been working with him since 1946.[47]

For three years a copy of the annual report came via the Education Department to the supervising inspector. Such were Pickering's methods with those above him in the administration structure.

While total admissions during the mid 1960's rose due to the 1960 rubella epidemic, admissions for the year 1967 were particularly high due to the fact that seven boys and one girl were sent from St Dominic's School for the Deaf in Fielding to the Sumner School for the Deaf. These were older pupils who, Pickering concluded, came as a result of a policy at St Dominic's "not to have boys beyond about 11-12 years of age."[48] He deduced there was also a new policy, "to decline admission of children with multiple handicaps. As a state school we cannot and would not insist on the same degree of selectivity."[49].

---

47. Interviewed at Christchurch, May 1981.
48. Principal's Report, Sumner 1968.
49. Principal's Report, Sumner 1968.

St Dominic's School for the Deaf, Fielding

St Dominic's however, had over the years eased the burden for Sumner in the education of deaf children. From 1944-1952 a total of 53 children had been admitted to St Dominic's and a further 134 children from 1953-1973, bringing the total to 187 children for the 28 years it had functioned.

At the end of 1969, after much thought and planning on how he would cope with the massive 'bulge' of deaf children beginning their education, Pickering considered the year to be one "which may fairly be described as momentous in the history of deaf education".[50] He felt pleased with the manner in which the education of such a large number of deaf children had been organised. But problems were looming in the hostel. It seemed that throughout his time as principal, in years when there were low numbers in residence at the hostel he had few problems. But as numbers rose all manner of problems evolved not the least of which were behaviour problems and staffing. He was moved to comment in 1971, "It is at least fortunate that in the present generation a greater proportion of our pupils than ever before are day pupils."[51]

The late 1960's and early 1970's saw a gradual transition from total control of the School for the Deaf by the Child Welfare Department to control by the Education Department. Pickering had had a very happy relationship with successive superintendents of the Child Welfare Department and was rather dubious about any benefits that could be derived by handing control to the Education

---

50. Principal's Report, Sumner 1969.

51. Principal's Report, Sumner 1971.

Department. In April 1972 the last ties were finally severed with the Child Welfare Department.

For many years the needs of very young deaf children had dominated events and planning. Once classes were established for these children, Pickering moved into areas of education to which he had had little time previously to devote attention. Courses began to be organised by advisers for teachers of normal classes that had a deaf child in their class. These were well received by the general teachers concerned. At this stage (1970) the advisers were supervising a total of 608 pupils (both pre-school and school age in normal schools). For Pickering the scale of the latest epidemic became obvious in 1970, for when rolls were collated, a total of 319 children were supervised by him. Besides Christchurch, units had been established in Napier, Palmerston North, Porirua, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Te Aro (also Wellington), Nelson, Timaru, Dunedin, Gore and Invercargill. Many more were established north of Napier but they were under the control of the Auckland School for the Deaf.

After having often held great hopes for immunisation campaigns in the past, Pickering became more guarded on the question of further epidemics:

> We dare not predict beyond four years. If the high hopes held for a successful immunisation campaign against rubella and measles are justified, it is possible we shall be spared any further wave of cases.[52]

---

52. Principal's Report, Sumner 1970.

The immunisation campaign referred to was carried out in all schools and school-age children, both boys and girls were immunised against rubella. It was not many years later however, before it was realised that an unsatisfactory level of immunisation was being achieved in pre-school children, and that pregnant mothers were not going to be sufficiently protected by this plan of attack on the virus. Of late, it has been decided to immunise girls only before they reach child-bearing age, and also to campaign for the immunisation of women of child-bearing age (before they become pregnant).

The writer well remembers the campaign Pickering referred to. Her class of young boys and girls were lined up to receive their rubella injections in 1970 to protect others against the handicap of deafness from which they suffered. The immunisation procedure seemed rather ironic especially as its purpose could not be explained to the children.

Originally Pickering thought that once the 1964-65 rubella group had been catered for in Education Units, these units could be phased out. But as time passed he realised this concept needed to be revised and that a great deal of flexibility was needed in all deliberations on the question of educational provisions for deaf children.[53] In January 1973, Pickering wrote his report for the previous year. He concluded:

---

53. While he was professionally responsible for a total of 350 deaf children in 1972, there were no children requiring admission to the boarding school in 1973 - a situation without parallel in the history of the school.

Mrs Pauline Stewart's Class, Goro Main Deaf Unit, 1971.

> The year ahead is one of special significance for the writer, as it will bring to an end his career in the Public Service. Mention of this is made mainly to emphasise the need for carefully timetabled action by the Department not only to appoint a replacement but to ensure that consequential vacancies which will probably also be in key positions, will also be filled in good time.[54]

His final year however was suddenly cut short when he died of a heart attack on 17 July 1973 at the age of sixty-four years. It seemed somehow appropriate that such a dynamic administrator who had devoted his entire professional life to the cause of deaf education should pass away whilestill in control of the vast educational services he had shaped during his thirty-three years in office. During his time as Principal he had been responsible for the introduction of a more synthetic approach to speech and language development and for the training of specialist teachers. He had also been instrumental in introducing hearing aids and other auditory equipment. He had helped engineer the development of the Itinerant Teacher Service, the Advisory Service and Deaf Units in ordinary schools. When rubella epidemics attacked scores of children in 1939, and the early 1940's, 1960 and 1964-65 he had organised his resources so that all were given the best education he was able to provide. In 1946, 90% of the deaf children receiving education were boarders. This had dropped to 64% by 1957 and in 1972 only 36.5% boarded away from home. He developed over the years, partly one suspects through necessity but also through compassion, a philosophy which emphasised the need for a normal home life for deaf children while they received specialist education. His

---

54. Principal's Report, Summer 1973.

influence had been nation wide and the passing years had mellowed the rather agressive approach he had often earlier adopted. The ambitious Englishman who had crossed the world in 1940 to control and shape our educational services for the deaf had, indeed, proved to be a dynamic influence in his chosen field.

CHAPTER 6

Provision for Deaf Education beyond Sumner

In September 1942, sixty-three deaf pupils assembled at the Auckland School for the Deaf to resume their schooling following the Army's confiscation of their school at Sumner. Included in this group of sixty-three boarders were nine pupils from the Myers Park School, which was closed by the Auckland Education Board. Because the authorities had been unable to secure a suitable building in Christchurch to house all the deaf children, it was decided to lease two buildings, one in Christchurch and one in Auckland. All children who lived north of a line drawn across the middle of the North Island had been directed to Auckland. A senior master, Mr Cyril L. Allen, was appointed to administer the school.

