

*Writing.*—Until lately the Vere Foster copybook has been in common use in our schools. It is being gradually discarded, and copybooks without headlines have been introduced so that teachers may have an opportunity of teaching writing from copies written on the board. In this way regular class instruction can be given, and some good results have been obtained. As the teachers become more accustomed to the method, I have no doubt that even more success will accrue. The tendency is, in many Native schools as well as in European schools, to make use of writing as a silent lesson in order that the teacher may be free to devote full attention to another standard class. Of course, the writing suffers from the want of correction and mistakes are repeated frequently, a fault which can be prevented only by providing more than one copy on a page. I regret to say that this year there were some instances where it was very evident that correction had been reduced to a minimum, and others in which there could have been no correction at all. Such a practice is calculated to produce the very worst results, and teachers are therefore advised not to make writing a silent lesson only. In other cases I noticed that the teacher had gone to the trouble of setting a separate copy in the book of each pupil. Surely this is waste of time; all that is necessary is that a properly selected copy be placed upon the board in full view of the whole class; next, the difficulties pointed out and illustrated, and then the whole class set to write, the teacher carefully supervising their work and explaining on the board any mistakes that he sees have been made.

*English.*—In none of our schools is English now taught by means of translation from Maori, although the requirements of the Code are still in that direction. The teachers have gradually adopted the newer and more rapid method of teaching English by means of conversation lessons. In most cases the progress made is remarkably good. The want of success in others is due probably to two factors—(1) insufficient appreciation of the importance of the lesson, and (2) want of versatility on the part of the teacher. With regard to the first, it is perhaps hardly necessary to remind teachers that upon English rests the whole fabric of the school work, and no success can be achieved in the school if English is in any way deprived of its due. The greatest care must be exercised during the lesson to see that the child talks correct English. In several schools I have heard the teacher pass over such sentences as: "That is pig"; "He holding out his hand"; "She is holding his [a girl's] hand," &c.

In order to secure the maximum amount of attention and energy for this lesson, I have invariably recommended that it be taken as the first lesson of the day.

In the next place, there is a danger of the lessons becoming stereotyped and monotonous if sufficient care is not taken to introduce as much change as possible. Children are apt to get tired of conversing always on the same subject, and teachers should aim at securing variety. A cold morning will suggest a conversation about lighting a fire, warming hands, &c.; a hot morning may be taken as ground for talking about swimming, walking in the water or in the bush. A careless boy may drop a slate while the lesson is proceeding: this is again an opportunity for variety of conversation, and the lesson should be such that every child has taken part, the weak ones having had the lion's share by the teacher constantly harking back to them, even when they are confident that they are done with. The practice of preparing lessons cannot be too strongly recommended to teachers, and it would be of great assistance to them in their work, and avoid monotony, were they to keep a list of the various lessons in conversational English that have been taken during the year.

In using pictures for teaching English use should be always made of the blackboard, so that the lesson may appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. As the various sentences are elicited they should be written on the board, and the lesson should then conclude by the reading of the complete work as it appears there. The lesson may afterwards be reproduced by being written. I am certain, however, that no amount of written English can take the place of oral work, and that the more of the latter that is taken the better and stronger will the English in our schools become. Any one who has some knowledge of a foreign language knows that it is much easier to write in that language than to talk in it. Indeed, were it not for want of time, I should prefer to conduct the whole of the examination in English orally.

*Arithmetic.*—The quality of the arithmetic in our schools varies considerably. In several it is excellent: in these schools it is to be noted also that English is of a very high order.

The need of systematic and scientific teaching in the preparatory classes impresses one in this subject as it does in reading. Children are often a long while in school without being able to do much in the way of arithmetic. Then they learn the making of figures without knowing fully the idea expressed; they can recite, but not count, count but not add, and use fingers (or toes) as aids. It is fair to say that these faults are not confined to Maori schools only, but they are found frequently in our schools. In the early stages of arithmetic, number is necessarily concrete, hence the use of fingers or strokes, which is perfectly natural. But the children make very slow advance by this means, and the teachers must endeavour to find the readiest means of effecting the transition from the concrete to the abstract. This will be managed first by using actual objects side by side with abstract numbers. Secondly, it is necessary that the number to be taught should be used in connection with a variety of objects—five boys, five slates, five books, five men, &c. The child will abstract for himself the common element which will be associated only with the sign—i.e., the figure "5." For the early stages of arithmetic I have recommended teachers to confine the work in the first preparatory class to the first ten numbers which should be taught in all their relations, though in the first stage it is advisable to limit the exercises to addition and subtraction, and to introduce the other operations at a later stage.

In all of the lower classes more use should be made of mental and oral arithmetic, which is a weak subject in most of our schools.

In Standard II., for instance, children are often found unable to manage a simple problem in division or multiplication, because they do not comprehend the English and have not been accustomed to oral work.