

the pupils mentally alert. Pupils do not receive sufficient training in questioning their classmates and in discussing important points arising out of the reading lesson, nor in giving explanations of the subject-matter of the paragraph or of the whole lesson under consideration. In individual schools, and often in certain large areas, the pupils read with a dreary, monotonous accent which seems to be part of the popular speech. In such localities the teacher needs to fight this tendency to deterioration, not only in the pupils but also in himself. In fact, in all schools the subject could profit by more attention to correct and pleasing accent. Comprehension of the passages read is very poor in some schools. From the first the pupil should be trained to look for the meaning of the sentence or passage as a whole. In the lower classes constant practice is necessary in reading aloud in order to ensure that the child can recognize words and speak them accurately. With older children an additional aim in view is to ensure that the pupils appreciate the literary excellence of the passage read. The plan of breaking up the class into sections for reading and allowing the better readers to work by themselves, even if used only occasionally in the infants' classes, should be adopted with increasing frequency in the standards. It makes considerable demands on the skill and resource of the teacher, but the risks of partial failure are less harmful than the certainty of concealed inattention, which will be the case if the reading lesson consists solely of allowing child after child to read aloud a few lines in turn. A bright scholar largely teaches himself to read after very little direct instruction. The best use is not made of the time allotted to silent reading unless tests are applied and reasonable care taken to ensure that the pupils are reading with profit. It is gratifying to note an increase in the number of school libraries, but in a large number of schools the grant of 3d. per head has not been expended. We would again stress the imperative need for the greatest care in the selection of the school library. Most teachers seem unaware of the extraordinary output of wholly interesting books in geography, history, science, and nature-study. There is no subject the teaching of which a modern library does not illumine and complete. Yet our school libraries continue to be absolutely dominated by fiction. Perhaps our training colleges could build up a special library of school-books so that the young teacher could carry away with him a list of the most valuable.

*Recitation* ranges from moderate to good. After lack of expression, the chief weakness is poor memorization. In some schools the pieces are never thoroughly learned or revised frequently enough to keep them fresh in the pupil's memories. Probably far too much time is allowed for the learning of a poem—weeks, when days should suffice. The children lose all interest in it long before they reach the end. Few teachers ask their pupils to learn the poem as a whole, but follow the time-honoured custom of a verse per week. The name of the author should be known, and the main "pictures" in them should be understood as far as children can appreciate them. There is very little variety in the selection of pieces. Few teachers appear to purchase books containing suitable selections of poetry, or even to make a collection of such pieces, but are content to take those they find in the reading-book or in the *School Journal*. Opinions may differ greatly as to the type of poetry suitable for senior pupils, but undoubtedly the best type for young children is narrative poetry in the form of ballad, and that descriptive of the more striking aspects of nature and of experiences of childhood. With the seniors, a poem which in one school and under one teacher may be keenly appreciated, in another may prove a failure. Many pieces, like Gray's "Elegy" and some of the rhetorical passages from Shakespeare, presuppose a much riper experience of life than children generally possess, but the music of such verse may captivate the mind of the child. Teachers would be well advised to consider the subject thoughtfully and select pieces which the pupils will like, which can be readily learned and understood, and which contain gems of language and, to some extent, of thought. Above all, the work of poets now living should not be neglected. Different rhythms should be carefully studied, and much practice given in the reading of poetry for the sake of the rhythm and the music; and the poems of one year, if of good quality, should certainly be revised in the next. The practice of allowing pupils to select their own pieces without guidance of the teacher is of doubtful value.

*Oral expression* in its various forms varies from very good to moderate. Although much of the inferior speech is found in the country schools, there are several schools in rural areas which are bright exceptions. The dominating factor in determining the result is undoubtedly the teacher, and it is doubtful whether a teacher with slovenly speech should be employed, for the effect of bad example is so pernicious as to cause the habit to be well nigh ineradicable once it has been formed. It is a sound dictum that there should be no impression without its corresponding expression. Yet we find teachers permitting pupils to read silently in a desultory fashion; they frequently have no definite object in view, such as the oral reproduction of the matter in the form of a lecturette or as argument during a debate or in essay form. Such purposeless reading is often worse than valueless, for it engenders and fosters an inattentive habit of mind. The ideal to aim at is the reproduction of several pages of printed matter after a single reading; with systematic training this is within the powers of almost every child.

*Spelling* is in general a satisfactory subject; it is weak in those schools where direct teaching is not adopted. Where education extends over many years, and is largely concerned with book learning, spelling is often learned unconsciously, but owing to the short time during which the pupils attend the primary schools it is impossible to dispense with direct instruction. In addition to giving attention to selected lists of words, the intelligent teacher will deal with spelling during the course of the reading, the composition, and other lessons. In particular the pupils should receive much practice in the spelling of familiar names and terms in geography, history, and science, and the pronunciation and the spelling of Maori words should not be neglected. Divorcing spelling from reading and composition renders the task of learning to spell unduly burdensome both for child and teacher. The good teacher will have no difficulty in making the teaching of spelling through other subjects thoroughly systematic though apparently incidental. Teachers are still found who use dictation as a means of teaching spelling instead of as a means of testing it. In some quarters the traditional method in the dictation exercise is giving place to a method which develops concentrated attention: the paragraph or page is