Allen had been born in Springston, Canterbury in 1904. He had moved to Sumner when his father had taken up a position at the Sumner Public School. A friendship with a deaf child in his neighbourhood had stimulated his interest in the plight of the deaf. After completing his schooling at Christchurch Boys' High School, he gained a position as a pupil teacher. He joined the staff of the Sumner School for the Deaf in 1924. In 1928 he was selected to represent New Zealand as a runner at the Olympic Games but lack of funds prevented his participation. Allen had been teaching at Sumner for eighteen years when Pickering asked him to take charge of the school in Auckland. The building secured for the deaf pupils was the former Titirangi Hotel. It was totally unsuitable for use as a residential

school for the deaf pupils; having little space for recreational purposes and being situated as it was, on sloping ground. Accidents were commonplace. In fine weather bush walks, beaches and playing fields could be used but in adverse weather, facilities were severely restricted. Jeanne Edgar, a teacher at Titirangi in the early days of its establishment recalls that, "Children played in the concrete basement and there was nothing there but an odd heap of coal."[1] The situation was little better in the boarding establishment. In the multi-storied building supervision of children was difficult. In every year, other than the first year, the building was severely overcrowded. Epidemics spread like wildfire through the building.[2] With the sudden influx of children due to the 1939/40 rubella epidemic, boarding accommodation and teaching space became so critical that in 1945 Pickering warned:

> Unless additional buildings, whether permanent or temporary... are available in February 1946, it may be necessary to refuse admission of five year old day pupils.[3]

Pickering was asked to recommend some solution to the problem of overcrowding since in the wartime economy, additional buildings were not readily forthcoming. He recommended:

> that enquiries be made immediately as to the possibility of transporting 16 or 20 pupils (present boarders) to and from Titirangi by special bus.[4]

---

1. Edgar/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of writer)
2. There was a large number of cases of "summer Sickness" & whooping cough in 1944. As well there was an outbreak of diptheria. 8 positive cases of diptheria were admitted to hospital. The school lacked basic facilities such as a sick bay.
3. Principal's Report, Sumner 1945.
4. Pickering/Director of Education, 13 March 1945. (Copy in possession of writer.)

Even with the implementation of this recommendation however, overcrowding persisted. The dispersal of bedrooms over three floors did not help the situation. Little playroom space was available, and for teachers conditions were little better. Jeanne Edgar recalls:

> Our entire school, apart from the infants' room, which was in the main building, was the ex-museum (small) which had been part of the hotel. It was a stone building in the grounds and for the school we had gibralta board partitions dividing the building into six classrooms, very small. The dividers did not even reach the ceiling, so you can imagine the noise.
> We had to teach all day with the lights on in the rooms because there wasn't enough natural light. There were wooden floors. The infants' room was the ex-cocktail room in the hotel, to the right of the front door. This room did have lino-type floor covering and two long narrow windows opening on to the street or pavement outside.
> It was the sorting out group[5] - the truly deaf from the spastic, deaf-blind etc. including brain damaged children and children of low mentality. Strangely, and because, I guess, we were all totally immersed in our work and because we lived with the children and shared their lives, the standard of speech and lipreading was high.[6]

Pickering however, was not quite so sure about the standards that were being achieved. He expressed concern at the lack of supervision he was able to give to his staff both at Titirangi and Sumner:

> It is necessary to point out that for various reasons it is not possible at present for me to give the individual attention to each class and teacher that would be desirable. Approximately 18 weeks of my time is spent in each school, the remaining four weeks of the school year being devoted to visits to speech clinics or surveys of districts where

---

5. As early as 1914 the Education Act (1914) had sought to define classes of deaf children who could be admitted to the School for the Deaf, but in practice many multiply handicapped children continued to be admitted on trial.

6. Edgar/Stewart, 1 July 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer).

> speech clinics may possibly be opened. Moreover, while at Titirangi, three schools days weekly are spent entirely training students.[7]

In each class at Titirangi there were approximately fifteen pupils although this varied from class to class. Besides Allen, in the first year there were three other teachers, one of whom was a trained teacher of the deaf. Teacher trainees helped to relieve some pressure but when Pickering was at Titirangi, they were involved in lectures. Overall however, the sudden influx of large numbers of deaf children caused many problems.

There had been a proposal to build classrooms on a New Lynn site[8] but within a short time[9] it was realised this would do little to solve the overall problem of grossly inadequate conditions. Month by month the roll continued to rise from 63 pupils in 1942 to 102 by 1947.[10] A long term solution was considered essential.

On 14 June 1946 the position of principal of the Auckland School for the Deaf was advertised in the Education Gazette. It had been decided by the Education Department formally to split the school into two separate entities. Pickering gives no indication of his thoughts on the matter other than to say that

---

7. Principal's Report, Sumner 1945.
8. Pickering/Director of Education, 7 June 1945. (Copy in possession of the writer).
9. Pickering/Acting Superintendent (Child Welfare Dept) 13 March 1946.
10. The combined roll of Sumner and Titirangi had risen from 103 in 1940 to 238 in 1946. (This increase was principally due to the influx of 1939/40 rubella children.)

statistics pertaining to both schools should be referred to and, if necessary, reported upon by the Senior Principal so that trends could be followed closely.[11] From 1946 onward however, the schools were considered as separate entities and reports from each principal were forwarded separately to the Director of Education.[12] Six applications, including that of Allen, were received for the position of principal which carried a salary of £740 per annum[13] The Education Department recommended that the Public Service Commissioner appoint Dr Ernest Lund to the position of principal. The Department wrote:

> Dr Ernest Lund is easily the best applicant and has academic qualifications unequalled among teachers of the deaf. He has had adequate practical teaching experience in a large school for the deaf (Sydney),, and is familiar with the work being done in the best English schools in which he was undertaking research work from 1931-41. While in England he completed the Diploma in Education of the Deaf issued by the National College of Teachers of the Deaf, having previously held the "Overseas" of that recognised examining body. Lund had held important positions in Government (Commonwealth) Departments in Australia. From Recent experience in the Acoustic Research Laboratory, Sydney, he has acquired in a field where important advances have been made, up-to-date information which can be used with great advantage in this country. Mr Pickering, Principal of the Schools for the Deaf, Sumner

---

11. Principal's Report, Sumner 1947.

12. Those in control of the Auckland School for the Deaf were:

C. L. Allen	(1942 - 1946)	Senior Master
Dr D. E. Lund	(1946 - 1948)	Principal
C. L. Allen	(1948 - 1950)	Acting Principal
C. L. Allen	(1950 - 1961)	Principal
Dr D.M.C. Dale	(1962 - 1965)	Principal
L. B. Hogue	(1965)	Acting Principal
A. J. Young	(1965 -)	Principal

13. This salary of £740 was only £140 more than the first principal's van Asch had received 66 years earlier.

> and Titirangi, has known Dr Lund since 1939, and came to know him well during his recent visit to New Zealand. Mr Pickering is impressed with his manner with deaf children, while he is invariably tactful and considerate in his attitude towards people. His training as a psychologist is an obvious asset. He has the ability to accept responsibility and to use sound judgment. The Department will be fortunate to attract to its service a man so eminently fitted for the Position of Principal of a School for the Deaf.[14]

Dr Lund commenced his duties in August 1946. Not withstanding his excellent academic qualifications, within two years he had resigned from his position to teach in a small country school in New Zealand and later to travel to Australia. During his term as principal however, he helped four of his staff gain the overseas examination conducted by the National College of Teachers of the Deaf. The short length of service given by Dr Lund was a great disappointment for the Department as his experience and qualifications augured well for the future of deaf education. Allen immediately assumed control as acting principal.

