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THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH
TO THIRD AND FOURTH FORMS
IN NEW ZEALAND.

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Submitted as part of the Examination
for M.A. in Education by
Dorothy Mary Cumming.

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The teacher of English has not always been concerned that clear critical thought and expression should be a product of his teaching, nor has his subject always

been conceived as broadly as by the writers of some modern Reports and pedagogical works. The teacher of English in New Zealand last century might have difficulty in recognizing his subject today. Then a very different philosophy of teaching. The

Chapter I - INTRODUCTORY

faculty theory of the mind, with its assumption of the

Count. The authors of the Spens Report state that the curriculum of the secondary school should be developed around an attitude to life, and one main core of learning which is to be found in what are generally known as the English subjects. These consist of history and geography ("social studies" in the third and fourth forms) and English itself. Of these, perhaps the one most capable of integrating the others and giving meaning to the secondary course is English in the narrower sense. Its influence does not end with school life; the outlook of boys and girls, and consequently their actions, will have been influenced, perhaps quite unconsciously, by the "reading, discussion and reflection which the study of English provides and stimulates." It is the hope of the teacher of English that this will produce clear critical thought and expression.

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been conceived as broadly as by the writers of some modern Reports and pedagogical works. The teacher of English in New Zealand last century might have difficulty in recognizing his subject today. Then a very different philosophy and psychology influenced teaching. The faculty theory of the mind, with its assumption of the similarity of all minds, was made the justification for large classes in primary schools; methods were comparatively simple and few materials were used. The minds of children were believed to be small and weak replicas of adult minds, and in the same way that parts of the body respond to exercise by gaining greater strength and control, so the faculties of the mind such as reason, imagination and memory, were supposed to develop in response to exercise and discipline. Individual differences were largely unrecognized, and it was believed that unless a child was actually deficient, he could be trained to the level of his fellows. Obviously, it seemed as easy to teach a hundred children as fifty; their minds were supposed to be passive, each one receiving the same impression from the same quantum of teaching. The child's interest in what was taught, or his willingness to accept what was offered, were factors in the learning process too often neglected by teachers.

All this had its repercussions in post-primary teaching. Classes were smaller than primary classes

because secondary education was not yet free and fewer went on to the third forms, and it was taken for granted that children who attended secondary school were there merely in search of knowledge. This made for uniformity of method, and teaching tended to be formal and authoritarian. Incentives to learning were not as widely used as they are today.

At the beginning of the second decade of this century, the chief emphasis in the teaching of English was still on formal work; text books in use at that time show with what detail pupils were expected to analyse sentences and parse words. Careful attention was given to correct sentence structure. The number of books read in school was limited, and children took turns in reading aloud.

In the nineteen twenties, formal was still stressed, but a less formal element was coming in. More time was being given to oral English; opportunities for speaking and discussion were increased, and more varied methods were introduced to the teaching of English as a whole.

During the early years of the fourth decade, the sociological background of learning became more widely the study of educators. Teachers began to take a greater interest in the activities of adults in the communities of

which their pupils were members, and to the life of ^{to} which they would contribute more fully when they left school. Research into the social uses of the curriculum was undertaken, and in the English syllabus a more utilitarian approach became apparent. Lists of words were arranged, which graduates from secondary schools would most likely be required to spell; forms of sentence structure were taught which they would most probably need to use, and books were recommended which it was desirable for them to be able to read.

Another decade saw further developments in teaching methods. The difference in kind between silent and oral reading was widely recognized; silent reading was used more frequently than formerly and greater care was given to ensuring that children both understood what they read, and could say what it was about. The swing away from formal grammar reflected the scepticism of teachers about its value in promoting clarity and precision of thought and expression. A freer and less conventional form of expression was accepted and encouraged, probably influenced by a less conventional literary style. There was a slightly less rigid definition of what was right and wrong in the use of words. The individual differences of the children taught were taken in account as part of a deliberate policy and not merely from incon-

venient necessity. Their interest and co-operation were more widely recognized and used as factors in learning. As a result, there was increased freedom in both oral and written expression.

From all this it may be seen how the teaching of English in a comparatively short time has developed and broadened in concept. English is best considered nowadays as a subject area; today, miming, puppetry and music, art, handwork and sewing contribute to a practical training, through which is sought the acquisition of those skills which alone were once called "English".

The history of his subject, with its changes and developments, is important for the teacher of English, to whom we now turn our attention. He must know something of its history if he is to see where it is going. He must, indeed, know where he is going. Professor I.A. Richards,¹ discussing responsibilities in the teaching of English, says that teachers are reluctant to state their principles - they take them for granted. This reluctance may be attributed to their holding beliefs so deep that confessing them is painful, or more likely to the individual's recognizing his lack of even unformulated beliefs; he does not know where he is going. It is strange that this is so, espec-

¹ Richards, I.A.: Essays and Studies, Vol. XXXII, No. I - "Responsibilities in the Teaching of English" (1946).

ially as in other subjects of the secondary curriculum there is not the same doubt about either the goal or the way. According to Professor Richards, there is in the modern teaching of mathematics, physics, biology, music or even history, not the confusion about aims and methods too frequently evident in the teaching of English. It is necessary therefore that the teacher of English should be able to think clearly and objectively, so that he may formulate and evaluate his aims in relation to his immediate work and to teaching as a whole, and ultimately to the demands that the community makes on his pupils.

He should devote some thought, for example, to such problems as that of the relationship between education and vocational training. According to Milton, the purpose of education is that of fitting a man to "perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war." Aristotle would probably agree with most of this, but would add that education is also a preparation for leisure, which for him is the end of all human activity. The purpose of education is to produce the "good" man - the good citizen, the man who is interested and interesting. With this most civilized communities have agreed, and C.S. Lewis² points out that

² Lewis, C.S.: "Rehabilitations and Other Essays" - "Our English Syllabus" (1939).

the means they have taken to educate their children are much the same; they have taught civil behaviour by direct and indirect discipline, awakened and encouraged the ability to reason by mathematics and dialectic, and have tried to produce right sentiments "which are to the passions what right habits are to the body" by steeping them in the literature which is the basis of their culture.

The purpose of vocational training is very different; it trains not for leisure but for work and its primary aim is not to produce the good man but the good carpenter, dressmaker, drainlayer or interior decorator. But no matter how desirable an education may seem, as distinct from a purely vocational training, it would be impracticable in an equalitarian society to give the former to everyone while neglecting the latter. Time must be found for both. The teacher of English helps to equip the child for life in his community, and trains him in those skills of communication which will enable him to work more efficiently. The teacher must find a middle way, so that the vocational aspect of his pupils' training does not exclude their education in a wider sense, whose value is that it "actualizes the potentiality for leisure which is man's prerogative."³

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sampson, G.: "English for the English" (1934)

Plural.

When the teacher of English is considering the aims of his subject, and the purpose^s he is trying to fulfil in teaching it, he should realize that it is his duty to help in giving a wider education, so that his pupils may be literate, articulate, and educated as far as their individual capacities and opportunities permit. This is the greatest contribution the teacher of English, or any teacher, can make to the school and to the community, for by it he is helping his pupils to become qualified to assume the responsibilities of citizenship. George Sampson emphasizes the isolation of the inarticulate person, who is cut off from his kind or limited to "sullen contact" with those equally inarticulate. He believes the task of the English teacher is twofold; it is to treat English first as a tool whose use the pupil must master, and then as a means of access to formative life and beauty.⁴ If this task is successfully discharged, pupils will be helped to think and to express themselves with clarity, to make valid judgments, and to appreciate something of their cultural heritage. Even more broadly, the teacher of English will see that the successful discharge of this task will help to resolve those conflicts, racial, religious, social, economic and political, which breed distrust and antagonism towards minorities in our communities and suspicion and fear of other nations.

⁴ Sampson, G.: "English for the English" (1934)

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In this introductory chapter have been considered very briefly some changes in emphasis in the teaching of English, and their significance for the teacher, and something of his responsibilities to his pupils, with the results that may be expected to follow from carrying them out faithfully. The aims of the teaching of English are more precisely formulated in the next chapter.

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¹ Sampson, G: "English For the English".

themselves, speaking or writing, accurately, concisely and effectively"²

In the eighteenth century the standard of written and spoken English was set by what Sir Fred

Clark³ English was not much spoken outside England and America, and in

Chapter II - THE AIMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

When considering the aims of teaching English in the secondary school, one must remember what the function of English really is. For English-speaking peoples, using their native language is their most important activity from the time they begin to speak until the time they die. For the vast majority of New Zealand secondary school girls and boys, English is the only language they will ever learn to use with fluency and anything like accuracy. It is their normal means of everyday communication, their only means of linguistic study, the only way by which they may approach literature, and as Sampson says, "the sole means by which they can contact the embodied feeling, thought and experience of mankind."¹ Since this is so, it should be the prime object of the English teacher to continue the work begun first in the home and continued in the primary school, — that is, the development of the pupils' command of their mother tongue, so that they may be enabled to "express

¹ Sampson, G: "English For the English".

themselves, speaking or writing, accurately, concisely and effectively".²

In the eighteenth century the standard of written and spoken English was set by what Sir Fred Clarke³ called a "highly cultivated minority;" English was not much spoken outside England and America, and in England itself many dialects caused confusion. That situation has been changed by industrial and social revolutions. The emergence of a fairly uniform standard of spoken and written English has been assisted by the extension of literacy, the growth of the popular press, and the advent of radio and film entertainment. Clear, "good" English is no longer the prerogative of socially or economically privileged classes, but the common basis of our common culture. For the school boy or girl in New Zealand it is almost unexceptionally the medium of instruction; for the adult, it is the medium of all intercourse, social, commercial, public and private.

It is hoped by teachers and employers that those leaving secondary school will be able to speak and write good English. What good English really is, however, can only be determined by considering its use in relation to

² "Suggestions in Regard to Teaching in Junior Technical Schools", H.M.S.O. 1937.

