

attention, because it is manifestly accompanied with little or no thought on the part of the reader. Appropriate pausing will lead the reader to *think*, and to exercise his judgment as he reads.”—(*Bell*.)

With regard to the other features of good reading—correct pronunciation, good enunciation, and good articulation—the progress made generally is very satisfactory indeed. The cockneyisms that are only too marked among the children of the Dominion do not appear in most of our schools, a result due partly to the care with which the first steps in reading are taught in the preparatory classes, and partly to the natural aptitude of the Maori child for acquiring correct sounds.

With the increase in power to read is growing also the increase in desire to do so, and applications for library books have become more frequent. Libraries have now been established in at least one-third of the schools.

The recitation—practically a new feature in the syllabus—has not so far been of much merit: in many cases it has degenerated into mere repetition, and has not risen above monotonous sing-song. Recitation is a great aid to a good vocal delivery and intelligent reading, and teachers apparently do not yet realize its value.

The choice of poetry for recitation is not always a happy one. The fact that a poem occurs in the reading-book should not be regarded as indicating its suitability for the purpose. It may be too difficult of understanding, or it may be uninteresting to the child. In recitation, as in reading, before an intelligent rendering of a passage can be given, the child must be able to make mental pictures of the various ideas contained therein.

*Spelling*.—In the lower classes there is on the whole little to find fault with in this subject, as the children are fairly able to write correctly such words as they can read intelligently, and these are all that they should be required to spell. Children are frequently set to learn the spelling of lists of words—a work involving more or less waste of time. The confusion of “their” with “there,” “where” with “were” or “wear,” will never be overcome by spelling-drill. The children should be trained to use these words in oral lessons, then to observe their written forms, and finally to use them in writing. Transcription still suffers from carelessness and from insufficient supervision. There is no excuse for either of these; indeed, unless the transcription is corrected, it had better not be given at all. Similar remarks apply in many instances to the dictation, which involves more than mere accurate reproduction of words and punctuation-marks. Intelligent comprehension of the passage by the child will prevent many mistakes in the spelling, and will, with practice and comparison with the passage as printed in the reading-book, enable him to overcome the difficulties in punctuation.

*Writing*.—The writing is still very far from satisfactory, and the defects are due solely to want of proper teaching of the subject.

The difference between the work of the lower classes and that of the higher is very marked, from which one can only infer that writing receives much less attention in the higher classes than in the lower ones. Copybooks with headlines are being supplied this year, and it is to be hoped that by their use the writing will be materially improved. But it must not be understood that the placing of a copy-book in the hands of a Third or Fourth Standard child will *ipso facto* teach him to write.

Even though the exigencies of the school require that the upper standards be grouped together, all using the same copybook, a definite lesson should precede the writing, and untiring supervision should follow each step.

Too much importance cannot be placed on the correct holding of the pen and the correct posture of the body, and yet in very many instances these are quite overlooked. Indeed, children are allowed to write in attitudes which render good work impossible, and are probably harmful to them physically.

It has been frequently stated that Maoris have a natural aptitude for writing, but it is not safe to rely upon this in all cases. In the few schools where writing is well taught the children certainly write an excellent hand; good teaching rather than natural ability has played the most important part in producing this result.

*English*.—The English work of the preparatory and lower standards is relatively much better than that of the higher ones, and we are forced to the conclusion that the amount of oral teaching diminishes as the higher standards are reached. It is impossible to place too high a value on oral composition as a means of teaching English in Maori schools. Indeed, so far as we are aware, there is no other way of teaching it, and it cannot therefore be neglected or discarded at any stage in the child's career. Unless he is made to use English directly as the mode of expressing his ideas he cannot make progress. One frequently finds specimens of absurd mistakes—“howlers” as they are called—quoted as illustrating the futility of teaching English to Maori children. The true explanation of these is that the child's mind is working in two directions at the one time. He thinks as a Maori, and attempts to speak as a pakeha. A striking illustration of this occurred during one examination. A boy, who was asked the meaning of the expression “angry foes,” replied, “Angry foes are friends to fight with.” His answer was, of course, a literal translation of the Maori *hoa riri*—he was still a Maori in habits of thought. Until by constant use of English in oral composition, as well as in reading and other subjects of the school course, a child has acquired the habit of thinking in English and of not translating from Maori as he goes, he will be liable to errors such as those referred to. This, then, is the problem that the teacher must solve.

A fair amount of improvement has been shown during the year in the correlation of reading and English, and it is not uncommon to find Maori children who can readily tell in their own words a story which they have read, or reproduce a piece of poetry in which they have been interested. It would be wise if no lesson in reading were put aside as done with until the children had shown their comprehension of it by their ability to reproduce it in their own language, first orally, and then in writing.

Again, it is necessary to impress upon teachers the necessity of keeping on lists some record of the topics upon which composition-lessons have been given during the year. Through neglect on the part of the teacher to do this, the children are kept, unintentionally perhaps, circling round the same path, and their range of ideas is limited to its circumference.

Attention is very necessary also in the higher classes to the writing of all kinds of letters. Those that we get at the examinations and in the ordinary course show the need for better training, and great