At this time Mr D. G. Ball was acting Director of Education in the absence of Dr. C. W. Beeby. Mr Ball wrote to Pickering concerning the advisability of appointing Allen as principal at Auckland. Pickering advised the Department to move cautiously and recommended that the position be advertised in England, not necessarily with a view to making an appointment from there, but to give the Department sufficient time to assess Allen's work while acting principal.

---

14. Education Department/Public Service Commissioner, 9 July 1946. National Archives. E/19/16/52. (Copy in possession of the writer).

Pickering wrote:

> ...The test would be a severe one as the Titirangi school is faced with serious problems in the near future. If Mr Allen came successfully through such a test, the Department could proceed with his appointment with full confidence... he might well prove a more successful Principal than one with high paper qualifications.[15]

The main stumbling block to Allen's appointment was the fact that, although he had passed the Overseas examination of the National College of Teachers of the Deaf, to obtain the full certificate he would be required to pass the practical examination in England. Allen's only N.Z. qualification was a 'D' Certificate.[16] Furthermore, Pickering was apprehensive about what Dr Beeby's re-action would be if, when he returned to New Zealand he found that Allen had been appointed to Titirangi. Pickering contended that Dr Beeby had been at school and Training College with Allen and would have contested his appointment on the grounds of his ability.[17]

Allen's trial as principal was a severe one indeed. The problems of educating such a large influx of children seemed almost insurmountable at times. The Department procrastinated and no appointment was made throughout the whole of 1949. A Parent-Teachers Association was formed at the end of 1949 and communicated its dissatisfaction to the Department at the lack of action on the question of the principal's position.[18] It was finally decided to appoint Allen in 1950.

---

15. Pickering/Ball, 3 September 1948. National Archives E 19/16/52. (Copy in possession of the writer).
16. Allen did later travel overseas to gain additional qualifications.
17. Pickering/Ball, 3 September 1948. National Archives E 19/16/52. (Copy in possession of the writer).
18. Director of Education. Memorandum. School for the Deaf, Titirangi: Appointment of Principal, 20 December 1949.

By that date the problem of accommodation had become critical. Dr A. W. G. Ewing and Irene R. Ewing visited Titirangi in the course of their New Zealand wide survey on deaf education in N.Z. They reported:

> We have been informed that when the school was established in 1942 it was intended that the building should be used only temporarily as a School for the Deaf. During the past eight years, the number of pupils has increased from about 60 to 136 of whom 78 are boarders. The main building stands immediately on a highway. We learned that passers-by sometimes make use of the children's lavatories. This building is situated on a hillside, involving the frequent use throughout the day by young deaf children of steep flights of stone steps or of a rough and equally steep pathway. The amount of space available in the main building is altogether too small for the number of boarders, and there is no sitting-room for members of the teaching staff. We were informed that there is no sick ward and that, in cases of illness, it has been found necessary to arrange for children to sleep in a corridor to free a dormitory for the sick patients. Temporary huts provide classrooms which are so noisy and reverberant that the teaching of speech to the pupils is extremely difficult. These rooms are so small that activity methods of teaching are impracticable.
>
> By levelling part of a field, an attempt is being made to provide more space for outdoor games, but in wet weather some of the children have to be sent to play in the former hotel garage which is also used to house a motor truck and as a store. Many of the present pupils have had no opportunity to attend any school that is normally housed or equipped. We regret that we must condemn the physical environment in which these children are growing up.[19]

---

19. A. W. G. Ewing and Irene R. Ewing/Minister of Education. Report on the Education of the Deaf in New Zealand, 1950. (Copy in possession of the writer).

The table below graphically illustrates the difficulties at Titirangi. Between 1942 and 1950 the deaf population at that school increased by 100%.

TABLE 4

Year	Pupils
1942	67
1943	70
1944	72
1945	88
1946	95
1947	102
1948	97
1949	119
1950	134

Some admissions had to be deferred and the waiting list lengthened,[20] but the Ewings nevertheless considered the pupils to be making "satisfactory progress in spite of the difficulties."[21]

In 1951 the active and enthusiastic P.T.A. discovered a group of hitherto unaccounted for deaf children in the Rotorua area. Several were receiving help from the N.Z. League for the Hard of Hearing. In other areas, groups of children, often severely deaf, were being educated in their local school and aided by the League for the Hard of Hearing. The situation reached a point in 1955 where:

> it was made plain (by the Education Department) that the League's teachers in the various centres throughout New Zealand must not cater for children of school age.[22]

---

20. Allen/Education Department, 23 August 1950. (Copy in possession of the writer).

21. A.W.G. Ewing & Irene R. Ewing/Minister of Education. Report on the Education of the Deaf in N.Z. 1950, (Copy in possession of the writer).

22. District Senior Inspector of Schools/Allen, 24 August 1955. (Copy in possession of the writer).

As a result children's names were submitted from areas such as Whangerei.

In February 1952 a side school, known as Mt Wellington Side School was opened to meet the pressing need for accommodation. A special bus which had alleviated the overcrowding at the boarding school in the early days by allowing Auckland pupils to travel to school daily, had itself become seriously overcrowded. The Mt Wellington school had been used as a residential school for boys so there were few modifications needed before the deaf pupils moved in. Soon after the building was opened it was condemned as a fire risk by the department. Space was at a premium however, and it continued to be used. The opening of this place enabled Titirangi to take all waiting admissions.

The side school was set in approximately thirteen acres. It was flat on the lower slopes with more area than at Titirangi for games and sports - a situation welcomed by the deaf pupils. Local schools were played at cricket, rugby and hockey. Even swimming baths were available to the pupils. Mr J. Bates, senior master at the school, recalls:

> The groundsman kept the playing fields in order and attended to the swimming pool. Being deaf and having been at school, he was able to help pupils with swimming and pets. The children bought themselves trolleys (and) had runs made for the trolleys down hill slopes.[23]

A constant theme in the annual reports of the school throughout the 1950's was the difficulties encountered year after year in the area of staffing. Both hostel and teaching staff were

---

23. Bates/Stewart. 5 October 1981. (Letter in possession of the writer).

often difficult to attract and usually difficult to hold. Relievers were continually employed to teach in the school. In some years, eg. 1953, a total of eight relievers were required. The total staff in that year was fifteen teachers. In the early 1960's when the roll numbers began to fall[24] the principal, Dale,[25] who succeeded Allen,[26] was able to organise a four day refresher course for teachers. This was taken by Miss A.D.Burns of the Farrar School for the Deaf, Sydney. Other courses and seminars were also organised for the teachers.

By 1966 however, the rolls had begun to rise rapidly and staffing again presented problems for the principal, Young.[27] The situation became critical by 1969 when the full force of the 1963/64 rubella epidemic was felt. In 1969 Young wrote:

---

24. The 1939/40 rubella group had left school and the 1960 rubella group had yet to be enrolled.

25. Born in New Zealand, Darcy Dale trained as a teacher of the deaf in 1949. The following year he taught at the Auckland School for the Deaf. After a period doing post graduate work at the University of Manchester, he became principal of the Auckland School for the Deaf. In 1965 he was appointed senior lecturer in education of the deaf and partially hearing children at the University of London Institute of Education. He was the A.G.Bell Association International Lecturer in 1972.