³ "The Teaching of English in Schools" - A Symposium ed. by Vivian de Sola Pinto, Foreword by Sir Fred Clarke.

all
employers?

its purpose. As Professor I.A. Gordon says,⁴ in considering what good English is, the question "Good for what?" must be asked. A scientific report of an atomic bomb explosion tabulates ascertained data impersonally, and is written for a different audience from that reached by the journalist who gives a memorable description of the same explosion, although hardly in the restrained neutral language of the scientific report. A knowledge of the different functions of English is important for the teacher because it helps him to know what to encourage, and what to discourage in the work of his pupils.

It is generally recognized that secondary English comprises three main skills. They are the comprehension of the thoughts of others, the clear expression in speech or writing of one's own thoughts; and the enjoyment of literature. Professor Gordon distinguishes a possible fourth, the writing of literature by the pupil, but qualifies this by saying it is an unusual classroom activity and that it can be taught has yet to be proved.⁵ The aims of teaching English are to foster the development of these skills by means suited to the age and intelligence of the children taught.

⁴ Gordon, I.A.: "The Teaching of English".

⁵ Ibid.

The Thomas Report emphasizes that the aims of expression and comprehension are not "separate or separable"; there is an incessant and valuable interaction between the elements of communication ^{such that} and they cannot be taught separately. However they are discussed here in turn to stress the fact that communication is a "two-way process".

The first aim then of the teaching of English is to encourage the development of the power to express oneself clearly in speech or writing.

Professor Gordon calls this process the initiation of communication.⁶ It involves the practical control of words, phrases and sentences, the fruition of a process that begins in the first year of a child's life. The power of organizing words into sentences for the purpose of self-expression is cultivated in the child by his teachers. Forms of expression may range from the very simple oral and written work of the lower thirds to the more capable and mature work of the upper forms. Training boys and girls to say and write "A plain thing in a plain way" is a difficult and exacting task for conscientious teachers. It means providing opportunities for speaking naturally to an audience about subjects of interest; it means giving much practice in various forms of written work,

⁶ Ibid.

graded according to interest and difficulty. It entails demanding and getting correctly spelt and punctuated work; reading passages which are to be summarized or reproduced in various degrees of accuracy; and teaching some rather more formal techniques such as letter writing. Without these skills, says the Thomas Report, children are imperfectly equipped to communicate with their fellows and to play their part in society. The latter is a remote goal to many children and is little or no incentive; but it is good that boys and girls should be helped to realize that their work is relevant to life outside and beyond their school. The H.M.S.O. pamphlet already quoted speaks of the asset it is not only in ordinary life but also in the industrial and business worlds to say what has to be said in an "effective, finished and graceful way". This fact may be lawfully used as an incentive to effort, particularly in those classes whose members are likely to stay only two years or until they have reached the school leaving age.

The second aim in teaching English is to develop the ability to understand the thoughts of others clearly expressed in speech or writing, which is the other element in communication. The expression of thought initiates communication; the comprehension of that expression completes it. To comprehend what he has heard the child must

are very largely intellectual, and so may be acquired by

react to the meanings of words, to their intellectual and emotional associations. This is an acquired skill, which can be greatly improved with practice. To hear and read a plain thing in a plain way (Sampson) is necessary to social communication and satisfactory relations with others, yet it seems to be a difficult skill to acquire, judging by the number of times apparently unambiguous statements are misread, and the times people complain that their statements are distorted and their opinions misrepresented.

Training in comprehension begins long before children go to school, but it is continued more purposefully and intensively first at the primary then at the secondary level. There are varied methods of training and testing comprehension; the wise teacher will choose those best suited to the age and intelligence of particular classes, and will see that while their work is not too difficult, it does demand some effort. Careful reproduction in paraphrase or summary form, and questions to be answered either orally or in writing are of use, but one difficulty encountered by teachers of third and fourth forms is that of finding interesting material. Selections of suitable material, cyclostyled and sent to teachers by the Department of Education would be of immense value.

The two skills of expression and comprehension are very largely intellectual, and so may be acquired by

children within the limits imposed by their own intellectual powers, in response to direct instruction and constant practice. The third skill in English is the ability to appreciate literature. This skill is different from the other two in nature, being rather an emotional response. The others may be inculcated by drill and instruction; the third can only be aroused by the communication of enthusiasm. The third aim in the teaching of English therefore is to arouse this response. This third element in English cannot be neatly separated from the other two; in actual practice, as the teacher knows, the ability to appreciate the appeal of literature goes hand in hand with the other two.

It is necessary to have a definite time allocated to reading or listening to stories and poems being read, otherwise the literature period can too easily be relegated to a few "spare" minutes, or else quietly dropped altogether under the pressure of more formal work.

The study of literature is part of a systematic effort to build up a sense of values, and as the "Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers" expresses it, attempts to persuade the mind to accept certain types of experience which are of cultural and personal significance.⁷ The

⁷ "A Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers". H.M.S.O. (1942 Reprint).

latter is an important factor in the choice of literary texts especially for third and fourth formers, who are beginning to acquire an attitude to literature no book, however excellent in style or content, will be understood or appreciated if it is not suited to both the intellectual and the emotional level of the pupil. It is harmful to insist that a child read books too difficult for him, but one may unobtrusively foster his liking for reading and encourage him to choose books that will enlarge his imaginative experience and as he grows older give him the joy of discovering literary beauty.

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common to most people, and correct and lucid speech is one of the first and last necessities of corporate existence (Sampson). To speak well in class or in private conversation is a useful accomplishment, but its value does not end

Chapter III - ORAL EXPRESSION

Oral expression includes not only oral work undertaken as such in English, but all expression in speech throughout the school. Oral expression involves the power to say clearly what is intended to be said, without ambiguity or uncertainty, and the ability to say it in what is accepted as good New Zealand English. It was once said that "Le silence est une conversation anglaise," and there may be some truth in it. It is certainly true that many third and fourth formers become shy and silent - at least in public - with the onset of adolescence. Teachers of junior English may help them during this time of new experiences and sometimes difficult adjustments by giving them opportunities for speaking clearly, naturally and with confidence.

The Thomas Report recommends that oral expression be emphasised in secondary English, and for good reasons. In the Harvard Report we are reminded that speech comes before reading and writing, and teachers are advised to keep this priority. Speech is the means of communication

common to most people, and correct and lucid speech is one of the first and last necessities of corporate existence (Sampson). To speak well in class or in private conversation is a useful accomplishment, but its value does not end there; it is necessary in business, industry, and in life as a whole.

Much of what is being said applies to all forms, but it is important that teachers of English in junior forms should realize that the work in senior forms is an extension and elaboration of the work done with the juniors, and that they have a particular responsibility in the lower forms to encourage clear, confident and natural speech. This comes about when the child has something to say and a situation in which he is happy to say it. The educated adult is able to make concise, lucid and intelligent comment; he may only do so as the result of earlier training. At school, children acquire knowledge, but the power to transmit that knowledge is part of it.

Third and fourth form boys and girls often have two entirely separate standards of speech; the children who talk with interest and vigour among themselves become halting or tongue-tied in school, or use a stilted and unnatural phraseology. There is a lack of incentive to do much better at the junior stage; the prospective rewards of adult life are too far off to influence children. Oral

work then in junior forms should be kept relatively informal; boys and girls are not long away from primary school and sometimes find the greater formality of the secondary school inhibiting. As far as possible their work should be related to their immediate interests; Lewis observes that the strongest incentive to good speech is to have to inform those who are uninformed.¹ The interests and hobbies of juniors should be exploited for this purpose; their holidays, experiences of tramping, after-school jobs, unusual pastimes, or possession of specialised or technical knowledge such as many children possess from their experience with boats, engines or mechanical processes or creative work, are rich and varied sources from which good speech may naturally spring. Most boys and girls in junior forms have at least one main interest, even if it is going to the pictures as often as possible, or listening to every radio serial, and it is the teacher's responsibility to give them some opportunity to speak about them to a familiar and not unkindly audience. Short talks on subjects of the child's own choice are a good introduction to oral expression in the junior forms, and are not as dangerous as they sound. A time limit may be imposed, while giving the child enough time to say what he wants to. Some children will ramble on if they are

¹ "The Teaching of English in Schools", ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; Ch. IV, "Spoken English in the School," M.M. Lewis.

not checked by the knowledge that their time is limited, and may not only alienate the sympathies of their audience by boring them, but may feel frustrated or despairing because they have failed to accomplish their purpose. Other children will have to be reassured that it does not matter if they do not fill the allotted time. When a child is very shy and even when speaking about something he knows to familiar people is painful, it is kinder unobtrusively to leave him out and to see as far as possible that he does not feel guilty about his inability. (Teachers should also watch that a child does not avoid all oral work by trading on his disability, real or imagined!) With a new third form, whose members are not well known to each other, it is a good idea to draw up a list and ask each child to indicate a subject he would like to speak on for, say, five minutes, then announce a time limit of perhaps two weeks when all talks must be ready. One or two homework periods may be given for preparation, and a supervised library period in school time can be very useful. This allows children ready access to books of reference, and they can work in quiet. Not all boys and girls have these advantages at home. When the time limit has expired, it is just as well to take advantage of any enthusiasm aroused, and to devote several periods to hearing the talks, even if other work has to be laid aside for a week. Children will get very tired of having their talks prolonged for weeks on end, and will almost invariably lose

their notes or forget what they have prepared. Most often they prefer to have their order of appearance decided by lot. This is better than adhering to an alphabetical order as it prevents those at the end from neglecting their work or from suffering agonies of apprehension as their turn approaches. Children should be allowed to illustrate their talks with photographs, pictures, blackboard drawings, samples or working models, as long as they realize that their talks are the important thing. A chairman, either the teacher or a pupil, can act as timekeeper and give a quiet warning as the limit approaches. In a forty-minute period, about half a dozen children will speak; this allows brief discussion or questions from the floor. The keynotes of such periods should be spontaneity and discreetly controlled informality; if these are attained, children will speak fluently and confidently. Some brief constructive criticism is usually welcomed, and can be given at the end of each period.

