

during the year, and that a valuable aid to the child in the acquisition of English is thus lost. Understanding the thought is more difficult in oral than in silent reading, since in the former the reader must direct some of his attention to the proper pronunciation of the words instead of devoting practically the whole of it, as in the latter, to grasping the sense; and, as the pupils tend to get rid of the difficulty by ceasing to trouble very much about the meaning, the teacher must so much the more be on guard and adopt methods to prevent this neglect.

Silent reading should, we think, have more time allotted to it, and the amount should be gradually increased. The books employed for the purpose should not, however, be the pupils' ordinary school-books. Books from the school library will be especially useful in this connexion, and we therefore recommend an extension of the library whenever it is possible. Arrangements are now complete for the introduction of a series of continuous readers in place of the miscellaneous readers that have been in use for some years. Three readers, each containing a complete story in an abbreviated form, will be supplied—one serving for each term of the year. The place of the miscellaneous readers will be taken by the *School Journal*, which provides lessons on 'current topics' and supplies fresh reading-matter every month. In several new schools libraries have been established during the year, and it is interesting to know that the books are widely used by the children, who in many cases translate them for the edification of their parents.

In *spelling* a reasonable amount of progress is evident, and it is not too much to say that in the lower classes a much higher degree of accuracy is now achieved. The small words continue to prove more fruitful sources of error than the large ones, a fact which shows that there is a tendency to overlook these difficulties in the early stages. They should never be allowed to reach the standards. In offering these remarks we are referring chiefly to the spelling ordinarily used by the pupils in their own written work, their composition, &c., and not so much to the spelling of tests of isolated words, which we have no doubt they could manage well enough were they set to do it.

The *writing* is again generally satisfactory, especially in those schools where the teacher has broken away from the copybook in order to teach the subject. This is due to the fact that in such circumstances the writing is *taught* rather than allowed to *teach itself*. The use of paper in place of slates in the higher classes, combined with the more frequent use of exercise-books, has done a great deal to improve the writing, and indeed we have before us specimens of work that are highly creditable to both pupil and teacher. We are not yet convinced, however, that the Maori child is a born writer, as is so often stated, and a good deal of care is necessary in the early stages of the subject before the best results can be achieved.

In consideration of the pupils' work, his comfort, and his health, teachers should have more regard to the position he adopts when writing. The old attitude of "left arm into the desk" is totally wrong, and not only prevents the child from writing well, but may even lead to serious physical injury. He should sit erect, near the desk without leaning on it, and should face it directly. The style of writing which we have recently introduced to teachers requires this attitude, and we hope that it will become general in the schools.

*English*: The quality of this subject varies very considerably in the schools. In a few it may readily be described as excellent; in many it ranges from fair to good; but there are still many in which it can only be described as poor. It has been truly remarked that fair comparison of one school with another is difficult. The environment certainly plays an important part in regard to progress in the language. Pupils learning English do so more rapidly if they have opportunities of mingling freely with English-speaking playfellows and class-mates. But we agree also with those who consider that the absence of such conditions is insufficient to account for the comparatively slow progress made in many schools. In some of the most remote schools the English is far better than it is in schools near European influence. The fact is that the measure of the children's progress is the teacher's skill in teaching the subject. The weakness is not so evident in the case of the oral work: as a matter of fact, the children as a whole speak very well. It is the written work that leaves so much yet to be desired, and we have no doubt that this arises from imperfect preparation by means of oral composition, which in the standard classes is made but little use of. Conversation based upon pictures is commonly taken in classes up to S2 or even S3, but we are inclined to think that in many cases it stops there. Free conversation based upon reports of the child's own experiences and story-telling by individual children are valuable aids to the writing of English that are frequently overlooked, while a correlation of the English lesson with other lessons, especially with reading, should be practised much more extensively than it is. At the end of an ordinary language-lesson the teacher should have collected and arranged for oral reading from the blackboard a series of connected sentences growing out of it. As the sentences are developed the spelling and punctuation should be corrected by the class, and the sentences will then serve as a convenient basis for written work such as transcription or dictation.

The form of composition which the pupils are likely to require most of all in their after career is that used in ordinary correspondence, and it is advisable therefore that almost all the written compositions should take the form of letters.

Some teachers still find it difficult to secure anything like correct punctuation even of the simplest kind, and "breathless narration" is accordingly commonly met with. To overcome this the following suggestions, taken from a Report of Committee on Teaching of English, Chicago, 1911, may be found helpful: "Children should be allowed to write their sentences on the board under the supervision of the teacher. The sentences should be short and simple: the teacher will see that the capitals and periods are used. At a later stage the children should be encouraged to write a short paragraph, each one expressing his own ideas of a story that has been told or of some incident that has taken place under his observation. The teacher can ask