

phrase is beyond them they revert to the word as the unit, and bad habits are started. With a difficult book the subject should be studied first, and reading aloud should follow, not precede, the comprehension by the pupil of the passage read.

"Further, it ought not to be necessary to insist that the teacher should be a good reader himself, capable of showing by his own example that reading is not a mechanical process, but a social and humane accomplishment, and a method of interpreting literature. Above all, he should be able to read poetry so as to reveal its beauty and to awaken poetic emotion. Reading aloud by the teacher should be much more frequent than it is, and it is most important that children should be practised not only in the art of speaking and reading, but also in the art of listening. Just as they are apt to read by words instead of phrases, so they are apt to listen for words and not for the sense. They should be trained to follow attentively the sense of what is read to them, and this remains true when the reading is for the purpose of dictation, which should be given to them in phrases and not word by word. Reading aloud will be greatly helped by dramatic work and by good teaching of recitation. But, in view of the associations which have gathered round the term 'reading,' we suggest that when the mere technique, the recognition and use of symbols, has been mastered, the lesson should be called 'literature' rather than reading. Reading aloud will then fall into its proper place as an aspect of the study of literature."

*Language Instruction: English (Oral and Written).*—The results achieved in this subject vary very considerably in the schools, and it is felt that although some degree of improvement is noticed in many cases the general standard of proficiency is not by any means as high as might reasonably be expected. In a fair number of schools the results are very good; in a fairly large number they range from fair to good; and in a very considerable number the results are disappointing. This condition of affairs can only be attributed to the ineffectiveness of the teaching, due, no doubt, in many instances to lack of skill on the part of the teachers in dealing with the problem. The proficiency of the pupils in this subject provides a very accurate measure of teaching-skill. In last year's report and also in previous reports an attempt was made to point out the defects in the methods of teaching adopted, and to make suggestions for a more methodical and intelligent treatment of the subject. The importance of providing the pupils with ample opportunities for practice in oral expression was emphasized. It is just in connection with this vital matter that many of the teachers fail; they lack resource and originality in securing for their pupils the maximum of oral practice, with the result that they monopolize the greater part of the conversational work. In the preparatory divisions it is clearly evident, if the pupils' interests are to be conserved, that their acquisition of a working vocabulary as quickly as possible becomes a necessity, and the best efforts of the teacher must be directed towards this end before attempting to teach them to read and write. The sooner the pupils learn to talk freely and naturally on things within the range of their observation and experience the better. "Oral work is, we are convinced, the foundation upon which the proficiency of writing English must be based: more than that, it is a condition of the successful teaching of all that is worth being taught."

The work of the preparatory divisions and S1 and S2 is relatively better than that in the upper divisions from, say, S3 upwards, and the explanation of this feature appears to be that from this stage there is more or less an abrupt change of method, with results that are correspondingly harmful. An undue proportion of the pupils' time is devoted to written work in this subject, and there is a falling-off in their power of self-expression. The pupils in the upper classes are denied the opportunity for free expression and for developing the power of connected and continuous speech. As a matter of fact every lesson should afford this opportunity, and neglect in this respect deprives the pupils of the readiest means to fluency and naturalness in their written work. "Composition cannot be regarded merely as a subject. It is a measure of all that has been truly learnt, and of the habits of mind which have been formed. In fact, the capacity for self-expression is essentially the measure of the success or failure of a school, at any rate, on the intellectual side. If the habit of merely perfunctory or artificial writing is allowed to usurp its place the avenues to mental development will have been partly closed."

*Writing.*—In schools where the subject is satisfactorily taught the writing of the pupils is generally good; in many instances it is excellent. In many schools the copybook is discarded, and the writing is taught entirely from the blackboard with good results. There is a tendency, however, to sacrifice speed and ease of movement to copybook neatness. In schools where the writing is of inferior quality it is felt that there is little real teaching of the subject, the method being to hand out the copybooks and to allow the pupils to get along as best they can. Incorrect posture of the body and incorrect methods of holding the pen or pencil are frequently observed.

*Geography and Nature-study.*—In a very fair proportion of the schools there is an intelligent treatment of the subject; in quite a number of schools, however, the results cannot be regarded as particularly satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of maps, atlases, newspapers, and of the globe; and direct observation on the part of the pupils is not properly appealed to. The schemes of work and the programmes of the work actually covered are frequently uninspiring.

*Arithmetic.*—Generally speaking, the subject is taught very satisfactorily in many of the schools, and in a fair proportion of them it is well taught. There are, however, too many schools where the work is poor—a result due not to the inability of the pupils to make progress, as many of the teachers would lead one to believe, but rather to the inefficiency of the teaching. In the preparatory divisions the composition of numbers is generally well dealt with, and in a large number of the schools the proficiency of the children is distinctly creditable. It appears necessary, however, to remind quite a number of teachers that the aim and purpose of their teaching, as far as the preparatory divisions and S1 are concerned, should be to ensure that the pupils, according to their stages of progress, acquire by concrete methods a thorough grasp and mastery of the first hundred numbers, and the power of working mentally questions involving the use of the four processes. In S1 the pupils should be called upon to explain orally the various operations they perform.