

English on the playground, and to see that this is done as much as possible. There are many schools in which this habit is regularly practised, and it is very encouraging to hear the young Maori children calling to one another in English as they chase each other about the playground.

I may inform teachers that it has been alleged that an important distinction exists in this very respect between the Maori children attending a Board school and those attending one of our own Native schools—namely, that the former speak English in the playground, while the latter speak Maori. I hope that teachers will do their best to give this statement a practical denial, and to take every care to impress upon the children the necessity of practising outside school the lessons they learn within it.

It is important to notice in connection with English the benefit that the subject has received indirectly from improved methods in teaching arithmetic, especially in the work of the lowest classes, which is, generally speaking, taught orally. Nor can it be doubted that the improved skill in reading and the power that this gives are decided helps to the child in his English, and there is thus an unconscious correlation of the various subjects.

As regards the written English, one of the chief faults is the want of proper punctuation. One frequently sees the whole lesson written without a single stop inserted. In other cases the word *and* appears *ad nauseam*. The remedy for these faults is blackboard instruction, during which the children themselves should be made to supply the punctuation, the full stop being taught first, then the semicolon, and the comma last.

*Arithmetic.*—During the year there has been a gratifying improvement in this subject, though there is still a considerable amount of disparity amongst the schools. In the infant classes, however, a great advance has been made, and I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching of arithmetic in the lowest classes is now being conducted on methods that are thoroughly sound and likely to produce the best results. The art of counting by units has practically been discarded, and oral teaching of the various numbers in all their relations has been substituted. Counting on fingers, using strokes, and other mechanical aids to addition are, therefore, now not to be found in the lower classes of our best schools, though one occasionally sees in a higher standard a boy or girl unable to proceed without using fingers.

In most of the schools the recommendations I have made have been accepted by the teachers, and they are now working practically on the same lines as those set forth in the public school syllabus. The teaching of the first ten numbers has been, I think, quite sufficient work for a first-year child of, say, six years of age, the first twenty numbers forming a two-years course. Wherever this plan has been followed the results have been surprisingly good, and I have great hopes in the future for the arithmetic done by the children that have been given their first training in numbers on the method referred to.

During the year a manual of elementary arithmetic by the late Mr. Hartley, Inspector-General of Schools in Adelaide, South Australia, was supplied to teachers of schools. I cannot recommend it too earnestly to teachers who wish to give a thorough foundation in arithmetic in their school.

The teaching of this particular branch of the work being almost entirely oral, there has been a corresponding advance in mental arithmetic and ability to work simple problems. Nor can there be any doubt that the difficulty experienced by Maori children in this respect will entirely disappear as the children taught in the lowest classes on the new method reach the higher standards. I am pleased to note that teachers are making good use of the cardboard money supplied, and in not a few cases the teaching of sums involving money calculations has considerably gained by the practical work. For instance, in a northern school the children of Standard III class are frequently set to transact business such as is commonly done in country stores. One boy acts as storekeeper and the others come to buy goods, the money in all cases being the cardboard coins referred to. At the conclusion of the lesson the storekeeper accounts for his takings, and must have the proper amount of cash in hand. One can see the benefit of this lesson—arithmetic, English, and practical utility are all involved. And, further, in a well ordered school the children can be set to do this work occasionally by themselves; all that the teacher requires is to take note of the cash supplied to each.

The suggestions I have offered teachers as to the necessity of teaching children in Standard IV the working of simple bills of accounts have also been acted on, and I hope that we shall in future provide that every boy on leaving school will be able to understand the meaning of such bills and the correct way in which they should be drawn out. The writing out of sums of this kind forms a very proper subject for a writing lesson in Standard IV. For the arithmetic examination of Standards IV, V, and VI in Native schools I have found it practicable to use the arithmetic cards provided by the Department for the examination of public schools, and, except in one or two instances, have not found the work entirely beyond the ability of the children. What I want to impress more than ever on the teachers is the need of constant and regular practice in oral work throughout the whole school, and to suggest that such arithmetic as will be found to be of practical use to the Maori receive special attention.

*Geography.*—The work in geography proceeds practically on the old lines, and consists more of topography than of anything else; but there is already a tendency on the part of many teachers towards modern methods in this subject, and the Maori children are being taught to observe the phenomena of nature for themselves.

A teacher once complained that he could not teach the definitions without a map, and, as no map had been supplied until late in the year, his classes knew nothing of geography. It is now found that definitions cannot be taught by means of a map only, and the attempt to do so results in failure. I hope to see in the new Native Schools Code an approach made to the requirements of the public school syllabus, and to have the necessary topography acquired through the use of pictures and an up-to-date geographical reader.

*Sewing.*—Since last year I am very pleased to say that a great change has come about in the work done in many of our schools. The teachers have readily accepted the suggestion that the