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THE TEACHING OF READING

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Being a Thesis presented for
Master of Arts Degree
in Education

D. P. Caird

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

During the past six years as a "General Subjects Teacher" in a Provincial Technical High School with a roll of 700 plus I have observed with misgiving the apparent marked lack of reading ability displayed by the pupils. I have felt continually frustrated in my attempts to teach various subjects by the fact that a preponderance of the pupils are poor readers. By this it is meant that the pupils were incapable of reading accurately for meaning and were incapable of interpreting passages supposedly read. They could not follow directions, and even displayed a meagre interest in reading from a recreational point of view. Furthermore a considerable proportion of pupils openly resented opportunities to avail themselves of a free choice of reading matter during any silent reading periods offered to them. Many were content to turn over pages of books or magazines and frequently gave pictures only the most cursory scrutiny.

It is true that a large percentage of these pupils (approximately 65 %) attended school with the intention both of themselves and their parents that the day they turned fifteen they would seek employment. School was merely a "holding paddock" where they could practise in the various workshops the fundamental skills which might aid them when

they secured an apprenticeship to a trade.

But even in these situations, where interest was present, poor reading hindered progress through lack of ability to follow written instructions, as well as the inability to pursue and interpret written matter dealing with the specific technical interests aroused in the shops.

The problem was further complicated by two important factors -

1. The Apprenticeship Act.

In many trades, namely carpentry, engineering, motor, electrical and plumbing, the applicant must complete satisfactorily two years of post-primary education before the law permits him to be apprenticed to the particular trade.

Obviously this has increased the length of the school life of many pupils with an accompanying complication of the reading problem at a higher level.

2. The School Certificate Examination.

Many students find that on completing two years' post-primary education in order to comply with the apprenticeship requirements they have developed specific interests. They further realize that employment following these interests may demand certain qualifications such as a pass in the School Certificate Examination or that a pass in this Examination will give a better status and greater monetary advantages. But in order that a candidate may enter for the School Certificate

examination he must have had full-time instruction in English language and literature, social studies, general science, elementary mathematics, music, a craft or one of the fine arts, and physical education, in accordance with the syllabus from time to time prescribed by the Minister.* These "core subjects" must be pursued for a period of at least three years and are in addition to any of the vocational subjects which may be selected by the candidate.

Owing to its wide range of vocational subjects the School Certificate Examination itself has attracted increasing numbers of candidates who offer a wide spread of subject interests. But as these candidates require a thorough background of core subjects, and as they are examined in theoretical papers, it is essential that they should have good reading habits and abilities which will enable them to cope with the subject-matter of the various prescriptions according to their innate intellectual abilities and interests. In order to achieve any degree of success a student should be able

- (a) to read with speed
- (b) to comprehend at a high level
- (c) to interpret in the different content fields
- (d) to exercise study skills
- (e) to command a wide range of vocabulary

* The Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations, 1945.

That these conditions do not obtain is evidenced by the dissatisfaction expressed by the various subject teachers, who however, seem to accept the situation as being inevitable. The spirit seems to be abroad that if a pupil enters the Post-Primary School as a poor reader, well then, it is not the business of the Post-Primary School to remedy the matter. If a remedy were possible, it would have been attended to during the Primary School period.

Not being willing to accept this attitude of laissez-faire, the writer undertook a study of some of the works in the field of Reading. After a period of investigation it was found that it is possible to enumerate the factors involved in reading ability as follows:-

1. Level of general intelligence
2. Special mental abilities, namely, visual and auditory discrimination of word patterns
3. Experience and language background
4. Emotional attitudes of interest, individual application and confidence.

These four sets of factors, mental and environmental, act interdependently to produce the composite power of reading ability.*

It is accepted that the mental age of a child is an important factor in determining, at least in some measure, the level and accuracy of his power of word recognition and

* F. J. Schonell: "The Psychology and Teaching of Reading"

of comprehension, and that his intelligence quotient will indicate the speed of learning that can be expected from him. However, there is no absolute relationship between the degree of general intelligence and reading ability. The average intelligence quotient of the pupils attending the school is approximately 94 as determined by the Otis Group Test - Higher Form B. Therefore one might expect that the mean of the Reading Tests applied to these pupils would approach the norm for their particular ages but this has not proved to be the case. (Appendix I)

One must observe at this juncture that the Otis Test is a highly verbal test, consequently it requires a reading ability unimpaired in any way otherwise the possible score on the Test would be materially affected thereby reducing the true intelligence quotient. This may possibly account for the consistent average over a period of five years of an I.Q. of 94 for 2,000 new entrants who attend this school.

The second factor noted above requires normal powers of perception in respect to the visual and the auditory patterns of words involved in reading ability. These require

- (a) an ability to discriminate and to remember the visual patterns of words, and
- (b) an ability to associate sound units of words with the correct groups of letters.

Thus reading involves partly a breaking down and partly a building up process.

Obviously normal powers of sight and of hearing influence to some degree the efficiency in these abilities and a defect in either, or both, of these senses may cause acute reading deficiencies.

"But normal perceptual powers in the visual and auditory fields of word patterns mean more than normal sensory equipment. These particular perceptual abilities represent a mental power which matures at different rates in different children. This is evident from the case of pupils whose intelligence, sensory powers, language background and emotional attitudes are normal, but who exhibit gross reading disability in either the visual or the auditory perceptual fields. These specific intellectual abilities are, in some degree, acquired, and one of the conditions which influences their development is early language experience."*

The discrimination of visual patterns of words receives impetus where the following conditions obtain:-

(a) There is a sensible approach to reading. This may be described as an approach which provides contrasting visual patterns of words thereby aiding the growth of a discriminatory power and obviating early confusion which tends to inhibit the development of discrimination.

* F. J. Schonell: "The Psychology and Teaching of Reading"

(b) The material used. Confidence is an important factor in learning to read especially in the early stages. Therefore reading material must at this stage introduce new words gradually and should provide adequate repetition in order to promote confidence and to develop visual perceptual power.

(c) The form and layout of the print. All authorities are agreed that this factor is of prime importance and Schonell may be quoted as an example

"In the first introduction to a printed book the lines should be short, the type should not be less than 18 point and should resemble as nearly as possible the print script that the child is acquainted with in his writing. This can be achieved by use of an 18 point Gil Sans type.

"In the first half of the first reading book one-line sentences are advisable; to begin with the child is confused if he has to carry on the meaning to a second line.

"For later reading books the lines should gradually lengthen and the print should gradually decrease to 16 or 14 point, but finally should not be less than 12 point.

"Bold clear type of correct size with adequate spacing between the words and between the lines is essential for correct discrimination of visual patterns of words."

The form and lay out of the print especially as regards spacing is also an important factor in the span of recognition. The term, span of recognition, denotes the amount properly

recognised at one pause in the reading process which consists of a series of eye movements and eye pauses.

In addition to recognising the correct visual forms of letters or groups of letters a specific mental aptitude, partly inborn and partly acquired, is necessary in order to associate sounds with the letters perceived and then to blend these sounds into words. This analysis and synthesis of the auditory components of words is more difficult than distinguishing their visual patterns. Furthermore both aptitudes mature at different rates in different children and evidence shows that the power of visual differentiation matures the earlier. But as the child's reading vocabulary begins to increase there arises the need for a specific power of sound analysis to help with many new words. The stage is then reached when discrimination and memory of visual patterns is not enough. In order to attempt new words a combined visual-auditory approach is necessary.

The third factor in reading ability, that of experience and language background, is obtained in a variety of ways such as trips and visits, books and pictures, stories told and questions answered. All these aid in giving a background of spoken language which is essential to the building up of a meaning vocabulary which in turn provides clues to the nature of word patterns and enables the pupil to make the maximum use of context in word recognition.

Fourthly, consideration must be given to the emotional attitude in reading ability. In all learning situations the best results accrue when the pupil is interested and when he is keen to try or to do his best. Some teaching situations stimulate this keenness whilst others produce attitudes of frustration and failure. The emotional attitude is often greatly influenced by the home situation. On the one hand the parents may enhance the child's reading progress by widening his experiences, praising his efforts, and by not expecting unduly high standards in the early stages while on the other hand the parents may hinder progress by limiting opportunities, by robbing the child of confidence, or by pushing him along too fast, all of this only culminating in confusion.

Thus we realize that the reading process is extremely complex and demands teaching methods which recognise and allow for a gradual maturation in numerous directions before success in the teaching of reading can be achieved.

With these points in mind an attempt is made in the following chapter to analyse the reading background of the pupils who have entered the Technical School since 1944.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

§1: Within the School

On further analysis it is revealed that these pupils under consideration entered the Infant School between the years 1935-1943. With this in mind the following points are considered to be pertinent:

1. The Syllabus of Instruction for Public Schools 1935 issued by the Education Department of New Zealand (Reprint of 1929 issue) sets out on Page 8 in the section dealing with the Preparatory Division of the School the following:-

"Reading. - No particular method of teaching reading is prescribed, but it is suggested that the reading material should consist first of words as names of things or actions, then of simple sentences arising from the conversation lessons. The next stage should consist of the analysis of suitable words into their component phonic sounds, and the synthesis of these sounds to form whole words, both being associated with the interpretation at sight of words and sentences on the blackboard, on individual reading sheets, or in reading books, of which each child should read as many as possible. Reading aloud must form an essential part of the reading practice.

"Teachers are required to set out in their scheme of work the various stages in the method adopted to secure clearness of utterance, fluency and expression."

Standard I, Page 10,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading of the following:

(a) The School Journal; (b) other books to be read in class either silently or aloud. Reading of suitable poems should be included, and dramatization encouraged to assist comprehension and appreciation."

Standard II, Page 11,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading of the following:

(a) The School Journal; (b) other books to be read in class either silently or aloud. The pupils will be expected to read with fluency and suitable expression. Free oral reproduction of the subject matter of suitable passages and whole stories read should be further developed."

Standard III, Page 12,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading of the following:-

(a) The School Journal; (b) Supplementary continuous readers. Carefully selected passages and complete works to be read for information or for enjoyment, the subject-matter being treated accordingly. Excessive attention to detailed explanations shall not be required, but the pupil should be able to show in a general but definite manner that he comprehends the subject-matter of the reading lessons.

Reading aloud by teacher and pupils of carefully selected passages in prose and verse. Magazine clubs should be encouraged."

Standard IV, Page 13,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading of the following:

(a) The School Journal; (b) supplementary continuous readers. Reading matter should be selected and treated in much the same way as indicated for Standard III.