Later, lecturettes on specific subjects may be attempted by volunteers. It is not wise to introduce children to impromptu speeches unless they are sure of themselves and each other. Impromptu speeches should always be treated as a further progression, not as an expedient to fill in a few moments at the end of a period.

Panel discussions can be helpful in encouraging good oral expression. They are much better than debates,

which tend to become sterile and artificial on the one hand, with children speaking on subjects which have no relevance for them; or on the other, they become occasions which encourage "fluid insincerity" as the Thomas Report so admirably expresses it. Panel discussions allow more speakers to take part, and do not limit them to one occasion of speaking or to one point of view. They encourage discussion from the floor and are more natural and spontaneous in character. Quieter members of the class will often join in readily because they are not hindered by having to observe the rigid rules of debating. Those subjects are best which are related to everyday life. "Co-education," "Homework," "Corporal Punishment," are topics of perennial interest to juniors, even though teachers think them hackneyed.

The Thomas Report recommends another exercise in oral expression from which junior forms can benefit. Practice in committee procedure and in reaching decisions through group discussions is valuable training in civics, and is manifestly related to life in and beyond the school. It is well that children should become accustomed early to this method of reaching agreement, and they will gain from the discipline of having to think out reasoned arguments to defend their beliefs, and of expressing them in concise and unambiguous terms. The give-and-take involved in such experiences can be a valuable introduction to the assumption of civic responsibilities later on. Brains Trusts and Open

Forums can be used with some success with upper fourth forms; but discussion in junior forms generally needs the unobtrusive guidance of the teacher. All such ventures should be prepared as carefully as possible.

Many situations in the wisely and well planned home give opportunities to boys and girls to express themselves with confidence, but not all children are fortunate in having such homes. There are some experiences which form part of the ordinary background of many children, but which all pupils should share. Junior forms gain a good deal from the talks they give and their discussions, but teachers may also help them by providing other activities designed to make the desire for self-expression vivid to all pupils. Acting as chairman for class meetings or discussions, giving directions, instructions or explanations, briefly recapitulating the plots of films or books enjoyed, and telling stories, are all activities which are usually entered into with enthusiasm. With third formers who are not too inclined to be self-conscious or critical, such techniques as using the telephone or conducting interviews may be used to advantage.

Earlier in this chapter it was said that oral expression involved the ability to say what is intended in speech which is accepted as good New Zealand English. Arnold Wall in "New Zealand English - How it Should be Spoken", says that good or standard English is that which is spoken by

the "best speakers" in the old land, especially those of Southern England. Good New Zealand English is not a new dialect of English developed in this country by those who care nothing for standards and authorities, but is that which is spoken by the best-educated and conscientious speakers who avoid provincialisms and affectations.

Every teacher has a responsibility to speak good English, and to encourage its being spoken by his pupils, who probably learn more by example than by precept. The teacher often, in oral work, accepts the intention of answers given, as he is concerned more with facts than with the form of expression. But every lesson requiring speech is a lesson in English, and the teacher does his pupils the most service by taking advantage of the opportunities afforded in each period for insisting on oral answers being given in clear and articulate English. Sampson² points out that children do not resent "genial correction", which is obviously best done casually, as the occasion arises. The teacher of English particularly must watch for and check as unobtrusively as possible slovenly and careless habits of speech - "It's a heck of a large boat," and the ever-present "kind of" and "sort of". Vulgarisms and solecisms such as "I had of seen her" creep in and must be corrected. No school can be held entirely responsible for the speech of the children attending it, but the more obvious and the more easily corrected

² Sampson, G: "English for the English", 1934.

faults are usually considered the responsibility of the school attended by the offender.

There are some faults which are bad in any speech irrespective of any standards - these are gabbling, lax and slovenly articulation, drawling and nasality. All these can be corrected only by constant watchfulness on the part of all teachers, and by their giving an example of good spoken English on which pupils may model their speech. Some faults are found particularly in New Zealand speech and Wall lists them as a tendency to speak too fast - much time is wasted through children having to repeat slowly what they have said; a tendency to produce certain sounds, such as plosives, feebly and inefficiently, making them indistinguishable as units to the hearer; and a "very strong" tendency to nasalization. This last is an insidious fault; children can realize when they are speaking too fast or are not articulating their words clearly; but they cannot realize how unpleasant their nasal speech is. They are only imitating, quite unconsciously, what they hear all around them. Nasal speech must be directly attacked; children must be taught to listen to themselves, and where necessary must be instructed in how to produce sounds correctly.

Teaching the correct pronunciation of those Maori names for which there is little excuse for mispronunciation is an important task for the teacher of English. Contracting the names of townships ("Paekakariki" to "Paekok" and

"Paraparaumu" to "Parapram" or simply "Pram") is common. "Teeamoot" and "Wongganewi" are well known to North Island travellers, and would probably not be recognized if pronounced correctly. The teacher of English must help his pupils to become aware of Maori names as being one expression of the culture of the Maori people, and to treat them with the respect they deserve. European place names in New Zealand are never as ignorantly or deliberately mutilated. Radio announcers are making the correct pronunciation of Maori names more familiar to many people; teachers of English may help in the same task with some success, as their pupils are not as self-conscious as adults, and may be more responsive to good examples.

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CHAPTER IV - WRITTEN EXPRESSION.

Written expression, like oral expression, is not confined to the English period, but comprises all written work done by pupils. The teacher of English has therefore a great responsibility, shared by his colleagues to help children to express themselves in writing with accuracy, brevity and clarity. The purpose of writing is to communicate facts or emotions, and its fulfilment requires compliance with certain conditions. It is the task of the teacher to train his pupils to an awareness of these conditions, that they may learn to write in accordance with them. Biaggini says¹ that intelligent writing is more difficult than intelligent reading because in learning to write intelligently one is being initiated into a discipline rather than being taught an accomplishment. Disciplined writing however must be preceded by disciplined thinking, which is the result of careful training. The teacher who is prepared to spend time stimulating his pupils to think,

¹ Biaggini, E.G.: "The Reading and Writing of English"(1946)

will find that mastery of language will accompany growth in the capacity for thinking.

While the ability to think clearly is most necessary to good writing, there are other essential conditions to be observed. Of these, having something to say is probably the most important. All written work must have a purpose, for the class as well as for the teacher, and as far as possible should be relevant to the ordinary life of members of the class.

What is written must be expressed in grammatical English, correctly spelt and punctuated. Statements should be made with clarity and precision. The teacher of English will train his class to select and arrange their ideas, to make a proper choice of words and phrases in which to express those ideas, and within limits, to develop logically their argument or theme.

Written expression has two aspects, one chiefly routine, the other more creative. They are interrelated, but the second is more truly a development of the first. The accurate reproduction in varying ways of the ideas of others, and the exact presentation of their own thoughts, are the two elements of written expression in which the teacher of English must systematically train his pupils. Either kind of writing to be good must conform to the conditions mentioned earlier.

The pupil must have something to say. When he is reproducing the thoughts of others, his material is at hand and his task is to select what is required. He must be able to express acceptably the ideas of another, in accordance with a known purpose, and in a particular form. The difficulty many pupils have in making a paraphrase or precis of a passage is caused by their not understanding what the author has said and so having little to say themselves. In composition, children are asked to express their own thoughts and the situation is different. Subjects must be definite and limited in scope and must embody a purpose in writing which is known to the class as well as to the teacher. Titles consisting of one word or phrase such as "Trees" or "Wonders of the Deep" which are expected to stimulate a flow of descriptive or imaginative writing can be harmful, especially to junior forms. Boys and girls in the third and fourth forms need to write about what is concrete and particular, not what is abstract and general. Narratives and straightforward descriptions come before formal essays. What the children write about should be related to their ordinary experiences. Boys and girls can produce creditable work when they write about something familiar, whereas their writing often degenerates into incoherence if they are asked for something beyond their experience.

What is written should be as far as possible grammatical, correctly spelt and accurately punctuated.

Biaggini does say² that it is better to write sense ungrammatically and carelessly than nonsense grammatically and carefully, but the teacher should strive to inculcate a sense of the importance of literate presentation. Punctuation should not be regarded as a formality whose observance is necessary to satisfy an adult whim, but as a help in elucidating the meaning of what is written. Fleming³ points out what every teacher knows only too well from experience, that there is very little transfer from the knowledge of the rules of punctuation to correct usage. At the same time children ought to be encouraged by observation, imitation and constant practice to improve the punctuation of all their written work in all their subjects, and they should be helped to realise that carelessly or incorrectly punctuated work is liable to misinterpretation.

To attain precision and clarity of expression, certain conditions must be observed. Children must be taught to select and arrange their ideas. It is best with almost every class, but especially with junior forms, to encourage the habit of devoting some thought to whatever they are required to write, and to writing on a piece of scrap paper any ideas they may have. These ideas can be arranged later. The practice is obviously necessary when preparing a summary or precis, but may well be extended to

² Ibid.

³ Fleming, C.M. "Research and the Basic Curriculum." (1946)

other written work in junior classes. In writing, the ideal is to compress the maximum of sense into the minimum of words. This is difficult for junior forms, but third and fourth formers can be taught to write what they have in mind, excising superfluous words. Revision will help to check exaggerations and will enable pupils to detect unconscious verbosity. It is hoped that eventually pupils will learn to think so clearly that a minimum of revision is needed. This stage is hardly ever reached in junior classes, and in order to ensure that work is revised before being handed in, it is as well to ask the children to initial it as a guarantee of their having done so.