26. Mr Cyril Allen retired on 31 December 1961. He had been involved in deaf education for 38 years. After his retirement he carried out welfare work for the deaf. In 1978 he was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the deaf. He died in June 1981 at the age of 76 years.

27. Alan Young was born in Timaru on 16 April 1930. He received his education at the Pleasant Point D.H.S. After attending Dunedin Teachers' College he trained in the specialist field of deaf education at Christchurch in 1950. From 1951 to 1960 he taught at Sumner. During that period he completed his B.A.degree. A short period as principal at Kimberley Special School, Levin (1961-1963) was followed by a period as Principal at the Otorohanga School. In 1965 Alan Young was appointed Principal at the Kelston School for the Deaf.

> A serious shortage of trained teachers of the deaf during the first and second term and a subsequent succession of relieving teachers caused many problems and this was further aggravated by the number of staff absent due to illness. Only on one occasion during the first term was the school fully staffed and throughout the whole period classes had to be divided and teachers constantly had additional children in their classrooms. This situation caused many frustrations as teachers had the greatest difficulty developing continuity in their programme of work. A great strain was placed on our senior staff and regular teachers, who felt they were doing no more than gap filling during this period. The junior division which commenced with seventeen classes had only one teacher with more than one year's teaching experience at Kelston, the other teachers were either new to the school or directly from the training course.[28]

Part of the problem seemed to be that few people from the North Island applied for the specialist training course in Christchurch, and even fewer returned from the course to teach at Auckland. It became obvious that this problem would persist until a training course was established in Auckland. In 1969 such a course commenced as a temporary training course for teachers of the deaf, at Auckland Teachers' College. The course was reduced to two terms instead of a full year as was the case in Christchurch. Later the course was extended to a full year and accorded permanent status. Because of the need for large numbers of specialist teachers to educated the influx of children a dilemma arose. As the number of trainees in each intake increased, problems were experienced with maintaining the quality of the trainees. However if large numbers of trainee teachers were not trained, relievers with no experience in deaf education needed to be employed. This policy of training large numbers of students in Auckland

---

28. Principal's Report, Auckland 19691

paid dividends in some respects however.

In 1971 Young sought a continuation of the policy of placing surplus teachers in an additional capacity at the beginning of each year. He wrote:

> For a number of our children this will be the first time for some years that they have had a permanent teacher for two terms and at this stage the staffing situation for the third term appears most satisfactory. I Would strongly recommend continuation of this year's policy of providing additional teachers in February 1972.[29]

As units for the deaf opened in the North Island, trainees of an even higher calibre were needed to cope with the diverse demands of the unit situation. If even one of these teachers in a unit resigned the problems of replacing that teacher, in a country area, were often great.

In an effort to make these unit teachers feel part of the base school and to support them as much as was possible, Young endeavoured to organise a familiarisation course at the beginning of each year at Kelston. A newsletter was also distributed to these teachers, and the staff from the base school visited the units periodically in an effort to reduce their sense of isolation. Of great value also was the Teaching Media Centre, the first building of its type in New Zealand, which was opened in 1973. This centre supplied resource material to a wide variety of teachers, including those in units.

If the staffing situation in the school seemed problematic, the staffing problems in the residential section of the institution seemed virtually insurmountable. Year after year each principal was required to cope with a constantly changing staff. In

---

29. Young/District Senior Inspector of Schools, Auckland, 8 September 1971. (Copy in possession of the writer).

general the people employed for the supervision of children out of school hours had no qualifications for the job. Some had had experience with children in private home conditions but most were inexperienced in handling large numbers of children in institutional situations. This was not conducive to the smooth running of the institution or the healthy development of the growing child. The wages and conditions associated with the positions in the hostel were not always conducive to attracting quality staff. In years when employment was competitive, some staff stayed for a longer period but the lack of continuity in hostel care was not conducive to the healthy social-emotional development of each deaf child. The position became so critical in 1961 that the principal, Allen, found it necessary to live on the premises throughout most of the year, to assist with supervision.[30] Even in 1962 when numbers were relatively stable the Principal, Dale, lamented the problem of hostel management. These were due in part to the size of the hostel staff, but also to a number of other factors including:

> ...the nature of the work which necessitates people working and living very closely together...the lack of adequate play areas, the lack of proper training for staff, particularly during the initial period and the difficulties involved in managing deaf children who have come from poor home backgrounds. [31]

The problems were even more apparent as numbers continued to rise. In 1971 Young wrote:

---

30. Principal's Report, Auckland 1961.

31. Principal's Report, Auckland 1962.

> The staffing of the Hostel is still causing concern and although a case was made to the Child Welfare Division in 1970 and an investigation was promised by a State Services Group, no action has resulted. The case included a request for a complete review of the staff members and a general upgrading of positions so that more experienced, better educated staff would be recruited and retained. At present girls with reasonable qualifications who are attracted to child care work in the Hostel usually, after a short period, realise that there are limited promotion opportunities, no recognised training qualifications available and resign to enter nursing, kindergarten teaching or one of the recognised training areas.
> Since the Hostel has opened staff-pupil ratios have remained basically the same and the situation still persists where the untrained inexperienced staff are expected to cope with large groups of our most difficult children. While this situation is permitted to continue there is little hope of improved standards of achievement for our Hostel Children.[32]

In the early days of the Auckland School problems of staffing in both the school and hostel were clearly compounded by the problem of unsuitable buildings. In 1958, sixteen years after the school had opened in temporary accommodation, new classrooms were used at Kelston for the first time. Mt Wellington continued to function as a residential establishment with pupils travelling daily by departmental bus. There had been years of delay in building the new school. (See Appendix H). Teachers and pupils had painted classrooms, and hostel staff had painted and decorated halls and dormitories in an effort to make the environment in which they operated more appealing.[33] The new complex was greatly appreciated by pupils and staff alike when it was finally opened.