Increased time should now be given to silent reading; the use of library books under the teacher's direction to be encouraged, and a record kept by the pupils of the books so read. The reading aloud of selected poems and prose passages by teachers and pupils, followed by discussion thereon, to be regularly practised. Magazine clubs and reading at home to be encouraged."

Standard V (Form I) Page 15,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading as follows:

(a) The School Journal; (b) supplementary continuous readers; (c) books from the school library.

Silent reading should now predominate, and should include training in the use of textbooks and books of reference.

Oral reading of prose and poetry should still receive attention with a view to securing appreciation of works of literary excellence and a thorough study should be made of short selected passages in prose or poetry. A record of

books, etc., read should be kept by each pupil. The use of the library to be encouraged."

Standard VI (Form II) Page 17,

"Reading - Oral and silent reading as follows:

(a) The School Journal; (b) supplementary continuous readers; (c) books from school library. Silent reading to receive greater attention, to include reading for enjoyment, reading for information, and reading for language-study. The pupil should be able to show in a general but quite definite manner that he comprehends what he has read, and in the case of specially selected passages appreciates the skill of the author, his command of language, and his ability to awaken the emotions of the reader. Oral reading to be practised at regular intervals."

From the point of view of a Training College Student when the writer was in no fewer than twelve different class rooms for varying periods, and as a Primary School Teacher until 1945 some comments must be passed upon the above extracts.

A. METHODS OF TEACHING READING.

1. As the syllabus suggested no particular method of teaching reading was laid down. Some Infant Teachers used the "Look and Say" method whilst others emphasised the "Phonic" method. The success of these methods was largely dependent upon the ability, and enthusiasm for the method used, of the

individual Infant Mistress. Pupils in the Infant division persevered until

- (a) they had mastered reading by the method used or in spite of it, or
- (b) they were promoted for social reasons, i.e. they were too old, too backward or presented too great a problem in the Infant Department.

2. These pupils then passed into the standards where they often became the charges of a male teacher. This male teacher had even less training in the methods of teaching reading than his female colleague. Except for a minimum of suggestive instruction given in infant room methods the male training college student received no specific instruction or training in the methods of teaching reading; further the terms "diagnostic" and "remedial" treatment for poor readers were foreign to him.

When on section in the schools students were often given groups of poor oral readers whom they were expected to patiently hear read certain passages over and over again; and even to give sample patterns as to how the passage should be read. The pupil was to learn

- (a) by imitation
- (b) by repetition
- (c) by listening to his fellow poor readers.

A common comment passed between students seems indicative of the unsatisfactory position as regards reading in the Schools. "Why do we always have to take a weak group for reading? Why can't we have a good group?" Generally students disliked this

task as they had no knowledge of how to treat the poor reader (in fact they were products of the weak system themselves). Further one can only infer that the class teacher was in the same predicament as the student and was "passing the buck."

B. MATERIAL FOR READING.

1. The School Journal was fundamentally the only source of reading material. The month's activity tended to be based upon it. It was usually the source of spelling material, composition material and poetry as well as being the principal class reader. Children generally openly expressed delight at receiving a "new" journal. Was this manifest delight an expression of relief from the weariness of a month's travail upon the one journal? Was it a genuine expression of pleasure at the prospects of additional reading? Or were the children really interested in "School Journal Study" so heavily meted out to them? Probably it was a varying combination of all factors for each individual pupil.

2. The Syllabus of Instruction mentions supplementary readers. Generally the supply of these was hopelessly inadequate. In cities such as Wellington the schools had access to the Public Library Schools' Department from where they could borrow once per term a supply of reading material on the basis of $1\frac{1}{2}$ books per pupil. Keen teachers would select their choice of books during the school holidays thereby picking the eyes out of what was available. In theory this was very promising, but in

practice the service was quite inadequate, as the material was largely unsuitable for reading purposes although it was of some assistance for dramatic work and social studies projects. Otherwise there was no other source for supplementary readers.

3. School Libraries. Generally these again were far from interesting or adequate. Usually funds were not available for such a purpose; when they were the choice of reading material was very conservative. Teachers generally were NOT familiar with the types of books which appealed to children. Further there appeared to be a scarcity of suitable books from the point of view of print, illustrations, vocabulary and interest content upon the market.

4. Some teachers (one may hazard not very many) encouraged pupils within the class to bring to school their own books which they considered interesting. These were placed in a class library for a term or a year. Many pupils responded to this and the supply of reading material was thereby supplemented to a small extent and many books were provided which were of interest to the pupil at that particular age.

C. CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS.

Should a primary school teacher happen to be interested in the methods of teaching reading and where necessary the application of diagnostic tests and any subsequent remedial treatment he would probably be deterred by a number of factors.

Briefly these factors are

1. The size of the class. This usually ranged from 45 to 60 plus. Obviously a class of this size would entail a great deal of testing and systematic treatment. The preparation of material would consume much time - both school time and private time.
2. The wide range of the primary school curriculum places a heavy burden on the non-specialist teacher. He must be proficient in all subjects of the curriculum and each subject demands its share of time on the time-table. Reading requires a great deal of time especially silent reading for the development of speed etc., but in order to satisfy the requirements of other subjects reading as such had to be neglected; although it should be noted that an adequately trained teacher could develop reading skills whilst teaching the subjects of the curriculum.
3. As noted above Reading is time consuming, therefore, it does not create the impression of activity and progress. If a teacher should be found sitting preparing a series of questions on material which his class was busy reading at that moment, or if he were preparing remedial materials he would often be described as being lazy. The teacher is very conscious of this epithet and is constantly the butt of remarks from the general public, his friends and his colleagues. The complex is further developed by the attitude of the

departmental inspector who takes strong exception to finding a class teacher seated no matter how earnest or important his task may be. The inspector invariably expects the teacher to be either (a) giving an oral lesson accompanied by liberal blackboard work, illustrations etc., or (b) supervising a general class activity, or (c) supervising simultaneous group activities. The inspector has been known to make a close scrutiny of the teacher's work-book and to verify the entries by examining the pupils' compositions, spelling books, social studies and nature study projects, writing, artistic and handicraft efforts, as well as appraising the standard of physical education, singing and reading. In order to impress the inspector the teacher must present an impressive array of books, projects, drawings and paintings and handicraft exhibits - in short something material, something that may be seen and is pleasing to the eye. Obviously reading, a time consuming activity with no apparent material end-products, receives scant attention. The teacher must obtain grading marks in order to gain promotion, prestige and economic and social security. Grading marks are obtained by impressing the inspector. Therefore one must still assume that in the teaching profession "payment is by results;" but may one add results of a spurious kind.

D. THE ATTITUDE OF THE PUPIL.

1. Most children are eager to commence school in order

to learn to read and write like the big brother, or sister, a neighbour or someone else. Many achieve their desire to learn to read under the current system or, as said elsewhere, in spite of the current system. Unfortunately many others fail to meet with initial success. These unsuccessful pupils soon become sensitive of their inability to cope with the reading situation and unless they receive sympathetic and scientific treatment they almost immediately develop an inferiority complex regarding reading. This complex may not be very marked in the early stages but it gradually develops in the infant division and becomes marked in the standards. Although a pupil's reading may be backward in one or more aspects, he may be good at number, he may be chronologically old, or he may be physically big though chronologically normal, or he may be socially precocious, or a combination of these factors together with school organisation may precipitate his unwarranted promotion to the junior school.

2. In the junior school he has to compete with the pupil who is there on his merits and his inability to cope with the reading situation becomes more pronounced. He is aware of it, his contemporaries are aware of it, and so is his often ill-equipped teacher. Needless to say, the immature pupil will endeavour to avoid reading whenever possible. He resents the occasions when the class teacher asks him to read; he senses the attitude of impatience and often unsuppressed ridicule which emanates from his fellows, as well as the

barely patient and tolerant attitude of his teacher. When an interesting story is to be read, or a play is to be acted, obviously the best readers are given the parts to read in order to sustain interest and economise on time. Admittedly this is educationally unsound but practical expediency usually demands it. Consequently the poor reader drifts into a reading back-water; he receives little or no positive sympathetic and/or scientific encouragement from his teacher; he builds up an attitude that he has no ability for reading and may over-emphasise some other activity at which he has achieved some success, and has obtained attention and drawn forth favourable comment from his teachers and parents. On the other hand he may develop an undesirable attitude to all aspects of the curriculum, or the school itself or even society in general and the sum total may be another delinquent child. Throughout the Primary school this attitude may snow-ball to a greater or less degree only to become aggravated in the post-primary school.

E. TEACHER MOBILITY.

Another important factor influencing the general school life of the pupil is the varying number of teachers he may have in any one school year. Classes have been recorded as having as many as sixteen different teachers in the course of a year. It was not uncommon, especially during the war and post-war years, for classes to have as many as six or more teachers per

year. Further, the situation was made more complex by the fact that (a) immature teachers and (b) ex-teachers (in many cases grandmothers!) were employed to maintain the teaching strength. The disadvantages arising from these circumstances can readily be seen. Once again the inept reader would receive even less consideration and would be thrown into even greater confusion.

§2: WITHIN THE HOME

1. The group of children under consideration in this thesis are the offspring of parents married just prior to, during, or just after the depression period. They were parents who had experienced few luxuries; in fact many often had barely sufficient food or clothing for themselves or their children. Reading material was often not available owing to economic stringency nor was it considered desirable. However just prior to the war there was a period of economic prosperity when luxuries were more easily obtained and money was more readily spent on films, radios and motor-cars. Then the war interrupted to deprive many homes of the father who was called up, or volunteered, for active service. Furthermore, the mother often sought wartime employment and the children did likewise, thereby reducing leisure time and eliminating possible opportunities for interest reading.

This early morning and after school employment with its

resultant plentiful supply of ready money, together with the ease with which juveniles could gain employment, and the lack of home supervision which frequently obtained, considerably hindered the pupil's progress at school. In fact school itself was regarded as a hindrance to the child; the law demanded he attend school for certain hours each day but also the labour problem and the economic situation absorbed his out-of-school time and even coerced him away from school.

2. The wartime prevalence of lack of home discipline, together with easily earned and large pay-cheques, granted these youngsters opportunities to patronise the films, sport, dancing and any recreational pursuits which took their fancy. Film watching and radio listening were easy. Mental effort was not needed as film and radio programmes could be selected to suit all primitive tastes. Therefore school work in general, and reading in particular, which required mental effort was placed at a disadvantage.

3. The war and post-war period accompanied by a shortage of housing, consumer goods and labour further accentuated the position. The social order, together with the economic situation, demanded a supply of man-power which could produce goods to overcome these shortages, therefore a premium was placed upon manual dexterity, or even physical energy, no matter what its calibre. Ability at school work was of little consequence, for employment with high wages was easily obtained.

