

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to William Cogswell, February 28, 1891, with transcript

(Copy.) 1336 19th, st. Washington, D. C., Feb. 28th, 1891. Hon. William Cogswell, My dear Sir:

The courteous manner in which you listened to me this morning emboldens me to ask your careful consideration of President Gallaudet's letter to the Secretary of the Interior asking for an increased appropriation of \$5,000. for the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. (A copy of which I enclose.).

You will observe that whatever views President Gallaudet may have regarding the future character of his training school he asks this present appropriation for the specific purpose of training the graduates of his College as teachers of the deaf.

The telegrams and letters I showed you this morning contain expressions of opinion from the Principals of all the oral schools of the Country, unanimously endorsing my statement that such a training school would work injury to the cause of articulation teaching in the primary schools of the country for the reason that deaf persons cannot teach speech to their pupils. I enclose also a copy of the Thirty-third Annual Report of the Columbia Institution from which you will see (pages 10 and 11) that the proposition to establish a Normal Department in which both the sign and oral methods shall be taught is due to Mr. L. S. Fechheimer of Cincinnati— not to President Gallaudet. President Gallaudet simply says that he “ could ” carry out Mr. Fechheimer's suggestion, but he makes no promise to do so . There is no definite proposition before Congress to do more than train the graduates of the College as teachers.

The impression is conveyed, however, that President Gallaudet's present application to Congress is a resuscitation of those plans of Mr. Fechheimer that were laid before your

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Committee last year by the Hon. Benjamin Butterworth. This is not the case — in proof of which I beg to submit the enclosed communication which I have just received from Mr. Fechheimer.

I would like to lay before the Committee all the letters and telegrams I have received but I recognize the fact that you cannot give them attention.

I trust however that you may see the propriety of allowing time for the public discussion of the whole matter by those interested in the education of the deaf before committing Congress to Mr. Dr. Gallaudet's plan.

The oral teachers of the Country will not oppose an increased appropriation to the Columbia Institution, if its object is limited to the employment of Articulation Teachers and a Professor of Elocution for the benefit of the deaf students of the Collegiate Department, but they do oppose any increase of appropriation for the purposes set forth by President Gallaudet.

The principals of the following schools for the deaf in your own State endorse my position.

The Clarke Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Northampton, Mass.

The Horage Mann School for the Deaf, Boston, Mass.

The Sarah Fuller Home for little Children who cannot hear, West Medford, Mass.

I am, my dear Sir, Yours respectfully (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell

(Copy.). President Gallaudet's Letter to the Secretary of the Interior. Appendix . In relation to the estimate for Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. (See page 236.). The Columbia Institution for the D. and D. Kendall Green, near Washington, D. C. Sept. 22, 1890. Sir:—

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I have the honor to submit herewith estimates of expenses in this Institution for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1892. Also, as required by an act of Congress approved Aug. 30th, 1880, a list of the regular employees of the institution during the past year, and the compensation paid to each.

The amount submitted for current expenses is larger by five thousand dollars than the appropriation made for the current year. The object of this increase is to enable the directors to enlarge the facilities afforded in the institution for normal instruction. For many years the graduates of our collegiate department have been in demand as teachers of the deaf in the primary schools of the several States. The demand for such teachers has far outgrown our limited supply. And as no normal school for the training of teachers of the deaf exists in this country, while several are sustained in Europe, it has been thought extremely desirable that the advantages for normal instruction, existing in this institution to a limited degree should be increased.

This subject was presented to the Appropriation Committee of the House of Representatives last Winter by M. L. Fechheimer, a prominent citizen of Ohio, who has taken an active interest in deaf-mute instruction in his own State, where the lack of trained teachers has proved very embarrassing but was not pressed to any action.

The representations of Mr. Fechheimer, and other considerations bearing on the new measure, will be presented to Congress in the annual report of the President and Directors of this institution.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant, (Signed) E. M. Gallaudet. To the Hon. John W. Noble, Secretary of the Interior.