



KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

An official
publication of the
New Zealand Free
Kindergarten Union

March 1977



Something To Think About

In this Journal you will find a competition entitled, "Can you answer these?" If your answer is "yes" then you are obviously well informed about the Kindergarten movement. If however, your mind is a blank after studying the questions I hope that you will make every endeavour to become familiar with the answers to these and many other questions. It was Duncan Stuart who wrote, "Strange how much you've got to know before you know how little you know."

Where then are you going to start this involved business of acquiring the basic knowledge you need? The answers are all in the History, "Kindergartens in New Zealand", in this, and other copies of the Journal, "Kindergarten Education" and in memos which your Association Secretary receives from the Union Office. The Union needs well informed people to become the LEADERS of the future. SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

PATRICIA M. LOCKHART,
Editor.

The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union

is a body which consists of and co-ordinates kindergarten associations throughout New Zealand working in the interests of kindergarten.

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Deadline for articles for the July journal is 15 May 1977.

All cheques and orders should now be addressed to:

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6 Norfolk Street,
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Please address articles to:

THE EDITOR,
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WELLINGTON 3.

ORDER FORM

A separate order form will be forwarded to Association Secretaries to use in future. If you are a new subscriber within the Kindergarten service please ask your Kindergarten Secretary to record your order when he/she forwards the Kindergarten order to the Association Secretary. If you are an interested reader who would like to receive regular copies please write to the Manager, Kindergarten Education, 6 Norfolk Street, Dunedin.

The next copies of the Journal will be on sale in July and October at 20c a copy. Orders for the July edition must be received by 1 June 1977, and by 1 September 1977 for the October edition.

We encourage orders to be placed for the whole year. This cuts down the work load both for Association Secretaries and the Manager.

A TRIBUTE

With the untimely death in January, of Mrs Ngaire Larcombe, the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association lost a valued and respected member. As a former President of that Association, Ngaire had the interest and welfare of her very large Association at the top of her list of priorities. No detail large or small escaped her active mind and her ability to cope. Her knowledge of site acquisition, planning and building kindergartens, and her ability to find the right person in the various departments to listen to, and accede to her requests was the envy of many. Perhaps it will be for her able Chairmanship of the first National Pre-school Convention that Ngaire will be remembered by readers of the Journal. To accept the challenge to chair the Convention Committee on top of the heavy load she was already carrying seemed to be an impossibility, but history has recorded the wonderful success of the Convention. This is due in no small measure to the capable guidance and enthusiasm of the Chairman. As a delegate to the Union Conference on many occasions, Ngaire has much to contribute always speaking in a positive and forthright manner.

The union extends to her daughter Lorraine, and her son John, sincere sympathy and the assurance that the work their late mother did on behalf of the Kindergarten movement will be recorded for all time in its history.

*Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled.
You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.*

Thomas Moore, The Farewell

"A Survey of Wellington Pre-school Families"

One of the persistent questions raised by people interested in early childhood education is:

"Why are some families who live near pre-school centres, not using such services?"

I was able to ask this question of 28 families in Newlands, Wellington, when I surveyed 139 parents of pre-school children (three and four year olds) in three Wellington suburbs in 1974. The Department of Social Work at Victoria University have obtained further information about inner city non-users this year, and a different picture is emerging there.

Newlands is one of Wellington's newer suburbs. The majority of the fathers in the sample had white collar jobs and many had jobs where the employer expected them to move about New Zealand to gain promotion. Hence the suburb has a highly mobile population. The young age of the suburb and the mobility of its inhabitants were two important factors in the pattern of non-use in this suburb.

It is often assumed that families who do not attend playcentres or free kindergartens come from low socio-economic groups, but this was not so in Newlands. These fathers' occupations were more often in the professional/managerial category than were kindergarten and playcentre fathers in the same suburb. More Newland's non-users had recently moved into the suburb than had families attending a pre-school centre. This mobility acted against families desiring kindergarten education (39%) getting a place because the kindergarten had such a long waiting list of over 300 children that the teacher could not accept transfers—a common state of affairs in new housing areas.