No less important than the selection and arrangement of ideas is the choice of words and phrases to express them. At first the vocabulary used by third and fourth formers may be very meagre, but increasing skill in composition will demand a widening vocabulary and a developing control of idiomatic expression.⁴ Patience and skill is needed by the teacher, but he is rewarded by the increased fluency and ease seen in the written expression of his pupils. They will find for themselves the satisfaction of using the best word; and some children will revel in the new power it brings them.

The teacher of English can help his pupils, within

⁴ "The Teaching of English in Schools," ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; Ch. VI, "The Teaching of Prose Composition," M. Alderton Pink.

limits imposed by their intelligence and experience, to develop logically the theme or argument of their written work. He will teach them how to arrange their ideas in sentences, and will show how those sentences are parts of a larger whole, the paragraph. It should be explained to pupils that a paragraph is intended to develop a thought, and that compositions should be paragraphed logically, instead of being paragraphed according to the whim of the writer.

What is required of junior classes as written expression varies widely in amount and kind. Once the weekly essay was the rule; now a good deal of written work is done, but essays as such may be set only a few times a term, or in poorer classes, never. As Sampson says,⁵ the ability to state something is expected from students, but not necessarily the ability to create something. This lifts a burden from unimaginative children who may not be happy with creative work, and it lifts a burden from the teacher, who is not obliged to ask the impossible from his pupils.

Written compositions should be restricted in length and concrete in subject; in general, the composition should be treated objectively, and it should have a definite reader in mind, apart from the teacher.⁶ Once this discipline has had its effect, more ambitious forms of expression

⁵ Sampson, G.: "English for the English". 1934.

⁶ The Spens Report.

may be attempted.

Reproducing a story is one of the simplest forms of written expression and is most suitable for third forms, particularly the lower third forms, in the earlier part of the year's work. Familiar stories such as those of Alexander and Bucephalus, and Atalanta's Race, or narrative poems like Young Lochinvar or The Pied Piper, may be read to the class who are asked to retell the story in their own words. This method gives practice in intelligent listening, which is a correlative of intelligent speaking and writing. Children learn to remember the order of events, and are trained to reproduce that order accurately. They are also obliged to think of synonymous terms to express themselves.

Brief accounts of everyday scenes and processes are invaluable in stimulating careful observation and exact description. All city children know what a traffic officer looks like, but few can describe his uniform with any degree of accuracy to distinguish him from other uniformed men. Most secondary school girls know how to make biscuits or sweets, but without training few are able to give coherent directions to others. The details of what children see are taken for granted and are not sufficiently impressed on their minds. Children whose written work is not usually fluent are often capable of excellent prose of this nature. Short reports of local or national events, written as for a magazine or newspaper, are useful in training juniors to write

concisely and without exaggeration. Such exercises also help to give young readers some criteria for judging the style of actual newspaper reports.

Other forms of written expression involving the comprehension and restatement of ideas will be mentioned in the next chapter.

More creative kinds of writing for juniors are not difficult to find. Conversations in narrative form or dialogues in dramatic form are suitable for third forms. The subjects of these may be invented or taken from literature. Radio commentaries on sports, carnivals and fashion parades, designed to last for about two minutes, may be prepared, written and then read to the class. This leads naturally to work later with individuals or groups, writing scripts for ballads, legends and well-known stories. The scripts may be expanded into plays, then corrected and revised. Enthusiastic classes may go further, and act what they have written.

In the primary school, children are taught something of letter writing. Further practice should be given in junior forms, but care should be taken to avoid irrelevant or impossible subjects. Children should know how to reply to invitations, and how to write letters of thanks. They should be taught the courteous ways of making requests or justifiable complaints, and of replying to business letters. It is necessary that boys and girls should be able to apply for testimonials and for positions. As well as all this, the writing

of more casual and friendly letters should not be neglected.

Essays as such are rarely set in the junior forms. Perhaps two or three a term are not too few. They demand a good deal of thought and preparation; the Spens Report recommends that "schemes" on the French model should be employed more than they are at present. Practice in expanding from notes or paragraph headings suggested by the class and written on the blackboard is conducive to ordered written work. Subjects should be familiar, otherwise essays will be stilted and insincere.

Finally, classes may sometimes be permitted to invent tales similar in theme to those they know. Imaginative writing sometimes runs wild, and while no child should be discouraged from trying his hand at it, on the whole, written work of the nature indicated previously is best. However, children do enjoy writing "Just So" stories, when they have heard Kipling's own. "How the Kiwi Lost his Wings" and "How the Hedgehog got his Bristles" and similar titles have been used successfully in junior forms. The class newspaper is perhaps the best place for imaginative writing. This is a favourite project and can be undertaken once a term, or at the end of the year. In addition to stories, the class magazine encompasses articles and poems, and sections with puzzles, recipes, hints, patterns, book and film reviews, fashion notes, accounts of sports and other

meetings. A combined class effort, with editors and sub-committees for dealing with different sections, can be valuable both in improving the standard of written work and in consolidating satisfactory relationships between members of the class.

In all composition work, the teacher should encourage sincerity and the honest expression of opinion, and should guard against the use of stock phrases to produce stock effects. He should not allow to pass without comment such indications of ignorance or laziness as words like "re" and signs like "&", "&c". By adding to their knowledge, and fostering normal mental development, the teacher can help his pupils to scorn falseness and pretence. Only then can their progress be continuous.

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In order to reveal a little of the genius of language to secondary school pupils, the Harvard Report suggests a course which could be termed "General Language". Such a course would show that language is more than a tool whose effective use is to be carefully acquired and increasingly practised.

Chapter V - FORMAL LANGUAGE

In this chapter we shall consider first the wider significance of language; and second, the study of English grammar as it applies to the junior forms of our New Zealand secondary schools.

Language is living and plastic; it is sensitive and responsive to new influences; and it is our chief means of communication. Language reflects our culture and our mode of life.

The teacher of English deals essentially with fluid language. Most of his time is devoted to "giving practice and help in understanding and using the English which is the indispensable medium" of his own teaching.¹

It is desirable that the teacher should help to form in his pupils a favourable attitude to language and to language study. On the lowest level, pupils would thus be able to profit most from instruction, and on a higher level, they would grasp something of the importance and value of language itself.

¹ Harvard Report: General Education in a Free Society, (Cambridge, Mass. 1945).

In order to reveal a little of the genius of language to secondary school pupils, the Harvard Report suggests a course which could be termed "General Language". Such a course would show that language is more than a tool whose effective use is to be carefully acquired and increasingly practised. A general language course would include the elementary study of the structure of other languages, related and unrelated to English, and also the origins of words. The course would help to give an insight into other cultures and to put English itself into clearer perspective; it would illuminate English as any study of a language in a general education should do at this stage. The Harvard Report states that if such a course survived the preliminary trial stage, it could well become the core of English teaching in the first year of secondary education. The recommendation of the Harvard Report is for American education, but it is relevant to New Zealand too. Adapted to New Zealand conditions, the course would widen the outlook of non-language students and give added meaning to the work of those specializing in the study of language.

The study of literature (to which most time is given in English courses) is primarily the study of language. The teacher's main function is to "excite attention to, and care for, the living word".²

² Ibid.

² Fleming, C.M.: "Research and the Basic Curriculum". (London, 1946).

⁴ New Zealand Department of Education. Report of Committee on the Post Primary Curriculum. (Wellington, 1944).

We turn now from a brief consideration of the study of language in general to an examination of the particular study of the structure of the English language, with special reference to the requirements of the English syllabus for third and fourth forms.

Towards the end of last century, the formal study of grammar, according to Fleming³, was the chief preoccupation of teachers of English in Britain. This emphasis was reflected in New Zealand practice. Its justification was found in the belief that the study of grammar imposed a valuable mental discipline. Teachers assumed that constant practice in grammatical analysis not only increased facility in the use of language but also improved their pupils' ability to recognize and write good English. It can be seen how different contemporary educational opinion is by reading what a recent Report says about grammar. The Thomas Report states that grammar is "useful for the general student only in direct, applied relation to the use of English, written or spoken", and adds that "no substantial transfer of grammatical knowledge to written or spoken English is proven".⁴ This obviously means that it is fallacious to teach grammar in the hope that increased facility in the use of English will result. Its inclusion is justified only when it illuminates and illustrates

³ Fleming, C.M.: "Research and the Basic Curriculum".
(London, 1946).

⁴ New Zealand Department of Education. Report of Committee on the Post Primary Curriculum. (Wellington, 1944).

the working of language, and when it provides a "convenient vocabulary for the analysis of structural weaknesses in speech and in writing".⁵ Successful study is integrally related to, not isolated from, the writing and speaking of the ordinary student. The successful teacher sees his reward in his student's growing ability to understand what they read and hear; in their increasing freedom in the exercise of their critical faculty, and in their achievement of more articulate expression.

Some teachers find that good English is better encouraged by giving much time to reading and writing and to the oral discussion of what has been read, than by systematic training in formal grammar. Others include a varying minimum of such training in their English courses. The extent to which grammar is taught by any one teacher depends on such factors as the ability of the class to benefit from formal study, and the exigencies of timetables and available textbooks. Personal inclination is often a further factor. It is usually found that a teacher achieves most when he works according to the system in which he has most confidence.

In "The Teaching of English", Professor I.A. Gordon defines grammar, as far as English is concerned, as "a body of empirical rules which explain and regulate the structure of

⁵ Harvard Report.

the sentence". The grammar the pupil can most usefully employ is mainly that of the sentence structure he is best able to use. The study of grammar is profitable only in relation to written and spoken English, and the Thomas Report condemns the teaching of grammar in isolation from oral and written composition. Teachers should not teach so far ahead that the material of their lessons is divorced from the level of expression ordinarily reached by their pupils. The study of grammar is after all a means to an end, and it is well for some partisans to subordinate their private enthusiasms to the needs and abilities of their classes. On the other hand, some teachers fail in their responsibility to their classes by insufficiently covering all aspects of the subject.

Children leaving secondary school should normally have a knowledge of the following minimum of grammar.

