similar age and general mental development. The reason of this will be shown later on. Writing correctly from dictation is, I believe, the only other cardinal subject. In our efforts, then, to make the attainments of our Maori children approximate to those of well-instructed European children we have to bestow our most careful attention on English, reading, and writing from dictation.

In reply to the question as to what is the upper limit of efficiency for Native schools, I should say that we have no right whatever to expect Maori children in a Maori district—hearing in many cases no more English than that spoken by their teachers and by occasional visitors—to speak and write English fluently after being at school as "Preparatories" for two years, and in due course afterwards passing four standards. It must be remembered that for Maori pupils living in a settlement there is no complete break in the use of their mother-tongue as there is in the case of English boys sent to a French or a German school. In such cases the mother-tongue almost disappears, and the pupil has to concentrate attention on the language that is constantly being spoken around him. Our Maoris, on the contrary, spend four hours a day in school; during this time they hear good English. Perhaps, also, they spend an hour in the playground, where a kind of English is spoken, the educational value of which is very small. All the rest of their time is spent in the settlement, where they hear Maori, and generally Maori only. These being in the main the conditions under which English is taught to Maoris in Maori districts, it would almost seem that if clever young Maori boys and girls are, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, able to translate an easy piece of Maori into decent English, to correct grammatical errors in simple English sentences, to write a brief letter on some particular subject, to read and understand a tolerably advanced English book, to speak and understand ordinary English, and to write from dictation with considerable correctness, they do remarkably well. It is found that boys and girls of similar age who have attended European grammar schools or high schools very often fail to do as much as this with French or German, to say nothing of Latin. It seems, then, that, instead of setting the upper limit of our Native-school attainment at the ability to wield English as well-educated English children wield it, we should, perhaps, take the less prejudiced and empty-headed plan of asking our teachers to endeavour to bring *all* their Fourth Standard pupils up to the state of efficiency now reached by their best pupils, or, if this should be considered too severe, to set themselves the task of making *all* their pupils capable of dealing with English as well as grammar-school pupils of thirteen or fourteen deal with French or German.

Now that the ground has been cleared to a certain extent, an attempt may be made to show what is the nature of the improvement that has taken place in Native-school instruction during the time that the Education Department has had charge of it. At the beginning of Native-school work in New Zealand the only available plan was to follow closely the old-fashioned methods in vogue. These methods, unintelligent as they were, had to be used without any exact notion as to the effects they would produce; still less was there any distinct aim. Now, just here was the point where a divergence took place. The new management knew as little as the old what the aim ought to be, what the necessities of the case were. The difference was that strong determination to solve the enigma was brought to bear on it. In the first place, then, it was found that chaos rather than cosmos prevailed; only one thing was clear—until light should come any system was better than none. Therefore a rough-and-ready attempt was made to draw up standards, to devise a time-table scheme, and to get a workable code of rules based on such experience of the past as was available. These measures soon began to effect improvement in some directions; above all, a certain amount of light began to dawn, it became possible to see in what directions we were actually moving, and in what directions we ought to be moving.

Soon a great mistake was corrected. It had been taken for granted that generally it was right to make some allowance for the fact that our pupils were Maoris, and that it was unreasonable to expect Maori children to do as well as English. For instance, in the case of reading it was thought absurd to expect thoroughly good pronunciation from Maori children. Hence we allowed ourselves to be contented with third- or fourth- or even seventh- or eighth-rate reading. The light-giving thought that corrected this mistake was that we ought to be content with nothing but the best, whether our pupils were Maoris or Europeans; that if we failed to get it at first, we ought to go on trying till we did get it. Many of our teachers took up this idea and made full use of it. At our examinations an "excellent" mark is used. It is given for first-class work only, and it is now very often secured by our Maori pupils for reading that is excellent so far as it goes.

The next fruitful idea was that English is our most important subject. Of course, English always has great intrinsic importance, but it is also the master-key to arithmetic, geography, and other subjects. It had been found that children strong in English were strong in the other subjects; also that inability to deal with simple problems was entirely owing to inability to make out what the English statement of them meant: the proof of the correctness of this view was found in the fact that problems given in English and found impenetrable were quite within a pupil's reach when given in Maori.

The next feature developed is connected with the principle stated above, that nothing but the best should be judged thoroughly satisfactory. It was recognised that this principle might with very great propriety be applied to handwriting, seeing that Maoris have special faculty for this branch of school-work. It is now being done with success.

What was, from our Native-school point of view, an important discovery dawned upon us in connection with the teaching of arithmetic; it was simply that problem work could be most effectually taught if taken in connection with *vivâ voce* arithmetic. This, again, was a development of the principle that success in teaching arithmetic very largely depends on success in teaching English. What may be called the mathematical thinking in connection with arithmetic presents little or no difficulty to ordinarily intelligent Maoris; the meaning of English questions of a necessarily somewhat obscure character is an altogether different matter.