

the basis of the scheme and the source of the principal modifications proposed, respectively. The system in its complete form has had full trial in only three or four cases, but important sections of it have been carefully tested at about one-half of our schools. The results obtained, where all or some of the methods have been fairly tried, have been found satisfactory, and generally quite beyond expectation. From our experience of the system so far gained, I should be led to imagine that lessons in a foreign language skilfully given in accordance with it would reduce the time needed for securing a good working acquaintance with that language to one-half, or, perhaps, only one-third, of that required for the successful use of any other method that I have seen employed for such a purpose. It is likely, however, that a word or two of qualification would be useful here. The methods will probably not give very striking results in the hands of a teacher unable to effectively wield the language to be taught. An English teacher knowing Maori very imperfectly indeed could teach Maori children his own language very speedily, but if his ill-luck brought him pupils to be taught Maori, he would probably get on better with the old classical methods of learning vocabulary and grammar, translation, and retranslation. Then, again, the method under consideration will teach Maoris to understand and speak English, but it will not teach them reading, although it helps to render reading-lessons effective. Two or three of our teachers, noting the very rapid progress made in English with the aid of this new system, have rashly concluded that the ordinary reading-lessons might be almost dispensed with. The effect of this hasty conclusion has been to shift failure from 'English' to 'reading'—a school previously weak in English and strong in reading has become strong in English and weak in reading. Of course, too, the method fails entirely to teach spelling, and it is a strange mistake to expect it to do otherwise; as, however, the mistake has been made in one or two cases, it may be useful to mention the fact here.

Improvement in Other Subjects.

The substitution of Vere Foster's "Bold Writing" series of copy-books for the older series of the same publishers seems likely to prove very beneficial to our schools. The new books combine many of the advantages of the older styles of handwriting with the thorough-going *science* of the Vere Foster school. The advantage will be in the direction of greater firmness, superior legibility, and slighter departure from older and well-established letter forms. The introduction and persistent use of Longmans' "Practical Mental Arithmetic" (there are many other good text-books on the subject) is producing a very beneficial effect on the arithmetic generally. In many of the schools it has been found that this kind of exercise soon renders the problem work so very easy that pupils acquire almost imperceptibly the power of dealing satisfactorily with all the slate-work problems set, or likely to be set, at the standard examinations. To some of our teachers this problem work has appeared to present almost insuperable difficulties—without any good reason, it would now seem. It may be remarked that *viva voce* arithmetic and the English work have a mutual reaction. Increased power of understanding English lessens the difficulty of the problems, and, on the other hand, the effort to catch the exact meaning of problems trains and braces up the minds of Maori pupils, and tends to cultivate the habit of close attention to the more important portions of their English lessons.

The Use of the Magic Lantern.

The exhibitions given by Mr. T. Crook last winter have been of very marked utility. In the first place, they have in nearly every case greatly interested the older Maoris, and have made them acquainted with much that they had not previously known or suspected about Europeans—their unbounded activity, and the superiority of their mode of living. Then, the exhibitions have tended to bring the children into much closer contact with actual fact than is ever attainable by mere school instruction consisting of verbal statement and explanation—to bring them nearer to reality—and to let them actually see for themselves that their schoolroom and its appliances, superior as they are to Maori buildings, do not at all reach the higher limit of what can be done by the pakeha's wealth and power and skill and enterprise. In many cases the Maoris appear to have felt that this kind of provision for their instruction and amusement is a very palpable pledge of disinterested goodwill towards them on the part of the Government. There is great reason to hope that the permanent arrangements now being made for the periodical use of the magic lantern in our Native schools will be productive of immense benefit.

"The School Attendance Act, 1894."

It is too early yet to form any very definite idea of the ultimate effect of this important measure, and far too early to suggest amendments and improvements. But a remark or two on the more obvious tendencies already observed in connection with the Act can hardly be out of place. It seems, then, that in all but very few schools the attendance has been increased through the parents' knowledge of the fact that the Committees now have in their hands the power of bringing the law to bear on parents who neglect their children's education. Many of the Committees recognise that the Act has greatly increased their usefulness by making their authority a reality, and not a mere sham that may be safely defied. Nearly everywhere the Committees are showing a desire to exercise their new powers wisely and kindly, and no case has come under notice in which there has been an attempt to make an oppressive use of it. It seems, however, to be generally felt that the practical utility of the Act would be greatly increased if Chairmen of Committees undertaking prosecutions *bonâ fide* could obtain protection from personal liability for the payment of travelling-expenses and costs of Court, in case of failure to obtain a conviction. It seems likely that if the difficulty here indicated could be got over, the deterrent effect of the Act would be greatly increased, while, through the good feeling and common-sense of the Committees, prosecutions would still very seldom occur.