---

32. Principal's Report, Auckland 1971.

33. Principal's Report, Auckland 1955.

If the building situation brought no joy to successive principals in the early days of the Auckland School, the Parent-Teachers' Association certainly did. In contrast to the situation at Sumner, a vigorous influential P.T.A. functioned from the earliest days (late 1949). It spared nothing in its efforts to assist the school. With the help and approval of the principal, Allen, a magnificent fund-raising effort saw the P.T.A. purchase land for a beach cottage. Allen applauded the foresight of this group when he wrote:

> The Parents' Association has recently finalised the purchase of five acres of land at Parau, situated on the Manakau Harbour, approximately four miles from Titirangi. This piece of land borders on a safe sandy beach which, at present, is remote from public patronage. The Association intends, in the near future, to build a comfortable beach cottage to house up to twenty children for short periods, such as weekends, during the school terms. It is very pleasing to know that the enthusiasm of the parents is such that, in the short space of four years, several thousands of pounds have been raised for this worthy project. I look forward to the time when our children are able to take full advantage of this fine gift; to enjoy the pleasures of shells, sand and sea; and to marvel at the mysteries of life of beach and bush.[34]

As well as this venture, the P.T.A. provided parcels for needy children, trophies for school competitions, built and maintained the beach house at Parau, employed two teacher helpers for many years, financed groups of children on field trips and teachers attending conferences, purchased equipment, financed driving instruction for senior pupils, and generally provided many extras for the school. Numerous workshops and courses for parents were

---

34. Principal's Report, Auckland 1953.

supported by the P.T.A. One of particular value was held in the second term of 1972. Young wrote:

> Over two hundred parents attended and the highlight of the day was a teenage panel consisting of young severely and profoundly deaf people who had commenced work, were attending high school independently or who were still at Kelston. This was the most interesting and rewarding session we have had at any parents' day since I have been at Kelston. The young people acquitted themselves extremely well and the visitors were most impressed with the type of young person produced by our school system.[35]

Over the years two trends developed at the Auckland School for the Deaf. Firstly, as had occurred at Sumner, a greater proportion of pupils gradually became day pupils.

TABLE 5

Day Pupils	Boarders	School	Year
49	113	Auckland	1956
53	100	Sumner	1956
120	161	Auckland	1973
266 *	87	Sumner	1972

* includes part-time preschool and itinerant children.

Source: Principal's Reports, Sumner and Auckland, 1956, 1972 and 1973.

The second trend was the development of unit classes for deaf children in ordinary classes. In 1952, one deaf boy was enrolled at Avondale College. In 1953 senior classes from the school attended Avondale College on a part-time basis. The following year six full time pupils were enrolled at Avondale. Because of the proximity of the new Kelston High School a much enlarged programme of secondary education became possible in 1955. These

---

35. Principal's Report, Auckland 1972.

classes at Kelston High School allowed the pupils to integrate for subjects such as woodwork, metal work and technical drawing, cooking, dressmaking and typing. An even wider range of subjects was added as the years progressed. Alongside this scheme for the lower ability or more severely deaf students was a scheme whereby talented children worked fulltime at high school. These programmes for fourteen year old plus children were adapted to meet their individual needs. Work experience classes were also established to give the students an introduction to the working world.

Experience showed however, that apart from a good general intelligence, successful integration with hearing children within a normal school appeared to depend upon a well balanced personality, devoid of timidity and reluctance, but possessed with confidence and a desire to succeed. As early as 1961 Allen had realised the importance of successful experiences in the early stages of a deaf child's education. He wrote:

> Those pupils who are making excellent progress amongst normal children have gained these desirable personality traits during years of successful effort within the atmosphere of a special school. At the moment it appears that this "success" story is an essential part of the early life of a deaf child.[36]

In August 1962 a unit class was established in Hamilton. Six severely and profoundly deaf children were enrolled at the unit. The principal, Dale, was also an enthusiastic advocate of normalising the education of handicapped children. He felt that institutions were not the best environment to foster healthy

---

36. Principal's Report, Auckland 1961.

mental and social growth. He endeavoured to arrange boarding in private homes around Auckland for deaf children. Despite much publicity, this idea did not come to fruition.

However, the concept of unit classes was developing momentum. At the end of the first term in 1963 a further unit was established at the Kelston Primary School. Dale welcomed this development but cautioned against too wide an age and ability range, and pointed out the need for experienced associate teachers (teachers of the hearing working with a teacher of the deaf). He felt that even though each of these units[37] cost up to £10,000 to establish, the fact that many of the children could live at home rather than board at the hostel would offset this initial expenditure.

By 1965 there were three units at the Hamilton West school, two at Waterview school and one at the Glen Eden Primary, with older children at the Kelston Boys' and Kelston Girls' High Schools. In 1967 the Hamilton West school units were transferred to the control of the South Auckland Education Board. For the first time in the Auckland School for the Deaf's history there were more day pupils than boarders under the school's care. This was achieved mainly by arranging a daily bus service and feeder taxi service to the eastern and southern city areas. Units, too, relieved the pressure on the main school.

In 1966 in order to cater for the preschool aged children of the 1963 rubella epidemic, four preschool groups were established in the Auckland city area at Northcote, Henderson,

---

37. Principal's Report, Auckland 1963.

Myers Park and Kelston.[38] Further groups were established later at Rotorua, Hamilton and Whakatane. Trained teachers of the deaf worked on a part-time basis with these groups. By 1968 these pre-school children had reached school age and the school was faced with their immediate educational needs. The influx of children into the school in 1968 was dramatic. In February of that year there were 208 pupils (98 boarders, 74 day pupils in the main school, and 36 day pupils in units). By December there were 230 pupils (106 in the hostel, 87 day pupils in the main school and 37 day pupils in units). A new junior classroom block was available for use in 1971. It helped ease the classroom accommodation problem. Units were operating in Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua and Gisborne by 1973 with arrangements completed for a unit of two classes at Papatoetoe East Primary School. In addition, approval was granted to establish an itinerant teacher service in 1971 in order to help deaf children who were being educated within the normal classroom situation. Individual tutoring for high school students was approved two years later. The waves of rubella children usually arrived at Auckland[39] a year earlier than at Sumner. In a field as specialised as deaf education, the admission and withdrawal of large groups created many problems indeed.

Activities and subjects followed similar lines to the programme at Sumner, i.e. the primary school syllabus was used but

---

38. A nursery class had been established in 1956. Two three year olds were involved in this initial class.

39. Not all children were rubella children but these children, on top of the number of non-rubella children, greatly complicated the problems of educational provisions in this branch of special education.

adapted to meet the needs of individual deaf children. In several years a concentrated effort in a specific subject area was undertaken. In 1971 an intensive effort was made in the area of arts and crafts culminating in several exhibitions of the children's work. Over several years a great deal of attention was paid to reading. In 1967 only 5% of the children reached the 9+ reading age on the Gates Paragraph Test. By 1972 there was 27% who had reached this level. It may have been that a level of familiarity was a factor in this result but there seems little doubt that the reading age level had increased.[40] Out of school activities for the deaf children were many and varied. Constant use was made over the years of the Parau Camp. Scouts, Guides, sport and hobby classes were all arranged for interested children.

One particular problem encountered by successive principals at Auckland was the large numbers of non-European children. Some non-European children were educated at Sumner, but not in the numbers they were in Auckland. As early as 1962 Dale had questioned the practice of bringing children from the islands to be educated at Kelston:

> Apart from their very different background, these children have, in most cases, been used to lipreading only their native language. One wonders about the advisability of exposing them for a number of years to the form of education which we offer here, and then returning them to their quite alien conditions. Possibly the best solution might be to conduct a survey of these islands at some future date and where suitable groups of children with defective hearing occur, to train a local teacher (in New Zealand) so that he or she can return and educate the children at home.[41]

---

40. Principal's Report, Auckland 1972.

41. Principal's Report, Auckland 1974.

There were also many island and Maori children living in the Northern Region serviced by the Auckland school. These children presented many problems for the teachers, especially when little English was spoken in the child's home. By 1974 35% of the children under the care of the Auckland School for the Deaf were polynesian. Often, as preschoolers, they had little equipment[42] to experiment with and few opportunities to develop speech and lipreading skills. The task of arranging for loans of play equipment to such children was vested in the advisory service.

