

readers are supplied, and it is considered that the pupils from this division will now be better equipped to undertake the reading material prescribed for Standard I. In regard to recitation, the results in many schools are disappointing, the pronunciation and enunciation being slovenly, the punctuation ignored, and no attempt made to secure expression. If teachers appreciated to the full the valuable aid afforded to the Maori child by the recitation of verses they would exercise the greatest vigilance in securing accuracy. The quantity and variety memorized are frequently insufficient, while the choice of pieces does not always indicate good judgment. Moreover, it is apparent in many schools that the pieces selected, instead of being learnt individually, are learnt by the class in unison. Such a device is merely mechanical drill, and destroys much of the value the recitation may have.

In *spelling* a very fair amount of success is achieved in the majority of schools. Many of the mistakes which occur in the pupils' work, not only in the dictation exercises but chiefly in the composition exercises, arise not so much from the inability of the children to spell more or less difficult words as from the imperfect appreciation of the smaller words and the distinctions between them. More attention should be given to the spelling of words which rightly come within their vocabulary, and less attention given to those words clearly beyond it, and to this end teachers should prepare lists of suitable words. Oral spelling to the exclusion of better methods still persists in a few schools, the teachers being unaware that by this method the ear only is requisitioned, whereas the eye and hand are the more effective instruments.

The excellent *writing* seen in many schools proves clearly that with method and close co-operation between teachers and pupils it is possible to get almost every pupil to write decently. In other schools, however, the writing is poor in quality, and it is evident that the teachers permit indifferent work and that the pupils' *best* is not always exacted. In competitions held in this subject in various parts of the country, pupils from Native schools have succeeded in carrying off the majority of the prizes.

*Languages: Oral and Written Composition.*—The teaching of our language to the Maori child constitutes a very difficult problem for the teacher of the Native school, and although it is recognized that work of higher quality is gradually being produced, it is still evident that the instruction in many instances leaves much to be desired. The quality of the work varies very considerably in the schools, and while it ranges from very satisfactory to good and even to excellent in a large number of schools, in a considerable number it can only be described as poor. The results both in oral and written composition are in direct proportion to the skill of the teacher, and consequently where the work is not satisfactory it is quite apparent that the teacher and his methods are at fault. It is felt, moreover, that there is a tendency among such teachers to regard the difficulties of the subject as insuperable to the Maori child, and the progress of their pupils, such as it is, as the limit of his attainment. The schemes of work drawn up in this subject form a good index of the methods of treatment, and where the schemes betray an absence of thoughtful preparation it seldom or never happens that the work of the pupils reaches a moderate standard.

For successful work in composition the oral practice is a *sine qua non*, and teachers who fail to realize that it is indispensable must not expect to meet with anything but disappointment and failure. Since the importance of oral composition is strongly emphasized in the teaching of English to pupils whose mother tongue is English, it surely must be recognized how doubly important it must be in the case of children who are confronted with the task of acquiring that language and the power of expressing themselves in it. In those schools where the written composition fails to reach a satisfactory level it is felt that there is really little or no attempt to teach the subject. The children are given a theme such as a letter or description, or reproduction of a story; and when they have used up a certain amount of paper and much time in their efforts to write, the teachers imagine that by the mere correction of the errors they are teaching composition. The fact that there must be well-directed constructive work on their part is either not appreciated or is ignored; and it is no wonder that the children thrown on their own resources with neither advice nor example to guide them produce only the crudest of work.

As letter-writing is an indispensable social necessity it is important that children should be taught to write a letter correctly; not only the variety of form, but the details of technique—the beginning, the salutation, the ending, and the incidental punctuation require much attention. Punctuation can be taught effectively (1) by examination and discussion of printed passages in the readers, (2) by carefully chosen passages set, without punctuation, on the blackboard.

*Arithmetic.*—Speaking generally it may be said that this subject is now receiving more intelligent treatment, and that teachers endeavour to make the instruction as realistic as possible. In the latter connection, however, the teaching of the preparatory classes shows to better advantage than that adopted in the standard classes, where some teachers appear loth to make provision for the practical treatment of the subject. Greater care and attention are now being devoted to the logical arrangement of the work of the pupils, while mental arithmetic, although not yet receiving the attention it deserves, shows improvement.

*Geography and Nature-study.*—In a large number of schools very satisfactory work is done in this subject, and the schemes of work indicate that it is intelligently treated. In other schools, again, there appears to be a falling-off in the quality of the work, there being very little observational work at all. It is frequently found that the pupils are unable to make a decent sketch of their own district with the features of which they are perfectly familiar. Teachers who find a difficulty with this subject are referred again for guidance and inspiration to the suggestive treatment contained in the appendix to the regulations.

*Handwork, &c.*—Various forms of handwork are taken in Native schools, and generally the work done is of a very satisfactory nature. The chief weakness in this connection in quite a number of schools lies in the want of proper recognition of the value of correlation of this subject with the other subjects of the school course.