

It cannot be too strongly stressed that memorization and general fluency are but the preliminary essential steps to the fuller development of these subjects. In very few Native schools to-day is there lack of fluency in oral expression. The foundations for vivid expression have been laid; attention should now be paid to super-structure.

In a number of schools the concert period provided scope for co-operation and organization among the pupils themselves. Singing continues to be taught chiefly by ear, with too little attention paid to ear and sight training. The Maori child has a strong rhythmic sense, which finds expression in Maori action songs and in percussion bands, but there is a persistent tendency to sing at a very slow tempo. In many schools the choice of songs is very limited, the same songs being taught year after year. When properly trained, young Maori voices can be very sweet, but in too many schools tone is forced and often harsh. In a number of Native schools, however, singing reaches a remarkably high standard.

Dramatic work has endless possibilities as an educational tool. Most children have greater gifts of acting than we commonly suspect. Most teachers, too, have unsuspected resources, and all are capable of making use of the child's love of make-believe. Dramatic work is similar to all other art in its power to release children from self-consciousness, in its provision of outlets for the difficult child, in its training in initiative, and in its scope for imagination. No teacher striving towards pupil activity can afford to neglect it. At the present time dramatization is a method best used by infant teachers, but during 1938 it became established in the standard classes to a greater degree than ever before. Common faults were too few pupils participating, speech too fast, insufficient speech, and occasionally too much teacher interference.

Few teachers have attempted to introduce choral speaking, and this hesitation to do so has been wise, for choral speaking, if it is done at all, must be done properly. True choral speaking has real educational value in that it promotes discipline through co-operation and confidence through free and joyous expression. Other values, such as voice training and control, exactness in enunciation, and the cultivation of literary and artistic appreciation, are obvious.

The Maori child's appreciation of reading for its own sake has not been advanced to any great degree, nor should any marked improvement be expected until ample, easier, and more interesting reading material is available.

6. ENGLISH AND ARITHMETIC.

Fluency in oral expression has reached a pleasing stage in most Native schools, although it is not overlooked that there is a minority of Maori children who appear never to speak with any degree of efficiency or pleasure. It now seldom occurs that a Maori child is compelled to pause before speaking while the process of translation from Maori to English is taking place. Thinking in English seems to be the common practice.

Progress has been made in the quality of written expression, but at a slower rate. Where pupils are given the opportunities for wide reading, research, and the compilation of reports on projects, school magazines, &c., it is noticed that the standard of written English advances rapidly. The general standard may be regarded as very fair, but in many schools Maori idiomatic constructions continue to break through. More schools are now using scientific drills to establish good speech habits. The regular formal type of composition is being replaced by letter-writing, paragraphing, short descriptions of common things, folio-making, and note-taking. The aim is plain writing, stressing the qualities of conciseness and clearness, with vigour added, as a sense of word values develops. There is now less florid writing than was once the case.

Spelling is generally satisfactory, although there is too great a tendency to rely on the *School Journal* as the source from which to select words. A greater concentration on those words distinctly related to the child's life and environment is to be desired.

From the point of view of fluency, reading in most schools is good, but interpretation is frequently mechanical. The increased supply of departmental supplementary reading material, together with the efforts being made by the teachers to enlarge their school libraries, should assist in fostering a real love of reading. Writing varies from fair to good, but is seldom distinguished in any way. It is constantly emphasized that there should be only one kind of writing current in school, a reasonable standard of accuracy and of neatness being required from all pupils at all times.

Practical arithmetic is receiving increased attention, but the text-books continue to dominate the teaching of this subject to too great an extent. Mechanical arithmetic, including number combinations, the four rules, and everyday tables of measure, is of particular importance and a high standard is expected. Diagnostic tests are seldom used by teachers, although they are straightforward enough to be adopted as teaching equipment in arithmetic, reading, composition, and spelling.

7. GENERAL.

(a) All Native schools were visited by your Inspectors.

(b) *Teachers' Meetings*.—At various centres Native-school teachers have met regularly for the purpose of discussing their problems and, in general, of improving their efficiency and that of the service as a whole. Where opportunity permitted, Inspectors have addressed these meetings and shared in the discussions. It must be remembered that, owing to distance and isolation, most Native-school teachers can attend such meetings only at considerable personal expense and inconvenience. The well-attended meetings are evidence of the strong spirit of service possessed by these teachers.

(c) *New Salary Scale*.—The Teachers' Salaries Regulations 1938 placed the salaries of Native-school teachers upon the same basis, in all respects, as those of teachers employed in public schools, thus removing minor anomalies that had existed for some time. A new salary scale for uncertificated assistant teachers, based on service, was included in the regulations.