They should recognize parts of speech by their function. For example, they should know what a noun is by the work it does; classifying it as common, proper and so on is unnecessary. Constant practice is needed in naming nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and the definite and indefinite articles.

The common uses of the apostrophe, indicating possession or abbreviation, must be understood. Difficult words like "ladies'" and "princesses" ought to be taught separately, as should the commonest mistakes from written compositions.

The recognition and correct use of pronouns - personal, relative and interrogative - is third form work. Pamela Gradon⁶ says that in her experience - and other teachers will probably agree - mistakes in the use of personal pronouns are among those most frequently made by children. "Him and I", or even "Him and me" as subjects of a verb are often overheard, and tend to creep into written work. "Between you and I" is another very general solecism.

The correct use of the comparative and superlative should be mastered in junior forms. "John is the best of the two" is a common kind of mistake. Occasionally children will use double superlatives; it would not console them, when re-proved, to know that Shakespeare used them with impunity.

Third and fourth forms ought to know in practice what the concord of subject and verb is. Common errors such as "none are" need careful explanation. The need is often felt for a pronoun of neutral gender when the idea of gender is irrelevant, and so we find pupils substituting a plural personal pronoun for the non-existent neutral one and saying "Everyone got into their cars".

A good understanding of the structure of the simple sentence is a solid foundation for more advanced work. Here

⁶ "The Teaching of English in Schools", ed. by V. de Sola Pinto: Chapter 5, "The Teaching of Grammar", Pamela Gradon.

"subject", "object", "predicate", are essential terms. Direct and indirect objects should be known as such. The compound sentence follows, and the recognition of clauses - noun, relative, adjectival and adverbial - all terms adequately describing their function.

The transitive and intransitive use of verbs is encountered in third form work. As part of their essential technical vocabulary, pupils should know the words "active" and "passive". The word "construction" should be used rather than the out-moded and misleading "voice".

A knowledge of the simpler English tenses is essential for successfully writing indirect speech. Some children cannot easily differentiate between past, present and future actions, and need patient coaching.

By the end of the third form year, pupils ought to recognize the present and past participles of verbs, and should know the commoner irregular past participles, for example, of the verbs "to wring", "to buy", "to go" ("went" is sometimes given for "gone"). "Being, been" usually has to be taught.

A characteristic of earlier grammar teaching was the emphasis on analysing sentences and parsing words. Some teachers would omit these exercises altogether today. The Thomas Report however recommends the inclusion of analysis in grammatical study as an aid to comprehension, because it is an

exercise in the logical subordination of ideas.

Professor Gordon maintains that "if the structure of the English sentence is taught realistically, the analysis of the sentence on the basis of modern grammar is a real test of the pupil's ability to grasp the mechanics of his own language".⁷ An intelligent understanding of these mechanics has two advantages. It helps the pupil to discipline his own thought and mode of expression, and it provides a technical vocabulary used by the teacher and taught to discuss errors and corrections.

Little has been said yet about some broader aspects of formal language study. These put to good use all that has been learned of formal grammar.

What is known in the primary school as "Comprehension" is still necessary in the secondary school. M. Alderton Pink⁸ recommends exercises based on the understanding and restatement in the children's own words of ideas contained in a given passage. Patient training in reading carefully and obeying instructions is a necessary prerequisite for good results. Where possible, students should have the text before them. Passages should be carefully graded; short, concrete

⁷ I.A. Gordon, "The Teaching of English". (Wellington, 1947).

⁸ "The Teaching of English". Chapter VI, "The Teaching of Prose Composition", M. Alderton Pink.

paragraphs will be succeeded by longer and more abstract passages. Answers to questions may be oral or written. Some questions may be better answered in sentences, but others need no more than one word in reply.

The condensation and expansion of easy, short passages is a good oral or written exercise. Practice in selecting, condensing and arranging ideas is a useful introduction to more intense precis writing later.

Paraphrasing helps students to discriminate between synonymous terms, and to appreciate idiomatic expressions. The selected passage must be carefully understood, dictionaries consulted where necessary and serious difficulties explained. Children should not be asked to paraphrase verse - they would destroy a beauty which can be expressed in no other way, and quite probably would begin to dislike poetry.

Changing direct speech to indirect speech is an important activity introduced in third form work. With practice comes facility in transposing tenses and adverbs indicating tense. Many children acquire only slowly the ability to give a clear account in indirect speech, in the past tense, of an activity or an event, and need much practice. A useful exercise to be set weekly or fortnightly, at the discretion of the teacher, is the punctuation of a passage of direct speech, which is then rewritten in indirect speech.

Few figures of speech are suitable or necessary for

junior forms. Figures of speech are not superficial ornaments but are devices employed to attain special effects, or to make a statement clearer or more pointed. With non-academic forms, it is often achievement enough to distinguish simile and metaphor, and to use simple examples effectively in their written work. Academic fourth forms will demand more - personification, and the extended metaphors based on personification - parable, fable and allegory. Litotes, euphemism, onomatopoeia, are figures of speech which they can recognize. They will see for themselves how figures of speech sharpen and enliven prose styles.

The root meanings of words borrowed from classical sources can be intensely interesting, especially to non-language classes. An enthusiastic teacher can help his class to glimpse something of the character and vitality of older cultures, through a simple study of the words used for familiar things and our subsequent borrowings for the enrichment of our use of language.

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primary level, help to develop balanced and integrated personalities.¹ Timid children learn to express themselves, and the self-assured find they must "subordinate their speech and action to the pattern of the whole".² Drama is an effective means of improving the clarity and fluency of children's speech, and is an excellent discipline in poise and self-confidence.

Students are not expected to read and discuss specified plays in the third and fourth forms. A broadening

¹ Bourd, M.L.: "The Education of the Poetic Spirit" (London, 1949).

² Thomas Report: Section on Art and Crafts.

concept of the purpose and value of drama is seen in the nature of the work done and the methods employed in our secondary schools. For example, we are becoming more conscious of the worth of the "legacy from the primary school", of mine a Chapter VI - DRAMA actions or in the words of the boys and girls themselves.

Drama is part of the ordinary work of every English class. The theatre is the most direct representation of life in the realm of art and taking part in dramatic activities even on a small scale is a natural and enthralling occupation for children. Dramatic work helps more than does any other section of the English course to bring freedom of imagination and of bodily movement into the classroom. Drama has a therapeutic value at the secondary as well as at the primary level, helping to develop balanced and integrated personalities.¹ Timid children learn to express themselves, and the self-assured find they must "subordinate their speech and action to the pattern of the whole".² Drama is an effective means of improving the clarity and fluency of children's speech, and is an excellent discipline in poise and self-confidence. A choir recites the poem while others act the story.

Students are not expected to read and discuss specified plays in the third and fourth forms. A broadening

¹ Hourd, M.L.: "The Education of the Poetic Spirit" (London, 1949).

² Thomas Report: Section on Art and Crafts.

concept of the purpose and value of drama is seen in the nature of the work done and the methods employed in our secondary schools. For example, we are becoming more conscious of the worth of the "legacy from the primary school", of mime and retelling stories by actions or in the words of the boys and girls themselves.³

Once it is conceded that drama in the third and fourth forms need not consist of two set Shakespeare plays a year, or a few one-act plays "read round the class", it will be found that there are many suitable dramatic activities for juniors.

Mime is useful in the early part of the third form year, although not all children are so free from self-consciousness that miming is invariably a successful activity. The willing co-operation of children is necessary for all successful dramatic work. Charades give opportunities for shyer children to take part, and for group leaders to exercise organizing ability. Miming and charades are valuable for quiet and slower classes.

Ballads and narrative poems can be dramatized effectively. A choir recites the poem while others act the story; or children use their own words or those of the poem, while a narrator links the scenes together. A ballad can be

³ "The Teaching of English in Schools", ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; Ch. II, "Drama", D.C. Whimster.

⁴ The Thomas Report: Section on Art and Crafts.

acted by the whole class or by groups. These need to be fairly large; two groups in a class are usually enough. After selecting a ballad, the class or group appoints a producer, prompt, stage manager, and someone to supervise costuming. The ballad is divided into scenes and parts are allotted. The teacher must use his discretion about the amount of assistance he gives to groups. Extra parts can be contrived if necessary, since everyone should participate in acting or producing. Groups rehearse in English periods although they usually need further practices in their own time. The ballad ought to be acted finally before an audience. During the performance players should observe silence off-stage and move scenery as quickly and as quietly as possible between scenes. Some producers arrange for attractive programmes, designed and executed by artists in the group, to be presented to the audience.

Fruitful sources of plots for short plays arranged by groups are famous novels such as "Pride and Prejudice", "Oliver Twist", and "The Count of Monte Cristo"; and folk lore and legends like "Hiawatha", "The Knights of the Round Table", and "Robin Hood". Children working in small groups may like to adapt dialogues or conversations from books such as "Pride and Prejudice" or "The Wind in the Willows".

Acted scenes based on the children's experience are effective.⁴ These include conversations on telephones and in

⁴ The Thomas Report: Section on Art and Crafts.

trains and buses; social gatherings of various kinds; elections in sports clubs; learning to ride a bicycle or to drive a car. The class will suggest many topics once they understand that everyday situations have dramatic possibilities.

Children usually find mock trials extremely interesting and devote much time and thought to secure accuracy of presentation. The whole class may enact a summary trial before a magistrate, or a trial before a judge. Some knowledge of court procedure is necessary and children should find out as much as they can for themselves. It may be possible for the class to visit a court house. A well-planned mock trial will include everyone, and wits are sharpened and shyness forgotten as statements are examined, inconsistencies detected, and judgments made. The "magistrate" or "judge" must be able to keep a firm hand on proceedings. Some third forms may profit from enacting a mock trial; good fourth forms can make a really excellent job of it.

Play readings can be presented successfully by groups who know their parts well enough to infuse life and vigour into the performance. The teacher should make quite sure though that the plays selected are of interest to the other members of the class. A play must not make impossible demands on the readers, who are expected to give an intelligible presentation.

