

by the School Committee for the younger classes at least. I have been particularly careful to supply the newest reading tablets and cards for the infant classes in schools. Reading "sticks," for word-building, I have only seen in two schools. The most expressionless reading with neglected aspirate is met with in several of the Wellington country district schools.

**SPELLING.**—There are few schools in which the spelling is positively bad. This I attribute to five years' use of standards. No pupil can pass a standard who makes more than three mistakes in the dictation exercises, and any bad spelling in the composition exercises of the higher standards is also fatal. It is equally true that there are few schools in which the spelling is positively good, and there are many schools in which great improvement should be made. In looking through my notes I find certain classes in nearly all the schools weak in spelling. The good examples are Thorndon, Lower Girls' School Mount Cook, Taita, Upper Hutt, Wainuiomata, Masterton, Featherston, Waihenga, Opaki, Fernridge, Tenui, and Porirua. Spelling is now generally taught by various means—learning by heart, dictation, spelling words round class after reading lesson, lessons on similar sounds, transcript exercises, home lessons, and sometimes by school spelling bees. Teachers who depend wholly on dictation exercises are often disappointed at the results. On the whole I recommend teachers to aim at attaining greater accuracy in this subject, and to associate the meanings more with the spelling of the words. Hard passages for dictation will form part, and an essential part, of the higher standard work. Hitherto in Standards V. and VI. only composition exercises have been given, in which the pupils could choose their own words if in doubt as to the spelling of any word. Practice has convinced me that such a test of spelling was not a sufficient one, though a good auxiliary. Clear enunciation in reading is a great aid to spelling. Good reading and good spelling generally are found side by side, as would be expected. In the best schools there are of course chronic bad cases of children who never will spell. On the whole, spelling continues to improve year by year. The best method of correcting dictation in class is still an open question. One good method in use in the lower standards is for the teacher to write the passage in good round-hand on the board, with its back turned to the class, whilst the dictation is being called out. Afterwards the board is turned round, and the pupils correct their exercises by the written model.

**WRITING.**—This subject is generally well taught, the teachers for the most part treating it analytically on the black-board, and not depending wholly on copy-books. The use of the script exercises has been beneficial, if only in calling attention to a good model. At Waihenga, and in other good schools, copies are set by the teacher in preference to using printed head-lines. In some instances I have found advanced pupils imitating writing on the board, which does not make a good model. Teachers should endeavour, as far as possible, to put down all their explanations on the board in clear handwriting. I would recommend teachers to aim at teaching form in letters rather than the thickness of up-and-down strokes, to confine the writing to round-hand until Standard III. is reached, and to associate writing with drawing, where drawing is taught. I do not attach much value to angular hand for girls. Transcription exercises should be employed, not only for spelling, but to cultivate the neat effect of good writing in quantity. Children as a rule should not be allowed to divide words in writing. Any number of copies of the script exercises will be supplied by the Board on application.

**ARITHMETIC.**—Formerly this was a weak subject in the school curriculum, but the standards have directed and regulated the teaching of the subject, and enforced that amount of practice necessary to secure accuracy in examination. Still it is perhaps the most difficult subject to teach, and requires the largest share of the school time. One hour a day at least should be given to it. A fresh impetus has been given to the subject during the past year by the introduction of mental arithmetic into the standards. An examination in slate arithmetic, followed by *viva voce* work, enables an examiner to form a better estimate of the value of the teaching than would be obtained by slate arithmetic alone. The learning of tables and exercises in numeration and notation are always carefully done in good schools, but sometimes omitted in less satisfactory ones. In point of fact some teachers err very much in overlooking or missing out portions of the work, or in leaving the teaching of it until just before an examination. The arithmetic work in the lower standards is generally satisfactory throughout the district; and in the large city schools, Thorndon, Terrace, and Mount Cook Boys', and at Tawa Flat, Pahautanui, Lower Hutt, Taita, Upper Hutt, Featherston, Waihenga, and Fernridge, advanced accurate work is done in the upper classes. Arithmetic is now generally carefully taught on the black-board without much use of books, except in the advanced classes. Practice in examples is obtained by home lessons, now generally given, arithmetic making a capital subject for home lessons, as the work cannot be shirked if done at all. I am pleased to find the standard arithmetic cards are getting into common use for this purpose. Neatness in arithmetic work is becoming more common. The Waihenga and Taita Schools are foremost in this respect. After the compound rules, if not after the simple rules, should come, in my judgment, an elementary knowledge of fractions, taught by diagrams and practical examples with much oral illustration; then a few simple rules, say practice and a little simple proportion, and afterwards a more complete knowledge of fractions. When fractions are once thoroughly mastered the principles of arithmetic are known. In my examinations I have given plenty of work in arithmetic, generally setting eight or ten sums in the higher standards and four in the lower. The questions set are not taken from books, and different sets are given in each school, catch questions being avoided. Numeration forms part of the test, and, as a part of the subject, is generally, but not always fairly, taught. I have reason to be fully satisfied with the progress made in the teaching of arithmetic, and with the present knowledge of the subject. Teachers must be prepared for the introduction of more questions in which the candidates set their own sums from dictation. Teachers do not always appear sensible of the amount of practice required to enable a pupil to bear examination well. For instance, in simple rule-of-three, I should say from a thousand to fifteen hundred examples should be worked before a pupil is fit for examination.

**GEOGRAPHY.**—Several teachers have neglected to teach the geography required for the lower standards this year. Even in some good schools the subject was weak in certain classes. The schools