Another 46% of these families did desire early childhood education for their children. A few families obtained some by transporting their children to a private kindergarten outside the suburb. Many kept their children home because they did not know that the two playcentres had shorter waiting lists, or because they felt that playcentre was not for them. Fewer of these mothers had the use of a car and more of the carless, non-user families expressed a reluctance to walk, even if they lived relatively close to the pre-school centres—a characteristic of non-user mothers which I predict as common in any type of suburb.

Only 14 percent of the non-user families had deliberately chosen not to use a pre-school centre. Their reasons included:

"I needed child care until I finish work at 2.30," and "The kindergarten was full when we

arrived, and you have to pay to go to playcentre, which we didn't have to back home (Wales)," and "I prefer to keep a close relationship with my children until they are five years old. My husband is not enthusiastic about pre-school education."

The other 86 percent display a picture of thwarted desire for pre-school education in Newlands. However, I doubt whether this picture could be generalised to lower socio-economic areas. In such areas as Wellington the kindergarten waiting lists are relatively short, which is a blessing as many parents in such suburbs do not understand the middle class procedures of enrolling a child then going on to a waiting list for a year or two. In Wellington's inner city suburbs, the wait is a short one and yet the turnover of children through these kindergartens is just as high as if the children were not starting until they are nearly four and a half. Hopefully, the Department of Social Work's study will explain whether most of these families stop attending because they are moving or whether other factors are involved.

What picture emerged for the 111 families who attended a playcentre or free kindergarten in the three suburbs, Khandallah, Newlands, and Newtown?

Eighty-four families had used kindergarten at some stage and their reasons for choosing kindergarten included:

- (a) "Kindergartens are better organised", "Kindergartens have better discipline", (36%)
- (b) Kindergartens enable children to mix with others of their own age, (18%)
- (c) Kindergartens have better equipment and activities, (14%)
- (d) The kindergarten was closer to home. (12%)

The two main reasons for choosing playcentres were the younger starting age, and a liking for the playcentre approach to early childhood education.

Amongst the 111 families who were using a kindergarten or playcentre, were 28 families who admitted having used both services, although at different times, 75 percent of them had made kindergarten their first choice, but had gone to playcentre for a period because the child could start younger. Both organisations' personnel usually actively discourage switching from playcentre to kindergarten simply for the parents' convenience. Seven percent had chosen playcentre for an older child and felt that the kindergarten style of discipline would suit the younger child better. Both pre-school organisations had 7 percent of families switching from one service to the other because the child would not settle at the first

form of pre-school tried. However, this action is only open to parents who have enrolled at kindergarten at age two.

Enrolment and waiting procedures inhibited quite a number of families using the kindergarten service. It was not only a constraining practice for those who did not enrol at the right time, but also for those families who moved house when their children were pre-schoolers, particularly if they moved to a new housing area where there is usually a time-lag between the arrival of lots of young families and the building of a kindergarten. Fewer kindergarten families (18 percent) had moved in the last two years than playcentre families (38 percent), and many kindergarten families were well-established in their suburb—58 percent had lived in the same place for more than five years in contrast with only 29 percent of playcentre families being so settled.

Not only were more kindergarten families firmly settled, but they tended to settle near extended family members. More than half of them saw the children's grandparents fairly frequently and probably other kin as well. Contact with kindergarten came about because of relatives for 9 percent of kindergarten families. Other main sources of information about kindergarten included friends and neighbours (46%) saw the kindergarten sessions in progress while in the neighbourhood (14%), and references from the doctor, plunket nurse etc. Far more playcentre parents (71%) learned about playcentre from friends and neighbours' recommendations, and lived a distance away from grandparents so that they were visited rarely.

Kindergartens seemed better able to cater for families with certain distinguishing characteristics:

- (a) Families for whom English is their second language;
- (b) Families where the parents have not been socialised into participating in voluntary organisations, and therefore have neither the skills nor the motivation to join a playcentre where more participation is expected of them than it is at a kindergarten. Twenty-three percent of the kindergarten parents surveyed had never participated in any type of kindergarten activities;
- (c) Families where both the parents have heavy commitments; either in the form of paid work or voluntary work. More kindergarten

mothers had jobs (42 percent compared with 36 percent of playcentre mothers), and 25 percent of the kindergarten working mothers had full-time jobs whereas only one playcentre mother worked a 40-hour week. The greater proportion of full-time working mothers is associated with the greater proportion of kindergarten families living on a low income. Also more kindergarten parents were very active in voluntary organisations. Twenty-seven percent of kindergarten parents were active in four or more community organisations, whereas only 11 percent of playcentre families were so active. A large majority of playcentre users were moderately active in two to three clubs or organisations, and few were non-joiners;

- (d) Families where the parents believe in training their children. These parents seem to be more concerned with the end-product from the time spent in schools and pre-schools, whereas playcentre parents are more concerned with the learning process.

