

Finally, it may be very naughty of me, but I confess to being unimpressed by the battery of famous names (including as it does, four past Presidents of the Association). Dare I ask also: Has any of these gentlemen ever taught Infants?

Yours etc.

R. V. PARKEE

To the Editor of the *Mathematical Gazette*

Dear Sir,

I like the method of beginning subtraction suggested by Miss Bursler in your October number, 1959, but I cannot agree that equal additions is as hard to demonstrate as she suggests. Equal additions is the method of subtraction that derives from problems in which the difference must be found. If a child has to find the difference between a 6 inch rod and a 9-inch rod, he has both minuend and subtrahend before him, and both do have an existence. It is then, also, quite easy to show that equal additions do not alter the difference. Children see this quickly when their own ages are used in examples.

This method of subtraction has some advantages, one of which includes the appreciation of the basic idea that equal additions do not alter differences, but this is appropriate to a year or more of mental growth beyond decompositions, and should probably not be attempted until then.

The difficulty with crutches is easily dealt with by always adding one to the bottom at the same time as one to the top line, where that is necessary.

Many teachers object to teaching more than one process of subtraction in the scare of confusion. I doubt if this is reasonable for I have observed that, without knowing it, teachers who use equal additions for whole numbers will use decomposition for fractions—and without confusing the children.

Yours sincerely,

RAY CHAPMAN-TAYLOR

WANTED

Mathematical Questions from the Educational Times, in particular the volumes by W. I. C. Miller.

Robert Simson's Euklid from 1756, and those of I. Playfair, Ch. Hutton, T Perronet Thompson, A. de Morgan, Todhunter, R. Townsend, Nixon. I. MacMahon, Elementary Plane Geometry, 1903.

Offers to Karl Michaelis,

Hamburg-Wandsbek,

Rodigallee 100.