

Adult Deaf and Dumb Society of Victoria

(Incorporated)

OFFICE-BEARERS, 1935-1936

Patrons:

HIS EXCELLENCY LORD HUNTINGFIELD, K.C.M.G.,
GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA.
HON. SIR WM. IRVINE, K.C.M.G., LL.D.
THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MAYOR OF MELBOURNE.

President: MR. L. A. CLEVELAND.

Chairman: MR. F. W. SPRY.

Hon. Treasurer: MR. EDGAR H. PEACOCK, J.P., 486 Bourke St., Melbourne.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. W. F. ROWE, 343 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.

Hon. Physicians: DR. W. J. CRAIG and DR. A. J. FARGIE.

Board of Management:

MR. N. ARMSTRONG, J.P.	MR. M. J. HOATH
MR. E. J. L. BREMNER	MR. S. G. HOBSON
*MISS R. DOW	MR. F. W. SPRY
MR. G. FETHERS	COUNCILLOR G. W. SWEETLAND
*MR. F. E. FREWIN	*MR. A. SUTHERLAND

Principal:

MR. ERNEST J. D. ABRAHAM.

Adult Deaf Mute Centre, Jolimont Square, Melbourne.

Assistant Secretary: MISS E. EMPSON.

Residential Welfare Officer: *MR. J. M. JOHNSTON.

Collectors—City and Suburbs: MESSRS. *E. JOHNSON,

*M. G. B. MORTIMER, *E. NOBLE and V. BUTTACAVOLI.

Collectors—Country: MESSRS. *N. WEBB and *O. QUINTON.

GEELONG BRANCH.

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BALLARAT BRANCH.

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* These gentlemen are deaf.

ADULT DEAF SOCIETY OF VICTORIA
101 Wellington Pde. Sth., Melbourne East.

Our Deaf and Dumb Fellow Citizens

*Being the 51st Annual Report of the Adult Deaf and Dumb
Society of Victoria.*

Jolimont Square, Melbourne East.

Headquarters of the Religious, Welfare and Social Activities and the
Society's Homes for Aged, Infirm and Dependent Deaf Mutes.

FIFTY-FIRST
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Adult Deaf and Dumb Society
OF VICTORIA (INCORPORATED)

In submitting the annual account of its stewardship for the year just closed—a memorable one for our deaf and dumb community—the Board of Management desires to place on record its high appreciation of the magnificent and remarkably well-sustained effort of the deaf members in connection with the Jubilee of the Society and the Victorian Centenary Celebrations.

Of the total expenditure of £451, the deaf and dumb were responsible for raising the sum of £380, and, in conjunction with the Principal, they carried out the whole of the work of this, the most successful function ever held in the history of the deaf and dumb in Australia.

For this splendid achievement, and for the way in which many serious difficulties, financial and otherwise, have been successfully overcome during the past year, the Board unites with the deaf and dumb community in thanking Almighty God.

THE SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVE.

The aim of the Board of Management of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society of Victoria is to make provision for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social welfare of the deaf and dumb in a manner best suited to their mental outlook.

It must always be kept in mind that, through the absence of the sense of hearing, the average deaf child is excluded from informative communication to the age of seven; that is, through those early years of childhood that are generally admitted to be the foundation years of elementary education.

If fortunate, the child is sent to the State school for the deaf at the age of seven or thereabouts, but he has begun to acquire a knowledge of the world and his duty in it so heavily handicapped that it is not possible for him ever to make up the deficiency.

Let it be here acknowledged that, in the nine years at his disposal—from seven to sixteen years—the teacher does all that is humanly possible to prepare the child for the responsibilities of life, knowing that, on leaving school, he must attempt to earn his livelihood side by side with the better-equipped normal man.

Nevertheless, he leaves school terribly handicapped, not only by his deafness, but through the lack of the knowledge he might have acquired in those lost precious years.

Thus poorly equipped and heavily handicapped he stands, at the age of 16, at the gate of the world, to be met by the only organisation of this State that is in a position to advise, assist and encourage him—the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society of Victoria.

How favourable is the outlook of the normal child when compared with that of the deaf! The fortunate normal youth, on leaving his State school, has many avenues of knowledge open to him—The High School, Technical School, and University, to the cost of upkeep of which the deaf and dumb must contribute, but cannot participate in the benefits; also the many essential institutions, such as our Town and Public Halls, our Churches, Theatres, etc., which mean so much to us, are just “buildings” to the deaf and dumb.