Arising out of this survey I became interested in the distribution of pre-school centres in Wellington city. David Barney reports in *Who Gets to Pre-school?* that there is a fairly even distribution of pre-school places across the different socio-economic areas of Auckland. This was not the case in Wellington. Despite efforts by the early Wellington Free Kindergarten Association to provide kindergartens in poor areas, there have been insufficient kindergartens built in low socio-economic areas of Wellington. Under the present system of building only when parents have formed an establishment committee and raised many thousands of dollars for their proportion of building and equipment costs, the lower ratio of places will persist unless the Association and government decide the inner city qualifies for special assistance. In upper and middle socio-economic areas there is one kindergarten place for approximately four children aged three and four years, but there is only one kindergarten place for every six pre-school children in low socio-economic areas. As there are also relatively few playcentre places in the low socio-economic areas, special efforts must be made to improve the provision of pre-school places in such areas.

ANNE MEADE.

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE?

If you can and your entry is one of the first five correct ones opened you could win a book token for yourself and one for your Kindergarten.

Conditions of entry at the end of the quiz:

1. Who is the Minister of Education?
2. What percentage of the Education Vote is spent on Pre-school?
3. How many Wards are there?
4. In what city was the last Australian Pre-school Convention held?
5. The Union recently celebrated a Special Jubilee. Name it.
6. Who was the first President of the Union?
7. Who is Mr Bill Renwick?
8. By whom was the history, "Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975" compiled?
9. On what date did the Union move into its own office?
10. What year did the integration of the Teachers and Kindergarten Colleges take place?
11. On what date and in what city did the Kindergarten Movement begin?
12. Who is known as the founder of the movement?
13. Who is President of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association?
14. Where does the Union Vice-President live?
15. Which is the largest Association?
16. Name three one Kindergarten Associations.
17. Who is the present Manager of the Journal?
18. Where does she live?
19. Name the two main Pre-school services.
20. How many recognised free Kindergartens are there at the present time?—February 1977.

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS 1-20 CLEARLY ON ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY.

Include your name and address and that of your Kindergarten (or one of your choice). On the outside of your envelope write the word 'Quiz' in a prominent place and post to:

The Editor,
"The Mooring",
6 Zaida Way,
Wellington 3.

All entries must be received by 1 May 1977. **NO ENTRIES WILL BE OPENED BEFORE THAT DATE.**

A clue is given in the editorial as to where the answers may be found **GOOD LUCK.**

News and Views From Around the Associations

Oamaru Free Kindergarten Silver Jubilee 1976

The Oamaru Free Kindergarten Association decided to make 1976 an outstanding year, as 25 years had passed since the enthusiastic inaugural meeting under the leadership of the late Edna McCulloch. To mark the jubilee, a Silver Ball was planned. An energetic committee, drawn from the three kindergartens and members of Council, under the Chairmanship of Helen Grater planned the function.

The long saga of rebuilding McCulloch Kindergarten was nearly over, and 1000 letters, toll calls, deputations and plans later, 1 July was a "red letter day", when a "go ahead" telegram was received from Southern Regional Office. The date of the Ball was Friday, 8 October 1976 and McCulloch foundations and framework were completed by that day.

The Ball was honoured by the presence of Mrs Pat Lockhart, Mr and Mrs F. Logan, the Mayor and Mayoress, the Member of Parliament and his wife, Mr and Mrs J. Elworthy, the former Mayor and M.P. Mr W. Laney and his wife who had been the first Secretary of the Association, Foundation Members and about 200 friends. The cake was cut by Mrs Lockhart and a sumptuous party supper was supplied by parents and friends in the usual Oamaru tradition. Besides giving a happy night's dancing and feasting, the Association made a handsome profit of over \$500.