4. There is ever present in the community whatever its

size, be it the family, the school, the suburb, or the town the attitude that it is "sissy", or "swotty", or that one will be a "blue-stockings" if one is interested in reading or academic pursuits. Possibly this unconscious, and even often consciously expressed, opinion has some bearing upon the pupil's attitude towards learning to read.

5. The lack of interest displayed by parents in the reading efforts of their "infant" offspring has often had dire effects upon the child's subsequent desires to learn. Many pupils have told me that they were genuinely hurt by this lack of interest, especially on the part of the father. This particular point has been positively confirmed to some degree by the answers given to a questionnaire. (See Appendix II)

This brief survey of the background of a reading career seems to show that there are many factors both within and beyond the school, undermining the desire which a child may have to learn to read successfully. However those negative aspects are now being confronted by positive aspects, demonstrated by the fact that the apprenticeship requirements as well as the academic standards necessary to secure future worthwhile employment demand that a child must tend to be able to read well in order to gain the greatest measure of success.

That dissatisfaction with the status quo existed amongst Educational Authorities during this period will be traced in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

EVIDENCE OF THE AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM WITHIN NEW ZEALAND

A. That the method of teaching Reading in New Zealand Schools was causing anxiety among not only students and class teachers is evidenced by letters, semi-humorous, written in the May and June, 1941 issues of "National Education" by puzzled parents. These letters evoked a reply from the late Professor W. H. Gould who expressed his concern at the apparent results of the "Phonic Method" of teaching reading.

He wrote

"I have been looking through our clinic records and I am surprised in how many cases there is exaggerated reading deficiency, though tests indicate normal intelligence. In every one of these cases the child has learned by a phonic method, perhaps because that is almost the only method employed in the schools. However that may be, wherever we have managed to have the child retaught by a different method, preferably the method of whole word recognition, his progress has been fairly rapid and the behaviour and other problems have in large measure disappeared . . ."

Further he suggests that the phonic method may be responsible for some speech defects. He quotes Professor Cyril Burt:

'In a few cases, the hesitation seems to spring from an excessive preoccupation with consonants, induced or aggravated by ill advised phonic drill; such drill at times engenders a sort of bewildering mouth-consciousness, and so, like all attention to functions ordinarily automatic, throws the component processes temporarily out of gear.'

Although Professor Gould did not openly condemn the Phonic method he drew attention to the fact that like any other method it had its defects. He maintained that teachers should be free to use the methods they were best acquainted with provided that when they found a child who made unsatisfactory progress they should be ready to try him with other methods.

The Phonic Method is an analytic method which aims at providing pupils with the sounds of the various letters of the alphabet. By various picture and letter association devices the pupils are taught that

a says a as in a pple

b says b as in b at

c says c as in c at, etc.

Then they are given regular words to read. Only one sound is given for each letter, so that the scheme is weak in the first place because it provides only twenty-six sounds out of the sixty odd sounds which the twenty-six letters of the

alphabet may represent. This method also has a limitation in word forms, thus too many two- and three- letter words are used. This deprives pupils of learning by the most important means of contrast of visual patterns when longer words such as "Mother" "Teddy" "play" etc., which are common everyday words, should be used more frequently than the small phonic words with artificial associations.

Psychological research confirms the opinion that for many pupils the phonic method is too analytic - they do not really understand what they are doing, and many of them are mentally unable to associate sounds with symbols and then to analyse and blend these as they find them in words.

B. The Primary School Revised Syllabuses issued by the School Publications Branch of New Zealand Education Department in May, 1948, was rather more specific when compared with 1935 Syllabus, though briefer in indicating the Reading requirements in the various Primary School Divisions. For the Junior Division emphasis was transferred to requiring the child to develop the power to express himself orally:

"(a) After reading a short passage, he may be asked to answer questions based on the matter read.

"(b) He may express in one or more sentences, the impression gained from the piece read.

"(c) He may be required to frame and ask his own questions. His class-mates supply the answer in well-constructed sentences. This exercise develops concentration and a greater degree of comprehension than is usually displayed when the teacher does the questioning.

"(d) He may be asked to give his interpretation of certain words or phrases used in the material studied.

"Middle Division: Motivated reading lessons afford endless opportunities for later discussion. A pupil may be asked to study a short story to read aloud to the class, and to be prepared to answer their questions afterwards. When children are familiar with a story, they will be ready at this stage to discuss the motives of the characters, and to consider whether or not they behave in what seems to be a reasonable manner. After a silent reading period, the class may assist the teacher in drawing up the questions for a good comprehension test. For the morning talk period a child may be asked to 'review' a book he has read recently. Much of this work can be done by pupils working in groups under a leader.

"The Senior Division: Much of the oral expression work connected with class reading can be done in groups working under class leaders. Periods given to silent reading should be periods of motivated reading followed by relevant discussion or oral summaries.

The literary style, unity consistency, atmosphere background, or the motivation of the characters of a story or book may be discussed. Pupils may also be invited to give brief spoken reviews of books they have read at home. There is still a place in this division for the re-telling of short stories."

This Revised Syllabus attempts to remove the emphasis away from the "School Journal" atmosphere and the vicious oral reading method where forty plus pupils listened while one self-conscious poor reader stumbled his way through mouthing a passage. Obviously reading was to be now more purposeful and was tending to become more personal. Presumably the grouping suggested would be ability grouping where the poorer reader would receive more sympathy and encouragement and would have to cope with material within his grasp.

However there is no indication of diagnostic or remedial treatment in this syllabus nor is there any indication of the availability of reading material nor suggestions as to suitable books.

- C. Apparently many Primary School teachers in New Zealand were independently aware of, and disturbed by, many of the factors mentioned in the analysis to the background of the problem as outlined in Chapter II. "National Education", the Journal of the New Zealand Educational Institute, issued as a supplement to one of its editions "Reading in the Primary School - Reports of the Syllabus Committees" and a further supplement to

"National Education" April, 1950: "Reading in the Primary School."

These reports acknowledge the inadequacy of the "Syllabus of Instruction" as far as it related to reading throughout the Primary School and, although it was not stated specifically, the suggestions and recommendations left no doubt as to the inadequacy of teacher-training in the Reading sphere.

These reports deal with two sections

A. Infant Reading

B. Reading, Std. I - Form II.

A. Infant Reading. The Report suggests the aims of reading at the infant stage to be:

1. To arouse and maintain a desire to read.
2. To enable the child to interpret the ideas conveyed by print.
3. To establish the habit of effective silent reading.
4. To teach the art of oral reading.
5. To enable the child to master the mechanics of reading.
6. To foster a love of books.

The report recognises that within any age group, there are wide differences of ability and it emphasises that parents and teachers must be aware of the significance of these differences. It suggests that ability grouping is an essential teaching principle as by this method the individual receives personal consideration within the group. Also strain for both the child and the teacher is alleviated, confidence through the sharing of ideas is gained, while ability grouping makes for easier

assimilation of work and economises time and material.

Programmes should be so planned as to enable one group to receive instruction while other groups work at co-ordinated activities.

Attention is drawn to the three natural stages through which reading in an Infant School is considered to progress.

1. The Preparation Stage. This is stated to occupy on the average six weeks, but that the time will vary according to the rate of development of the individual child. During the period the task is to create the appropriate reading situation which will enable the children to readily profit by definite reading instruction in subsequent stages.

This preparation stage is the most vital period in the child's educational career. It is suggested that the stage should occupy six weeks, however, this time is not mandatory and could, or even should, occupy in some cases six months or more. The mere fact that six weeks is suggested in the report does not mean that the inspector should demand it, nor that the teacher should act on it, unless she is completely satisfied that the pupil is ready to go on to the introduction stage. This point has been stressed as it has been reported that inspectors insist on the introduction stage after six weeks of preparation.

2. The Introduction Stage. The next four to six months is the period suggested for the establishment of a set

vocabulary of 75 to 100 words. In this period each pupil is to become acquainted with reading and is to be trained to regard reading as the interpretation of thought expressed in symbols.

The training during this period includes simple orientation practice and is dependent upon meaningful content for the recognition and gradual assimilation of the sight vocabulary. The silent and oral reading of short stories, composed from the known vocabulary, is the objective.

3. The Continuation Stage - which is to occupy two stages: Grade A, a period of four to six months when deliberate training to develop independent skill in discovering new words by comparison of word forms and of elements of words is given. During this period also, reading habits of thought, orientation, and word recognition are integrated and extended to produce the beginnings of independent interpretation. Grade B, a period of one year during which the desirable habits of former stages and the perfection of fundamental skills give power and incentive for wider reading. The known vocabulary is to be enlarged to between 800 and 1,000 words and independent skills in word mastery are acquired. The silent reading habit is to be established, and expressive, fluent oral reading is to be cultivated by the use of text-books.

Comprehension is to be developed by deliberate word study, by parallel activities, by group study of the text-books, by supplementary reading, and by sight reading of simple selections

for dramatization. The combination of these skills and habits leads to independent understanding. This independent understanding creates the desire to read and contributes to the joy of reading and the appreciation of books.

A significant cautionary statement is made: that a small percentage of children with slower adjustment to reading conditions will need to spend a longer time in mastering the programme for each stage. Teachers are reminded that due recognition must be given to individual differences. Further that teaching should of necessity be more interesting and provision should be made for a slower rate of word assimilation. Periods of concentration, such as Word Study and Reading, should be frequent and of short duration.

The Report gives further general suggestions as to treatment of Word Studies, Parallel Activities related to Word Studies, Chart or Blackboard Reading, Text-books, Supplementary Reading Book, Individual Reading Cards, Types of Reading (a) Silent, (b) Oral and a statement on Method in aims and methods on the basis of these results. It is also considered that, owing to the wider interests and relationships of present day children, a broader and more balanced treatment of reading is called for. As an instrument of social progress it plays a vital part in reflecting and directing social changes and the school has the responsibility of establishing attitudes and habits in reading that will enable the child to

adjust himself to a changing world.

Within its four walls it is considered to be the duty of the school to train pupils in the most efficient use of books, not only for the value as literature but also as sources of information. The importance of background reading in such subjects as social studies and science makes it imperative that children be given adequate guidance in the use of books of reference and in methods of study. Learning to read must develop into reading to learn, and pupils must be trained to read intelligently and purposefully in every school subject and for every school activity.

For this division of the school the general aims in the teaching of reading are suggested as follows:-

1. The development of strong incentives to read.
2. The development of tastes and a capacity for thoughtful study which will make for the personal development of the children, so that later as citizens they can participate appreciatively and intelligently in the thought-life and activities of the world.