To “father and mother”—to stretch out a protecting and helping hand to all deaf and dumb folk—to bring every influence to bear that will lead to higher ideals and the practical Christian life is, briefly put, our aim.

THE CHURCH.

The Society is essentially a religious organisation, and the spiritual and moral uplift of the deaf and dumb is fundamental to the whole of the work.

Hence, the specially designed Church for the Deaf that stands in the centre of Jolimont Square for the spiritual guidance of our people.

Although it would have been pleasing to see the ordinary attendance at Divine Worship much larger during the past year, the Christian spirit and reverence of those regularly attending the religious services is evidence of earnest sincerity and devout appreciation of the opportunity given for thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God.

At times there have been very large congregations, especially on the occasion of the special Jubilee Services in October, and during the period of the Christmas Congress and Festivities.

HEATING OF THE CHURCH.

The Church for the Deaf and Dumb in Jolimont Square has, through the kind effort of Mr. E. J. L. Bremner, a member of the Board of Management, been electrically heated, and is now a very comfortable place during the Service in the winter evenings.

This innovation is much appreciated, for, although our Church is one of the most beautiful of little Churches, it proved to be a very cold place during the winter months.

To Mr. Bremner the thanks of the whole congregation is extended. The Board of Management is also indebted to Mr. Bremner, as all it was called upon to pay was the small sum of £17/0/0.

HONORARY ORGANIST.

Again we are indebted to Mr. T. F. Crabb, who continues to act as Honorary Organist at our little Church when special services are arranged at which hearing people are present.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AND CONGRESS.

Our year just closed was crowded with events of enthralling interest to the deaf and dumb throughout Australia, more especially to the three hundred and fifty who participated in the ten days Victorian Centenary Celebrations Congress, Competitions and Festivities of the deaf and dumb held in Melbourne from 22nd June, 1934, to 2nd January, 1935.

The whole of the functions were under the auspices of, and the visitors were, the guests of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society of Victoria.

The visitors included two short of eighty from New South Wales, and three short of fifty from South Australia, twenty from Tasmania, three from West Australia, and two from New Zealand, and a large number from Victorian country districts. This great foregathering of the deaf has had far-reaching beneficial effects, not only from the educational and social points of view, but in giving publicity to the sterling character and determination of the deaf and dumb as a community to overcome their handicap and whereby

they can, through substituted means, participate in such functions as are deemed desirable and proper by the normal citizen.

Every courtesy was paid and every opportunity given the deaf by various public bodies to enable the Reception Committee to make adequate provision for their visitors.

The Board of Management of the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution for Children kindly placed at the disposal of our Society two large dormitories, accommodating approximately one hundred of the deaf and dumb visitors, and also provided breakfast free for these guests for the whole of the period of the Festivities.

A Civic Reception was given to the visiting officials at the Town Hall by Alderman S. H. C. Crespin, Acting Lord Mayor, in the absence of the Lord Mayor, Cr. A. G. Wales.

The use of the Collingwood Town Hall was graciously granted by the Mayor and Councillors of the City of Collingwood for the public reception of delegates on Christmas Eve, when some four hundred were present, and again for the whole of Christmas Day, when upwards of three hundred and fifty visiting and Melbourne deaf mutes were the guests of our Society to dinner, tea, and an evening party. The Mayor and Councillors of the City of Hawthorn lent their beautiful hall for a ball, which was also largely attended.

Conferences of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Societies of the Commonwealth and of the National Council of the Deaf and Dumb were held in the Old Legislative Council Chamber, by kind courtesy of the Minister for Public Works.

Our Society greatly appreciates this practical assistance and sympathy with our work shown by those public bodies mentioned above.

All States, with the exception of Queensland, were represented at the Conference of Adult Societies. Mr. L. A. Cleveland, President of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society of Victoria, was appointed Provisional Chairman, and Mr. M. J. Hoath (Victoria) Provisional Secretary.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

“That this Conference deems it desirable that a Commonwealth organisation of incorporated adult deaf and dumb societies in Australia be formed.”

“That the membership of the Commonwealth organisation comprise two members to be appointed by the Board of Management of the incorporated society of each State, executive officers of the several incorporated societies to act as advisory officers.”

“That a draft constitution be prepared and submitted to the Boards of Management of the incorporated societies of the various States for their consideration and comment.”