The advisory service based in Auckland had developed along similar lines to the group attached to Sumner. All had been trained in Christchurch and allocated various regions throughout New Zealand. Over the years some discontent with salaries and conditions surfaced and more difficulty was experienced in attracting teachers into this service. The service was a valuable one however. The advisers provided help for parents, organised courses and workshops, lectured groups on deafness, tested the hearing of children, carried out public relations duties and undertook a wide range of other tasks. The great value for parents was the preschool guidance programme available through this service. Young realised the value of this form of assistance to parents of young deaf children when he wrote in 1966:

> Despite all the efforts of our teachers and the use of modern aids, progress in speech has been disappointingly slow. It is becoming more apparent that unless severely and profoundly deaf children are diagnosed at a very early age and have the opportunity of concentrated home help by well informed parents working with our advisers, their chances of speaking in a near normal manner are fairly remote.[43]

---

42. Principal's Report, Auckland 1974.
43. Principal's Report, Auckland 1966.

In years when the pressure of numbers was least, the impact of the advisers was perhaps the greatest. Armed with information from the advisers on future enrolment trends, the principals of the Schools for the Deaf could plan staffing and buildings with greater confidence.

Looking back over the period since the establishment of the Auckland School for the Deaf, one is struck by the problems which faced each of the principals in his endeavour to provide a specialised education for the deaf children of this region. Problems of staffing both in the school and the hostel, problems of dealing with great influxes of deaf children and problems of providing for the multi-racial population of deaf children were but a few to be resolved. Many children were educated, however, in spite of almost overwhelming odds.

POSTCRIPT

Over the years the education of the hearing impaired in New Zealand has been the subject of constant innovation and change. At times this change was exceedingly slow. At other times, such as when large numbers of rubella deaf children were born, change was, of necessity, rapid. Not all changes made were successful. At times the education of the hearing impaired proved extremely problematic. Controversies, such as the oral versus manual debate and the residential versus day school provisions, seldom surfaced in New Zealand, in direct contrast to countries such as America. Questions such as these have only surfaced in the very recent past as dissatisfaction is expressed in some quarters concerning the results produced under the present provisions. It was not until 1965 that doubt was officially expressed about the use of the purely oral method with multiply handicapped deaf children.[1] By 1979 a combined method labelled "total communication" was being used with a wide variety of hearing impaired children. The success of this innovation will defy evaluation for many years hence.

This history of deaf education has been entitled "To Turn the Key". The title has been chosen for two reasons. For over one hundred years successive principals have recognised the need to unlock the tongues and minds of the hearing impaired children in their care. Without help, many of these children would have been unable to carve a place for themselves in a world where people are often indifferent to their plight. Secondly, educationalists in this specialist field have sought to discover the

---

1. Principal's Report, Auckland. 1965.

solution to the many problems they have been forced to face. The key to many of those problems has been a willingness to accept change and to evaluate the results of that change.

That the great majority of those educated over the past one hundred years have found useful occupations and been absorbed into the community, bears witness to the fact that many of the problems presenting themselves were solved. It must never be forgotten however, that for many hearing impaired children, graduation from school ushers in a life of isolation and, at times, even rejection, from the community at large. In 1863 James Hawkins wrote:

> Those of us in the blissful possession of every faculty find it somewhat difficult to form an adequate conception of the actual sensations of the deaf and dumb; but perhaps it is possible to approach some slight idea by fancying ourselves as exiled from every social intercourse, yet daily surrounded by those near and dear to us; as being incapable of giving oral utterance to our own thoughts, or of comprehending the interpreted thoughts of others, yet possessing the apparent organisation and a reasoning mind for the free outlet and exercise of ideas; and as being destitute of all sense of hearing sounds, thereby existing in one perpetual silence. Still, even then, however exquisite the intensity of our imaginative powers, our ideas of their isolated monotony would be extremely vague and wide of actuality.[2]

As hearing impaired children face the wider community little may have changed over the past hundred years.

---

2. James Hawkins, op. cit., Page 2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PART I

OFFICIAL PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

1. New Zealand National Archives

Archives of the Education Department. Inward Correspondence on Deaf Education.

Commission of Inquiry into the Management of the Sumner Institution for Deaf Mutes. 1892.

Report on The Education of the Deaf in New Zealand. 1950. A.W.G. Ewing and Irene R. Ewing.

2. Official Publications

Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, E-1, E-4, E-8, E-11, H-17; 1879 - 1928.

Education Act 1901 and 1914.

Education and Training of Speech Therapists. Wellington. Department of Education 1978.

Laishley, R. Report upon State Education in Great Britain... including a special report on deaf-mute instruction. AJHR., E-12, 1886.

New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 1878, 1890, 1892.

Otago Education Board Report, 1895.

Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Conference of the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf. Glasgow, 1913.

Stevens, J.E., Advice to Parents for the Home Treatment of Young Deaf Children. Wellington. Government Printer, 1917.

3. Manuscript Collections

Exercise Book of Mrs A. Charman (née Ashley) 1916.

Personal Letters of T. Chambers, 1913 - 1940. (by kind permission of Miss E. Chambers.)

PART II

OTHER WORKS

1. Contemporary Publications

A. Newspapers

Lyttleton Times (Canterbury)
Manchester Guardian (England)
The Press (Christchurch)

B. Reports

Annual Reports of Principals of Sumner School for the Deaf, 1923 - 1980.

Annual Reports of Principals of Auckland School for the Deaf, 1946 - 1980.

Reports of Alfred Cowles, Inspector, Education Department, 1929 and 1930.

C. Books

Ewing I.R., Lipreading. Manchester. Manchester University Press 1930.

Goldstein, M. Problems of the Deaf. U.S.A. Laryngoscope Press, 1933.

Hawkins, J. The Deaf and Dumb. London, Longman, 1863.

2. General

A. Books

Allen, A.B., They Hear with the Eye. Wellington. School Publication Branch, 1980.

Bowlby, M., Child Care and the Growth of Love, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1977.

Butchers, A.G. Education in New Zealand. Dunedin, Coulls, Somerville, Wilkie, 1930.

Dale, D.M.C. Deaf Children at Home and at School, London. University of London Press, 1967.

Ewing A. & Ewing, E.C. Teaching Deaf Children to Talk. Manchester, Oxford University Press, 1964.

Havill, S.J. & Mitchell, D.R., (eds). Issues in New Zealand Special Education. Auckland. Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. 1972.

Hodgson, K.W. The Deaf and their Problems. London, Watts & Co. 1953.

Lash, Joseph P., Helen & Teacher, U.S.A. Allen Lane, 1980

Rutter, M., Changing Youth in a Changing Society; Patterns of Adolescent Developments & Disorders, London, Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1979.

Rutter, M., Maternal Deprivation Reassessed. 2nd Edition. Middlesex, Penguin Books Ltd, 1981.

Van den Berg, D.M., The Written Language of Deaf Children. Wellington. New Zealand Council for Educational Research. 1971.