It is recognised that the teaching of reading involves certain general fundamental principles as follows:-

1. Reading must be made an enjoyable activity. If, throughout his school life, the child is led to associate books, content subject books as well as books of stories, with interesting and pleasurable experiences (allied to those to be had from a radio story or film screening), many of the difficulties

inherent in learning to read will be minimized.

2. It is essential that the pupil should be given opportunities to enjoy a wide range of reading. Within the classroom materials of varying kinds whether supplied by the community, the school, the teacher or the pupils should be available for reading; this use of books both vitalizes instruction and contributes to reading efficiency.

It is essential in all content subjects, e.g. social studies, general science, to choose background reading material that will appeal to, and be readily understood by, the pupils. This background reading in other subjects of the curriculum plays a vital part in the development of reading.

3. At all stages of reading development the mastery of the various skills will be successfully obtained only by progressive and systematic training.

4. The reading programme must be balanced, making provision for such activities as oral and silent reading, specific study drills, recreational and informational reading, without undue emphasis on any one of them.

5. Provision must be made for individual differences in ability and interests as well as in physical and emotional characteristics.

In Chapter II attention was drawn to the fact that generally schools, and class-rooms in particular, were inadequately supplied with materials for reading. However, if the principles enunciated above are to be put into operation a very wide range of suitable reading material will be required.

It is suggested that every class in the primary school should be equipped with the following material:-

1. A wide range of books for general reading and as background reading in various subjects;

2. Group readers for group and individual instruction in the skills of reading. These should fulfil the following requirements -

(a) They should be graded in difficulty and diversified in interest to suit the individual needs of boys and girls whose requirements may range from as much as two standards below (or lower) to two above the standard for which the materials are nominally prescribed.

(b) They should contain poetry and drama as well as prose.

(c) They should be attractive in make-up and in their appeal to children.

(d) The layout and print should be suitable.

(e) The matter should be worth reading.

3. A suitable book of work-type exercises for each child in each class. These books should contain graded exercises to give training in the skills of reading and study, e.g. exercises to improve comprehension, exercises for improving oral and written recall, vocabulary exercises, exercises to develop ability in thorough reading, skimming and associational reading, and in the use of dictionaries, atlases and works of reference. Many of the exercises contained in the study books should make use of the material of the content-subject textbooks, such as

those in Social Studies, English, Arithmetic, Science, etc.;

4. A good dictionary written for children;

5. A child's magazine; published monthly, containing articles on current events and topics of special interest to New Zealand children, social study articles, poems, children's sections, etc., and graded into three divisions, Junior, Middle and Senior. This Magazine should not as a general rule be used as a medium for the teaching of the skills of reading.

In its thirty-two pages the Report on Reading in the Primary School has summed up the position regarding reading in New Zealand and makes it clear by virtue of its systematic analysis of reading requirements, methods of teaching reading, and by its recommendations (see Appendix III) that past deficiencies need immediate attention and that constructive action on a national basis is required in our schools.

D. Evidence of the growing awareness of disabilities in reading among New Zealand school children may be culled from that virile yet short-lived publication, "Education - a Magazine for Teachers", issued by the School Publications Branch New Zealand Education Department.

The issue number five, volume one, October, 1948, gives on Page 248 a resumé of a special study of reading problems carried out in 1947 by the Wellington Inspectors in conjunction with Professor C. L. Bailey, Victoria University College, and a number of Wellington teachers. It is interesting to note that first a course of study was arranged

under the leadership of Professor Bailey, and it was attended by three teachers of each of nine schools. The course extended over the middle term of 1947 and is stated to have greatly clarified the problem. This statement alone indicates the lack of general and specific training in the matter of reading received by teachers and is a healthy indication of what the future may hold in store.

The next two issues of "Education" March, 1949, and May, 1949, contain most valuable articles for the class teacher entitled "The Organization and Teaching of Reading in the Middle Division." That Mr. A. H. Forbes, an Inspector of Schools, Auckland, should write such painstaking, systematic and instructive articles surely indicates that on his inspectorial visits he was convinced of the paucity of knowledge of teaching reading in the schools.

The July and September issues 1949 of "Education" contain two articles by A. B. Allen "About Children Who Cannot Read." These articles, at the least, lend some emphasis to the contention submitted in Chapter II that a pupil may, and often does find his way from the Infant Department, still with reading disabilities. Mr. Allen says

"In the upper school and in post-primary schools the bogey of specific disability is still present, but in some cases it takes a very different form. Instead of being bad at oral reading, the child becomes 'careless' or lazy in essay work, 'untidy and slap-dash' in

writing up geography and history note books, 'unable to scan' poems or get essential meanings for précis writing. The teachers in the upper school blame the infant teachers; the complaints of post-primary teachers about the lack of standards in primary schools are becoming legendary."

Further, the University teachers criticize the low level of attainment of the entrants from the Post-primary School - yet they receive the upper strata from these schools. Professor Gould said

"It has been demonstrated over and over again that many university students are poor readers. The rapidity of their reading (silent) and the meaning they get from it are really inferior."*

In the May, 1950, issue Miss Ruth Trevor supplements Mr. Allen's articles with four interesting case histories, a discussion on principles of remedial teaching, and a very interesting note in the light of this thesis which will be discussed in the conclusions to this chapter.

Mr. N. J. Dew in the September and November issues, 1949, of "Education" gives a class-room teacher's interpretation of some aspects of the teaching of reading as suggested in the Reading Syllabus Revision Committee's Report and he has laid out suggested methods which should be of valuable assistance to that body of teachers who have not been fortunate enough

* "Reading Can Be Taught" - Professor W. H. Gould in
"National Education" August, 1941

to receive the guidance and material assistance which evidently has been available to teachers under the jurisdiction of the Otago Education Board.

Out of the above fragments concerning the published position regarding reading in primary schools at the present time, a few conclusions may be drawn.

In the first place it is obvious that teachers in New Zealand are dissatisfied with the results emanating from the methods of teaching reading. Hence the detailed and thorough report published by the Educational Institute and adopted in part by a departmental committee, whilst a manual on reading has been issued to infant teachers and another one is being prepared for teachers of standard classes.

On the basis of the Reading Syllabus Revision Committee's Report both representatives of the departmental inspectorate* and the lay-teacher** have published plans and methods of attack on the much more comprehensive reading system suggested.

That specific backwardness in reading abilities exists in the schools is emphasised by the evidence produced in the articles on remedial treatment in both Wellington*** and Christchurch.**** Many significant facts stand out from these

* Education: Vol.2. Nos. 1 and 2.

** Education: Vol.2. Nos. 4 and 5.

*** Education: Vol 1. No. 5

**** Education: Vol.2. Nos. 3 and 4 and Vol.3. No.2

articles:-

1. Teachers must be trained before any diagnostic testing and remedial treatment can be attempted. While this is accepted as a scientific necessity, it is also indicative of the almost universal lack of teacher-training in reading in the past.
2. Only a limited number of cases - forty in Christchurch and fewer in Wellington - can be provided for. Candidates for remedial treatment are selected only from those who have a Stanford-Binet I.Q. of 90 plus. Yet there is a WAITING LIST. Further this list is selected from those who have been referred to the psychological clinic for treatment. One may guess that only a minority of teachers recognise symptoms of disabilities as opposed to "backwardness", "laziness" etc., consequently only a proportion of cases of true disability would be referred to the clinic.
3. This valuable remedial work, as far as can be ascertained, is being carried out in only two cities, and even then only to a limited degree. Yet the cities are the centres where students are trained, where university college clinics exist, where facilities for reading are greater than in other areas of New Zealand. Ipso facto one might assume that the range, and even the degree, of reading disabilities may be greater outside the four main centres.
4. The responsibility rests upon the class teacher to recognise the early symptoms of reading difficulties, and to

have some working knowledge of remedial principles.

5. The importance is stressed of the necessity for close co-operation between class and remedial teachers.

6. Not every teacher can be expected to be a specialist in remedial techniques. Much background study, a knowledge of remedial teaching techniques, an adequate training in the use and interpretation of standardised tests of intelligence and attainment, as well as of diagnostic tests, are all essential. Just as important as these academic and professional qualifications is the personality of the remedial teacher. No amount of knowledge will compensate for a lack of that warm human interest and understanding which makes the remedial teacher successful in this difficult but worthwhile vocation.* But how many more are required!

7. Not all backward readers are behaviour problems - they may be quiet mouse-like persons, covering up their feelings of inferiority by being meticulously well-behaved.**

8. Remedial treatment may be undertaken at any age or stage but obviously the sooner the better. The Christchurch clinic reports success with three adult illiterates of average or above average intelligence.

* Education Vol.2. No. 4 Page 21.

** Education Vol.2. No. 3 Page 32.

CHAPTER IV

OVERSEAS EVIDENCE

§1: In England

Interest in the subject of reading was stimulated in England by the beginnings of scientific observation of the reading process in the laboratories of Valentius^{ne?}, Cattell, Erdmann, Javal, and Ahrens in the middle of the nineteenth century. Although the results of their work had little immediate effect upon the complacent efficiency of the schoolroom, they were valuable in that they not only called attention to some of the differences between oral reading and silent reading, but also revealed something of the unrealised complexity of the reading process.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the work of such men as Alfred Binet, emphasised the need for impartiality and objectivity of test material and they pleaded for the necessity of recognising differences in initial ability, in rate of learning, and in power of retentiveness.

Among standardised tests constructed on these lines were reading tests. These tests were very simple as is typified by Starch's comprehension tests, which consisted of short passages to be read silently for thirty seconds. After exactly half a minute, a mark had to be made to indicate the

last word read, and then all that could be remembered of the passage had to be written. Success was estimated by counting the number of words read per second and the number of written words which correctly reproduced the thought.*

Administrators found as a result of this early testing that there was a wide range of individual differences and a very wide overlapping of performance from year to year or from class to class. This led to a more careful analysis of what was involved in the process of reading and of what was required in a test before it could provide full evidence of the difficulties which pupils were encountering. Furthermore questions were raised as to whether the existing organisation of teaching on class lines was meeting the needs of pupils whose differences were now for the first time objectively revealed. The outcome of this was the birth of two movements - that towards scientific educational diagnosis, and that towards individualised instruction and adjustment of the school organisation to the needs of the pupils.** These movements have been paralleled and justified by developments in the psychology of learning as well as realisation of the importance of the past history of the pupils, their attitudes, activities and interests and of the importance of pupils' co-operation,

* Starch, D. Educational Measurements. New York.

The MacMillan Company. 1916.

** Fleming, C.M.

Research and the Basic Curriculum.