“That this Conference learns with regret that the State of New South Wales does not provide for the compulsory education of deaf and dumb children, and respectfully suggests that early representation be made to the Government of New South Wales to include the compulsory education of deaf and dumb children in its Education Act.”

“That Colonel Payne (Tasmania) be asked to convey to the Conference of Representatives of Deaf and Dumb Schools in the Commonwealth, to be held in Melbourne in the near future, fraternal greetings from this Conference, to assure them of the support of this Conference, and to ask that the two organisations co-operate in the interests of the deaf and dumb of the Commonwealth.”

Queensland was also the only State not represented at the Second Conference of the National Council of the Deaf and Dumb. This organisation is composed exclusively of deaf members of incorporated Adult Deaf and Dumb Societies. Mr J. M. Johnston, of the Victorian Adult Deaf Society, is the Chairman, and Mr. S. Phillips, of New South Wales Adult Deaf Society, the Honorary Secretary.

The sports programme included the Interstate cricket and tennis matches between teams from New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, and the Victorian Deaf Cricket Club succeeded in winning the “E. J. D. Abraham” shield from New South Wales, but that State managed to retain the “R. Cohen” Tennis Challenge Cup. There were also individual contests. There were billiard, chess, and draughts championships, and a full day was devoted to athletic sports.

The festive section of the programme included a trip down the Bay, with meals on board, a motor drive through the Dandenong Ranges, with tea on the mountain, and a banquet at the “Victoria.”

Special Services were held at St. Paul's and St. Patrick's Cathedrals, also at the Church for the Deaf, at Jolimont.

An exhibition of needlework by deaf women from all parts of Australia was held at the Club House of the Society, Jolimont, during the Festivities. Approximately two hundred exhibits were received and admired by large attendances daily.

PRESENTATION TO H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

As part of the Centenary Celebrations of our Society, an article made in Australian blackwood by one of our male members was presented to H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester at the Levee at Government House, Melbourne, by the President (Mr. L. A. Cleveland) on behalf of the Adult Deaf and Dumb of Australia.

The President was accompanied by our Chairman (Mr. N. Armstrong) and Mr. F. E. Frewin, who represented the Deaf Committee.

THE SOCIETY'S JUBILEE.

The Society's Jubilee, and that of its Principal, was celebrated on 9th October, 1934, at the Masonic Hall, Melbourne. The audience was just a few under one thousand, and everyone in the great audience enjoyed the programme so ably performed by the deaf and dumb members of the Society. This consisted of hymns and songs in the language of gesture by deaf young women, and a comedy, also in finger and sign language, by the Deaf Dramatic Club.

His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield, K.C.M.G. (who, immediately on his arrival in Victoria, accepted the position of Patron to the Society), expressed himself pleased with the work of the Society and the graceful performance of the deaf young women. He also complimented the Principal on attaining his fiftieth year of work amongst the deaf and dumb.

Mr. L. A. Cleveland, President, and Mr. N. Armstrong, Chairman of the Society, also spoke. The latter, in the name of the Society, presented the Principal with a cheque, and Mr. F. E. Frewin gave him a clock from the deaf and dumb community.

During the evening the Cairns Memorial Church Choir, under the leadership of Mr. R. J. Oehr, rendered appropriate vocal items.

THE ISOLATED COUNTRY DEAF.

Here words are inadequate. The actual condition of many isolated, semi-educated, deaf and dumb persons can only be sensed by actual contact in their own peculiar atmosphere. What knowledge they have acquired gradually deteriorates, conversation with them, in a normal sense is most difficult. They are, indeed, foreigners, as it were, in the midst of their own countrymen, and even still more isolated, for the very voice of nature is closed to them—the village Church, the occasional speaker or lecturer, the modern wireless are non-existent to them. They may "attend" the local dance, look on and smile, but they have no real part in the rhythm, the music, the talk, and the latest humorous story. They are wallflowers in truth, only an occasional smile may drift their way.

It is a gracious thing to visit these folk in their homes, to talk to them in their own language, and bring them news of their fellow-deaf, and the comfort of spiritual consolation.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.

Much necessary and helpful work has been accomplished by giving careful attention to individual cases, not only in Melbourne and district, but country districts, including Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong.

This includes monetary assistance, medical advice, interviews with specialists, interpreting, visitation of sick deaf in hospital and at their homes, visitation of lonely deaf in country districts, etc., etc.

