

regular and intelligent instruction in mental arithmetic. The secret of the successful teaching of arithmetic is the ability to get the greatest use out of mental arithmetic. The daily practice of tables and of mental arithmetic bearing on the rule or principle under consideration is the foundation of success in securing mechanical accuracy. Besides making a boy accurate in his paper-work, it tends to sharpen, quicken, and brighten his mind, but to be of real benefit it must go beyond and outside mere rules. A teacher requires to be properly prepared with examples, and to be thoroughly skilled in the neatest and most expeditious way of working them.

Spelling.—As we have previously reported, the special spelling-test is characterized by accuracy. Punctuation, however, in the dictation exercises appears to be taught in a somewhat haphazard way. In schools where composition receives systematic treatment it generally follows that the dictation test is punctuated intelligently; for it stands to reason, if a pupil has a good grip of sentence-structure he is in a better position to understand the principles underlying correct punctuation. Again, there is a tendency on the part of inexperienced teachers to devote an undue amount of time to the difficult and more uncommon words of the text-book, to the sacrifice of the simpler words of everyday life. A good general rule for the teacher, therefore, is to concentrate attention upon the “actual and developing vocabulary of the child.” Where written work is carefully supervised and mistakes noted and reviewed, and where assistance is given to the eye by suitable analysis and word-building, one finds that the children have little difficulty in spelling words they need to use.

Discipline.—With respect to discipline the general standard of former years has been well maintained. There are still, however, a few teachers who show weakness in governing-power. Insufficient force of character and a lack of systematic attention to details are almost invariably noticeable in those teachers who cannot create in their schools that atmosphere of willing work so characteristic of our best schools, in which the tone is such as to produce an abiding effect on the character of the pupils who come under its influence. Some inexperienced teachers seem to think that the discipline of their schools is good when order reigns, though they may have failed to secure what is most essential—a properly directed mental activity. The best discipline is so intimately connected with live teaching-methods that the ill-trained or ill-informed teacher can never expect to claim recognition as a good disciplinarian.

Too Much Talk.—There is one fault—and not an uncommon one—prevalent in some of our schools: the teacher talks too much. There is an almost continuous current of words; telling, explaining, correcting, questioning go on incessantly. The pupil seldom gets a chance to say more than a few words at a time. He is forced to become in a large measure an inert listener. He grows into the habit of waiting for the teacher's stimulus and direction. The child should do more work. Let the child think. It is his work we want, not the teacher's. More time should be devoted in almost every lesson to teaching the children to talk about and discuss the subject of the lesson; and although less ground may be covered there is no doubt that the children will be trained to become more self-reliant and less self-conscious.

Conclusion.—At the beginning of this year the Inspectors were brought under the central Department, and in concluding our report we wish to place on record the considerate treatment we have at all times received from the Board and the implicit confidence it has always placed in us. The Board, we can candidly say, has ever been willing to listen patiently and sympathetically to any proposal made for the betterment of education in the district. This kindly consideration has materially heartened us in the discharge of our duties.

The Director of Education, Wellington.

W. A. BALLANTYNE, B.A. } Inspectors.
R. G. WHETTER, M.A. }

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 21st February, 1916.

We have the honour to submit our report for the year ended 31st December, 1915.

Distribution of Duties.—During February we were engaged in compiling statistics and in writing our annual report. From then till the end of the year we were engaged almost continuously in the inspection and examination of schools, in the organization of the instruction on better lines, and in supervision and examination work in connection with the public examinations conducted by the Department. In addition to these duties the editing of the Board's official periodical, the *Leaflet*, and the management of the Board's circulating library for teachers, were undertaken. The District High School secondary classes and the Saturday classes for teachers were reorganized, and the instruction made, we think, more effective. Two of us took part in the organization of a winter school for teachers; the acting Senior Inspector attended all the meetings of the Board; and all the Inspectors were consulted on matters relating to transfer and appointment of teachers. In innumerable ways we were indebted to the Board and its staff for assistance in our work, and we desire to thank them for the help given. We, on our part, drew no hard-and-fast line between our special duties and the work that might be thought more strictly to fall to the share of the Board's officials. We took a very broad view of our inspectorial functions, with the result that the greatest harmony prevailed in all our official relations. During the latter part of the year Inspector Milne was unfortunately forced, on account of ill health, to apply for leave of absence for four months. His place was taken by Mr. James Grant, B.A., of whose services we are glad to take this opportunity to express our appreciation.

Inspection of Schools.—Notwithstanding the fact that we were somewhat short-handed, we succeeded in visiting all the State schools and several private schools during the early part of the year, and during the second period missed not more than ten schools, among which were six with whose efficiency we were satisfied. In all, 200 unnotified visits and 224 notified visits were paid in the course of the year. Our general impression regarding the efficiency of the schools was that there was a notice-