Of the subjects of instruction, reading, writing, and drawing are taught with most success, and, in the great majority of the schools they are very creditably dealt with. In reading, the most common defect is a certain hurry and want of deliberateness that leads to indistinctness of enunciation and to incorrect or careless phrasing. In a number of the smaller schools, as Mr. Cox points out, monotonous reading is prevalent, the pupils failing to sustain the voice at the close of phrases, thus giving each pause the weight of a full stop. Mr. Cox remarks that it is not for want of constant correction that there is so little improvement in this matter. Doubtless the correction comes too late, being applied after the bad habit has been acquired and become confirmed. Nothing can be clearer than that this difficulty must be overcome in the earlier steps of learning to read, and that it is to grave neglect at this stage that the continued existence of this fault is due. Mr. Plummer notes that "in many of the smaller schools it is desirable to devote more attention to the expression given by pupils when reading aloud. The comprehension of the reading matter I have often found neglected. This should not be so. Even in sole-teacher schools, where the teachers find it difficult to devote sufficient time to this subject, the elder pupils should be provided with dictionaries, and should be trained to use them to assist themselves in their work." The last point is one of considerable importance, and my own experince shows that pupils who have dictionaries, and apparently use them, are still frequently unable to learn from these helps the pronunciation and even the syllabification of unfamiliar words. Many schools and class-rooms are not provided with a dictionary of any authority or fulness of vocabulary; such a dictionary should be considered an indispensable requisite of every senior class-room. On the other hand, a good many teachers have provided for use in school encyclopædias of one kind or another, which are used as occasion requires, to the great benefit of their pupils. The ability to use dictionaries and similar works of reference correctly and intelligently should be a possession of all the pupils who have left our schools from Standards V and VI at least.

Mr. Garrard once more pleads for the adoption of higher and wider aims in the teaching of reading. "The lessons," he writes, "should lead the children to take to reading as a recreation and an amusement first, and later on as a means of acquiring knowledge. Can we say that this will result from our present method of teaching? One of the worst features of our present system is the tendency to reduce all to a dead level of acquirement. In our infant classes a wide course of reading is adopted, and the Department has set a good example by providing several books, and these of an interesting type, for the primer classes; but in the upper standards, especially in Standards V and VI, little is being done to inculcate a love for reading in our pupils. Fancy a mentally vigorous boy or girl of thirteen years of age being compelled to spend a full school year—and that at an important stage of life—with reading limited to the ordinary school readers, the *School Journal*, and the Geographical and Historical Readers, the last two of which the pupil would never read for pleasure. 'A boy or girl will read page after page of Robinson Crusoe or Rip Van Winkle, while he will be dragged with slow and reluctant steps through a school reader.' Moreover, the non-continuous type of reading-book, useful as it may be for the teaching of spelling, and possibly for giving the pupils some idea of the different styles of composition, is, as a means of instilling a love of reading, a dismal failure. Nor are our teachers blameless in their method of dealing with the reading matter; they often spend the whole time in solving problems for their pupils; they fall upon the text and worry it as a hungry dog worries a bone, until the pupils get such a distaste for reading as they never forget. Exposition is not an end, but a means, and a rule has been given for it which our teachers would do well to heed. It is, 'As little as possible, as much as necessary.' It is pleasing to notice that in some of our larger schools a good library has been established, and the children of the upper standards are allowed during part of the time devoted to reading 'to browse at will on the pastures they like best.'" Unfortunately, the maxim given above is vague, and leaves scope for many interpretations.

I have quoted Mr. Garrard's remarks at length, as they lay emphasis on what is frequently a real blemish in the treatment of reading in many upper standard classes. Here, as so often elsewhere, it is easier to point out a defect than to suggest a practicable and effective remedy. Teachers, none the less, would do well to ponder the question, and endeavour to find a remedy suitable to their circumstances. The building-up of school libraries for the use of the older pupils is an object that deserves all encouragement, and if the Board could afford to stimulate local effort to meet this need by granting a subsidy a great improvement would soon take place. I was pleased to find, at Waiokaraka School, evidence that pupils from Standard III upwards take home and read a large number of books from the considerable school library that has grown up there. The book recording the issue of the library books had a pupil's name entered at the top of a page, with the catalogue numbers of the books borrowed entered in a column below. In many cases a second column was more than half filled with entries—a very creditable record. I mention this plan of recording the issue of books because it shows at a glance, to any one interested, how largely the library has been used.

While recitation is good in a large number of schools, more than one of the Inspectors complain of its indifferent quality in some of the smaller ones. Of the schools of the northern district, Mr. Cox writes: "I regret to say that I cannot report any improvement in recitation. There are a few bright and refreshing exceptions, but in most cases it is dreary, monotonous, or absolute jabber."

Comprehension of the language of reading-lessons is, in general, satisfactory, and is certainly improving. I rarely find evidence that pupils are encouraged, before the reading-lesson is taken, to apply to their teachers for help in getting at the meaning of passages or words they have felt a difficulty in understanding. If the meaning of an unfamiliar word is not known, and a pupil is asked if he applied to the teacher for help in understanding it, the answer, in my experience, is almost invariably—"No, sir." If a spirit of thoughtful study and inquiry is to be fostered among our scholars, evidence of their recognition of difficulties should be regularly forthcoming.

The instruction in spelling and dictation occupies a very considerable share of time—in some schools a quite inordinate share—and the spelling of the words contained in the principal reader is in general