

and it is pleasing to record that in several schools under new teachers the Committee and the people have contributed liberally in the direction of making improvements in various ways. Under such teachers school funds have been successfully established, the purpose of which being to benefit the schools. In this important matter of environment teachers will do well to bear in mind that in considering claims for promotion the effect of their influence upon the environment of their schools carries very considerable weight.

ORGANIZATION.

Under this heading are included management and control, construction of time-tables, preparation of schemes of work, methods of teaching, &c., in connection with which the remarks made in last year's report are still applicable to a considerable number of schools. With regard to the methods of teaching it is pleasing to observe that a satisfactory improvement is noticeable, and that the teachers as a whole willingly adopt suggestions that are made from time to time. More particular reference to the methods is made in the general remarks upon the various subjects of the school course.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.

In accordance with the scheme adopted in the early part of the year in connection with the examination and inspection of Native schools, the work connected with the schools in the Hawke's Bay Education District (twenty-four schools) was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Bird, Senior Inspector of Schools, while in the other districts the work was undertaken by the Inspector of Native Schools, who was assisted by the departmental Inspector stationed in those districts. It is gratifying to note that the reports of those Inspectors who had not previously visited Native schools indicated generally an exceedingly satisfactory degree of efficiency—a condition of affairs that for some reason or other they had not anticipated. The following table gives an estimate of the efficiency of the Native village schools inspected during the year 1916:—

	Number of Schools.
Very good to excellent	39
Satisfactory to good	65
Inferior to weak	11

Four schools were not inspected—one which was opened for the first time after the visit to the district had been made, and three which were closed temporarily. During the year twenty-eight certificates of proficiency and twenty-six of competency were gained by pupils attending the village schools.

GENERAL REMARKS.

With regard to the various subjects of the school course the following remarks are submitted:—

English.—Reading: As far as mechanical accuracy is concerned there are few schools where the reading may not be described as good; still there are many teachers who are satisfied with this accomplishment alone, and who fail to recognize that reading is thinking, and not the mere pronunciation of words. Consequently it is frequently found that the lack of comprehension and of appreciation of the ideas underlying the subject-matter read constitutes one of the chief defects of the reading, if not the chief defect. The unnatural and monotonous tone of many of the pupils in reading clearly indicates that their attention is absorbed in form, and form alone, and that there is little or no free thought-action. Where there is this free thought-action it is generally reflected in the style of reading. Reading should continually serve as a means of enhancing thought, since it has to be borne in mind that the real use of words is to arouse educative thought. Unless great care is taken it is just possible that the pupils may never acquire the habit of thinking by means of words. The power to do so is more difficult in the case of oral reading than in that of silent reading, since in the former too much attention is devoted to the form of words and too little to the thought, and teachers must be careful to adopt methods which encourage to the utmost thought-action. Pupils should therefore have frequent practice, both oral and written, in expressing the thought evolved from what they read, either orally or silently.

“The demand thus made is, then, that from the beginning to the end the child shall think; that the action of his mind shall be upon the thought which he most needs for his own growth and development; that symbols shall act upon his mind immediately, attracting to themselves the least possible attention; that he shall early form fixed habits of thinking what he reads and of never fancying that he is reading unless he is thinking. Thus reading may be made, next to observation, the greatest means of mental and moral development.”

Reading taught in accordance with the principles thus enunciated would be a valuable factor in the acquisition of English by the Maori child, and his power of expression would be benefited accordingly. To the non-recognition of these principles must be attributed, in part at least, the disproportion that so often exists between the progress made in the language and the amount of reading covered.

Recitation of verses in quite a large number of schools is exceedingly well done, while in others it is not of high merit.

In many schools where the copybook has been discarded and the subject is taught from the blackboard the *writing* is excellent. The poor writing that is not infrequently met with is an unmistakable sign of defective teaching. One of the most potent reasons for the indifferent writing is the fact that the teachers themselves do not write well, and will not take the trouble to learn. By constant and careful practice it is possible for them to write with a satisfactory