

wider field may be explored without difficulty or danger. The material is ready but there is much uncertainty as to the direction the instruction should take. It is in the lower classes where much of the important work must be done. It is the breaking-in period of school life, and the good and bad perceptible during the higher course of training may be set down to the work done in the preparatory classes. Throughout the district the lady teachers who have charge of the younger children endeavour to do what they can with the limited means at their disposal, and it is surprising how much is really accomplished by some teachers who study to train their children by the employment of intelligent methods. Some of the Committees, failing help from the Board, have provided a limited quantity of apparatus and appliances for the use of their children, but more particularly for those in the lower classes. Kindergarten work is very effective as a form of infant training, and those schools are most promising where this form of instruction is carried on. At Wairoa, where many Natives are found in the lower classes, the introduction of calisthenic and kindergarten instruction has proved most beneficial as an aid to discipline and attendance, and I have noticed the same effect at Waerengaahika and other places. In the preparation of the pass-subjects there are few schools where one hears really bad reading, but the examples are as rare where the reading is really good.

A successful school is the outcome of the infants' department, and where the schools possess efficient workers in the preparatory division one may be sure that the effects will be seen and felt in the examination of the standard children. It would be easy for me to illustrate the truth of this statement by local examples. Some teachers do not appear to realise the pleasure derived by an examiner when listening to an intelligent reader with good enunciation and modulation. The fluent reader and speaker are synonymous, and I have never yet met a good reader unless accompanied by good enunciation in speaking. A slovenly mode of expression in class should never be permitted, and encouragement should be given to all forms of instruction in which the pupils are required to do much of the speaking themselves. The word-building exercises lately introduced into several of the junior departments by the lady teachers promise to be of great value as an aid to good reading.

Geography, drawing, and composition continue to be taught with considerable success in most of the schools, and it is seldom that complaints have to be made for defects in either of these subjects. I am unable, however, to express similar satisfaction either with the arithmetic or the writing in a number of the schools. Gisborne, Waipawa, Dannevirke, Kaikora, Makotuku, Kumeroa, Mangatua, Napier (in part), and Port Ahuriri have usually distinguished themselves in these subjects, and certain standards in a number of other schools have also done exceedingly well; but after the very best has been said the fact remains that the average results are not good. My inspection visits have brought to light, in some cases, serious defects in the methods employed, alike in the preparatory as in the standard classes, and it appears to me necessary for the principal teachers in the larger schools to give more heed to the employment of improved methods by the junior teachers subject to their control.

In practice and reduction, and in fact in all compound processes, the synthetic and analytic methods should always be employed together in the initial stages, so as to show the children that questions for solution in these branches are merely forms of processes already known. I notice also in Standard III., where pupils are learning additions in money, that no conception is given as to the fact that the forms $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, and $\frac{3}{4}$ are not a farthing, a halfpenny, and three farthings respectively, but a quarter, a half, and three-quarters of a whole taken singly or collectively, and that one portion of the form tells the number of parts into which the whole is divided, whilst the other tells the number taken. By this means a pupil is made acquainted with fractional forms of a generalised character, but this is impossible if children merely learn the terms farthing, halfpenny, and three farthings. Defects of this kind arise from the national tendency to mechanical routine, hence the necessity for more critical supervision, especially where young teachers are being trained.

In few schools is the writing even fairly satisfactory, but I am convinced that the subject can be taught with success if only the same intelligent supervision is followed throughout the preparatory and standard classes. It has been a common error in certain schools to alter the style of the handwriting without sanction, or when pupils have been drafted from one division of the school to another. This is a great mistake. The same plan of writing should proceed throughout, and where this is done, no matter what style of writing may be employed, the results invariably are good. At Hastings, for example, the writing at one time was of poor quality, but now that the subject is taught systematically the results are highly satisfactory. Gisborne has always done well in writing, and so has Kaikora, with several others. In the last-named school the plan of using a "class copybook" is adopted, in which each pupil writes a copy in turn. This is in addition to the ordinary copy-writing. Thus the "class copybook" contains specimens of the handwriting of each pupil in the same standard, and really represents the quality of writing for the class. The plan seems to me a capital one, and I have lately recommended it to the notice of other teachers. Some complaints have been heard from members of Committees against the too early use of copybooks, but I have always replied that the fault, if it be a fault, is mine. Children cannot be broken in too early to the use of pen and ink, for carefulness and attention are certainly fostered by their use. These qualities far outweigh any small inconveniences, such as the increase in cost may present. Indeed, I am so satisfied of the ill-effects of slates in school training that I shall be glad when writing in school has to be taught solely by the use of the pen.

Class and additional subjects continue to receive considerable attention in most of the schools. Too little regard is paid, however, to drill and calisthenics, and I should like to see an instruction issued to teachers on this matter. All pupils, and not merely a class, should be taught drill and calisthenics, and teachers should qualify themselves to give the necessary instruction. The fact should not be overlooked that drill and all forms of disciplinary training are quite different from reading and similar subjects. The latter affect the individual only, but government affects society as an organization, and the training of children should have both these ends in view. Most of the schools give some instruction in drill or calisthenics, but the schools which have reached a high standard of excellency in both departments are Waipawa, Gisborne, and Woodville.