University of London Press Ltd. 1946.

insight, and sense of responsibility for their own learning.

University Education Departments carried out careful analysis of what was involved in the process of reading and became consciously concerned with removing the difficulties which caused pupils to fall behind their contemporaries.

Works such as those of:

Kennedy-Fraser, D. The Education of the Backward Child 1932.

Burt, C. The Backward Child 1937.

Schonell, B. J. Backwardness in the Basic Subjects 1942.

The Psychology and Teaching of Reading
1945.

revealed that research and application of knowledge in the reading field had developed beyond the observational stage to the remedial stage. From success in isolated cases there developed an interest in diagnosis and treatment which led to the establishment of educational clinics. Methods which proved successful in such clinics have recently been used in experimentation with classes of backward pupils and, apparently, marked economy of effort with increased efficiency is resulting.

The early attempts at individualised instruction, such as those typified by the Dalton Plan, brought about the realisation of the need to teach pupils how to study and also focused critical analysis on the content of the curriculum and the content of the materials in use as reading text books.

Consequently some schools began to use reading tests as part of their routine and permitted differentiation of text books according to the reading age of the pupil as revealed by the

tests. Exclusive emphasis on oral reading was admitted to be both uneconomical and harmful. Differences of rate and eye movement were recognised in the two processes of oral and silent reading; and it was realised that differences of requirements on the part of different pupils destroyed the validity of the assumption that forty-nine pupils obtained maximum benefit by merely watching the words which were read aloud by the fiftieth pupil or by the teacher. This led to re-organisation within the classroom such as grouping of pupils for oral reading and for silent reading. The teacher also gave attention to pupils individually by hearing one pupil read while the remainder of the class carried out silent reading exercises. This procedure necessitated that more attention be given to diagnosis of the needs of individual pupils and consequently the findings of classroom experimentation and clinical study of backward pupils became of much greater importance to teachers.

These findings, which were perhaps the most characteristic development of the years between about 1926 and 1936, revealed that some degree of efficiency in silent reading is essential before fluency and expressiveness can be infused into oral reading at sight. Rates of reading were found to vary with:-

- (a) the kind of material,
- (b) its difficulty
- (c) its purpose, and
- (d) the conditions under which reading is done.

Rates also vary from individual to individual according to the

facility with which ideas are apprehended. Furthermore, adulthood finds silent reading more necessary than oral reading, therefore training in silent reading and the accompanying skills in studying is a necessary part of school education. Nevertheless oral reading is recognised as a valuable means of speech development and at the same time it provides a useful means of testing the extent of vocabulary and efficiency in pronunciation.

Interest in the subject of reading in the English schools is very much alive to-day as evidenced by the fact that the Minister of Education set up in September, 1947, a small committee of experts to investigate the reading ability of children and young people in England and Wales. Its conclusions and suggestions for helping backward readers of all ages appeared on 28th February, 1951, in Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 18, "Reading Ability". Although this Pamphlet has not been sighted in New Zealand as yet, the "Times Educational Supplement" Friday, 2nd March, 1951, discusses the pamphlet from which article the following points have been culled.

"After touching on differences of ability the pamphlet discusses retardation, which may result from personal handicaps, poor home or school conditions, or interrupted schooling. The premature introduction to printed matter, or the use of unsuitable teaching methods, can also have harmful effects.

"The committee realizes that remedies will frequently lie outside the province of the school, but makes certain suggestions which may help teachers in their important and difficult work. If the immediate incidence and effects of backwardness are to be reduced, it says, more teachers than ever before will be involved, including many teachers of older children." (Italics mine.)

"It can be concluded, the report says, that the proportion of backward readers in primary and secondary modern schools was larger in 1948 than it was before the war."

§2: IN AMERICA

In America interest in efforts to improve reading in high schools and colleges began to develop about three decades ago when striking evidence was secured that the reading and study habits of students could be greatly improved through appropriate guidance. This interest spread rapidly during the thirties as the value of corrective and remedial work among poor readers was demonstrated repeatedly, and as the reading demands made on youth increased both in and out of school. During World War II schools and colleges attempted to accelerate the progress of students in study activities and this interest in improving reading has remained to-day a vital force where serious effort is being made to adjust instruction to current needs.

The National Society For The Study of Education has devoted the Forty-Seventh Yearbook to "Reading in the High School and College" for the following reasons:-

1. The notable increase, as a result of recent social and educational changes, in the use of reading as an aid to understanding and social betterment. Furthermore, the results of scientific studies have demonstrated the social effects* of reading, both desirable and undesirable, and of the influence of reading and study habits on scholastic success. Amongst American youth there is apparently an heightened appreciation to-day of the importance of reading in meeting personal needs, in furthering scholastic attainments, and in promoting social stability and progress.

2. That a wide range in reading ability amongst students exists has been impressively demonstrated by the evidence scientifically produced over recent years. The number and the character of the reading difficulties encountered, and the effect of appropriate motivation and guidance on efficiency in reading and study activities have been analysed. As these facts become known, their implications were studied widely. As a result, high school and college staffs are becoming keenly aware of the serious character of the reading problems faced by students and of the need for carefully planned guidance in reading and study activities. They are also eagerly seeking help in promoting greater competence among students in reading.

*Wm. S. Gray: "The Social Effects of Reading" School Review, LV (May, 1947) 269-77

3. To-day the purposes for which students read are more varied and the amount of reading required is greater than formerly. The need for guidance for many students is urgent - a guidance which will aid them in acquiring greater competence in reading, in adjusting to the varied demands made upon them, and in securing essential types of understanding and interpretation.

4. The amount and quality of the personal reading of many students has been found to be very unsatisfactory. Some read widely while others read little, if at all. While admitting that the adolescent period has always been a critical one in respect to personal reading, to-day it presents more problems than formerly because of the unusual number of conflicting interests and distractions. Experimental evidence however lends strong force to the opinion that the amount and quality of the materials selected for reading can be greatly influenced by the motives which schools provide, by the provision of adequate facilities for leisure reading, and by the kinds of guidance given. The need is urgent for sources to which teachers and others can turn for help in making leisure reading a more dynamic force in enriching the lives of youth and in cultivating rich and stable personalities.

5. Great significance is placed upon the fact that there is a serious deficiency in the basic aspects of reading found to a surprisingly large degree among the high school and college students. This deficiency prevents students from being able

to prepare assignments effectively and consequently they are frustrated in their efforts to do school and college work. Teachers are baffled by their presence in classes and are eagerly seeking a solution for the difficult teaching problems they create. It is realized that these needs must be met and that the inadequate practices of the past must be eliminated. Changes in instructional programmes are needed which provide for wide variations in the capacity, attainments, and needs of students. The problems involved are so vital that they merit intensive study in every high school and college.

6. The fact that development in ability to read is continuous throughout elementary, high school and college years has been shown conclusively by scientific studies of the school progress of youth. Inferior instructional programmes may be responsible for the levelling off or even the deterioration of reading abilities and interests. It is only when appropriate stimulation and guidance are provided in all school and college subjects that require reading that satisfactory growth in and through reading occurs. Consequently improvement in reading is an all-school responsibility. All staff members must co-operate and vigorously co-ordinate the attack on the reading problems of the pupils.

These brief outlines of the position in England and America only serve to indicate that, as in New Zealand, with the increased school-life of the modern child, disabilities in

reading do exist and do seriously handicap the educational development of the individual. Much research, experimentation and testing has taken place and a lead has been given to the schools. The results obtained have been most valuable to those who drew up the Report on Reading in the Primary School discussed in Chapter III and obviously New Zealand authorities can benefit from overseas initiative.

Investigation into the incidence of retardation in reading has been carried out. As shown in Chapter III, this investigation has been carried out only to a very limited extent in New Zealand. However, the experience of teachers, both primary and post-primary, of inspectors of schools and of specialists in remedial work indicates that there is a very urgent need for a thoroughly comprehensive survey of reading in New Zealand primary and post-primary schools. When such a survey will be carried out, and what special provision will be made for pupils who are backward in reading, cannot be forecast. Meanwhile the duty devolves upon the individual school, or the individual class teacher, to make some effort:

- A. to evaluate the standard of reading within the school
- B. to assist retarded readers, and
- C. to develop reading abilities where they are normal.

A. In order to successfully organise a post-primary school scheme it would be of immense value to make a survey and appraise the reading interests, attainments, and needs of students at the time of entrance. The results of these initial

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS FOR POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

§1: Testing, Diagnosing, Remedial Treatment

In both England and America wide investigation into the incidence of retardation in reading has been carried out. As shown in Chapter III this investigation has been carried out only to a very limited extent in New Zealand. However, the experience of teachers, both primary and post-primary, of inspectors of schools and of specialists in remedial work indicates that there is a very urgent need for a thoroughly comprehensive survey of reading in New Zealand primary and post-primary schools. When such a survey will be carried out, and when special provision will be made for pupils who are backward in reading, cannot be forecast. Meanwhile the duty evolves upon the individual school, or the individual class teacher, to make some effort

- A. to evaluate the standard of reading within the school
 - B. to assist retarded readers, and
 - C. to develop reading abilities where they are normal.
- A. In order to successfully organise a post-primary school scheme it would be of immense value to make a survey and appraise the reading interests, attainments, and needs of students at the time of entrance. The results of these initial

surveys of the abilities and needs of pupils would give an impressive picture of the range in mental ability and reading competence of the pupils tested. The school staff would then be able to determine the extent and character of the reading problem which their pupils faced and the specific aspects of reading which required most attention, such as ability to comprehend, speed of reading, or the quality of the reading of the pupils. At the same time it might be possible to determine the number of special classes which would be needed for poor readers and any radical curriculum adjustments which might be necessary.

If individual teachers were to survey the data obtained from those initial tests they might be able to plan adjustments in the teaching of their specific subjects. Further, a study of the data might reveal aspects of reading that should receive major emphasis in teaching during the year. A staff might find that pupils, while reading effectively in some situations, may not have sufficiently developed habits of fluent reading, or certain basic study skills, to enable them to prepare assignments independently and effectively. As a result, increased attention could be focused on the development of ability both to read more rapidly and to use references, indexes, maps, graphs and the like, more intelligently.

The results of the initial survey might often provide teachers with the basic facts needed about individual students to insure appropriate adjustments of reading activities to

their reading levels and needs. The workshop teacher for example may find that certain members of his class are deficient in ability to read and follow directions. This may be true even if their general reading level is sufficiently high to enable them to read other materials required in the course. In such cases he should take immediate steps to develop proficiency in reading shop study sheets. In this way he will not only enable his pupils to become more independent in their shop work, but he will free himself later to give more attention to other problems of the course.

