

read his passage through. Above all it should be remembered that hearing reading is not teaching it. Frequently I have seen teachers correcting sums in one class, while "hearing" reading in another, forgetting that they must be all eyes and ears for the slightest error, and forgetting also that pupils are not likely to give their whole attention to their work when their teacher is not doing so. Correct speaking, too, should be insisted upon. I have noticed such expressions as "me and 'im" and "I done it" let pass without reproof. The aspirate failing is extraordinarily prevalent, especially amongst the girls. Again, sufficient attention is not paid to what is technically known as "comprehension." The end of one paragraph, too, is generally looked upon by the juniors as a signal to jump to the next with a convulsive gasp, and the rhetorical pauses at the logical divisions of the sentences are entirely disregarded. Simultaneous reading will be found a great help in obtaining distinct utterance and correct intonation, but it should be simultaneous reading—that is, *every one* must read in correct time and tone. There should be little difficulty in teaching reading to small classes where each pupil can get individual attention; large classes should be broken up into drafts, but care should be taken that these drafts are not put in charge of unskilled teachers, as is too often done. Indeed, the evidently very prevalent idea that any one can take the reading lesson is responsible for a good deal of the poor work in the subject. The practice of consecutive reading is common to a large number of schools, and should no longer be continued, as it is conducive to inattention. Each child should feel that he or she may be called upon at any moment to read. Reading paragraph-about also should not be allowed. The position of the pupils is neglected, consequently I have found big boys and girls reading into their chests, with bent backs, hands playing in their laps, and books lying on their desks. Pupils should hold their books well up on the palms of the left hands, forming book-rests by propping their left elbows on their left hips. Their right arms should be placed behind their backs. This will have the effect of expanding their chests, throwing up their heads, and keeping their necks straight.

**SPELLING AND DICTATION.**—I am sorry to say the generally-exploded habit of learning spelling by committing to memory long lists of words is still in vogue in this district. With the exception of some very bad schools the oral spelling was fair, provided only the words at the bottom of the reading lessons were asked. There was, however, abundant evidence of rote-work, for, no matter what part of a verb or noun was demanded, that in the book was invariably given, and if the pupil was at all unfamiliar with the word he could make no attempt to approach its sound. Dictation was generally bad in the Third Standard, fair in the Fourth and Fifth, and good in the Sixth. The spelling on the grammar, composition, history, and geography papers was often very bad, even in the case of those that wrote good dictation. Transcription should be made the principal means of teaching spelling. In the dictation lesson about half the time should be devoted to effectual correction, when all mistakes should be carefully pointed out on the black-board. Those having no mistakes should transcribe till the time allotted for the subject has expired. Unfamiliar words should be divided into syllables, and junior pupils might be asked to write sentences using these words. It was strange to notice the extraordinary attempts that were sometimes made in oral examination to spell the simplest vowel-sounds in an unfamiliar word. I may here mention that the practice in transcription and dictation of cramming in the last letters of a word at the end of a line and of dividing monosyllables should be discontinued. Pupils also should be trained where to divide words of two or more syllables.

**WRITING.**—Clean, neatly-written copy-books were rather the exception; but the transcription required from the senior standards was fairly well done, if I except the fact that only in a very few schools would the writing bear criticism. I passed writing of any style, provided it was neat and fair of its kind, for hitherto teachers apparently have not thought it of any importance that the writing should be exactly like that of the book used. I cannot do this in future; and, as the Board has now issued a list of class-books, and Vere Foster's copy-books are the only ones allowed, I shall expect the writing to be of the style laid down in them, and a faithful copy of the headlines. In transcription some latitude will be allowed to the Sixth Standard. Both the quality and the style of the writing throughout the district were very varied. At Hawera and Okaiawa in all classes, and at Palmerston in some, the writing was excellent, and would bear criticism; at several schools—especially at Stoney Creek, Jackeytown, Otaki, Carnarvon, Sanson, Upper Tutaenui, and Karere—it was very neat in the senior classes, but at several more it was very bad. At Wanganui the work of the infants and boys promises well, and the senior girls write neatly, but the juniors very poorly, owing to the kind of copy-book in use, which is mainly comprised of large hand. It is not going too far to say that the writing of the Third Standard in some schools was better than that of the Sixth in others. On my inspection visits I often found pupils of the same class writing in books of various styles, some of which were not mentioned in the Government list. Again, it was nothing unusual to see classes writing in far too advanced numbers (I found First and Second Standards writing in Nos. 4 and 6), and unsuitable numbers, with large hand, were often used. "The Standards" is very clear in condemning the teaching of large hand to little children. Undoubtedly, then, carelessness in the selection of books is partly responsible for the bad work; but it is also a fact that many teachers do not insist on good writing in the lower standards. Thus, one teacher excused bad writing in his First Standard because it could be learned in the Second; another because many adults could not write better. What is at the root of the bad writing, however, is that the subject is not *taught*, but a copy-book is put before pupils, and they are allowed to follow their own bents. I am of opinion that the writing lesson should frequently be made an object-lesson (every day in the junior classes), and each element of the letters noticed—in fact, that a system of analysis, classification, and synthesis, such as is recommended by Mulhauser, should be pursued. Thus, by analysis the teacher would decompose the letters into their elementary parts, such as the straight line, the curve, and the loop; by classification he would arrange the letters so that they might be presented to the children in the order of their simplicity; by synthesis he would train the children to recompose into letters and words the elements which the previous analysis had decomposed. When this method of teaching is practised in the junior classes, no trouble should be