

found with the writing in the senior. It is not sufficient that the writing should be neat: it must show that the headline has been faithfully copied with respect to distances of letters and words, slope, relative lengths and widths, crossing of loops, and point of juncture of parts. Failure in any of these should be educed from the children, and exposed by a liberal use of the black-board and chalk. To carry out the system to perfection, every child should be copying the same headline. The upper half of the copy-book should be written first from beginning to end, and each copy dated; then the lower half should be begun, so that improvement may be gauged; and on the fourth line the pupil should write his name and the date. To encourage children to look at the headlines, and not at what they have just written, it may be found advantageous to ask them to begin on the bottom line and write upwards. At most no more than a line should be written without supervision by the teacher. The habit of scribbling on slates is another assistance to bad writing. On my first visit to the schools I found that few slates were ruled, and even First Standard pupils were asked to make letters without any lines to guide them. The result may be imagined. The slates of the First and Second Standards should be ruled with double lines (care should be taken that these lines are parallel), and those of the remaining standards with single and marginal lines. In three months almost perfect writing was obtained at Feilding in the Second Standard when these lines were used. Many teachers seem to be unaware that transcription is required from the Second Standard; and consequently at the examination the work sent in was mere scribbling, done in a few minutes, without any attention to the style of the writing or to punctuation marks. The habit of asking First and Second Standard pupils to write out poetry should be discontinued. Some teachers, with apparent pride, presented me with verses written by First Standard pupils who were unable to make the letters correctly. Need I say that the lines were full of misspelled words, capitals for small letters, and *vice versa*. And this, forsooth, was teaching writing! Some very young pupils that were unable to make the letters in any shape or form were presented for the First Standard. In transcription the paragraph should be noticed, and all exercise-books should be ruled with marginal lines. In many schools no attention seems to be paid to the position of the body or to the proper way of holding the pen. A little drill every day in such matters should precede the writing lesson to the junior standards.

ARITHMETIC.—Arithmetic was a very weak subject in a large number of schools. In the First Standard, as a rule, the work was not nearly equal to the requirements, much less beyond them, as it should have been if a good Second Standard is desired this year. In only some half-dozen schools could pupils write figures in words, take down numbers from the black-board, or addition sums of three lines written in a row with the sign between the lines. Yet some of these same pupils could, I was told, add five and six lines when dictated. The figures generally were very bad. In the Second Standard I received some excellent work, especially at the Wanganui Boys', Wanganui Girls', Hawera, and Ashurst Schools. At the first-named the majority proved all their sums, and their short multiplication by two sets of factors and by long multiplication. This shows what can be done. At a few places pupils could not attempt the work, while fully three-fourths of all the Second Standard pupils failed in notation, being unable to put down the addition sum which was printed in words. In Standard III., again, many were ignorant of notation, long multiplication was generally incorrectly worked, and the term "Find the product" was not understood. Subtraction of money was very weak, and pupils' ideas of money were crude. Standard IV. was the worst-prepared of all the classes. Practice was not known, and it was very annoying to see how few could work a simple bill, and receipt it in proper form. Receipted bills of parcels should be neatly made out and hung on the walls of all buildings. In Standards V. and VI. little outside mechanical work was done at the majority of schools, and many broke down even in this, especially in interest and fractions. The arithmetic in both these standards at Hawera, Manaia, and Upper Tutaenui, and in the higher standard at Wanganui and Aramoho, was very good, and materially raised the two percentages for the district. I am afraid that small country schools will never, with only two years' preparation, be able to cope successfully with the arithmetic required in the two highest standards. Thus, although seven sums were set for the Sixth, and the correct working of only three carried passing marks, three-fourths of the children failed to obtain them. This amount, too, would have been still less if I had not in most cases used the cards which I found were in highest favour. But the bad results in arithmetic are partly due, I think, to defective teaching. The subject is treated in a purely mechanical, and not in an intellectual, manner. Pupils are taught rules, not principles: they are *told* what to do, instead of being led to *deduce* it. I would therefore urge teachers to train their pupils, even from the First Standard, to reason out problems, demonstrating the successive steps on their slates. The slates should be divided, the writing appearing on one half and the figures on the other. The general practice of "guessing out" problems in haphazard fashion on slates, when the pupil does not know how or why he obtained his answer, does more harm than good. The unitary method should be largely employed, and it would be well to discard Barnard Smith's text-book. The subject should be made as practical as possible; hence the making-out of receipted bills, calculations of the cost of flooring, painting, and papering rooms, and suchlike work, and the finding of areas, should form a large portion of the arithmetic of the senior standards. And much of this might be anticipated in the junior classes. There is no reason why even a First Standard boy who knows that $5 \times 12 = 60$ should not be capable of understanding that a rectilinear figure on the black-board having five squares in one direction and twelve in another contains sixty squares altogether, or—when the objects are shown him—that there are sixty pence in five shillings, sixty inches in five feet, sixty fingers on twelve hands. And here I may say that, as a child's earliest notions of numbers are concrete, his earliest exercises in counting should take the form of counting actual objects. The practice of teaching arithmetic to pupils in drafts on the floor should be discontinued, for it tends to promote careless and untidy work.

In very few schools was mental arithmetic carefully and systematically taught, while in some it was not attempted at all. The inability of even Sixth Standard pupils to solve mentally the very simplest questions was surprising. A slight acquaintance with the subject would have saved many blunders in the Fourth Standard.