In planning an initial survey of the reading attainments of pupils the following points should be kept clearly in mind:-

1. That any information worth collecting is worth collecting well,
2. that schools are handicapped by lack of time and trained personnel,
3. that means should be available for securing the information,
4. that all the information secured must be definitely useful in formulating instructional practices and administrative procedures,
5. that the programme must be practical and should, therefore, be kept within reasonable limits. At the same time it should be broad enough to provide sufficient data to realize the advantages inherent in initial studies of reading.

It is suggested that the following types of information are needed in appraisals of reading attainments and needs of new entrants:-

1. power or level of comprehension,
2. comprehension of material in different content fields,
3. basic study skills,
4. reading vocabulary,
5. speed of comprehension,
6. reading interests, tastes and attitudes,
7. intelligence ratings,
8. records of scholastic progress,
9. records of, or tests for, auditory and visual acuity,
10. physical status,
11. home background.

B. In the post-primary school retarded readers may be described as follows:-

1. Those whose reading development has been neglected in the primary and/or intermediate school.
2. Those whose education has been interrupted by illness.
3. Those whose education has been interrupted by movement from school to school.
4. Those whose home and school environment has not stimulated them to read as efficiently or widely as they can and should.
5. Those who come under the care of the Child Welfare Department and frequently change from family to family. There

are a surprising number of these pupils in some schools.

6. Those who have some special reading difficulties on which they need more intensive practice and instruction than other pupils in their classes.

7. Those who have developed a resistance to reading.

8. Those who have other emotional and personality problems that are preventing them from realizing their reading potentialities.

These pupils will not respond to regular school instruction and may be classified as retarded with unrealized reading potentialities. The needs of some may be met within regular classes by remedial work in small groups or by individual help; others may profit by joining a special reading group; still others will need more intensive individual help in getting at the roots of their difficulties; even some will need referring to a clinic or a specialist.

Before deciding to give a student special help in reading, the teacher should be satisfied that the following statements apply.

(1) His teachers have observed that he cannot do the necessary reading in his subjects.

(2) The pupil himself has expressed dissatisfaction with his reading.

(3) His scores on a standardised reading test are in the lowest quarter for his group.

(4) His mental alertness and verbal ability, as indicated by

intelligence tests that require no reading beyond his present ability, are superior to his reading performance.

- (5) He understands oral language of the same difficulty as that which he is expected to read.
- (6) His achievement in school work that requires little or no reading is above his level of reading achievement.
- (7) His case history or cumulative record may show environmental reasons for retardation in reading: e.g. unskilful early instruction in reading, lack of books and other intellectual stimulation, or unfavourable family attitudes and relationships.

There are many conditions which may give rise to serious reading difficulties and post-primary teachers would find it advantageous to be watchful for the following -

1. Certain eye conditions which are commonly related to reading difficulties. These may consist of any of the following: a limited visual field, far-sightedness, astigmatism, failure of the eyes to co-ordinate so as to produce a single image, and disparity in size or shape of the images projected by the two eyes (aniseikonia). Teachers are not expected to be eye-specialists but often undetected eye defects cause retardation.
2. Physical impairments such as fatigue, malnutrition, or illness may have operated in earlier years to influence a pupil's present reading performance. Illness that caused absence from school at critical stages of learning, diseases, or retarded total development would obviously affect an individual's progress in reading.

3. In cases in which attention to other conditions has brought no improvement in reading, the possibility of neurological impairment should be considered. Brain injury or abnormal development or functioning of the brain may cause reading disability. In some cases, difficulty in reading is associated with a tendency to prefer the left eye to the right (left-eyedness), or with inconsistent eye-and-hand preference.

4. Perhaps an inadequate speaking vocabulary or an auditory or speech difficulty, may make an individual pupil feel less adequate as a person, and, therefore, less competent in the reading situation.

5. When considering mental ability as related to reading one must recognise the inadequacy of the verbal measuring instrument. Most New Zealand Schools use the Otis Group Test Higher Form A or B which tests have been standardised for New Zealand. As G. W. Parkyn points out,

"where a child suffers from a specific reading disability: there are many reasons for specific reading disabilities, - whatever the reasons, if a child's inability to read is specific (i.e. not just one aspect of a general intellectual retardation) we cannot validly use a printed verbal intelligence test for him."*

If a pupil has lacked opportunity or incentive to develop efficient reading methods, or if he suffers from emotional maladjustment, his performance on general tests of mental ability and even on tests of reading ability may be below his real capacity.

*G. W. Parkyn: "Measuring Intelligence: Administering the Tests." in "Education" Vol. 3, No. 2

6. It has been demonstrated that dynamic processes in the personality determine or guide many phases of growth, including reading development.* Different kinds and degrees of reading difficulties arise out of varied personality structures and needs. Before some neurotic individuals can make progress in reading they have to some extent to resolve their inner conflicts. The writer experienced such an incident when studying a pupil as a special case history for the Education III course. Even less severe emotional disturbances may hinder reading development. The pupil who is somewhat unstable, inefficient in the use of his mental capacity, and concerned with many other adjustments, is handicapped in dealing with the complex challenge that reading offers. The pupil's inability to read may be his way of showing that he is emotionally disturbed. As noted elsewhere, repeated frustration in the reading situation often leads to loss of interest, irritability and dislike of reading and even of school in general. Thus a vicious circle is set up.

7. The teacher should, rather must, ascertain the home conditions of his pupil; the information gleaned is valuable not only from the reading point-of-view but also for the whole of his school activities. From personal experience the writer is convinced that a visit to a pupil's home and a discussion with his parents plays a vital part in that pupil's development at school. If reading is a part of the pupil's total growth, then reading achievement is affected by such developmental

* Mandel Sherman, "Emotional Disturbances and Reading Disability,"
- quoted in Forty-Seventh Year Book: Part II.

influences as parent-child relationships, sibling rivalry, lack of encouragement, failure in his first attempts to learn to read, and negative parental attitudes toward the child and toward reading. Unfortunately there prevail many unfavourable home and community conditions such as:-

- (a) lack of room for private study,
- (b) absence of suitable books, pamphlets, and magazines,
- (c) aggressively competitive counter-attractions such as radio serials, films, wrestling, speedway,
- (d) excessive home duties or remunerative work,
- (e) while too few homes, schools and neighbourhoods offer incentives to reading or stimulate pupils to read widely and with enjoyment.

Obviously the relative importance of these factors in cases of reading backwardness will vary with the individuals concerned and one must realise that the only way to understand a pupil is to study him directly.

Where a post-primary school, or a member of the staff, has found cases of reading disability it will be necessary to formulate some plan of action to help these pupils. The methods used will depend upon the degree of the disability and the number of pupils affected, as well as the equipment of the school and staff for such a project.

American experience indicates that many retarded readers can benefit from group instruction and to meet their needs special groups have been organised along the following lines:-

A. Reading groups within regular classes. Where a teacher has the necessary training he can make provision for seriously retarded readers within their regular classes. He will have his class room well stocked with practice exercises, as well as books and magazines covering a wide range of interests and reading abilities. In these classes schedules will be used from which students will work in small groups or individually.

B. "Special English." Where difficulty has been experienced in teaching along the lines of traditional English classes the normal routine has been dropped and a popular form of special reading group has been developed. This is not an extra class but rather a normal class which lays stress on the improvement of reading.

C. Corrective and Remedial Classes. These again will depend on the interests of the group. Some emphasise free reading, others drill; some give practice in the study type of reading, others put interest and enjoyment first; but the best method seems to be the one which includes a variety of reading experiences that are needed by the particular group.

D. Reading Club. This is largely recreational in emphasis and operates on the principle that better reading results from enjoyable group enterprises. Its most obvious influence is on reading interests and attitudes.

The most effective remedial results will be those obtained from individual treatment of the pupil for his specific

disabilities. The three primary bases for deciding upon a remedial procedure are

- (a) the kind of error made
- (b) the apparent reason or reasons for its being made
- (c) and the kind of person who is the subject of the treatment.

Once these bases have been satisfactorily ascertained the ideal remedial programme should stress the phases of reading in which the individual is deficient, but it should not stress them to the exclusion of other aspects of reading that are essential to balance and natural development. In fact in a remedial programme one should find a combination of all aspects of reading. Word or phrase drill, if it is necessary, should be only a matter of five or ten minutes in the instructional period and should be supplemented, generally speaking by some oral reading of a prepared passage, some comprehension exercise in silent reading, some speed drill with a comprehension check. Beyond this, it is desirable that a student have a diet of wide easy reading, outside the instructional period, as well as experience with more challenging material during the period itself. In other words the tutoring period should be varied, the techniques used should be varied, and every gain that drill may effect must be measured by success in normal reading situations.

It must be remembered that any remedial procedure is productive of certain new knowledge, and gives certain new

clues to the difficulties that beset the pupil and retard his progress. Therefore, when the remedial programme is planned (with the pupil's help) a hard and fast procedure must not be laid down, but rather one which can be altered as new experiences with the student reveal different needs. The initial oral reading test will not reveal everything; experience with the student will give further cues for future work. Only in this way can the most be made of instructional time and of the pupil's energy.

In addition to the above general suggestions for remedial work the following examples of some specific exercises and procedures for correcting varying types of word-recognition error will further indicate the type of work which could be given.

IN CASE OF REVERSALS:

First, make sure what kind of reversal it is, i.e. letter, word or phrase - "from" for "farm", "saw" for "was", or "pretty little dool" for "little pretty doll."

Then encourage appropriate sequence in the following drills:

1. Emphasize left-to-right attack in everything that the pupil does.
2. Have the pupil slide his finger over the letters of the word or phrase to get a kinesthetic impression of the sequence.
3. Have the pupil trace the form of the word printed or written large on a card, saying the word in syllables as he traces; then have him remove the card from sight and write the word from memory.

4. If the pupil continues to copy the word backwards, have him begin at the extreme left-hand side of the page, so that he cannot possibly write in the wrong direction.
5. Give exercises in the use of the dictionary, which involves awareness of the letter by letter sequence.
6. Have the pupil make his own dictionary of newly learned words.
7. Give completion sentences in which the proper word must be inserted. "Write your name on this" (from, form.)
8. Have the pupil write sentences using the words that are confused, or make a point of using the words in his other written work.
9. Make completion rhymes: Standing by the tall tree
Were little puppy dogs
(there, three.)
10. Make flash cards of the words that have been confused.

IN CASES OF SUBSTITUTIONS:

If the substitution has been a wild guess, with no bearing on the form of the word or the meaning in the sentence, the pupil needs exercise in word recognition and word analysis and in attention to the meanings of sentences (comprehension exercises).