There are some useful sets of modern one-act plays, but in third and fourth forms much depends on the teacher's own

See the report of a discussion on "The Teaching of Shakespeare" during the Conference of English Teachers at Victoria University College, 1952. Report of Conference issued by the Department of English, V.U.C.

resources, as it is difficult to find plays which are not only interesting but which have a sufficient number of parts.

Teachers differ about the place of Shakespeare's plays in the English syllabus.⁵ Some experienced teachers think that they should not be introduced until the fourth form, and generally speaking, they are probably right. But some third forms expect to read at least one Shakespeare play, and are disappointed if they cannot. They can always attempt those scenes, from easier plays, which are a unity in themselves. The Trial Scene from "The Merchant of Venice" and the play scenes from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are suitable. With a good third form, most of the play can be read. The teacher can bridge the gaps between difficult sections with a short description of the intervening action. With a Shakespeare play, read in whole or in part, the teacher can help his class to see it through Elizabethan eyes by describing the stage Shakespeare knew, with its minimum of scenery and its actors who wore contemporary costume. An outline of the play given by the teacher helps the class to pick up the thread of the story more easily. After the play has been read, groups can rehearse, then act scenes; they will probably thoroughly enjoy devising appropriate costuming and properties.

⁵ See the report of a discussion on "The Teaching of Shakespeare" during the Conference of English Teachers at Victoria University College, 1952. Report of Conference issued by the Department of English, V.U.C.

A good fourth form will like other plays such as Sheridan's "The Rivals" and Barrie's "The Admirable Crichton", and will shape a competent performance of suitable scenes. Girls particularly are interested in details of the costumes in vogue when the plays were written. The teacher will find many opportunities for correlating their knowledge acquired during drama periods with their other English work and with social studies.

When any part of a play is presented to an audience, it is best acted on a stage. If there is none, much can be done in the ordinary classroom. Everyone should have a specific task; those not acting can help in producing, stage managing, prompting; others must attend to lighting, scenery, making and mending costumes, providing incidental music, seating arrangements and so on. Children show much originality and initiative in solving the many problems arising from such a project. Quieter children often feel a strong sense of achievement in participating in these activities. They are frequently the children who could not achieve the same satisfaction in acting even minor roles.

The Thomas Report says very truly that drama does within a school what team games do outside it, but it also gives "far greater opportunities for creative self-expression in a social medium". The study of drama is valuable for the whole school because it can integrate and focus much of the

literary and artistic work of the school. Some schools which have the House system organize inter-House drama competitions; other schools present annually a play in public; and at least one girls' school celebrates Shakespeare's birthday with House entertainments, when each House presents a scene from a Shakespeare play.

New Zealand has suffered in the past through not having a professional theatre, and there have been few opportunities for secondary school pupils to see professional productions. Seeing a few really good companies would help pupils to appreciate what might be called the economy of production-controlled stage movements, smooth scene shifting, use of properties, and special effects.

The study of drama is related integrally to other aspects of English work, including formal language. "What does this mean?" leads to paraphrase, grammar and dictionary work, and individual research into the lives and times of other men and women. The study of drama leads to a consideration of how people behave in various situations, and why. Students begin to see something of the influence of reason and emotion on action - they are in fact beginning to study life itself. Their dramatic studies ought gradually to result in a deeper understanding of themselves, and in a widening sympathy for others.

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Poetry is also speech - it needs to be heard. Before the invention of printing, sagas, ballads and proverbs were preserved because successive generations learnt them by heart. Printing meant that poetry was more widely read than heard, and "Books took the place of bards".³ Gradually other changes

¹ Auden, W.H.: Introduction to "The Poet's Tongue" (London 1950)

² Lynd, R.: Introduction to "An Anthology of Modern Verse" (London, 1939).

³ "The Teaching of English in Schools", ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; Chap. III, "Choral Speaking", A.S.T. Fisher.

Chapter VII - POETRY

W.H. Auden has defined poetry as "memorable speech."¹ It is a definition brief enough to be witty, broad enough to be true. Poetry is memorable because it is speech which stirs the intellect or moves the emotions of the hearer. It is memorable, partly because of the meanings of words used to express ideas (although this is not always true - some of Lear's nonsense rimes are sheer poetry) but chiefly because of the words themselves and the way they are put together. Lynd² draws a parallel between the latter characteristics of memorable speech and the fundamental qualities of melody and rhythm in music.

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took place. When the period of creative literary activity in the time of Elizabeth I had passed, the lyric lost much of its beauty because sound was sacrificed increasingly to sense. Further, the musical language of the poet dramatists like Shakespeare, Milton and Marlowe, was succeeded by colloquial speech. Only in recent years has there been anything like a revival of poetry in drama, in the work of, for example, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden.

Because "our emotions automatically seek to express themselves in patterns of rhythm and measure",⁴ a taste for poetry has to some extent been shared by men in general. Every child is a poet. T.S. Eliot, in "The Sacred Wood", says that appreciation is akin to creation. The first stage in the appreciation of poetry is enjoyment,⁵ and this comes initially through ordinary and humble channels. Long before children know anything of poetry, or even before they can speak, they know a great deal about movement and rhythm. Life expresses itself in movement which tends to become regular. The regular alternation of stress and pause is rhythmical; the child experiences the rhythm of hunger and satiety, of waking and sleeping. When he begins to talk, his regular breathing helps to

⁴ Lynd, R.: Introduction to "An Anthology of Modern Verse".

⁵ Sampson, G.: "English for the English".

make his utterance rhythmical. He repeats sounds endlessly and joyfully - "da-da-da!" - even though they seem to have no special significance at first. As he grows older, the child continues to get immense satisfaction from rhythmical movements and sounds - he bangs his spoon on the table, and repeats words or phrases in the same tone. Later, he loves nursery rimes - Old Mother Hubbard, Rockabye Baby, Banbury Cross - and singing and dancing games like Poor Sally, Pigeon House, and Oranges and Lemons.

Considering all this, it is astonishing to realize that by the time the same child reaches secondary school, he may not like poetry at all. It is surprising too that poetry itself is sometimes the most neglected part of the English syllabus. There are various reasons to explain this apparent loss of interest; as far as the child is concerned, he may not have heard enough poetry which has meaning for him. "The poet writes of personal or fictitious experiences, but these are not important in themselves until the reader has realized them in his own consciousness".⁶ This is significant for the teacher; it means that he must choose poetry suited to the age and interests of his pupils. Simple poems with strongly marked rhythms, such as ballads, are popular with junior forms,

⁶ Auden, W.H.: Introduction to "The Poet's Tongue".

and make an excellent introduction to poetry in the secondary school. The earliest ballads, which Professor R.G. Moulton called "literary protoplasm", were dances. According to Sir Henry Newbolt, in "A New Study of English Poetry", the narrative was sung by minstrels, and the refrains were sung with actions by the dancers. There is much of the physical too in the response of children who hear ballads read. The children enter into the experiences related, and tap their fingers and feet, nod their heads and clap their hands. They like the fine-sounding words, the speed, rhythm and noise of ballads. These often mean more to children than the actual sense. Poetry appeals to the whole child, to his conscious and unconscious mind, to his emotions and judgment. His response may be primitive and total, and it is very desirable and necessary to allow him to make some physical response.

There are many ballads with good stories and plenty of action, which suit third and many fourth forms. Some of these are the Robin Hood ballads, Sir Patrick Spens, Lord Randal, Binnorie (pronounced to rime with "story") and the American folk song Casey Jones and the negro folk song beginning "Water boy, where are you hiding?" Ballads with something of the mysterious in their stories are The Daemon Lover, The Fause Knight, and The Twa Brothers.

Narrative poems, as long as they are not too long, never fail to give pleasure. There are many to choose from:

Young Lochinvar, The Jackdaw of Rheims, The Pied Piper, High Tide on the Lincolnshire Coast, John Gilpin, The Highwayman (Noyes) and The Rider at the Gate (Masefield). These can be mimed or dramatized effectively, as of course, can the ballads.

Many poems have alternate lines which may be said as a sort of chorus by the class, while someone reads the first lines. Saying or reading poetry in unison is stimulating and exciting, and helps children to listen so that they will come in on the right cue. Some of these are Widdicombe Faire, The Animals Came in Two by Two, Old Roger is Dead and Gone to his Grave, and The Strange Visitor. Girls enjoy There was a Knight Riding Frae the East, while boys and girls both like sea shanties, such as Boney was a Warrior.

Junior forms appreciate adventure poems - Dinas Vawr, or The Smuggler's Song, for instance - and poems with exciting, vivid and exotic imagery like Tarantella and Congo. Then there are many poems which children want to hear again and again, for the sheer joy and fun of them. They love W.S. Gilbert's patter songs and nonsense rimes and Belloc's Cautionary Tales; the strangeness of Lear in The Dong with the Luminous Nose, The Akoud of Swat, and The Jumblies; and Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky. These are read and enjoyed with unsophisticated enthusiasm.

The teacher should read a great deal of poetry to his students, even though they have no copies. Some children

cannot hear a poem when they see it in print, and as many poems are written expressly to be spoken, they miss much. There is no need to explain or comment on what is read.

However informal the classroom atmosphere is during the reading of poetry, the teacher's preparation must never become haphazard on that account. He should never think the period needs no preparation. Children can be very critical, and detect quickly insincerity or laziness. They should be encouraged to bring favourite poems to class, where they themselves can read them to an interested audience.

If poetry is to be memorized, pupils may be allowed to make their own choice, and perhaps may be asked to give in a sentence a reason for their choice. The teacher must always respect the children's feelings or reticence, and should never allow the period to become the occasion of "fluent insincerity".

