

“saying” the lesson. Next, I wish teachers would endeavour to get the children to modulate their voices—to read with expression. There are very few schools indeed in which this is done to any extent. That it can be done is abundantly evident from the reading at *Te Kaha* and *Whakarewarewa* Schools, and also at *St. Joseph's Convent School*, Napier, the last-named being remarkable for the excellent expression with which the reading is rendered. Lastly, I think that much more attention should now be paid to comprehension of the subject-matter of the reading-lesson and to the meaning of the various words and phrases occurring therein. This has been forcibly brought home to me in connection with the examinations for the Makarini Scholarships, the questions on the comprehension of the reading-matter being very poorly answered. A few minutes devoted to this work at the end of the reading-lesson would be time well spent, and the instruction would serve as a valuable aid to the English lessons.

There are still some schools in which the teaching of reading in the lowest classes is not at all satisfactory. Some of the teachers appear to value very lightly the attempts made to assist them in securing better methods, and still follow their own lines. Others again regard the model lesson given by the Inspector as the *omega* as well as the *alpha* of the process, and make no attempt to advance beyond it. When, therefore, they are asked to give a lesson in reading to a preparatory class they almost invariably reproduce the pattern lesson given by the Inspector, and feel aggrieved when their methods are afterwards reported as “having made no advance.” Teachers should not be satisfied until they understand the method which is being illustrated to them. After that they should think out and elaborate the scheme for themselves.

I hope to be able to supply shortly reading-sheets, which will give those teachers who require it assistance in following out the method of teaching reading I have been advocating.

The number of schools at which libraries have been established, books being granted in recognition of the committees having supplied firewood during the year, has increased, and the children derive much pleasure and benefit from their reading.

*Spelling.*—There has been a very marked advance in this subject, especially in the lowest classes, and, indeed, children in the preparatory and First Standard classes are quite able to manage words that two or three years ago were commonly required of children in a higher class. The infants can write fairly well from dictation, and word-building exercises, within a reasonable range, are accomplished without much difficulty. Oral spelling is not used so much as formerly. In most of the Native schools, as in public schools, spelling is learned by the children rather than taught by the teacher. Some systematic teaching of spelling and word-building on the lines set forth in Wood's “Word-building and Composition” (Macmillan) is very much required, and two lessons a week would prove of great benefit in this subject.

*Writing.*—The quality of the writing in the schools varies very much indeed. In only a few schools can it be described as excellent. In some it is nothing short of bad, that of the higher standards being relatively worse than that of the lower ones.

This subject is one also in which the children are largely left to their own responsibility. In only a few does writing receive the amount of teaching that is required, and I doubt whether some teachers even give a blackboard lesson before the actual practice begins. The copy-books are in some cases not taken proper care of, and there is in them no evidence to show that the mistakes have been corrected. It is a pleasant relief to turn from such books to those of a school like *Whakarewarewa*, where the books are clean and the work uniformly excellent.

*English.*—Considerable advance has been made in English during the year, and, on the whole, this subject is now very well treated. I have again to express my satisfaction at the work of the lowest classes, in which is to be found the greatest progress. Indeed, the necessity for teaching young Maori children English from the very first is the principal reason for the provision in the new scale of an assistant in schools comparatively small in numbers. But here again there is a tendency on the part of some teachers to restrict the vocabulary year in and year out to practically the same list of objects or scenes. Teachers should endeavour to secure that a fair number of new words and phrases, arranged in sets and connected with some definite action, should be acquired by the children during the course of each month. This, of course, involves preparation beforehand by the teacher, a matter which as yet does not receive due attention.

The principal fault in the written English consists of what has been aptly described as “breathless narration.” There is a want of punctuation and a consequent stringing together of sentences in a kind of endless chain. If the composition lessons were taught more from the blackboard and the punctuation illustrated thereby, this objectionable style would soon disappear. From the experience of the year's work I feel convinced that most of the children who have engaged in English conversations have never seen the sentences they have made written on the board.

In a very few schools teachers are to be found who use Maori in teaching English as well as other subjects. It is remarkable that in these schools the English shows a distinct weakness in comparison with that of schools even more isolated. Even the Maori people themselves recognise the danger of the practice, and at one place a request was made to an Inspector that a teacher should be sent who would teach in English. It is to be hoped that the teachers who follow the practice referred to will be advised in time and discard Maori altogether.

*Arithmetic.*—In the infant classes the teaching of this subject again shows much improvement, and I think a fairly sound foundation is being laid. Children are able to deal with the first twenty numbers in a pleasing fashion, and in only a very few schools do they invoke the aid of their fingers. The gain to the oral work in arithmetic as well as to their comprehension of questions in English is very noticeable.

I find, to my disappointment, that some teachers have made so far practically no use of the Manual of Elementary Arithmetic which was supplied for their benefit, and hope that it will yet prove a valuable guide to them in their work.

In the standard classes the ordinary public-school examination-cards do not prove on the whole a too difficult test, a fact which ought to prove that the work has made much progress. Oral work is, however, still necessary in the standard classes.