If the substitution is a context guess, the pupil needs exercise in word recognition and word analysis.

If the substitution is partially correct, there is need for stress on the parts that the pupil was not successful in

recognizing or analysing. These parts may be the endings, middles, or beginnings of words; they may be certain phonic combinations (ai, ea, ch, ing); they may be a matter of visual analysis (seeing the "car" and "pet" in carpet): they may be a matter of syllables that the pupil has skipped ("motion" for "promotion"), and there may be a need for attack on words through division into syllables (practise known words until technique is acquired; then attack unknown words).

If the pupil makes a substitution because he does not know the meaning of a word (ask him what it means) and because he does not know how to attack it, the problem is one of word recognition and word analysis, but primarily it is one of teaching him the meaning of the strange word.

If the substitution is a reflection of a speech difficulty, such as the substitution of TH for S, L for R (check by engaging the pupil in conversation and seeing whether he makes such substitutions normally), the problem is one of speech correction and not corrective reading.

For improved WORD RECOGNITION, try some of the following:--*

1. Make flash cards of the words confused and of other words involving the same issue (such as words beginning with B and K.) For a single pupil, the flash cards may be of calling-card size with the word printed in the size he normally encounters in the books he can read. For a whole class the cards should accommodate larger print, with about 2-inch capital letters and 1-inch lower-case letters.

* "Problems In the Improvement of Reading": McCullough, Strang and Traxler.

2. Make lists of the confused words, to be used only once or twice, the pupil reading them in sequence. If the lists are used often, the pupil tends to anticipate the words by their positions in the list rather than by their appearance.
3. If the word is common, introduce it into the spelling lesson.
4. Use the Fernald* method of seeing the word, hearing it, saying it in syllables while tracing it with the forefinger, then writing and saying it while the copy is out of sight, then filing the card on which it is printed in a filing system of newly acquired words arranged in alphabetical order.

The above suggestions all represent word-recognition exercise through isolated word drill. The following suggestions involve thought settings, sentences in which the words are planted for recognition in a more normal environment.

5. For word beginnings, middles, or endings, make sentences in which the critical word must be completed:

It was a beauti--- day in May.

The birds were sing---.

6. Make completion sentences in which the word is to be inserted: He cut the roast with a --- knife.
7. Give multiple-choice sentences in which the proper word is to be selected:

He cut the roast with a curling
 canning knife.
 carving
 curving

* "Remedial Techniques in Basal School Subjects" Grace M. Fernald

8. Have the pupil make sentences illustrating the troublesome word.

9. Have the pupil read aloud some prepared passages containing troublesome words.

For improved word analysis, the specific treatment depends upon the kind of analysis that the pupil is unable to do, but, in general,

a. Have the pupil develop lists of words bearing the characteristic that he has found difficult:

a phonic feature such as ai ea ch oi

a visual feature such as ight, able, take, or

a common prefix such as un, in, pre, per, or

a common suffix such as ing, ible, ant, ent, ly.

Let each list start with a word he knows well, so that it will be a clue to the phonic solution, the visual solution of the other words as he meets them and adds them to his list.

b. After he has read some material through successfully have him skim through it to circle or underline the parts of words of which he is making a special study: all the ATE's, the ING's, the PRE's, etc.

c. If the difficulty seems to come in attacking longer words, have the pupil practise syllabizing such words, beginning with words he knows well.

d. Have the pupil use the dictionary to improve his familiarity with prefixes, suffixes, and roots, with syllabizing, and with the pronunciation symbols.

e. Have the pupil make his own dictionary, thus to gain an appreciation of the likenesses and the differences in words.

f. After the pupil has seemed to gain mastery of certain elements of word attack through certain words, test his ability in analysis through flash cards and through sentences containing the difficult words. Actually his success in this exercise will be chiefly on a recognition rather than on an analytical level. For certain proof that he knows the element that caused him trouble, he must demonstrate his attack on strange words all of whose parts are familiar to him with the exception of the element to be tested.

Treatment along similar lines would be required for:

Cases of Omissions

Cases of Repetitions

In cases of No Attempt to understand a word

In cases of Insertions

In cases of Word-by-word Reading.

As there exists a number of pupils in post-primary schools who are non-readers the following suggestions should be of particular help. In addition to the technical difficulties indicated above, the personality factors in these cases should be given special attention.

Some pupils are afraid of reading; they think of themselves as children who cannot read. When he cannot read his fellow pupils consider him "dumb" or he regards himself as being "dumb." Parents and older brothers and sisters often

initiate or reinforce this attitude.

The first step will be to show these pupils that they can read a great deal more than they think they can, that they know more than they think they know. This particular case is a problem of re-education with respect to a habit and attitude pattern. This negative pattern may be attacked and changed by some of the following suggested methods:-

1. Give the pupil an appropriate reading test at his own rate of reading. Or better still, give the first test with standardised timing and then let him see how much he can improve his score when he is given more time. At the same time a basic difficulty with comprehension may be revealed; on the other hand, the difficulty may be only a slow rate of reading.
2. Where anxiety exists to any marked degree about reading dispel it as soon as possible and assure the pupil that there is no urgency and that he will learn rapidly enough. If possible, place first importance on discovering what his emotional needs are and help him to satisfy these needs.
3. If this negative attitude has been reinforced at home, and parents are putting pressure on him to read, then ensure that no further instructions in reading are given by members of the family.
4. Allow pupil to write his own textbook - have it typed and it will supply excellent beginning-reading material for him.
5. Supply other reading material which is meaningful to the pupil. His interest may be increased by a careful choice of material.

6. Occasionally a very seriously retarded reader may of his own accord decide to begin at the beginning, and go back to preprimer work, reading fluently the material for each primer and so on through the classes.

Needless to say these "non-readers" need a patient and sympathetic teacher - one who will proceed with instruction slowly enough and simply enough to give them a feeling of success and to avoid increasing their confusion and frustration. He will employ all his understanding of the individual, of psychology, and of reading procedures in working with each pupil. He will help the pupil to set immediate realistic goals of achievement in reading that he can reach with reasonable effort. Thus the teacher will help these seriously retarded readers to realize their reading potentialities.

C. Where it appears that reading abilities are normal the post-primary school should continue to promote development. In order to ensure development techniques for improving comprehension and vocabulary, for integrating reading skills and for evaluating reading growth must be continuously practised.

§2: THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR THE TEACHING OF READING

In the words of Sir Percy Nunn

"Educational effort must, it would seem, be limited

to securing for every one the conditions under which individuality is most completely developed - that is to enabling him to make his original contribution to the variegated whole of human life as full and as truly characteristic as his nature permits; the form of the contribution being left to the individual as something which each must, in living and by living, forge out for himself."*

It is herein submitted that one of the conditions necessary in modern society to enable the individuality to become most completely developed is that of enabling the individual to benefit to the fullest extent from his potential abilities to read. An American investigator** points out that reading to-day is an essential aid to personal development and social progress. It is an indispensable factor in modern culture, interwoven with work, recreation and other personal and social activities of man. It provides a permanent record of human experience that can be examined and restudied time and again in arriving at mature convictions and valid generalizations. Many of these values cannot be attained so effectively through the use of the radio and the cinema, because the reader is not free to pause and deliberate at will. On the other hand reading has the great advantage that the reader can adjust his pace to the demands of critical interpretation.

* Sir T. Percy Nunn: Education: Its Data and First Principles.
P. 5-6

**Edgar Dale: "Is there a substitute for Reading?" News Letter -
Ohio State University.

In New Zealand we aim to give everyone equal opportunities to profit from educational facilities. As stated above reading is a potent factor in the educational process, therefore it must be adequately provided for in our educational system.

Perhaps assurance that this provision exists would be established under the following conditions:-

- A. Where there was scientific and thorough teacher training in the field of reading
- B. Where there existed adequate libraries, and
- C. Where plentiful supplies of suitable materials were available.

Further consideration may be given to each of these.

A. TEACHER TRAINING.

1. General Teachers.

A thorough knowledge of the psychology of reading should be the stock-in-trade of all teachers be they infant-teachers, primary teachers or post-primary teachers. These teachers successively guide the pupil at the various stages of his school career but they must be aware of more than his chronological, physiological and average attainment level. They will need to be able to gauge his specific attainments in various fields, to understand his emotional and social development and to ascertain to what extent disabilities (if any) influence these. As noted elsewhere specific disabilities, be they in the field of reading, arithmetic or any combination

of subjects, can and do affect to varying degrees the whole development of the individual.

Trained teachers should have some understanding of the nature and causes of reading disabilities; they should be able to detect and identify common symptoms of reading disabilities; they should have an understanding of the influence of reading deficiencies upon the pupil's progress in school and on his general outlook; they should be ready to assist the pupil to overcome his handicaps or to enlist the services of those who can and they should have a knowledge of, and some skill in employing, appropriate procedures for remedial treatment in reading.

If all teachers possessed to a reasonable degree the understandings and abilities suggested above, they would be able, in a surprisingly large number of instances to remove the contributing causes and even to take appropriate steps in the treatment of retarded readers.

It is also extremely important that these teachers understand the basic principles of sound curriculum-building and of good teaching. Among the essential competencies* which teachers should possess are

1. a clear understanding of the nature of the learning objectives to be achieved,
2. a knowledge of the kinds of learning experiences necessary to acquire most effectively the learning products desired,

* Harold A. Anderson: "Teacher Education in the Field of Reading" in forty-seventh year book, Part II.

3. an understanding of the factors involved in planning the sequence of learning experiences,
4. the ability to adapt reading to the maturity level of students and to relate reading to the purposes of instruction,
5. the ability to provide a wide range of reading materials to meet the varied needs and interests of students,
6. a knowledge of the kind of guidance needed by students in achieving specific goals through reading, and
7. a sound rationale and appropriate techniques for appraising pupil achievement.

2. The Specialist Teacher.

In New Zealand we train specialist teachers in a variety of subjects such as physical education, music, art and crafts, etc., but in one aspect, that of the specialist in remedial work for such fundamental key subjects as reading and arithmetic, we fail to train specialist teachers to any extent at all. But the awakening awareness of our deficiencies in the teaching of reading as noted in Chapter III will, let it be hoped, precipitate the training of the remedial specialist teacher.

This specialist teacher will need to have manifested a genuine interest in this type of work and must have the personality to appeal to and maintain the interest of the children, as well as possess the temperament to withstand the exacting demands of the work involved. The specialist teacher's training should provide the following competencies:-

1. familiarity with new developments in curriculum and teaching,
2. a sound background in psychology and testing,
3. effectiveness in group work,
4. skill in diagnostic and remedial reading procedures,
5. proficiency in psychotherapy and advising.