MEALS AT THE CLUB HOUSE.

The mid-day meals provided at the Club House, Jolimont Square, for the unemployed at a nominal cost during the winter months, were well patronised and much appreciated by the deaf, and the Saturday evening dinner (for the various sports clubs and their supporters) is more popular than ever before, both for the excellent meal provided and the jolly company whilst partaking of it.

AN URGENT REQUIREMENT.

Our Club House at Jolimont is crowded to capacity almost every Saturday night, and, on special occasions, only programmes which permit of the audience being closely seated can be submitted. Even then a large section of the members have to forego the chief event and attend smaller functions in other rooms.

The "Saturday Night" is the social event of the week with the deaf. In the Assembly Hall all kinds of entertainments and competitions are carried on—cinema pictures, card parties, games of skill, legerdemain, humorous stories, etc., whilst in the smaller rooms are billiards, draughts, chess, table tennis, dominoes, library, reading room, social talk, etc. Improved accommodation in this section of the Society's work is now a very serious and urgent need, especially a larger hall and sanitary and kitchen conveniences.

THE STAFF.

The Principal reports a year of perfect harmony and loyal team work by the staff and all committees. No man, he says, could have a more conscientious, painstaking and patient body of workers, both stipendiary and honorary. There is ever present in all, and frequently under the most trying of circumstances, a willingness to forget self in the service of the deaf and dumb community. This very often means long hours, not infrequently occupied with problems that are nerve-exhausting and, at times, seem impossible of solution.

Mr. W. F. Appleton, who was trained to the work of Welfare Officer for the deaf and dumb by our Principal, under the auspices of this Society, has been appointed Assistant Superintendent of the South Australian Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission. The Board of Management wishes him success in his new sphere of work.

OUR YOUTH.

Notwithstanding the strong tendency of the youth of both sexes upon leaving school, during the past few years, to avoid anything that is not connected with sport or amusement, the beneficial results of the training adopted at our Centre in interesting the younger deaf in the responsibilities of life by practical and recreative means was powerfully demonstrated by the business-like manner in which the Jubilee and Centenary Celebrations were so successfully carried through. Every club and organisation of the Society—Men's and Women's Guilds, Cricket, Lacrosse, Basket Ball, Tennis, Dramatic Club, etc.—took up the matter with enthusiasm, working unitedly under the general supervision of the Centre's Deaf Committee.

The deaf community, in addition to their clubs, have their own publication and bank.

THE EMPLOYED DEAF.

It is very pleasing to the Board of Management to be in a position to record that the great majority of our deaf and dumb people are now in remunerative employment. Those at present without work are men who, for various reasons, are difficult to place, and youths who have either never had employment since leaving school or who have lost their work soon after being placed.

BENEFACTORS OF THE DEAF.

A feature that is gaining in popularity, year by year, amongst the deaf and dumb is Benefactors' Night. The object of the gathering is to familiarise the deaf with their own history and keep in remembrance the men and women to whom they owe the existence of their school, Adult Societies, and other benefits. It begins with a short address on the history and work of the Schools and Societies, with brief illustrated biographies of the founders, teachers, and deaf people who have, by some outstanding accomplishment, deserved a place in their records.

On this occasion, 15th November, 1934, an added feature was an exhibition of historical photographs, letters, books, and articles of unique interest. The very large attendance was the most satisfactory part of this gathering, showing, as it did, the feeling of the deaf, of their sense of understanding and appreciation.

MISS ALICE GRAHAM.

To Miss Alice C. Graham the Board of Management is again indebted, and very gratefully thanks her for her generous financial assistance. Her handsome monthly donations, to be expended on relief, have enabled the Society to give continued assistance to many.

Miss Graham also provides for the upkeep of the Church garden. Her Church means a great deal to her, and she is very proud of its beauty.

OUR LADIES' AUXILIARIES.

The Board of Management is very appreciative of the splendid financial assistance given to this Society by our Ladies' Auxiliaries at East Kew and Brighton during the past year. These ladies have been the means of materially helping our finances, and also giving much added publicity of a helpful kind to our work.

The General Board here records its appreciation of the efforts of these Auxiliaries, and would gratefully welcome any ladies who would undertake the formation of auxiliaries in either city or country districts, and desires to help them in every way to become familiar with the objects and needs of this Society.

THE HOME AT BLACKBURN.

