

of aids to teaching. When a word-builder is employed in teaching reading in the preparatory classes, I generally find that the children not only read well, but also spell well. If teachers would visit each other's schools in a proper spirit they might pick up useful hints in method and in making aids to teaching.

*Spelling.*—Spelling, I am afraid, is a decidedly weak subject throughout the district, more especially in Standards III., IV., and V. In dictation, words presenting any difficulties were seldom spelled correctly, and the pupils in the upper three standards very often showed that they had no idea of the sentence and punctuation, as required by the syllabus. Sometimes in Standard IV. ten or fifteen lines were written without one capital letter, or capitals were written in absurd positions, though the passage was read once by myself and twice by the teacher. How can children that send in dictation of this class write composition? It is, above all, important that the sentence should be understood. In Standard III. pupils often came to grief at ridiculously easy words; and "there" and "their," "were" and "where," "to" and "too," and suchlike were almost invariably confused. I noticed that some teachers read the passages for dictation very poorly, and in such cases the papers showed that the children could not follow the reading. A strange class of error by no means uncommon at the worst schools was the writing of the wrong consonant at the beginning or at the end of a word, as "pop" for "shop," "bag" for "bad." In the lower classes children failed as often in phonetic sounds as in peculiar combinations of letters. The teaching of reading by the method recommended should improve spelling in these classes. At Hawera, where the children in the upper preparatory class had been carefully taught by the phonic system, they could spell the most difficult monosyllables when the vowel combination was shown. Here the subject was not attempted to be taught by merely hearing spelling lessons, but children were trained to recognise the powers of the letters, as well as to know their names. Any one can hear lessons, but it takes at least a modicum of intelligence to employ the latter method. Slate transcription in Standard II. was often very well written; but absolute accuracy should be insisted upon, not only in spelling, but also in paragraphs, punctuation, use of "'s," &c. For dictation I would recommend that sentences made by the teachers, or by the pupils in answer to questions given at the time of the lesson, embodying words required to be learned, should be frequently given. And it is not sufficient to keep exclusively to the words at the bottom of the lessons in the reading-books; for, apart from the fact that many words in every-day use are not there, and that such words when given are often misspelled, the teacher should endeavour by means of dictation lessons to extend the vocabulary of his pupils. But to insure good spelling it is absolutely necessary that purity of enunciation and distinctness of articulation should be carefully cultivated at all times in school. If children are allowed to mispronounce even words that are phonetically represented—if, for instance, they are allowed to say "ketch" for "catch," "winder" for "window," "savage" for "savage," "wich" for "which," "were" for "where," "laid" for "lay," "peninsular" for "peninsula," "Gibberraltar" for "Gibraltar," "Glasgow" for "Glasgow," "Copenhagen" for "Copenhagen," it is not surprising that they misspell these words when they come to write them. It is strange, but nevertheless true, that children from one end of the district to the other, from Foxton to Mount Egmont, make, when reading the same page of a reading book, exactly the same mistakes in the text. Now, this would not be so if such mistakes were not passed over during the year. Indeed, at inspection visits I have often noticed them let go uncorrected. Ignorance of the sounds of the vowels, or carelessness in the use of the vowels, appeared to be the cause of many errors in spelling. Thus, of a very large number of children from various schools that sent in composition exercises on "flowers," fully three-fourths wrote "voilets" for "violets." Errors in spelling, however, were sometimes the result of ignorance, but often of sheer carelessness; for the very words on the cards were frequently copied incorrectly, and in dictation the same words were spelled in different ways on successive lines. It is strange how few children look over their work: a large proportion of the few that do have eyes but see not.

*Writing.*—At the majority of schools writing is fairly well taught, and on the whole it may be called a strong subject in this district. Transcription on slates in Standard II. was often very well written, but in some cases it was spoiled by poor, greasy slates. The transcription on paper in the higher standards was generally very neatly done. In some schools more attention should be paid to the manner in which the pen and also the slate pencil are held. A gradually increasing tendency to write in a cramped fashion, and also the habit of lifting the pen during the writing of a word, should be carefully guarded against. Where these faults were observed, I found that, while the writing in copy books and on transcription papers was good enough to admit of pupils passing in the subject, the writing on examination papers was very poor. In such cases, some practice in fairly large hand would be found advantageous. The writing at many of the schools is really very good in several classes; but for clever handling of rulers and nice arrangement of work on slates and paper, coupled with firm bold writing in all classes, no school in the district can compare with Waverley.

*Arithmetic.*—Table D shows that arithmetic, as far as passes are concerned, has improved by 5 per cent. in Standard I. and also in Standard II., by 7 per cent. in Standard IV., by nearly 4 per cent. in Standard V., and by over 5 per cent. in Standard VI., but that the average percentage for all classes is still only 67.7, or lower than in any other subject but grammar. In Standard III., though the papers were of the same style as those in former years, and not more difficult, there was a falling-off in the number of passes of no less than nearly 12 per cent. With regard to arithmetical rules in this class, the most failures were found in simple long multiplication and in simple long division, sometimes through ignorance of notation, sometimes through ignorance of tables, and very often in the former rule through placing the figures of the second or third line in the wrong denomination (as hundreds under tens), and in the latter rule through omission of cyphers in the quotient (as 754 for 7054). In the money rules in this class failures were generally the result of ignorance of tables and of inaccurate working. In division of money pupils often came to grief in the reduction; and here, again, when a cipher was needed in the pounds of the quotient it was