

models which show both careless observation and careless execution. Modelling, whether in plasticine, paper, carton, or any other material, should not be allowed to produce habits of carelessness or untidiness.

INFANT-ROOM METHODS.

The methods in the infant-room are steadily improving ; but in quite a number of schools we still find that insufficient use is made of modern methods, especially in the use of individual material for the teaching of reading and phonics. In this connection it should be noted that Dr. Ballard, in "The New Examiner," tells us that, owing to the introduction of individual-reading material, children now make much more rapid progress than they did ten or twelve years ago. That alone should be sufficient to induce the hesitating to give the newer methods a trial.

The teaching of number is usually looked on as the bugbear of the infant school, but we are convinced that it is often made unnecessarily difficult by the methods adopted for teaching. Most teachers go in for far too much number analysis, and thus often give children a distaste for number work which they never get rid of. After the children have got over the first steps, and, by means of concrete material, have come to understand what number is, the teacher should consider what are the really essential number facts that Class P should know, and then what is the best order for teaching them. These few essentials are (1) the addition combinations from 1 plus 1 to 9 plus 9 (45 in all), and (2) those parts of the multiplication tables which involve no products greater than 20 (16 in all). The order in which they should be learned should be that which is found easiest for the child. The usual method is to teach all number facts in connection with one number before proceeding to the next—to teach about 7 before teaching anything about 8, and so on ; but this is certainly not a natural way for the child to learn number, nor is it economical of effort. Besides, it leads to two other mistakes, for (1) there is a tendency to teach facts in isolation instead of connecting each new fact with some easier one previously learned, and (2) children are sometimes expected to memorize facts which should not be memorized but should rather be inferred from the basic facts. For instance, subtraction and division tables should not be memorized, but the result should be derived by the child from addition and multiplication. It is most important that the memorization of the few basic facts should be very thorough. The response may be slow at first, but it must be accurate, and later on it should come without the least hesitation. Want of thoroughness in this matter is the most potent cause of weakness in arithmetic in the standard classes.

SPECIAL CLASS FOR BACKWARD CHILDREN.

The special class for exceptional children which was established in Napier in the previous year under Miss Munro continues to do excellent work. Several of the children have made such progress that they have been sent back to their former schools and are now able to take their places in the ordinary classes. Dr. Clark has taken a keen interest in its success, and our thanks are due to him, and to the kindness of others who have been instrumental in getting a piano for the use of the class.

HOSPITAL SPECIAL CLASS.

In connection with the Napier Central School, a special class has been carried on at the Napier Hospital. This class continues to do good work, and to provide an interesting and profitable occupation for the young inmates.

MEDICAL INSPECTION.

Excellent work is being done by Dr. Clark and his staff of nurses. They have been most indefatigable in their efforts to raise the standard of health in our schools, and we are glad to have the doctor's assurance that the standard is now very much higher than it was a few years ago. The dental clinics already established in Napier, Hastings, and Gisborne are kept fully employed and are doing excellent work towards the same important end.

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.

This most important branch of education receives due recognition in all our schools, and the good quality of the work reflects credit on the ability and enthusiasm of the instructor, Mr. Price, who took up his duties here at the beginning of the year. The teachers as a whole show keen interest both in the more formal exercises and in organized games. In all the larger and in a considerable number of the smaller schools the teachers deserve much credit for their work in supervising the cricket, football, basketball, and hockey matches, which are a regular feature of school activities. We fully recognize the importance of the training thus given, not only in promoting the physical wellbeing of the nation, but in providing a very valuable means of character-building.

ORGANIZING TEACHERS.

Towards the end of the year Mr. H. Lyall took up the duties of organizing teacher in the southern end of the district, while Mr. Benson has carried on the work in the north. Both these men are enthusiasts, and it would be hard to overestimate the value of their work in helping and inspiring the teachers and in raising the standard of work in the more remote country schools.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, we desire to express our appreciation of the fine spirit shown by the teachers during the year, and of the kindness and courtesy shown to us on all occasions by the Education Board and its officers. They have been most willing to assist us in every possible way, thus promoting the most harmonious relations.