Spelling.—In this subject more attention is being paid to words regarded as properly coming within the vocabulary of the pupils of the various classes, and the preparation of spelling-lists intelligently used is producing an improvement in the spelling. In quite a number of schools the spelling of pupils, particularly in the standard classes, leaves a good deal to be desired, and the results are no doubt in direct proportion to the quality of the methods adopted by the teachers.

Writing is dealt with very successfully in quite a large number of schools, and the work of the pupils is very good indeed. In several schools the writing of every child is found to be excellent. Such a result is brought about not merely by the actual methods of instruction, but largely by the discipline of the school and the personality of the teacher. In quite a number of schools, on the other hand, where such factors are more or less wanting, the writing is of poor quality, and it is evident that the pupils are allowed to practise without any instruction as to form or height of letters. Moreover, sufficient attention is not paid to the correct holding of the pen or to the correct position of the body. The use of the blackboard by the children for writing exercises and other purposes is gradually becoming more common, and an extension of the practice is strongly recommended. The children should be taught to write upon the board before attempting to write upon paper or slate, and it is essential that the teachers themselves should be able to use the blackboard skilfully, so that (particularly for the primary classes) they may demonstrate by illustration and description how to write well. "Since it requires much less skill to write well upon the blackboard than upon paper, no teacher has a valid excuse for writing poorly. The act of writing skilfully upon the board stirs the souls of the children more than the art performed. The act convinces that it can be done, and then they, too, think they can learn. Blackboard writing is an *art* and an *act* all teachers can and need to acquire, and skill in the matter is an evidence that the teacher has *wrought* and not merely *taught*."

Language.—Oral and Written Composition: Since all instruction is imparted in English, the intelligent teacher very soon appreciates the vitally important bearing that this subject has upon the general progress of his pupils, and equally soon does he recognize that the Maori children in their efforts to acquire the language are confronted with great difficulties. He conceives it to be his business to ascertain the nature of these difficulties; to fathom the reasons for their existence; to understand as far as possible the workings of the Maori mind; and to determine how far the mother tongue, with an idiomatic and grammatical construction peculiar to it, is a help or a hindrance in acquiring a new language. He quickly concludes from his inquiries that he himself is confronted with a problem requiring for its solution much consideration and thought. From his analysis of the problem he perceives that the mental process followed by the child will certainly be the natural one of thinking in its mother tongue, and then attempting through the idiom and grammar of that tongue to translate its thoughts and ideas by means of a newly acquired vocabulary. It becomes evident to him that if real progress in the acquisition of the new language is to be made, and if anything like facility of expression is to be gained, translation as a means to those ends must be checked at all costs, and replaced by the power to think in terms of the new language. He finally comes to the conclusion that this power can be acquired only by providing abundant oral practice for the child—that is, he adopts the direct method of teaching the subject.

In many schools much good work is accomplished both in oral and written composition, but in quite a considerable number not much improvement is observed. After seven or eight years of teaching, the results do not reach the standard they should. In these schools absence of preparation of work and of carefully mapped-out schemes of work explains largely the want of success. The oral work that is so important is not skilfully directed, and there is an absence of systematic correlation with other subjects, particularly reading. Mere mechanical facility in reading will not assist the English of the pupil very much. "No reading-lesson should be considered finally dealt with until the pupils have mastered not only the words but the *ideas* contained in it. When this has been achieved the pupils will, in revision work, &c., in answering questions on the subject-matter, make use of the language of the lessons as part of their own vocabulary, and the result will be not only intelligent reading but additional strength in English." In quite a number of schools the teachers do not sufficiently insist upon English being spoken in the playground: neglect in this respect indicates either carelessness or want of appreciation of the benefit and importance of the practice. In 1916 the Department issued to all schools a pamphlet, "Teaching of English—Direct Method," and it was considered that it would prove of assistance to teachers in drawing up their schemes. To many of the teachers it has proved of assistance, but there are some who appear to be unaware of its existence.

Arithmetic.—This subject continues to receive very satisfactory treatment generally, and in quite a considerable number of schools it is well taught. The importance of mental work, and the view that it is an essential part in all work in arithmetic, have been emphasized in previous reports, and yet it is still apparent that in many schools it is regarded as a separate subject. All problem work should be introduced by simple questions involving quantities that can be worked mentally and orally by the weaker pupils in the class. Failure to work problems very often arises from a want of confidence on the part of the pupils and a mistrust of their own powers, and, provided the necessary ground work has been thorough, practice such as indicated will do much to encourage such pupils to approach their work without fear of failure. In the use of text-books, where a disproportion exists as regards the space allotted to different parts of the course in arithmetic, the wise teacher will make judicious use of the material at his disposal. It is not at all necessary that every sum in the text-book should be worked by the pupils, and yet that is what is actually attempted in some schools, the result being that the teachers frequently complain that they have not been able to overtake the work prescribed by the syllabus.

In the preparatory division the composition of numbers is generally very thoroughly and systematically dealt with in most schools; in others, however, it is evident that much more study