

dependent upon their proficiency in the use of English that it is highly important for teachers to concentrate their skill and attention upon discovering and applying the best methods and means of teaching the subject. The aim of the language teaching is to enable their pupils to express their thoughts in correct, clear, and concise language, both orally and in writing. In acquiring a mastery of the new language the pupils are confronted with very considerable difficulties, due to the fundamental difference in grammatical and idiomatic construction between it and their mother-tongue. To overcome these difficulties teachers have been recommended to rely upon the direct method of instruction. The primary aim of the instruction being to enable the pupils to speak correctly, the teachers must provide abundant opportunities for oral expression, and must be careful not to take up too much of the time themselves. The successful teachers keep in the background and let the pupils do much of the talking. The oral work must include conversational English, which is necessary to give the pupils the ability to speak readily and correctly about their common everyday interests. Conversational English should include conversation about current events, and the activities of the pupils in the school and outside of it. The outside interests of the pupils should receive special attention in connection with this subject, and these should form topics of discussion. Dialogues and dramatizations may also be very profitably used. It is felt that in very many of the schools the pupils in the upper standards receive very few opportunities for oral and conversational English.

In the written work in English there is much need for improvement in many of the schools. The crude attempts at composition that are often met with result from the failure of the teachers to prepare their pupils properly. Before any attempts are made in either oral or written composition, the subjects for composition, after being decided upon, should be developed orally. One of the most difficult problems of composition is to find something worth saying, and in order to assist the pupils in forming their thoughts they should be prepared for the work by suggestions and questions. The pupils themselves may also be given opportunities to suggest methods of treatment and to question their class mates. They should also be given opportunity to write on subjects of special interest to them. Ample preparation will produce increased interest, more definite motive, clearer thinking, and better work. The schemes of work in both oral and written English are in many schools frequently defective both in aim and scope.

*Reading and Recitation.*—The reading in a very large number of the schools is well taught, and the pupils read with clearness, fluency, and intelligence. The comprehension of what is read, and the ability to express the meaning, are very satisfactory in those schools where language teaching is efficiently dealt with. In the case of Maori children inability to express, clearly and fluently, the meaning of what has been read is not always evidence of a lack of comprehension, as other factors enter into the calculation. Reading in the proper sense means *getting the thought* from the printed page, the understanding of "*visible talking*," and no effort should be spared by teachers in securing on the part of their pupils the meaning of what they read. In many schools monotonous and expressionless reading is still frequently heard—a fault which is entirely due to the teachers' method of teaching reading. In the preparatory divisions of the schools the method of teaching adopted aims at overcoming the mechanical difficulties of the subject thoroughly and expeditiously, and in the great majority of the schools the pupils make rapid progress in learning to read. There is much need for a wider range of reading in all classes, and as soon as pupils have mastered the technique of reading they should have abundant opportunity for reading additional books. For this reason teachers should endeavour not only to keep the school library well stocked, but also to see that the books are made use of by their pupils. Unless this is done the schools will fail to develop the reading habit and the pupils will leave school without the desire to continue their reading for pleasure, profit, and enlightenment. Where some portion of the funds raised for school purposes are set aside for the purchase of books for the school library, the Department will be prepared to consider an application for a grant to assist in the purchase of suitable books. The recitation of poetry or of suitable prose passages receives very inadequate treatment in a fairly large number of schools. The selection of the pieces to be studied and committed to memory by the children is often unsuitable, and what should be a source of pleasure and enjoyment becomes an uninteresting and humdrum affair. It has been frequently impressed upon teachers that poems and prose passages providing dramatic interest, and also dialogues, will be found exceedingly useful in securing better expression, in arousing genuine interest, and in assisting the English of their pupils generally. Moreover, as the cultural subject of the school course, poetry should receive increased attention from the teachers.

*Spelling and Writing.*—In a large number of the schools the spelling of the pupils is remarkably good, and in those schools the success is due to the recognition of the fact that the hand and eye are the best instruments for securing accuracy. In many schools, however, the spelling is unsatisfactory, and distinct evidence that the pupils in their efforts in spelling are guided by the sounds of the words is usually forthcoming.

In most of the schools the writing of the pupils is very satisfactory indeed; and in a large number of schools it is very good. In a number of schools where the teachers permit indifferent work and the pupils' best is not always exacted the writing is of poor quality. It is frequently observed that insufficient attention is given to the position of the body, arms, fingers, and books during writing exercises. With good methods and close supervision it is quite possible to get almost every pupil to write decently, and in those schools where the writing is inferior the fault lies with the teacher.

*Arithmetic.*—In a satisfactorily large number of schools the subject is well taught, and the pupils generally do very creditable work. On the other hand, there are too many schools where the work falls below what may be regarded as a satisfactory standard. Mental arithmetic receives attention, but it is felt that in many of the schools the importance of this part of the subject is not properly appreciated.