Whetnall, E., & Fry, D.B., The Deaf Child. London. Heineman Medical Books Ltd. 1964.

Wilson, N., Hearing Aids in New Zealand Deaf Clubs' Souvenir Programme, 1955.

Witherford, M.A., Wilton, K.M., Parsons, M.B., Effects of Residential School Attendance on the Social Development of Hearing Impaired Children, New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 13, No. 1. 1978.

B. Periodicals.

Cole, M.L., The Foundations of Education for the Deaf in New Zealand in The New Zealand Journal for Teachers of the Hearing Handicapped. Vol. 5. No. 2. 1975.

Ewing, A.W.G., The Education of the Deaf, History of the Department of Education of the Deaf. University of Manchester 1919 - 1955 in British Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 4. 1955 - 1956.

McKenzie, D., Scholars & Mobility - An Account of the Operations of the Scholarship Scheme in Otago, 1878 - 1889, in The Australian & New Zealand Journal of Sociology. Vol.17 No. 1, March 1981.

New Zealand Speech Therapists Journal, May 1947, May 1953, and November 1954.

Saunders, M.E. Looking Back with Joy. New Zealand Speech Therapists Journal, 1971

Swan, C., Tostevin, A.L., Moore, B., Mayo, H. Barham-Black, G.H., Congenital Defects in Infants following Infectious Diseases during Pregnancy with Special Reference to Rubella. Medical Journal of Australia. 1943, Vol. 2 page 201.

C. Unpublished Theses.

Adams, F.R.Y., Education of the Deaf in New Zealand (unpublished M.A. thesis) Victoria University, Wellington 1945.

Cotton, D.M., The Hard of Hearing Child in New Zealand Schools. (unpublished M.A.thesis) Otago University, Dunedin, 1944.

Van den Berg, D.M., An experimental investigation into the Personality Patterns of a group of fifteen year old rubella deaf children. (unpublished M.A. thesis) Canterbury University College, Canterbury, 1955.

Williams, G.T., The Education of the Deaf in New Zealand (unpublished M.A. thesis) withdrawn. University of Canterbury, 1969.

D. Letters.

Assistant Director of Education/Chambers, 8 August 1939.

Assistant Director of Education/A.W.G.Ewing, 23 August 1939.

Allen/Education Department, 23 August 1950.

Bates/Stewart, 5 October 1981.

Caughly/Stevens, 30 July 1917.

Crawford/Director of Education, 12 August 1929.

Crawford/Director of Education, 12 September 19291

Crawford/Parliamentary Recess Committee, 17 December 1929.

Chambers/Director of Education, 8 September 1934.

Chambers/Director of Education, 20 June 1936.

Director of Education/Chambers, 23 December 1929.

Director of Education/ Senior Inspector of Schools, 6 February 1941.

District Senior Inspector/Allen, 24 August 1955.

Edgar/Stewart, 1 July 1981.

Education Department/Public Service Commissioner, 9 July 1946.

Le Directeur, Federation Nationale Des Instituts De Jeunes Sourds et de Jeunes Aveugles De France/Stewart, 5 January 1982.

Long/Stewart, 21 June 1981.

Malcolm/Stewart, 1 July 1981.

Pickering/ Director of Education, 13 March 1945.

Pickering/Director of Education, 7 June 1945.

Pickering/Otago Education Board, 3 December 1946.

Pickering/Acting Superintendent (Child Welfare Dept.) 13 March 1946.

Pickering/Director of Education, 7 November 1950.

Pickering/Ball, 3 September 1948.

Staff of the School for the Deaf/Education Department, (Date unknown).

Stevens/Chambers, 10 September 1930.

Strong/Minister of Education, 15 January 1930.

Strong/Public Service Commissioner, 17 December 1929.

Superintendent, Child Welfare Branch, Department of Education/ Chambers, 31 October 1936.

Van Asch(Senior)/van Asch(Junior), 4th February 1906.

Young/District Senior Inspector of Schools Auckland, 8 September 1971.

E. Interviews Conducted with:

Mrs M. Allen	(Auckland)	December 1981
Mr A. B. Allen	(Christchurch)	May 1981
Miss A. Allott	(Invercargill)	June 1981
Miss E. Chambers	(Sumner)	May 1981
Mr & Mrs L. Charman	(Christchurch)	May 1981
Mrs C. Grant	(Christchurch)	May 1981
Mr & Mrs H. Long	(Auckland)	December 1981
Mrs M. Pickering	(Christchurch)	July 1981
Mr J. Stevens	(Christchurch)	May 1981

APPENDIX A

Source: J. Hawkins
'The Deaf and Dumb'

Origins of Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb

Institutions started in:-

France	in 1755
The German States	in 1778
Austria	in 1779
Italy	in 1786
Prussia	in 1788
Belgium and Holland	in 1790
England	in 1792
Spain	in 1805
Russia	in 1806
Scotland	in 1810
Ireland	in 1816
United States	in 1817
Portugal	in 1824
Canada	in 1848
New Zealand	in 1880

APPENDIX B

Census Figures:

(i) Census 3rd April 1881

Deaf Children		Total Enrolled at School for Deaf Mutes
Under 5 years	5	
5 years - 10 years	29	
10 years - 15 years	21	
15 years - 20 years	17	
Total	72	21 pupils

(ii) Census 5th April 1891

Deaf Children		
Under 5 years	3	
5 years - 10 years	34	
10 years - 15 years	38	
15 years - 20 years	23	
Total	98	49 pupils

(iii) Census 12th April 1896

Deaf Children		
Under 5 years	3	
5 years - 10 years	35	
10 years - 15 years	46	
15 years - 20 years	31	
Total	115	50 pupils

(iv) Census 31st March 1901

Deaf Children		
Under 5 years	0	
5 years - 10 years	34	
10 years - 15 years	46	
15 years - 20 years	28	
Total	108	49 pupils

APPENDIX C

Classification of Deaf Children at Sumner 1892

14	pupils	would	be	totally	deaf	
2	pupils	would	have	one/eighth	normal	hearing
4	"	"	"	two/eighths	"	"
6	"	"	"	three/eighths	"	"
5	"	"	"	four/eighths	"	"
5	"	"	"	five/eighths	"	"
3	"	"	"	six/eighths	"	"
2	pupils	would	have	hearing	but	defective speech

APPENDIX D

Illness reported in AJHR for Deaf-Mute School (1880 - 1906)

1880 No serious illnesses.

1881 13 children contracted measles.

1882 No serious illnesses.

1883 " "

1884 " "

1885 " "

1886 " "

1887 Sanitation Problems - several children sick.

1888 No serious illnesses.

1889 " "

1890 Whooping cough outbreak.

1891 No serious illnesses.

1892 " "

1893 29 children contracted measles. (Severe epidemic felt throughout New Zealand)

1894 Many children suffered whooping cough and severe colds.

1895 No serious illnesses.

1896 Severe influenza, one death from heart disease, one withdrawal due to heart disease.

1897 Severe influenza epidemic.

1898 3 children contracted German measles. Large numbers of children contracted digestive disorders due to contamination of water supply.

