

given," and he recommends that "all passes in reading should depend absolutely on a knowledge of the meaning of the passage read": he would specially insist on this in Standard VI. "It would mean spending additional time on the examinations, but this is surely a matter of minor importance where the benefits to be secured are so obvious and so great." Mr. Grierson writes on this topic as follows: "There is a very general opinion among teachers that the comprehension of the New Zealand Graphic Readers cannot be overtaken, in the higher numbers at any rate. In this opinion I should entirely concur if it were necessary for a teacher to explain the meaning of everything obscure to the pupils' minds. But surely a child can be expected to help itself in this matter, as it does in arithmetic and elsewhere. The teacher should carefully thresh out a few lessons in the earlier part of the school year, guiding the pupils in the use of their dictionaries and presenting clearly on the blackboard the best manner in which the explanation can be shown. After a short course of such exercise the pupils would be able to pursue, with a little occasional assistance and further direction, this most useful and interesting study. Years ago I used this method with great success. Are not hundreds of thousands of children all over the world mastering a foreign language in this way? All that is needed for success is that teachers should realise the immense importance of this part of a child's education, make up their minds that it shall, by some means, be done, and set themselves to work to get it done. The end is a great one, and is worth a great effort." I would only add that the readers used in the Roman Catholic schools are no whit easier of understanding than our Graphic Readers.

On the whole, spelling continues to be well taught. Mr. Goodwin (North-Central district), while finding it "satisfactory" in the country schools, notes much incorrect spelling of common words in exercises outside dictation, which he roundly attributes to carelessness. Both Mr. Crowe and Mr. Grierson point out that too little account is often taken of accurate spelling in determining promotions.

Writing is taught with very unequal success in different schools. In many of the larger schools it is good, and this holds of a considerable proportion of the smaller ones. In the examination reports it is seldom described as being below "satisfactory." Still, in many of the smaller schools the writing in exercise-books, &c., leaves much to be desired, and that in copy-books cannot always be held passable. Mr. Grierson says "it is taught with fair success" in his district, but he complains of inattention to the writing posture and the way of holding the pen, as does Mr. Goodwin also. "Many teachers in my district," writes the former, "profess not to be able to see any utility in attending to these points, while others confess to their inability to train their pupils to a rational and natural posture. To the former I would reply that no one becomes a fluent writer until he has acquired the correct posture, and that the advantages of a fairly upright position, as compared with the sprawling, body-twisting distortions indulged in by most of the children in the district, from the point of view both of the development of a child's body and of the preservation of its sight, are self-evident. To the latter class of teachers I would say that they have mistaken their vocation, and if they are unable in one month to make the correct posture a habit at all times throughout their schools they are unworthy to be intrusted with the vital duty of moulding children's characters and forming their habits." Good writing goes hand in hand with good discipline; those who fail to teach it with reasonable success have not the influence with and power over their pupils that are indispensable to the educator.

Fair progress in the teaching of composition continues to be made. "It is good in a few schools, satisfactory in most, and weak in a few," is Mr. Purdie's estimate. Mr. Mulgan writes: "Grammatical errors and mistakes in spelling were seldom met with in the two upper classes, where moreover the power of expanding ideas is being cultivated with success. It is not unusual to find a large Standard VI. class writing relatively long compositions on subjects treated for the first time, and expressing themselves for the most part with clearness and accuracy. The matter evolved, however, is often disappointing, showing but small evidence of thought-power. The compositions in fact are descriptive, and disclose very little originality or ability to follow up lines of thought. I am inclined to think that too many of the subjects chosen (by the teachers) in the upper classes encourage descriptions of, rather than thoughts about, the matter to be discussed. In Standard IV. most of the exercises were written without notes, and in many cases were creditable productions. . . . In Standard III. the work was almost everywhere well done—in many cases, indeed, the exercises being quite up to the level of Standard IV." Mr. Crowe says: "On the whole, I think this subject is taught in a satisfactory manner." Mr. Goodwin describes most of the exercises received in his country schools "as passable, though few could be truly described as 'good,'" and he notes that the exercises were frequently marred by bad spelling. Mr. Grierson's account of the teaching is less satisfactory. "I found no evidence," he says, "of the many useful suggestions made in your last year's report being adopted. I can only record the opinion that the composition exercises written at the examinations were, on the whole, but fair. As you remarked last year, many of the teachers do not show any burning desire to learn good methods, and I am certain that few of them have taken the trouble to think out carefully a plan of teaching composition."

In the larger schools, and particularly in those of the city and suburbs, the teaching is creditable in nearly every respect. Exercises showing good arrangement of matter, clearness and correctness of statement, and considerable power of thought, are here by no means uncommon. Freedom from errors of grammar and spelling, added to general neatness, affords evidence of well applied attention to this part of the school-work.

Little change is to be noted in the teaching of arithmetic. There is, however, considerable discrepancy among the opinions of the Inspectors about it. In Mr. Purdie's view "it is on the whole very satisfactory as regards accuracy of calculation and the application of processes. The pupils in a very large number of schools do not, however, give evidence of understanding the principles underlying the processes. This is noticeable in the small number (comparatively) of pupils who