

the pupils should receive much more attention. In the senior classes, where it is expected that the mechanical difficulties have been mastered, the comprehension is frequently very unsatisfactory. It is felt that much of the time spent during the reading-lesson in hearing one child after another read in a more or less perfunctory mechanical manner, without comment or thought-provoking questions before, during, or after the lesson, is simply wasted. "The fact that a pupil reads well orally is not a test of his power to read. The best proof of his power to read is his ability to get the thought while reading silently, and his power to read silently depends on the use made of the time spent with the teacher in the reading-lesson." Much more attention should be given to thought-getting during the reading-lessons, and the pupils should be questioned for the leading thoughts and facts of the passages read, and called upon to explain certain words and passages. The pupils will thus be trained in close thinking and oral expression, with the result that the lessons will guide their mental activities in independent study. Reading, in the true sense, is getting the thought from the printed page, and, since the greater part of this reading in after-life is done silently, the importance of the value of silent reading becomes evident. It is therefore highly important that their power to read silently should be developed and strengthened, and to this end the best possible use of all the books available should be made. In those schools where there is no library, or where the selection of books is limited, a portion of the proceeds from the annual concert should be devoted to the purchase of suitable books. As has been said before, "Along with the ability to read, the desire to read should be strongly encouraged."

In *recitation*, the defects referred to in previous reports are still noticeable in a large number of schools. Very frequently the choice of pieces is found to be unsuitable, and teachers are again advised in their selections to choose to a large extent those which permit of dramatic treatment. Simple dialogues should also be taken in connection with the recitation. Generally the pupils are much interested in this part of their work, and every effort should be made by the teachers to secure the strictest accuracy in memorization and pronunciation, and to exploit the value of the subject in connection with the pupils' English.

*Language Instruction : English (Oral and Written).*—Language instruction, the aim of which is to lead the pupils to speak and write correctly, constitutes the most important single subject of study in the Native-school course; and, since it is the key to the educational advancement of the Maori child, it behoves teachers to give their utmost consideration and attention to the best means of attaining the aim referred to. On account of the inherent difficulties involved, no subject of the school course demands greater teaching skill, and no subject, it is safe to say, requires to a greater extent the exercise of initiative, resource, and originality on the part of the teacher. Much unsatisfactory work is met with in too many schools, the chief reasons for this result being (1) the failure of teachers to appreciate the value and importance of systematic practice in oral expression by the pupils; (2) the employment of methods of teaching more or less mechanical and stereotyped; (3) the absence, as disclosed by the schemes of work, of some system and plan of work; (4) the neglect to prepare lessons with a definite aim in view; (5) the insufficient use of story-telling by the pupils, of dialogues, of the subject-matter of what the pupils read, of colloquial English, and of questioning on the part of the pupils; (6) the unsatisfactory methods of correcting characteristic Maori errors; (7) the lack of careful supervision of the work of the assistants, whose teaching is often not only lifeless but aimless. It is felt, too, that much better use might be made, in the schools referred to, of the Department's pamphlet, "Teaching of English," and of the copy of "Morals and Right Conduct," which were supplied for the use of the teachers.

*Writing.*—The remarks made in last year's report in regard to this subject are still applicable to a good many schools. The use of paper for all written work in the upper classes has led to a falling-off in the quality of the writing in quite a number of schools, and this is due no doubt to careless work and scribbling being permitted by the teachers. Under such circumstances it is futile to expect that the writing-lessons themselves will counteract the harm that is done. It is not expected that in lessons other than writing-lessons overlaborious attention should be given to copy-book neatness: the aim should be to secure a maximum degree of speed and ease of movement consistent with good legibility.

*Spelling.*—Generally this subject may be regarded as satisfactory. The spelling list of words prepared by some teachers is much too short to satisfy the requirements.

*Arithmetic.*—In the preparatory divisions number work is very successfully dealt with in a majority of the schools; in a considerable number, however, it is evident that the concrete method is not sufficiently made use of. The important point in this respect is that the pupils themselves should make use of the counters, sticks, &c., in ascertaining and mastering arithmetical facts, the teacher acting in the capacity of director of operations only. In the upper classes of the schools the work may be regarded as on the whole satisfactory. Too little attention, however, is paid to the demonstration, by concrete methods, of important arithmetical principles. The common failure of children to solve arithmetical problems is due largely to their inability to grasp the elementary principles involved; and not until they thoroughly understand the inwardness of a process will they be able to apply the underlying principle for themselves. With many teachers the teaching of the subject does not extend beyond the pages of the text-book, and little, if any, provision is made to teach, by means of easily prepared apparatus, arithmetic in a practical manner. A noticeable defect is the absence of logical arrangement in the setting-out of the work by many of the pupils. With regard to mental arithmetic and oral work in arithmetic generally, it is evident that many teachers fail to realize that the neglect of this important part of arithmetic is largely responsible for the unsatisfactory results obtained.

*Geography and Nature-study.*—A very fair proportion of the teachers treat the work in geography in the right spirit, and their pupils show much interest. The results in many of the schools,