

spelling ; but the more closely spelling is connected with reading and composition the more effectively it will be taught. A good teacher should find no difficulty in making this apparently incidental instruction genuinely systematic. Spelling of words learned is often well done at spelling-time, but one frequently finds the same words wrongly spelled in composition.

WRITING.

Hawke's Bay District.

Writing continues to be good, though in the upper classes no conscious attempts at speed are made. All the schools practice the cursive style, since it is obvious that the commercial community as a whole is not yet prepared to accept print-script. Yet print-script has an undoubted artistic and commercial value. Whoever keeps his eyes open as he walks abroad sees everywhere increasing evidence of its use, in office and shop or picture-theatre. As an aid to legibility and artistic expression it should be used some time every day, especially in arithmetic and drawing of all kinds. It could be used entirely in the infant department.

Wellington District.

There has been much discussion of late in respect to the writing in schools, especially in regard to print-script. In our opinion, while print-script is naturally suited to the initial stages of handwriting, we do not think it serves the ordinary purposes of writing, and should not be accepted in the higher classes. Pupils who leave school should *write*, not *print*, and, if print-script is taught, it should only be part of a system of training that ends in the cursive style. We feel, too, that we should record our opinion that neatness in writing should be required. It is true that speed and legibility are very desirable ; but the person to judge of the legibility is not the writer, but the reader, and speedy writing is not of much use if it is difficult or impossible to read. Moreover, it is surely worth while training pupils to give their best always. Slackness is of all qualities the most liable to be transferred from one form of activity to another. It is important that a good habit of writing should be established at the outset, and there is no better preparation than that propounded by Montessori.

Auckland District.

Writing may be said to be of very fair quality ; in only a few schools is it very good. As a general rule, print-script is taught in the primer classes and cursive writing in the standards. There are, however, some schools in which print-script is the style adopted throughout all classes, and does not develop into a running-hand at all. Seeing that the business world demands good cursive writing, it is doubtful whether it is a wise proceeding not to teach it. Dr. Ballard says, " If print-script is to fulfil its proper function in the school, if it is to be a real reform which will distinctly raise the general standard of the nation's handwriting, it must be taught as a progressive system. Life is too short to permit of our writing to our friends or clients as though we were presenting them with illuminated addresses. The writing ultimately reached must look like writing and not like a bad imitation of print. It must have character, and depart from the stark neutrality of straight line and circle. In fact, though it begins as printing, it must end as writing." T. E. Raw has published an excellent little copybook showing how print-script can be developed into a good running-hand. In some schools, where cursive writing is most successfully taught, the copybook has been reintroduced. The number of pupils who write with the left hand varies from school to school, but, on the whole, it appears to be increasing. It seems that many children begin using the left hand in writing in just the same way as many infants hold the spoon in the left hand. In the latter case it requires a little attention on the part of the parent to induce the child to hold the spoon in the right hand ; so in the former a little tact and perseverance on the part of our infant-teachers would induce their pupils to use the right hand, and thus avoid that appearance of awkwardness, which may be detrimental when school-days are over.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY.

Auckland District.

Geography is fairly well taught, though on somewhat narrow lines. It is desirable that during his school career every pupil should receive some instruction concerning all the principal countries of the world, special attention being given to his own country, to the British Empire, and to countries that compete with New Zealand for the markets of the Home-land. The natural interweaving of physical, mathematical, and political geography is not often carried out. There is also evident on the pupils' part a lack of familiarity with maps, which seems to indicate that insufficient use is made of the atlas. The *drawing* of maps does not seem to merit much expenditure of time, but the filling-in of a traced or mimeographed map is a valuable exercise. A more definite study of the map by the pupil himself would enable him to discover half of the information he requires about any country, and would certainly serve to fix such information firmly in his mind. The use of pictures and models is capable of extension, and a fuller use might be made of the examples nature provides in the neighbourhood of many schools. In history there has been some little improvement, but it is still one of the least satisfactorily taught subjects of the curriculum. Where improvement is noticeable it is due to the fact that teachers have given more time to the subject, have prepared time-charts, and have used drawings and pictures to create interest. The urgent necessity still exists for the driving-home of certain fundamental facts—the attainment of accurate and sure knowledge—facts which form the groundwork of all further progress. Too often the lessons given are too diffuse and the detail too scattered, with the result that no definite impression is left in the child mind.