

Curriculum and the Child.—The syllabus in arithmetic has been revised with a view not only to eliminating the merely pedantic portions, but also to relating the work more to the actual conditions of life. There has been considerable adjustment of more difficult phases—*e.g.*, formal drills have been removed from the infant stage; the harder processes of subtraction and division have been deferred approximately one year throughout. Practical work in weights and measures, shopping games, and social arithmetic in the form of projects or exercises based on civic, industrial, and family needs are featured. Teachers are being asked to experiment with the new syllabus. It will not be possible to adopt the syllabus for all schools until new text-books and adequate equipment are provided. In two education districts considerable advance has been made with experimental work, and the time usually devoted to arithmetic has been reduced to allow time for greater attention to other essential studies.

The curriculum as a whole is being better integrated in numbers of schools. Subject walls are gradually breaking down, and reduced intensity of study in certain formal phases has permitted an enrichment of curricular content in music, verse, art, crafts, and physical education. The whole gamut of school subjects is gradually becoming more a stream of activities in which the child is given an opportunity to develop through his own efforts as far as possible. His reaction is noticeable in brighter personality, freer speech, greater resourcefulness, and better spirit of co-operation. There remains, perhaps, the inculcation of greater civic pride, expressed in increased respect for and care of property, public and private.

Ability grouping, in which children are grouped according to respective abilities in various phases of the curriculum and given work of a difficulty commensurate with capacity, has made some progress, but not sufficient. It is in this respect that intermediate schools have a great value. The services of specialist teachers enhances this advantage. The courses of work in the district high schools have been restricted largely by requirements of external examinations. With elimination of the compulsory foreign language for University Entrance, and provision of a wide range of subjects for the School Certificate Examination, it should be possible to provide well-balanced courses, both for those undertaking higher education and those completing their education at the post-primary stage. These schools are, within limits, doing really good work, but with the removal of a too-prevalent academic bias, can function more successfully.

Infant Methods.—Considerable interest has been shown in this branch of work. During the year a conference of the advisers to infant departments was held, and the chief subjects discussed were premature teaching of reading and number, activity period work, and the use of play-way aids, including manipulative toys. The New Zealand Council for Educational Research willingly helped in investigating the problem of readiness for reading and number, and the type of experience that should precede more systematic teaching at the appropriate time. There are in various parts of the Dominion some keen, progressive infant-teachers who have successfully introduced new methods in their classes. Teachers from other schools or districts have visited these departments. One of these features is the activity period, in which the children, through play and movement involving the use of apparatus or toys, acquire the general background of training for formal instruction later. In some classes rest periods have been introduced, particular attention being given to the youngest children.

Correspondence School.—In 1943 the school celebrates its twenty-first birthday. The total enrolment to date exceeds 20,000 students, and the current roll, 3,300. The staff now numbers 120 teachers and clerical officers. The Correspondence School most successfully provides educational facilities for those who cannot attend regular schools. The post-primary courses are well differentiated, and it is surprising how well commercial subjects, art, crafts, needlework, and dressmaking can be taught by correspondence. Weekly broadcast lessons by members of the staff are appreciated by the children. There is a large circulating library; and a wide range of clubs and societies, extending from garden circle and animal welfare to story-writers and international affairs, provides for the special interests of the children. War conditions have prevented the holding of vacation schools, which many children formerly attended, and also the continuing of the system of visiting teachers, whereby a substantial measure of personal contact was maintained between the staff and the pupils. Worthy of mention is the special work undertaken in the education of crippled and other disabled children. Recently the Headmaster received from a pupil who had lost the use of her hands a letter of thanks neatly typed by the use of her toes.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS (MR. E. CARADUS) FOR THE YEAR 1942

Staff.—During the year there was no change in the personnel of the Inspectorate. At the end of the year, however, Miss Hetherington, who had been a member of the secondary Inspectorate since March, 1926, retired on superannuation and was replaced by Miss L. A. S. Hurle, M.A., Principal of Timaru Girls' High School. Miss Hurle took up her duties in February of this year.