

improved, but the vast field of design, which has been stressed by your Inspectors, has been inadequately covered. It is hoped that during the coming year greater attention will be given to this aspect of the subject, and particularly to the study of Maori design.

12. AGRICULTURE.

This subject now includes a great variety of activities and studies. Assisted by the Agricultural Instructors the teachers gave careful attention to plot work, which included the growing of vegetables for the mid-day meal. A certain amount of nursery work was undertaken, and the tree nurseries established last year were maintained.

Club work has been strengthened, and now includes Home Garden Clubs, Calf Clubs, and one or two Pig and Poultry Clubs. Home gardens are of very practical value, and experience shows that they deserve even greater encouragement. Particularly in the East Coast district, the Calf Club work has progressed and has awakened the interest and co-operation of the local farmers.

Nature Study continues to be treated analytically, and teachers do not aim at awakening in the Maori children that appreciation of nature which would mean so much to them in their limited environment. The greatest progress in revising the methods of teaching Nature Study has been made in the North Auckland District. Better provision in the storage of tools is necessary, but in most schools they are carefully oiled and well cared for.

Ground-improvement schemes, sometimes on a considerable scale and involving the assistance of the Unemployment Board, were carried out in a number of schools, and in general it may be said that the outside environment has greatly improved of recent years.

13. ENGLISH, ARITHMETIC, AND SOCIAL STUDIES.

The need for proficiency in English, both oral and written, has been emphasized, as a command of this language is necessary to establish between the races that feeling of equality which is one of the foremost aims of the Native schools. Systematic drills in correct grammatical and idiomatic expression are still urgently needed to eradicate those errors which are characteristic of the Maori. In very few schools has there been any evidence of a planned attack upon these fundamental weaknesses. In written English a feature has been made of the development of the imaginative type of composition with very encouraging results. In composing letters, especially those of a formal type, lack of knowledge and experience often produces incongruous statements and requests. With a broader interpretation of civics this deficiency will be overcome. In both oral and written English fluency has improved, and in a few schools a high standard is reached.

Oral reading still suffers from a forced, flat, and monotonous delivery maintained at a high pitch. Voice modulation, inflection, and word-grouping in a foreign tongue, do not come naturally, but require continued teaching, mainly by pattern work. With the exception of this defect, oral reading is fluent. In a number of schools reading for content has not received the attention it merits, but this aspect of teaching is dependent, to a certain extent, upon adequate library facilities. Deficiencies in this respect have already been mentioned. In recitation a much better selection of poems has been made generally, with a consequent improvement in expression. This subject, however, lacks breadth of treatment, and more importance continues to be placed upon memorization than on the interpretation of the poems.

Spelling is still a problem in those schools which have not incorporated the spelling in a scheme for building up an active vocabulary. This subject requires more thought and preparation and much less reliance upon formal word lists and traditional teaching methods.

This year there has been an improvement in the mechanical accuracy of arithmetic and in the majority of Native schools the standard of attainment in this subject is satisfactory. In order to encourage teachers to devise schemes in arithmetic that would suit the needs of the pupils the tests given to the upper classes have been divided into three sections, commercial, agricultural, and domestic. In past years problems have been predominantly of the first type, and were more suited to those who would eventually earn a living in a city.

Mental arithmetic, where the problems are stated orally, is another phase which needs more attention in Native schools, as most of the arithmetic which the Maori child will be called upon to do in future life will be of that type. Formality in the teaching of this subject persists where the text-books are relied upon exclusively.

In geography and in history, initiative in the preparation of schemes has been still further encouraged by allowing teachers to prepare their own questions for the Proficiency Examination. In spite of this, geography continues to be taken on traditional lines, while its scope for experiment and observation is almost neglected.

In history little originality is shown in collecting local stories, although emphasis is laid upon local, Maori, and New Zealand history. In external geography and history, only that which affects New Zealand directly or indirectly is included in the schemes. Modern developments are not overlooked and, taking into consideration the difficulty many schools have in obtaining newspapers, satisfactory efforts are made to keep the pupils abreast of the times. The teaching of civics, in a broad sense, needs to be stressed more strongly, and clubs, school councils, and similar school organizations are valuable for this purpose.

Singing shows improvement in tone, in articulation, and in the types of songs selected. School choirs have increased in number, and some have performed with distinction in competitions.

Modern methods are being employed by a steadily increasing number of infant teachers. Child activity is more in evidence and group methods are more extensively applied. The new readers have proved very popular, and have materially assisted in the revision of teaching methods. In number teaching there is a tendency, in the upper primer classes, to abandon the concrete type and to restrict the arithmetic to symbols.