

such programs, if approved by the Minister of Education, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, shall be held to satisfy the requirements of the portion of the syllabus to which they refer.

## ENGLISH.

29. *Speech*.—It should be recognized that the foundation of all work in English is natural and correct speech. Children should be taught to reproduce in oral speech simple stories told by the teacher, and to give orally simple accounts or descriptions of common objects and occurrences that fall within their experience. These should be expressed in complete sentences properly grouped, and clearly and correctly pronounced. Simple conversations and talks in which both the teacher and the children take part, upon subjects of everyday life, but calculated to extend the interests of the children by arousing their observation and other activities, should be largely employed in the lower classes. It is not essential that the answers should contain complete sentences, but the answers should be as complete and clear as they would be in the natural conversation of educated people, and slovenly answering should not be passed over at any stage. Any attempt to make children speak in a stilted manner, or to use words and forms unfamiliar to them should be avoided; the speech should be natural, and errors should be corrected as they occur. The practice in oral composition should be continued throughout the whole school course, and should not be confined to the English class-work only; the children should regularly be trained to give orally a simple and clear account of anything that they have learnt in history or geography, of any experiment or observation made in science, or of any process used in their handwork.

The chief objects of the instruction in reading shall be to impart to the pupils the power of fluent reading, with clear enunciation, correct pronunciation, tone, and inflexion, and expression based upon intelligent comprehension of the subject-matter; to cultivate a taste for and an appreciation of good literature; and accordingly to lead the pupils to form the habit of reading good books. The reading of such books might, indeed, well replace all other kind of home-work. There should be at least two or three reading-books in each class. The requirements in reading shall be held to be met by the use of the *School Journal*, together with continuous readers suited to each stage. Silent reading should be largely employed in the case of children in the upper classes, and some of the composition should be based thereon. Generally, the instruction in reading must be such as to secure within the limits of the pupils' ordinary school course the ability to read at sight with ease and intelligence any reading-matter suited to the age and mental development of children completing the primary stage of their education.

Poetry set for recitation should, while suited to the age of the pupils, be chosen for its literary merit as well as for the interest it arouses. There is such a wealth of simple and beautiful poetry in English literature that there is no reason to select for repetition verse that is not worth the trouble of learning by heart. One of the objects in making children learn verse or prose by heart is that they may have stored up in their memory masterpieces that may develop their imagination, and may, whether the children themselves are conscious of the operation or not, mould their taste for good literature. A sufficient amount of poetry and prose, suitable for learning by heart, will be provided in the *School Journal*.

The children should have an intelligent comprehension of the poetry set for recitation, and be able to answer questions upon the subject-matter of it. In some classes the pupils might be trained to reproduce in their own words the substance of poetry previously committed to memory. These exercises link the recitation to the composition lessons.

*Spelling* should be taught by means of systematic lessons on word-building, based on a general phonetic scheme, or on the meanings of the words, or on both principles combined. This teaching should be regularly supplemented by transcription from script and print. Dictation is a useful test, but not in itself, it should be remembered, a method of teaching spelling. Indeed, the spelling may be judged rather from the composition and other written work than from special tests. The learning by heart of lists of spellings and meanings cannot be considered as serving any useful purpose, but children may be encouraged to bring to school lists of words and phrases that they have been unable to understand in the books read at home.

Any spelling shall be allowed that is recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary, and *ceteris paribus*, it is recommended generally that where this authority gives a choice the more phonetic form should be preferred; e.g., recognize, rime, gram, kilogram, program, honor, labor, plow, jail, and not recognise, rhyme, gramme, kilogramme, programme, honour, labour, plough, gaol.