

sentences. I also pointed out how the introduction of synthetical exercises to accompany analysis, would do much to develop style in the higher standards. Almost every lesson can be used as an aid to composition: the pupils may be called upon to give a written or oral summary of a geography lesson or of a history lesson; in the lower standards they may be asked to reproduce the matter of object lessons or to give, in their own words, an account of a reading lesson. But the latter is an effort of memory rather than of original thought, and is of little practical use where the system of simultaneous reading is in vogue, a system which tends to stereotype the book on the pupil's mind, and to destroy all individuality of thought as well as of reading. Much depends, too, upon the manner in which the compositions are corrected. Many teachers return the compositions with the mistakes underlined and the correct version written above, or on the margin. In most cases the pupils never look at the compositions again, much less study the improvements made by the teacher. If any good is to be derived from the composition exercise, the mistakes should be merely underlined and discussed with the class by the teacher before he returns the books; all corrections should be made by the pupils themselves under the teacher's supervision. The remarks under spelling about incorrect forms, apply with equal force to composition.

The exercise of paraphrasing demanded from Standards V. and VI., which is perhaps the best test of the pupils' intelligence is, according to the unanimous verdict of the Inspectors throughout the Colony, most unsatisfactory. The Wanganui Inspectors report that "paraphrasing in Standards V. and VI. was seldom good, while at many schools it was very poor, and at some ludicrously senseless." The Nelson Inspector reports to the same effect, and gives examples which show an appalling ignorance on the part of fifth Standard boys, of the commonest and simplest words in the language. To quote from his report: "He gave the tar a piece of gold," when rewritten

with its context, made utter nonsense in the midst of which a "piece of tarred gold" was conspicuous. "They brought out their best of cheer" was several times rendered "They gave a loud hurrah," or "They gave three cheers." "The stern advance of the men in red" was ingloriously turned into "The soldiers came on stern first."

Perhaps no part of the syllabus calls for such condemnation as the teaching of history. What ends should we have in view in teaching history? We should aim at cultivating a spirit of patriotism, at making good citizens, at developing a high moral nature, and generally improving the pupil's intelligence. Did the framers of our syllabus have these ends in view? And if they did, are the means they adopt likely to attain to the end? The teaching of history in New Zealand schools is fragmentary, scrappy, disconnected and, in the opinions of some of our inspectors, utterly useless. I am told by teachers in secondary schools who have to teach the chosen of the primary schools, picked out by the scholarship competition, that even the holders of scholarships display profound ignorance of the most prominent facts and personages of English history. If the best pupils are so utterly ignorant of history, how deplorable must be the ignorance of the average child trained under our vaunted system.

The teachers of the various standards are to select a list of personages, events and dates from a prescribed period, and on the list presented the children are questioned by the inspector. The teacher takes care that, by revision and re-revision, a few superficial facts are thoroughly instilled into the pupils' minds, that they can connect event with date and date with event, that they know the battles of the Hundred Years' War, and the result of each, that they know the number of forces that fought on each side, how many were killed, how many wounded, that they are acquainted with the details of the intrigues of the origin of Henry VII., and with the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht. The object of the framers of the syllabus seems to have been to fill the minds of the