1899 22 children contracted diphtheria, 9 children had tonsilitis, 2 children had gastritis, 2 children had pleurisy plus other sicknesses.

1900 One fatal case of typhoid.

1901 No serious illnesses.

1902 Three children had severe tuberculosis.

1903 No serious illnesses.

1904 Four cases of tuberculosis. Four other cases of sickness required long absences from school.

1905 One fatal case of peritonitis.

APPENDIX E

Summary showing comparative cost of upkeep at Special Schools 1917 and 1918.

School	Number of Pupils maintained		Net Expenditure		Average Annual Cost per head	
	1917	1918	1917	1918	1917	1918
			£	£	£ s d	£ s d
School for Deaf Sumner	109	104	3393	3625	31.2.7	34.17.1
Special School for Boys Otekaike	95	88	5608	5324	59.0.0	60.10.0

APPENDIX F

Recollections of Miss Chambers of her father's period as Housemaster at the Sumner School for the Deaf, (1917 - 1921) and during his term as Principal, (1930 - 1940).

The school had only one telephone and Enid Chambers remembers, "We would use it but it had to be a brief message and away. It was a party line and the other users were the local butchery and the fire brigade."

During this time Miss Chambers remembers the maypole dancing taken outside. Various people were invited to view the displays put on by the children. Miss McEwan took the children for this dancing and really built up the children's confidence.

The deaf school basketball team had grey gym tunics and the children were very proud of them.

In discussions about the layout of the buildings Miss Chambers recalls, "There used to be an old brick building fairly near the orchard and it was the laundry. It had equipment like mangles, tubs etc. in it. Next to that there was an area of ground with a tennis court, surrounded by walnut trees which we used to climb." This was where they used to have the games before the tennis court was built in 1930. Beyond this there was the fowl-house. They had hay-making. Enid Chambers remembers rolling in the long grass which was about to be cut for hay. She was severely reprimanded.

Vacations were always a long awaited and happy event. Enid Chambers remembers her mother accompanying a pupil to Invercargill, at the commencement of his long vacation. Photos in the family album show the car used to transport Mrs Chambers around

Invercargill. She had often talked about this enjoyable trip to her family. Since Mrs Chambers' family lived in Auckland, the Chambers family accompanied the deaf children to the North Island for their long vacation. They embarked at Lyttleton and went by ferry to Wellington. A highlight of one such trip was lunch at Parliament Buildings. From there the group caught the three o'clock north bound train. The Chambers children stayed with their grandmother and grandfather while their parents went off for a well earned holiday. Enid Chambers remembers the ferry trips. "The rooms were so elegant. In each bunk there were ladders and curtains you could pull around the bunk. When I was older I was allowed to wake up the children and can well remember going to the wrong cabin and with the authority of a ten year old telling the people to get up."

Enid's father was a very keen sportsman and a fitness fanatic. He walked long distances in his spare time. "I can remember walking over the hill from Sumner to Lyttleton with a group of deaf boys on an outing to teach them to shoot rabbits."

During the time her father was in"residence" she used to visit the headmaster, Mr Ted Stevens. He had a telescope at his house. She remembers looking at what she was told was the moon. She didn't think it looked as nearly as exciting as she had thought it would, but kept on visiting, as she was fascinated by the telescope.

In the evenings still pictures were projected on to a screen. There was a lantern used and the set-up was very primitive but provided much enjoyment for the pupils. Service clubs organised

outings for the children's enjoyment.

"Times were difficult financially and all spending had to be carefully planned. There was great excitement when a refrigerator was bought. That was part of the school kitchen. I can remember the staff making clothing for the state wards. It wasn't really the time to spend extra money".

APPENDIX G

Source AJHR., 1930, E-4, Page 5
AJHR., 1931, E-4, Page 3

EXPENDITURE PER HEAD OF MEAN POPULATION

(exclusive of new buildings.)

Primary	£ 1.11. 7
Secondary	5. 4
Technical	3. 0
High Education	1. 8

EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL (SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF)

£52.12. 0

APPENDIX H

NEW SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, KELSTON, AUCKLAND

1. The Department advised the Minister that conditions at the School for the Deaf at Titirangi were intolerable and that a new residential school should be built at Kelston to replace it. (Principal of New Zealand Schools for the Deaf, Mr Pickering, advised likewise in Principal's Annual Reports (1945), also Principal's Report, Titirangi 1951).

2. On October 24th 1950, Cabinet approved the preparation of sketch plans for the construction of a new School for the Deaf at Kelston.

3. About July 1951, a Committee of professional officers (Mr Ball in the chair) discussed and recommended the building general requirements of the new school, based largely, on a memorandum from Mr Pickering dated 21.6.51.

4. The first approved briefing, dated "August 1951", was for a school of 160 pupils, comprising 124 boarders and 36 day pupils. The Director approved expanding the project to cater for 200 pupils, of whom 160 would be boarders and 40 day pupils.

5. The August briefing was accordingly revised and a new briefing, dated October 1951, was approved and forwarded tothe Government Architect.

6. The first sketch plans were dated December 1951. They were examined by Messrs Allen, Pickering and others. Preliminary written comments were given to the Government Architects on February 15th, March 3rd. and April 2nd. 1952. There was also some oral consultation with the Government Architects directly concerned.

7. At about this time highly-charged and concentrated criticism about the area at Kelston allocated to the School for the Deaf began, and momentum was lost in redrawing the plans to give more playing space and in planning the whole site to fix the respective areas for the urgent Kelston Post-Primary project and the School for the Deaf.

8. Public criticism was silenced when the report of Mr A.W.G. Ewing on the project was received (on April 29th) and duly publicised. The vocal Parent Teachers Association of the School for the Deaf, Titirangi, reluctantly accepted Dr Ewing's opinion that the area allocated - 17½ acres - was ample for the school.

9. In the meantime more constructive suggestions concerning the sketch plans etc. were received. None of these attacked the overall framework of the scheme, but they posed a very real problem of correlation.

10. It soon became that nothing short of a full conference of those directly concerned could resolve the diverse suggestions. It was evident, too, that the cost factor was getting out of hand.

11. The preliminary estimate of cost was £300,000. On 30 September 1952, the Commissioner of Works reported the estimated cost at £388,526 for the buildings, and a provisional £25,000 for site works. The Ministry required "Cabinet's approval in principle for the expenditure and its appropriate inclusion into the Works Programme" before working drawings could be commenced.

12. A memorandum dated 12 December 1952, from the District Superintendent stated:

> "We have found difficulty in preparing a submission for Cabinet in support of an expenditure of £413,526 for a new School for the Deaf at Kelston. The estimated cost of this new institution is a considerable sum and we have felt that the case previously prepared would not convince Cabinet that conditions were so bad at Titirangi as to warrant the expenditure of over £400,000 on a new school."

13. The submission itself was revised and a revised submission dated 6/3/53 was (included in a) recommendation to the Minister.

14. During 1957 the school was built.

15. In February 1958 the classrooms were used for the first time.

Source: Department of Education Memorandum. 12/5/53. National Archives.