The poetry period is one of great opportunity for the teacher of English. It can give immense pleasure to his class, or deaden their love for poetry. It is pleasant to remember that the word "poetry" comes from a Greek root meaning "to make", or "to do". Poetry is something which is made or done by the poet for himself and others, and in reading or listening to it, the children share actively in that making and doing.

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¹ Norvell, G.W.: The Reading Interests of Young People (New York, 1950).

be influenced by them.

Secondary school pupils read many different kinds of prose - the factual and scientific writing of their textbooks, accounts of travel and adventure, fiction, biographies and autobiographies.

Chapter VIII - READING ACTIVITIES IN JUNIOR FORMS

Interests of children and their enjoyment of books read at school

are influenced by the school. Reading activities have an important part in the work of the secondary school, where they are the extension and expansion of work begun in the primary school. Norvell says that the most important purpose of the school's instructional effort is the inculcation of a permanent reading habit based on a love of reading.¹ This is the ideal for all normal children, and its realization would transform our programme and methods of education. In addition to giving lasting pleasure, being able to read gives children some mastery over their environment; a feeling of achievement and confidence to deal with situations requiring varying degrees of literacy. Reading widens the child's mind as he becomes familiar with other ways of living and thinking. He learns that there are different ways of looking at the same things, and he learns to evaluate those ways. Enthusiastic and normally intelligent reading means an active mind, a mind able to receive and assimilate new impressions, to select from among them and to

¹ Norvell, G.W.: The Reading Interests of Young People (New York, 1950).

be influenced by them.

Secondary school pupils read many different kinds of prose - the factual and scientific writing of their textbooks, accounts of travel and adventure, fiction, biographies and autobiographies, newspapers and magazines. The reading preferences of children and their enjoyment of books read at school are influenced by factors such as the age, sex and intelligence of the reader; the kind of book read; teaching methods used; and the total classroom situation. The last factor is important in any classroom activity, comprising as it does the relations between class and teacher, and their attitude to the material and treatment of the lesson. These factors must be taken into account by teachers of English, whose responsibility it is to help children to become intelligent readers with some literary taste.

To form this literary taste and to give some criteria for evaluating what is read, is a difficult task. Its successful accomplishment may take years, and often the teacher will ask himself if he has not failed. A book is like a play in that it is not complete until it has aroused a response; a play needs an audience, and a book needs a reader capable of making an intellectual or emotional response. Ezra Pound has defined literature as "language charged with meaning,"² and great lit-

² Pound, Ezra: "A.B.C. of Reading (London, 1934).

erature as language" charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree".³ This definition includes all kinds of good prose, fact or fiction, scientific or emotive, and means for the teacher that he is not bound to choose books for classroom study from a limited number of "suitable" classics.

Much is to be gained in the long run by disassociating the study of literature from the idea of "literature" as a school subject. Children should never think that the reading of literature is confined to the English classroom and that it has no relevance for them or place in their lives beyond the bounds of their school. Literature is the central humanistic study in the secondary course; as the Harvard Report says, literature gives "direct access to the potentialities and norms of living as they are presented to the mental eye by the best authors". It is important therefore to deal with literature instead of what has been written about it. It is a waste of time merely to give an outline of the history of English literature, and to talk about books and authors. Children must explore and read for themselves, at their own pace and with enjoyment.

The immediate aim of literature periods is enjoyment. Under the stress of a competitive examination system, teachers are apt to forget that reading should be "a pleasure and a

³ from Pound's "How to Read", quoted in "A.B.C. of Reading".

delight". Biaggini deprecates this tendency, which he sees in Australian teaching, but which may perhaps be found in New Zealand teaching too. Biaggini maintains that the chief purpose of education is to make the pleasure of reading greater, and its delight deeper.⁴ If his view is accepted, it follows that those parts of the curriculum where reading is involved, will receive greater emphasis, and that a methodology will have to be adopted which will enable the purpose of education more completely to be fulfilled.

A further aim of devoting time to reading is to inculcate a literary conscience. Matthew Arnold stresses this in his "Critical Essays", where he comments on the dictum of the distinguished French critic, Sainte-Beuve: "The first consideration is not whether we are amused or pleased by a work of art or mind, nor is it whether we are touched by it. What we seek above all to learn is whether we were right in being amused, or in applauding it, or in being moved by it." This is significant for the teacher and relevant to his work, because acquiring standards of value is more important than gaining an illusion of knowledge. Acquiring opinions before acquiring the means of forming them is what Sampson terms a "popular but preposterous process."⁵

⁴ Biaggini, E.G.: "English in Australia" (Melbourne, 1933).

⁵ Sampson, G.: "Literature in the Classroom", in "Essays and Studies", Vol. XX (Oxford, 1935).

literary This part of the English teacher's work demands much from him and from his pupils. The teacher needs a clear understanding of the purpose of studying literature, and must genuinely enjoy what he teaches. His class must be prepared to work willingly and with perseverance, using their gradually increasing ability to weigh, judge and appreciate what they read and hear. Intellectual activity is involved as well as emotional response. *are animal stories like "My Friend Flicka" and "Nate"*

As far as what is to be read is concerned, there is probably no minimum suitable for all pupils. Certain books used to be set each year, to be covered by particular forms. Professor I.A. Gordon mentions in "The Teaching of English" the teacher who for the seventeenth year in succession was preparing to teach "Cranford" to the fourth form. Now it is increasingly recognized that even in one class children differ widely from each other in temperament and intelligence, and that what one child may enjoy, another may dislike intensely. The teacher hopes that eventually some of his pupils will enjoy reading the great literary classics, but in the meantime he exercises wise judgment and gives unobtrusive guidance. He will devise ways to encourage the reading habit and to foster discrimination. He can appeal to an individual interest such as sport or ballet dancing, and can recommend books of fact or fiction about them. He can help his class to progress from humbler authors with obvious appeal to books of greater

literary value.

L.M. Montgomery's books are still favourites of many girls in third and fourth forms. Books about careers are popular, such as the Sue Barton series by Helen Dore Boylston, who writes about the adventures of a girl who becomes a nurse. The "Katy" books by Susan Coolidge, "Heidi" (Johanna Spyri) and L.M. Alcott's books about the March family are widely read, as are animal stories like "My Friend Flicka" and "National Velvet" by Mary O'Hara. Girls share with boys adventure stories by such diverse authors as R.M. Ballantyne, Zane Grey and John Buchan. Contemporary factual accounts interest others: "The Kon-Tiki Expedition" (Thor Heyerdahl) and escape stories like "The Wooden Horse" (Eric Williams). Some children need to be encouraged to read along the lines of their own interests, and then to be introduced gradually to more difficult but more rewarding books. They can be given books like "Treasure Island" and "Tom Sawyer", which are enjoyed by boys and girls alike. Later they may like some of Dickens - "David Copperfield", "Great Expectations", "Oliver Twist", "Pickwick Papers" - or of Alexander Dumas. Some girls will like Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë.

New Zealand writing should be introduced to third form pupils, and they can read such books as "Our Street" (Sutton-Smith) with its penetrating accounts of situations familiar to many readers; Maning's "Old New Zealand", and

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some of Katherine Mansfield. Cowan's and Andersen's collections of Maori legends fascinate younger pupils. Fourth forms will want to hear more of Katherine Mansfield and will probably like Satchell's "The Greenstone Door" and selected short stories by Sargeson. A quarter of an hour is well spent in giving a lively account of the contents of a book, or in giving a sympathetic reading of passages chosen to stimulate and hold interest. The book can be left on a shelf, while the teacher makes sure it circulates. It is difficult to tell in advance whether children will like a given book by any author, New Zealand or otherwise, so it is best to give them the opportunity to find out for themselves.

Reading for information is an important activity, especially in technical courses. Children should be able to use encyclopedias, biographical and other dictionaries, gazetteers, book indices and library catalogues. In the words of a prewar report, children are to be trained in the use of reference books "to build up the habit of the rational use of books as serviceable tools".⁶

The teacher will select for junior pupils those books suited to their ages and level of interest. Books to be studied in class should, at the same time, be as hard as the reader can handle. In this regard, I.A. Richards quotes

⁶ Fry, C.B. in Introduction to "Boys will be Boys" by E. Turner
"Suggestions in Regard to Teaching in Junior Technical Schools" (H.M.S.O. 1937)

Whitehead's well-known dictum, "If the book is easy, it should be burnt, for it cannot be educative."⁷ Its difficulty should not be so great that the reader is deterred, and the teacher must decide whether reading it would be fruitful. Books studied in the classroom are supplemented by less difficult books for outside reading.

To read a given number of books in a certain time should not be the inflexible aim of the teacher for his class, though he must make the best use of limited time. Fewer books ought to be studied rather than more; and once again quoting from the Harvard Report, the omission of books should be planned, not settled by the accident of a shortage of time.

Books should deal with reality, with some vital aspect of the affairs of man. There are many important books on the world and its peoples which ought not to be neglected. Those books will be avoided which tend to vitiate general taste by portraying inappropriate attitudes and "artificial tendencies to respond to situations."⁸

Ezra Pound says that a classic is characterised by a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness, and many junior pupils will respond to this unchanging quality in those classics

⁷ Richards, I.A.: "Responsibilities in the Teaching of English" in "Essays and Studies," Vol. XXXII (Oxford, 1946)

⁸ Fry, C.B. in Introduction to "Boys will be Boys" by E. Turner (London, 1948).

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most commonly assigned to be read in third and fourth forms.

1. The teacher must enjoy what he teaches or recommends. He must be an honest and unhurrying workman, waiting with patience for the slow unfolding and growth of his pupils' critical capacity. He will guide them in what the Thomas Report calls "the maze of modern literature", although he has no power to enforce an opinion. By his enthusiasm he can communicate his own love of reading and can open up new realms of experience to receptive boys and girls.

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hobby,¹ even before children enter secondary school. The school library will encourage reading habits and educate reading tastes.

The library should have such works of reference as dictionaries, atlases, and encyclopedias for all ages.² It

must cater for interests as wide as botany, animal husbandry and aviation.

