

### Reading.

*Auckland.*—Emphasis on the need for silent reading has sometimes been overstressed, and there is distinct evidence that the elocutionary aspect of reading is being somewhat neglected. A good deal of the reading in the senior classes is lacking in clearness, modulation, and expression, is often too hurried, and sometimes not so correct as one could wish. Teachers would be well advised to preserve an even balance between the various aspects of this important subject. We would commend also the practice of reading to the pupils. No one is able to make the story live as the teacher can. Short passages frequently read and discussed are of more value than lengthy extracts at longer intervals. The beauty of literature can be appreciated best through the spoken language.

*Canterbury.*—The teaching of reading is in some respects improving, the most pleasing feature being the increased use of school and class libraries. More schools are now adopting the practice of studying at least one book per term in addition to the *School Journal*, and by this and other means an effort is made to develop a real liking for reading and some appreciation of what is best in our poetry and prose. Too frequently, however, the only matter studied more or less intensively, in class or at home, is the *School Journal*, anything further being confined to the silent reading of library books. The teaching of oral reading cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Unfortunately, the advice given in the appendix to the syllabus did not make a general appeal, and the old rotation practice, which fails to distinguish reading for content and oral reading, has too many adherents. The value of oral reading as a training in appreciation as well as in elocution, is too often lost sight of, and the aim being obscure the teaching is misdirected.

*Otago.*—We have been pleased to note that more general attention has been given to silent reading. We have been somewhat perturbed, however, by evidence that this reading tends to become rather purposeless, and that on the one hand insufficient attention is given the supervision and discussion of the matter read, while on the other hand too little use is made of the opportunities which reading affords for the general study of the English language. While we are alive to the fact that the interest of the pupils in reading might be considerably lessened if they felt that literature was merely material for lessons in formal English, we are strongly of opinion that pupils should be expected to achieve an appreciation of the suitability of the vocabulary, the beauty and aptness of the imagery, and the arrangement of the thought in the matter selected for their reading.

### Recitation.

*Taranaki.*—The work reviewed was in many cases disappointing. The selections were often devoid of excellence of thought and beauty of language and poorly memorized. In the upper classes some time should be devoted to an appreciation of the literary merit of the poem under consideration: "free choice" poems (which in the main have little or no literary merit) should be regarded as "extra." In two schools the attempts at original verses and short poems merited commendation, and indicated good teaching.

### Speech-training.

*Taranaki.*—Efforts have been made to correct the major defects in pupils' speech, and in some schools good work has been done. It is obvious that there are at the present time influences at work which will require vigorous combating by the teacher to prevent the young people of this generation being swept into the whirlpool of impure vocalization.

*Wellington.*—Oral expression is not making the progress that could be desired. The "Speech-training" pamphlet issued to schools is ineffectively used, and steps are seldom taken to supplement the examples it contains with examples from other sources. Schemes have consisted either of complete extracts verbatim from the syllabus or of merely a general statement. In only a few cases did we find that teachers were concentrating on the commonest faults. It is very seldom that one notices a school or even a class where the pupils are striving consciously after correctly articulated speech. In recitation such training should be at once apparent; but, unfortunately, the value of this subject in securing a correct and pleasant enunciation is for the greater part overlooked. In recitation, also, one finds a singular lack of expressive speech. Dramatic work in a few cases has been highly successful. It is, however, only too rarely seen. The heavy hand of tradition lies here. When one considers how long we have had English specialists in our training colleges and the successful plays these colleges have staged, the only conclusion we can draw is that the students revert to type on re-entering the schools. In spite of the prescription and the encouragement of the modern and the experimental, traces of them even in our larger schools are rather difficult to find.

*Southland.*—The drill work and the formal instruction in phonetics are being very thoroughly carried out. Teachers wage unceasing war against the common errors in pronunciation and in grammatical structure, as well as against the intrusion of vulgarisms into the language of the pupils. Thus a very strong effort is being made to preserve a good standard in respect of purity of speech. We feel, however, that these efforts are for the most part counteracted by such powerful and insidious influences as the cinema and much of our modern fiction. Some deplorable Americanisms, such as "guy," have already become part and parcel of the vocabulary of our young people.

### Writing.

*Auckland.*—There is a general indication that it is desirable that a uniform system of writing should prevail throughout all the primary schools in the country. Page after page of the syllabus is devoted to precise instructions as to how to teach the new style, but, notwithstanding all this, it is most disappointing to find that the majority of our teachers are afraid or unable to give the muscular system a fair trial. They do not appear to recognize that a change-over means a temporary disorganization of the writing, and that steady and persistent effort extended over a long period will