The trained specialist should understand both the general instructional problems of the school and the highly specific problems and techniques of the field of reading.

For effective individual work the specialist will need a private interviewing room with diagnostic and remedial equipment and materials conveniently at hand. Files for current cases, closed cases and practice exercises are essential. A wide range of recreational reading material should also be available. A special reading room, which itself should be an invitation to reading, should be provided within the school. In this room the bookshelves should be spacious and conveniently placed. There should be tables on which books may be displayed, other tables at which pupils may work, and comfortable chairs for browsing. Bulletin boards will be needed for the display of reading material of current interest and the lighting should meet the practical criterion of comfort in reading.

B. LIBRARIES.

Most New Zealand schools are equipped with a library but in many, if not all, schools the library does not function as positively as it might do. Rather it is a place where many books, some impressively valuable, are stored. Some of these

books may be used and even borrowed by pupils who have sufficient interest and ability to ferret out books which interest them. But in most schools the teaching staff with the possible exception of one member has a very scant knowledge of the contents of the library. Experience more than suggests that teachers frequently issue books to pupils with no knowledge of the contents - whether difficult or easy, interesting or uninteresting to the children concerned, or even whether relevant or irrelevant to the topic in hand.

The Syllabus Revision Committee's Report on Reading has made valid and valuable suggestions regarding the expansion of school libraries within New Zealand and the suggested plans for development could well be extended to the post-primary schools.

At this juncture it is essential to stress the important role that a fully trained school librarian could play in the community. This term implies a trained teacher who has had teaching experience and then receives training as a librarian. One such trained, experienced, full-time school librarian could serve effectively a school enrolment of not more than five hundred pupils. The librarian would recognise reading as a part of the general development of the individual and a concern of all teaching areas. He would know that for maximum success, reading must be carried on in all classes, and that if an individual is an efficient reader, he must be able to read many types of material in many fields.

The school librarian would work with teachers, pupils and

even parents. He would be a resource to teachers helping them to find references on the topics they are studying in class, suggesting new books for pupils' recreational reading and supplying books for classroom libraries. He would also co-operate with teachers in helping students to acquire the best methods of locating information. To the teachers' professional growth he may contribute by keeping them informed concerning new curricula content, textbooks, reference books on teaching, and visual aids.

Not only should the library be the reading centre of the school, but, when well-equipped, it should be the pupil's most important laboratory. There, pupils should find books and articles which will illumine and heighten their interest in required reading, increase their sympathetic understanding of and curiosity about a subject, and make it real and imaginatively stimulating. The librarian should help to make study a delight rather than a drudgery. He would supply whatever books or magazines pupils display interest in, he would be alert to opportunities to guide them to something better in the same field, and, eventually, to extend their interests to other fields.

It is important to note that just as the class-teacher usually has a poor knowledge of the contents of the library or more specifically the contents of the books in the various sections of the library, the librarian for his part has an inadequate knowledge of the pupils, - their interests and their

abilities. Therefore it is essential that there should be co-operation to a fine degree between the librarian and the various members of the school staff. The librarian, the staff and representatives of the pupils should consult and discuss accessions to the library. The teacher can offer valuable suggestions for books relating to his special subjects whilst pupils can make most valuable suggestions as to the interests and requirements of their age.

C. SUITABLE MATERIALS.

In Chapter III, Pages 35-36, reference was made to recommended reading material for the primary school. These recommendations apply equally well to the post-primary school but obviously the range of difficulty will be increased in order to satisfy the greater spread of more mature and specific interests.

However, at this stage it is strongly recommended that a thorough going investigation be made into the reading interests of the 11 plus New Zealand children. This recommendation is made notwithstanding the investigation conducted by W. J. Scott and recorded in his "Reading, Film and Radio Tastes of High School Boys and Girls." The writer's experience reveals that "comics" provide the bulk of the reading indulged in by Technical school pupils. On the surface it appears that New Zealand children are starved of reading material which will satisfy their reading needs, interests and abilities. Suitable stories and magazines for New Zealand children with a New

Zealand flavour are scarce. Children, parents and teachers can buy only the material which is available. Thus children have reading interests thrust upon them rather than their reading interests and abilities catered for. Therefore, it is submitted that the standard of reading within New Zealand schools could be improved, if not greatly at least to some extent, by making a concentrated appraisal of the reading requirements of our children and then meeting these requirements by presenting material of varying difficulty attractively and scientifically produced. Above all it should be realised that this matter is urgent.

Another aspect of reading which is neglected in our schools is that of adequate testing. Once the problem of supplying adequate materials has been tackled it will also be necessary to tackle the question of the standardization for New Zealand conditions of Reading Tests such as tests for Silent Reading:- (a) speed, (b) vocabulary, (c) comprehension, etc.

Once reading remedial specialists have been trained and sent out into the field it is important that their work be thoroughly organised from the administrative point of view. It is suggested that each primary school receive the services of a remedial teacher and that this specialist should give all pupils in each school periodic check-up tests, either personally or by teachers under the personal supervision of the specialist. Further it is suggested that where intermediate schools exist

the specialist from a group of primary schools should also work in the intermediate school giving particular attention to those pupils personally guided through the primary schools.

This scheme could well be extended so that the remedial specialist attached to each post-primary school in the district would work in the intermediate school and any other schools which feed the post-primary school.

Within each school itself a rotation of remedial reading responsibilities from year to year in liaison with the specialist would ensure that ultimately every teacher becomes a teacher of reading. The chief drawback would be that the personality and background of many teachers would not be conducive to successful work in a reading programme while in some cases the attitude of the teacher might be unfavourable. However, this attitude would probably alter once teachers became informed in the field.

If such a scheme as that outlined above came into operation it would contain the following advantages:-

1. There would be continuity, co-ordination and co-operation from the infant stage to the university stage.
2. Class-room teachers and heads of schools could conceivably be kept up-to-date in the latest findings in the field of reading.
3. Once devised, tests could be efficiently administered and interpreted.
4. Once the needs of children with reading disabilities were

being met a greater understanding of the individual would emerge.

5. Unsound promotions would be eliminated.
6. The important factor of reading readiness would receive recognition at all stages of the individual's career, and a constructive programme of activities provided designed to develop the aspects of readiness which may be lacking.
7. The knowledge of what constitutes suitable materials for reading at the various stages would emerge.
8. Over-emphasis on certain skills and practices and the neglect of other skills and practices would be avoided.

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APPENDIX I

The following table shows the distribution of 150 pupils when the Reading Age (R.A.) is compared with the Chronological Age (C.A.)

R.A. greater than C.A. by:-	Boys	Girls	Total
over 30 months	3	2	5
25 - 30 months	2	-	2
19 - 24 months	-	6	6
13 - 18 months	2	1	3
7 - 12 months	4	2	6
1 - 6 months	3	2	5
R.A. equals C.A.	1	2	3
R.A. below C.A. by:-			
1 - 6 months	6	1	7
7 - 12 months	1	1	2
13 - 18 months	6	1	7
19 - 24 months	7	3	10
25 - 30 months	13	2	15
31 - 36 months	7	1	8
37 - 42 months	6	3	9
43 - 48 months	7	-	7
49 - 54 months	6	-	6
55 - 60 months	6	-	6
61 - 66 months	11	-	11
67 - 72 months	9	-	9
73 plus	23	-	23
Total	123	27	150

Although only 27 girls were tested 55.5% of these had an R.A. equal to, or above the C.A. On the other hand only 12.2% of the boys had a R.A. equal to, or above the C.A.

APPENDIX II

In an attempt to gauge attitude to reading a cross-section of a technical school population was subjected to a questionnaire. Of the 158 pupils who submitted answers, 133 or 84% claimed they liked reading silently for pleasure whilst 25 or 16% did NOT like reading at all.

- 58 or 36.7% claimed they did NOT like reading when in the Primer classes.
- 58 or 36.7% stated they did not wish to read to mother when they were primers whilst
- 68 or 43% did not wish to read to father.
- 133 or 84% Mother assisted primer with reading.
- 75 or 47.4% Father assisted primer with reading.
- 44 or 33% of mothers who assisted growled when primer did not read well.
- 28 or 37.3% of fathers who assisted growled when primer did not read well.
- 69 or 43.6% of primers were disappointed when mother would not hear them read.
- 58 or 36.7% of primers were disappointed when father would not hear them read.
- 125 or 79% claimed a marked objection to reading orally when in standards at Primary School.

Of those who liked reading in the primers the following claimed they took a dislike to reading in

Std. 1	6
Std. 2	5
Std. 3	12
Std. 4	11
Std. 5	9
Std. 6	6
<hr/>	
Total	49
<hr/>	

In six cases a pupil claimed that an elder brother put them off reading.

In two cases a pupil claimed that an elder sister put them off reading.

In one case a pupil claimed that a parent put him off reading.

1. The provision of books for general reading and as background reading in various subjects.
2. The supply of group readers for group and individual instruction in the skills of reading, and individual work-type material for all schools.
3. The preparation of a dictionary suitable for New Zealand schools.
4. The issue, weekly, of a Children's Magazine.
5. The preparation of reading tests standardized for New Zealand schools.
6. Facilities for distribution of standardized overhead tests to teachers.
7. Investigation into the incidence of retardation in reading in the primary and post-primary schools of New Zealand.
8. Provision for assisting pupils who are backward in reading.
9. The provision for each classroom of a set of basic readers for the use of children of slow development in reading.
10. Provision for the investigation of teachers' reference books.
11. The preparation of a scheme in visualizing for New Zealand schools and provision for the training of teachers to carry it out.

APPENDIX III

Recommendations made by Reading Syllabus Revision Committee

To enable the proposals of this Report to be carried out effectively the Committee considers that the following are essential -

1. The provision of books for general reading and as background reading in various subjects.
2. The supply of group readers for group and individual instruction in the skills of reading, and individual work-type exercise books to all schools.
3. The preparation of a dictionary suitable for New Zealand schools.
4. The issue, monthly, of a Children's Magazine.
5. The preparation of reading tests standardized for New Zealand children.
6. Facilities for distribution of standardized overseas tests to teachers.
7. Investigation into the incidence of retardation in reading in the primary and post-primary schools of New Zealand.
8. Provision for assisting pupils who are backward in reading.
9. The provision for each classroom of a set of basic readers for the use of children of slow development in reading.
10. Provision for the importation of teachers' reference books.
11. The preparation of a scheme in verse-speaking for New Zealand schools and provision for the training of teachers to carry it out.

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