The school library has an integral place in the life of every secondary school. Since the library is often the responsibility of a member of the English department, the teacher of English should know what are the functions of a library, and something of its organization and administration.

The school library exists, first of all, to supplement within reason the teaching of subjects within the curriculum. The teacher of English should be able to recommend reference books and to indicate sources of information for his pupils. The library should thus afford opportunities for practice in research, which is the basis for self-education. The library must also meet the needs of older pupils working for the School Certificate, University Entrance or Scholarship examinations. Finally, a very important function of the school library is to give pleasure to its users.

Through the fulfilment of these functions, it is hoped that the reading habit and the love of books will be fostered. As Claydon says, reading is the one universal

hobby,¹ even before children enter secondary school. The school library will encourage reading habits and educate reading tastes.

The library should have such works of reference as dictionaries, atlases and encyclopedias for all ages.² It must cater for interests as wide as botany, animal husbandry and aviation; modes of transport, photography, telegraphy, architecture and scouting; and crafts such as carpentry, dressmaking, knitting and cooking. Obviously the inclusion in the stock of the school library of books on some of these topics depends on the nature of the school - whether its pupils are girls or boys, town or country children.

Recent copies of periodicals and newspapers are useful. They should never be left until they are out of date or are falling to pieces. The better illustrated weeklies and a copy of a daily paper may be displayed, together with magazines such as "The Listener" and "The Times Literary Supplement", which are valuable for senior pupils. Occasional references by teachers to the articles in these magazines will help to stimulate and maintain interest in them.

The fiction section is an important part of the school library. Novels are the only books some children will read if left to themselves, and the school can help to mould

¹"The Teaching of English in Schools", ed. by V. de Sola Pinto; Ch. X, "The School Library", W.A. Claydon.

² "Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers" (H.M.S.O. 1942).

their preferences. Fiction may be classified as Senior, for fifth and sixth forms, and Junior, for third and fourth forms. Pupils should realize that these classifications are to guide rather than to limit their reading. Some school librarians refuse to allow on their shelves books specially written for young children, on the ground that such books are out of place in a library. But if there are young children in the school, their needs must be considered. If they are willing to read, there is almost a moral obligation to provide books suited to their intelligence and level of interest, which are also enjoyable. With pupils in examination forms, the problem is different. Here the teacher's task is not so much to persuade his pupils to read, as to find novels for them which are an introduction to, and an interpretation of, life as it is.

The design and equipment of the library are important factors in its success,³ and much can be done by an alert and energetic teacher to improve old or dark rooms. The library should be large enough to accommodate a class if necessary, but it ought not to be used as an ordinary classroom. Such a use destroys the atmosphere of a library and makes impossible the true fulfilment of its purpose. The room should look inviting and attractive, because a pleasing colour scheme gives children a good impression of their library. A coat of light paint will work wonders with an old room;

³ Claydon, W.A.: "The School Library".

Parents' Associations will not usually grudge a little expenditure when the return is both immediate and lasting. Furniture of a light-coloured wood - a light oak, for instance - is best, when it is possible to choose. Old dark varnished tables can be scraped clean and painted; where there are deep unsightly scorings, the surface can be planed or sanded smooth, then painted. Pupils are expected to treat furniture with care, and library assistants should have power to penalize those who violate what is after all a canon of good taste.

Reproductions of modern paintings may be borrowed for a small fee from public libraries; often embassies and travel associations are pleased to present artistic posters. Pictures should not be hung so high that it is a strain to look at them. If there is no suitable wall space, posters - mounted on stiff cardboard or backed with butter muslin - can be displayed on the top shelves or on dwarf island bookcases. These bookcases are arranged to form pleasant alcoves, and their positions can be changed from time to time.

Bookcase shelves must be accessible; many children will not trouble to stoop down if the bottom shelf is at ground level. If high shelves are used, a steady step ladder should be kept in the library.

Chairs should be well-designed and comfortable. Forms are unwieldy, cause congestion and give insufficient support to growing bodies.

Racks for periodicals can have stoutly made trans-

parent covers - clear plastic is excellent - which can be rolled up easily. These covers discourage fingering and putting other things, including food, on the racks; they also help to prevent magazines from curling up.

One or more shelves should be reserved for new accessions, and attention should be drawn to a noticeboard with a list of new or recommended books. A catalogue system should be adopted which the children can understand and use. An adaptation of the Dewey system is suitable, explained to the school and demonstrated by the librarian.

The efficient administration of the library is essential for its running smoothly. Usually a member of the staff, often of the English department, is in charge, assisted by a committee drawn from senior pupils. They are on duty before and after school and during the lunch hour, and work according to a roster. Their duties include issuing books and keeping order in the library. Rules must be few and simple, and supervision unobtrusive. Silence should be obligatory, and bringing food into the library forbidden. Offenders must be dealt with promptly. By instruction and example, children will learn the proper care of books⁴ - resting them flat, not turning pages down or marking them, and using clean hands. Committee members may receive suggestions for new

⁴ Bracken, G.H.: "The Teaching of English in Secondary Schools for Girls" (London, 1924).

accessions, and perhaps may be allowed to give a weekly book-review in the school assembly.

1. Bracken If possible, classes should have a regular library period for silent reading or for using reference books.

Working or reading for pleasure in the school library should be a normal part of the experience of every pupil. There self-discipline is learnt through consideration for others, while at the same time the individual joins in what is a real part of the social life of the school.

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4. Spens Report: Section on English Language and Literature.

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The Report of the Consultative Committee on the training of teachers points out that the post-primary teacher is always in some measure "a specialist whose work plainly demands accurate and well organized knowledge of his particular subject".¹ Especially is this true of the teacher of English, about whose subject there is much difference of opinion as to what constitutes its content, aims and methodology.

A good degree in English is almost always a necessary qualification. A pass in Stage III English should be the minimum required, but an Honours degree is preferable. Study at

¹ "The Recruitment, Education and Training of Teachers", Department of Education (Wellington, 1951).

the Honours stage gives the student a good foundation for teaching and for his own development as a teacher; for in English, probably more than in other subjects, the efficient teacher is the one who continues to learn.

Appendix: THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

In a work on the teaching of English to junior forms, it is impossible not to devote some space to the teacher himself. Although the Thomas Report recommends that where possible the teacher of English should be responsible for teaching social studies as well, this appendix is concerned only with the teacher of English. Much of what is said applies in principle however to the teacher of social studies.

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Although a teacher will rarely find that his other degree units are of little value to him in his professional work, it is wise to include in his degree some cognate subjects such as history, geography and one or two other languages. While it is ideal for the teacher of English to have a Master's degree in English, it must be remembered that success depends primarily not on training but on the possession of special talents and of disciplined enthusiasm.

The teacher must have the ability to write and speak well. This is axiomatic, but teachers in training must be reminded of their obligation in this regard. Some graduates write carelessly, and speak poorly and without thought. What they say casually will be remembered for years and will be quoted in the homes and to the friends of their pupils. The individual teacher must speak and write English with clarity, accuracy and freedom from bookishness.

A thorough grounding in at least one foreign language - ancient or modern - is valuable. From language study the teacher of English gains an understanding of another culture, and from the systematic study of older forms he gains a fairer idea of the genius of language as a whole. A knowledge of older forms is also essential in understanding the

development of language in its present condition.

The teacher of English must have a knowledge of English literature and of English literary history. He should read extensively, appreciatively and critically.² He must love literature for its own sake; a degree may be a guarantee that he possesses certain knowledge, but it does not necessarily indicate that he is capable of an emotional response. His appreciation of literature must be genuine and must never degenerate into sentimentality.

As well as a good degree, the teacher of English needs a professional training. Such a training will help him to lose his natural prejudice in favour of his own subject, and will enable him to think educationally about the aims and value of his subject. He will learn to understand the real meaning of education, and to see its "significance in relation to the many-sided business of life" (F.W. Westaway, "Craftsmanship in the Teaching of Elementary Mathematics", quoted in a recent Report on the training of teachers).³

It is hoped that as a result of his professional training, the teacher of English will not only know the contents of the current syllabus, but through practical experience will know something of conditions and standards of work

² See Sampson, G.: "Literature in the Classroom", in "Essays and Studies", Vol. XX (Oxford, 1935).

³ "The Recruitment, Education and Training of Teachers" (Department of Education, 1951).

within the schools. He needs confidence in himself, and some skill in teaching, and he must have some knowledge of setting and marking exercises and examinations, and of writing schemes of work.

Apart from a degree, the most important qualification for the teacher of English is the ability to understand the adolescents he teaches. He should widen and deepen his knowledge of the physical and mental development of boys and girls, with specific reference to the period of adolescence. On his understanding of his pupils depend the tone of his class and the quality of his discipline, the methods he uses, the standard of work he sets, and what he finally accomplishes. He must never forget that though all individual differences cannot be taken into account, they have not ceased to exist, and he must be prepared to give his best equally to the brighter children and to those who are slow learning or retarded. The teacher, particularly of junior forms, must respect the individuality of the children he teaches. Authoritarianism at this stage may retard their development as complete personalities, nevertheless they do need some authoritative guidance. They are changing all the time; this year's third and fourth formers are different not only from each other, but from what they were last year, and from what they will be a year hence. The teacher must walk delicately and refuse to succumb to the unnaturalness of his situation. For most of his working life, he is the only adult in a group

of impressionable children, and he must resist the temptation to see himself as they see him - infallible. As Hugh Lyon⁴ says, it is not a fatal error to be ignorant in fields where no one yet has come to full knowledge; but the teacher must be aware of his ignorance, and not be ashamed to admit it.

2. Carpenter, Baker and Scott: "The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Secondary School, Part III: 'The Teacher and his Training'; Ch. V: 'The Training of the Teacher'". (Longman's, London, 1927).
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⁴ Lyon, H.: the essay "Hit or Miss" in "English Studies" (London, 1949).

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