

In regard to recitation, we feel that on the whole the amount of progress made is disappointing. In a few schools the pupils acquit themselves well, but in a great number the results are very poor, the pronunciation and enunciation being slovenly, the punctuation ignored, and no attempt made to secure expression. In these cases the result will be that, unless care is taken, the faults referred to will react upon the reading and English generally; and the teacher should therefore exercise the greatest vigilance in securing accuracy. Teachers hardly appreciate to the full the valuable aid afforded to the Maori child by recitation of poetry. With the school songs, the poetry frequently constitutes the whole of the English practised by him in his own home upon his return from school, besides which it affords the parents the opportunity of hearing their children speaking English. For these reasons it is important that the utmost pains should be taken to secure that the recitation is as perfect as possible. Mere gabble is worse than useless.

In some of the schools we find that the teachers have gathered from various sources a collection of pieces for recitation far more suitable than those contained in the reading-books, and we derived as much pleasure from the change as the children evidently had done.

In spelling, it seems to us that the mistakes arise not so much from the inability of the children to spell more or less difficult words as from imperfect appreciation of the smaller words and the distinctions between them. Reference to the written exercises in composition shows that the pupils confuse such words as "were," "where," "there," "their," and even "a" and "are," while the omission of the "ed" in the past tense is also frequently found. That is to say, the errors could be avoided if these difficulties were dealt with during the lessons in English composition.

A good deal of progress is manifest in the writing, and in many schools much better results are obtained. The work of the preparatory classes and lower standards is still superior to that of the higher ones, and we are again inclined to think that there is more need for definite writing-lessons in the higher classes. Apart from the ordinary copy-book work, the writing in the exercise-books is often carelessly done, and it seems that some teachers do not realize the fact that such work will do much to counteract the effect of their formal instruction in the writing-lesson.

Instruction in the English language and in English composition still seems to leave a good deal to be desired, though we recognize that the work done is of much higher quality than that which obtained a few years ago. English is still subordinated to arithmetic, and receives far too little consideration when the time-table is being arranged. Further, the importance of the subject demands that in the scheme of work it should receive first attention, and for this we look in vain. The English lesson of each day should be arranged with a definite object in view, and should have a distinct relation to the work of the previous day and to that of the following day. At present it seems that sufficient unto the day is the English thereof, and the matter is left to inspiration, which may come by chance just before the lesson begins. It is a mistake to think, because the lessons in connection with the other subjects involve the use of English, that English may be safely left to look after itself. Unless these lessons involve practice by the children in the use of spoken English it is quite evident that their ability to use the language will not be greatly enhanced.

The crux of Native-school work is the teaching of the English language—that is, to train the pupils to speak English fluently and correctly. The children will never write correctly so long as this is neglected, and proficiency in other subjects can never make up for deficiency in English.

Not infrequently we find errors in speech overlooked by the teacher. It is important that he should not allow himself to become so accustomed to characteristic Maori mistakes as to pass them over without notice. From one year's end to another, as often as one of these characteristic mistakes occurs, it should be corrected on the spot. Nor should teachers feel that the difficulties of English are insuperable to the Maori child, and thus arrive at the conclusion that the English of their pupils represents their limit of attainment.

*Arithmetic.*—In the lower departments as a whole the arithmetic continues to be very satisfactorily taught. In many schools the composition of the numbers is treated in an excellent manner, and the pupils are able to make mental calculations with astonishing rapidity and correctness. In the higher classes good work is done in a large number of schools, but there are still many cases in which, in spite of the abnormal amount of time devoted to it, the arithmetic reaches only a low mark of efficiency, and evidently requires much improvement in method. There is still, we think, in these classes a tendency to neglect mental and oral arithmetic, which, as we have remarked in former reports, should receive more attention than the mere mechanical processes involved in book work. We have had several instances in which the practical knowledge of arithmetic possessed by the Maori boy has enabled him to see that he received proper value in his business dealings, and there can be no doubt that ability to perform accurately the ordinary business calculations is invaluable to him.

With the introduction of the new syllabus the Department issued to all schools a "Manual of Elementary Arithmetic," setting forth in an excellent manner the methods of teaching the work prescribed for the preparatory and lowest-standard classes. We regret exceedingly to find that in several schools, in which by the way the arithmetic is least satisfactory, no use had been made of the Manual, and that it could not even be found except after protracted search. Such treatment does not encourage us to extend the practice of supplying text-books for the assistance of teachers.

We are pleased to see that in many instances teachers have carried out the suggestions made that they should provide themselves with simple apparatus for illustrating the various weights and measures, and we hope to see this course adopted before long in every school.

In *geography* and *nature-study* many teachers are not yet clear as to what is required, though the syllabus lays down the course for each standard with sufficient directness, besides giving a fairly wide range. The difficulty seems to arise from inability to break away from the older or traditional form of geography, and to appreciate the aim of the newer form. This manifests itself largely in the schemes of work and programmes submitted at the annual visit. We find that the study of natural