

carefully how much time they can afford to devote to these subjects while still ensuring that spoken English is in no way neglected.

"Of course, the history and geography (especially the nature-study) can be made excellent media for teaching oral English in the hands of a skilful teacher; and this is without doubt the method that should be adopted. There is need for more oral practice in the standard classes, and the history stories and nature-study talks can be made extensive use of for this purpose. In the schemes of work, therefore, it should be indicated how and to what extent these studies are utilized for increasing the command of spoken language.

"The quality of the instruction in some of the schools reaches a very high standard. The ability to speak correctly and fluently can be developed only by much practice. In many of our schools this practice is confined to sentence or word answers by the child in reply to oral questioning by the teacher. This is insufficient. Especially in the standards, the child should be given frequent opportunities of developing the faculty of continued narrative. The use of such play-way activities as dramatization, dialogues, and action stories should not be overlooked.

"The difficulty of overcoming the incorrect grammatical construction due to difference in idiomatic usage between the English and the Maori tongue has been largely overcome by most teachers, who, by the adoption of drill methods in emphasizing the correct English form are aiding the formation of correct speech habits. Practice, then, should continue until the child is completely confident of his ability to express himself concisely and correctly. In quite a number of the schools this lack of confidence is shown not only by halting, but also by a too weak oral delivery.

"Once again we feel constrained to say that insufficient opportunities for oral and conversational English are given in the upper standards."

*Written English.*—"There is much need for improvement in many of the schools. This will not be attained by giving more time to this subject which, generally speaking, already monopolizes too much time, but by careful attention to the details and essentials which constitute good prose. Constructive sentence and paragraph work, use of adjectives and adverbs, vocabulary study, &c., should be emphasized, while less time might be given to the formal composition exercise. More teaching and less testing (the formal composition) is required. It is necessary to reiterate that, before a formal composition exercise, ample and adequate oral discussion and preparation are essential."

#### *Reading.*

"Reading in the primer class is well taught owing to two factors: First, the teachers give a great deal of time and trouble to this subject; and, second, the phonic primers that the children learn to read from are admirably graded for difficulty, and contain at every stage the phonic drill necessary to enable the child to read the ensuing words. Two faults were very prevalent in the reading some years ago, but are now much less noticeable. These were monotony and want of comprehension. A vigorous campaign on the part of the Inspectors has gone far to eradicate these.

"During the year the Department decided to subsidize money raised for the purchase of library books, and a system has been introduced by which the Inspectors select suitable books which are purchased at wholesale prices. By this means quite a number of schools now have suitable libraries, which have given considerable impetus to the study of reading.

"In the preparatory divisions of the schools the methods employed are most successful in overcoming the mechanical difficulties of reading. Throughout the service, work of a high standard is general in this division.

"In some schools in the upper standards oral reading is well taught, the pupils reading with clear enunciation, fluency, and, less often, intelligence. In many cases the oral reading is monotonous and expressionless. Want of expression is not necessarily due to lack of comprehension as other language factors are present. The cure lies in bright, even exaggerated, pattern reading by the teacher as well as in much wider reading by the children.

"In very few schools are the methods employed bright and inspiring. On the contrary, they are such that any interest or desire to read is atrophied at a very early stage. Whilst the necessity exists to hear daily the weaker pupils read orally, there is no reason for this with the remainder of the class, who would be much better employed on some silent reading activity.

"Very little attention has been given to the development of silent-reading ability. There is insufficient reading material of a suitable type, but this will be remedied when larger and more interesting libraries are formed. (It is to be noted that many teachers have already made a beginning). Comprehension of a passage may be tested by illustration, dramatization, retelling, true-false questions, &c.

"A reading aim of great importance is the inculcation of the correct attitude to and care of books. Care should be taken to ensure that primer and other readers are not doubled back, and that *Journals* are covered and kept in a clean state."

#### *Recitation.*

"This receives more or less mechanical treatment in a good proportion of the schools, and very good to excellent treatment in the remainder. It has been noticed that the selection of poems to be studied and memorized by the children is very often most unsuitable. Poems or prose extracts which are highly abstract in thought should be omitted. The teacher should devote some of the period to the reading of suitable dramatic narrative poems and prose passages to the children."

*Writing.*—"Writing is usually good. The teachers are trying to teach by the rhythmic method, but in most schools the older pupils practically all use finger-action instead of free arm movements. It is probable that the older children will, in most cases, be unable to make the necessary change."