In providing a permanent home for deaf and dumb people who are incapacitated and unable to maintain themselves, the Home is of important service to the State of Victoria. It is also a refuge for those deaf who are temporarily out of employment or, through other adverse circumstances, without a home.

In our last report we were able to give in some detail the work accomplished in renovation and repairs to the Home buildings and the draining of the Farm.

This year the Committee has, through arrangement with the Government, been able to continue this assistance to the deaf and dumb by employing quite a number of the unemployed section on the erection of much-needed accommodation at our Home.

HOME STAFF.

Some three years ago the Committee asked the Principal and his wife to again take control of the Home. This was done, and now that the staff is fully efficient for general routine purposes, the Committee has been able to release Mrs. Abraham from the position of Matron, and Mr. Abraham for general supervisory work at headquarters and in the country.

The retirement of the Matron was forced by the state of her health, and it is hoped that with the change it will greatly improve.

With the erection of the new buildings, deaf and dumb youths, capable of being trained in horticultural and agricultural work, have been admitted to the Home. The continually increasing usefulness of the Home, together with the attendant responsibilities, necessitated the engagement of a residential officer who would give his whole time to its requirements.

The Committee was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Douglas Abraham for this special work. Mr. Abraham, Junr., is specially qualified for the position, as he has grown up in the atmosphere of the Blackburn Home, and is, therefore, fully equipped to take over the work from his father. He has had years

of experience in the care and training of the sub-normal, and took a course at the Burnley Horticultural School to fit himself for this class of work on the Blackburn Farm, and for several years was Assistant Manager. He resigned this position to gain a wider experience of managerial work, and has held several important positions.

The Committee feels safe in leaving its big Blackburn family in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Abraham, the latter having been appointed Matron of the Home.

CHRISTMAS AT OUR BLACKBURN HOME.

The festive season means a great deal more to our Home inmates than to many other folk. It is eagerly looked forward to and, when it arrives, enjoyed to the full. After a real Christmas dinner had been enjoyed and gifts distributed by the Chairman of the Home Committee, Cr. G. W. Sweetland, the inmates were entertained to a cinema show, followed by games and supper.

The annual picnic down the Bay was held on 31st January, 1935, when a large number of deaf and dumb folk took advantage of the kindness of Mr. Evans, of Bay Steamers Ltd., in again granting free passes for the trip. Most of the extras to the menu were provided by the following ladies and gentlemen, to whom our grateful thanks are extended:—

Mrs. A. R. Taylor (per Miss Beatrice Murray), Sir MacPherson Robertson, H. V. McKay Massey Harris Pty. Ltd., Carlton and United Breweries Ltd., Mrs. Theo. Kitchen, Mr. S. G. Hobson, Mrs. K. Ratcliff, Miss Annie Danks.

ERECTON OF NEW BUILDINGS BY THE DEAF AND DUMB.

At the Society's Home at Blackburn the need of additional bedroom accommodation, and a sitting or recreation room for the sub-normal inmates, was a problem of much concern to the Home Committee.

For the erection of this accommodation, the Government made a grant of £530 from the Hospitals and Charities Fund, and unemployed deaf mutes were put to the work under the supervision of a skilled hearing builder. The work was actually, for the deaf and dumb, vocational training in building, for, although the work took longer and cost a little more than it

would have done if contracted for, satisfactory buildings were erected, unemployed deaf mutes were given work over a lengthy period, and all have acquired knowledge that would not otherwise have been possible, and should help them in procuring other employment. Later, a further grant of £480 from Unemployment Relief Funds was made to build a cottage for the occasionally unemployed. Again, out-of-work deaf mutes were put to the work with still more satisfactory results.

For the plans of the above-mentioned buildings the Board of Management is indebted to Mr. J. S. Gawler, of Messrs. Gawler and Drummond, Queen Street, Melbourne, Honorary Architects to the Society. The generous gift of his services in this matter is greatly appreciated by the Board, the deaf and dumb unemployed, and the deaf and dumb generally.

OPENING OF NEW BUILDINGS.

Through the thoughtful consideration of the Government and the Charities Board, the Board of Management of this Society was able to carry through most successfully a somewhat remarkable work.

The additions to the Home were opened on 9th March by Cr. W. J. Boyland, M.L.A., in the presence of a large assemblage of interested people.

The work was carried out under the working supervision of Mr. Mann, and the Committee is very satisfied with the result.

N. ARMSTRONG,
Chairman.

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