

7. ENGLISH.

This subject has been most effectually taught by those teachers who have ceased to regard it as a time-table subject, and have correlated it with every activity possible. Direct teaching is necessary to obtain grammatical accuracy, but it is the indirect training which is the most important factor in improving general oral expression. It has frequently been noted that the Native child will often make a deliberate attempt to use good English during formal lessons and lapse back into Maori idiom and errors in grammar when speaking about his practical activities. More use should be made of manual and outdoor work as material for training in English, particularly in vocabulary building and in obtaining a command of English idiom, two phases of English which need more systematic tuition. Owing to the common practice of using the *School Journal* for vocabulary work there is need to stress continually the importance of oral vocabulary and of placing emphasis on oral rather than on written expression. The fullest use of *ex tempore* dramatization has been advocated, and in several schools there has been a pleasing response. There are, however, many teachers who fail to realize the possibilities of dramatization of which fuller use could be made in poetry, history, the interpretation of pictures and in Nature study. Speech-training is usually restricted to such work as reading, recitation, and singing, but should be designed to eradicate the errors detected in oral work generally. Natural expression in recitation and reading also requires more consideration. Group methods in reading are now commonly used, though several teachers are still content to hear children read aloud consecutively while the others remain silent and ostensibly follow in their books what is being read aloud. Class libraries are gradually being extended, but much more can be done to encourage a love of reading and of reading for pleasure. Very few schools are equipped with reference libraries, so that reading for information is not a common practice. More use could be made of the newspaper for that purpose.

Following on the refresher courses, a determined effort was made to improve written expression, with pleasing results. The writing of letters has improved considerably, while imaginative work in composition reaches a high standard in a number of schools.

8. AGRICULTURE AND NATURE STUDY.

Most Native schools have established conveniently arranged vegetable gardens, the work in which is closely related to the home and the home gardens.

Stress continues to be laid on the utilitarian aspect of gardening, somewhat to the detriment of such æsthetic activities as the preparation and maintenance of attractive flower gardens, the building of rockeries, the laying-out of shrubberies, and other pleasing additions to the school environment.

Interest in the various club activities has been maintained, owing to the definite motivation they provide and to the opportunities they afford of closer contact with the parents and adult community.

In the infant division, nature study is treated realistically and a very live interest in growing things is aroused, but progress in the middle and senior divisions continues to be retarded, owing to the use of the analytical method. Rather should the children be given "opportunities of observing and of tending plants and animals with a view to their gaining at first hand some knowledge of growth in Nature," leading to a deeper interest in and appreciation of the living world around them.

Throughout the year ground-improvement schemes have been proceeded with in many schools. The provision of assembly areas is still inadequate.

9. SOCIAL STUDIES.

The biographical and social aspects of history continue to be stressed, and, in the junior and middle division, the approach through stories is adopted. A more active part could be taken by the pupils in the form of dramatization, correlated handwork, drawing, and, in the senior division, project work. Some good work has been done in compiling local histories, and in practical civics excellent training has been given by means of junior school committees or school councils where pupil administration and responsibility have, in some cases, been developed to a surprising degree. Both in this subject and in geography, realism can be introduced by the use of attractive pictures and maps and carefully selected reference books. Most Native schools have a small but by no means adequate supply of supplementary readers of historical fiction or geographical interest. History, to such a race as the Maori, which is inclined to look back for evidence of achievement and prestige, has a special interest, as was demonstrated by the large audiences that assembled to hear Sir Apirana Ngata's lectures on Maori and Polynesian history at the refresher courses. Local geography is generally well taught, although pupil activity has not, in most schools, developed to the stage where the study is made first hand and not indirectly in the class-room. The approach to external countries is frequently too artificial in character, and regional work is attempted too soon. More could be done to arouse interest by tracing the sources of New Zealand imports and of raw materials used in the manufacture of common domestic articles. Newspaper geography is a strong feature in some schools, and a considerable amount of self-education is engendered by projects involving the collection of cuttings. Greater facility in the use of maps continues to be stressed.