The celebrations were tinged with sadness, as the Association's first President, Edna McCulloch, had passed away just some days before. Edna was buried quietly but a public tribute was published in the local paper. The children visited Mrs Gardiner, Mrs McCulloch's 1st Lieutenant, at her home as ill health prevented Mrs Gardiner attending the Ball. Appropriately Mrs L. Divers accompanied the children. Mrs Divers was one of our first teachers and is now back on the staff as our senior head teacher.

I am sure Mary Selman, the President was a very proud person celebrating with her association the Jubilee "Silver Ball".

**JOAN GILLES,
SECRETARY.**

Southland

On Friday, 30 July, anyone travelling between Gore and Invercargill would have passed a jovial crowd of people staging a Bath-a-thon to raise funds for the Kingswell Kindergarten Building Committee. Two baths were pushed, one by men

from the area, and the other by men from the Post Office telephone services. All remained in high spirits despite the fact that rain fell for most of the journey, but hot soup dispensed from back-up vehicles kept the inner man warm throughout the trip. Two local Radio personalities joined in the fun and provided progress reports back to the station—eight in all being broadcast. These reports kept supporters in town well informed. The Mayor of Gore saw the "pushers" off at 8.15 a.m. and presented them with a letter to carry to the Mayor of Invercargill. A mishap occurred when one bath got a flat tyre which was soon changed and whisked away to be repaired in case of a second casualty. So great was the progress that the two teams and their "vehicles" arrived in Invercargill one and a half hours ahead of schedule. Some quick phoning by members of the organising committee ensured that the Mayor was at the Post Office to meet them.

The Committee's effort raised \$1,200 through sponsorship. A social function was held that evening to celebrate a rewarding and fun venture. Since that time the committee has raised a further \$200 from the sale of a variety of wooden toys.

**C. J. THOMAS
PRESIDENT
KINGSWELL ESTABLISHMENT
COMMITTEE**

Havelock North

Report of a Talk Given to Ward 5 by Constable Simmonds, A Youth Aid Officer with the Napier Police

On Saturday, 13 November 1976, Constable Stan Simmonds was guest speaker at a meeting held at the Lucknow Kindergarten, Havelock North. The purpose of this invitation was to enable the Ward to be informed about the work of Police Youth Aid Officers in relation to the work by the Kindergarten movement.

Constable Simmonds told his audience that all main centres now have two or more Youth Aid Officers whose task it is to deal with young offenders particularly with first offenders. Some eighteen months ago this was extended to allow one officer in each area to be involved solely with the schools. Constable Simmonds styled himself as "school talks officer" who spent much of his time addressing groups of children from Kindergarten age through to Seventh Form level. He also spent considerable time making home visits to parents of first offenders, and in this capacity he appeared to be more of a social worker than a Police Officer.

Constable Simmonds then went on to explain just what he told each age group, starting with the Kindergarten children. He came into this situation only at the request of the staff. With this age group his aim was to establish a friendly relationship with the children, to encourage them to realise that Policemen are people and always available to help them and also to stress to the children some of the dangers they might encounter, such as strangers offering them rides in a car. He recommended an excellent film strip entitled "Patch, the Pony" which he felt that teachers could use to good effect.

He then went on to speak of his work in both Primary and Secondary schools, an area which is of interest to all parents. He produced the rather alarming statistic that 60 percent of the crime in this country was committed by people 17 years and younger. He said that he personally felt that many parents were opting out of their role as protectors and disciplinarians, educators and setters of standards, and that this was the background cause of much of the trouble in which young people found themselves. He stressed several times that the Youth Aid Officers always emphasised that they were Police Officers and as such had a clearly defined role.

This was an interesting talk which gave much food for thought. It seems obvious that those in the Kindergarten movement must accept the fact that some of the homes from which the children come are less than ideal, and that together with people like Constable Simmonds, they have a very real opportunity to help shape the future of their young charges.

**JULIET HAIGH, PRESIDENT,
DANNEVIRKE FREE KINDERGARTEN
ASSN.**

Christchurch

In answer to many requests and in an endeavour to better inform their delegates, the Christchurch Association conducted a panel programme when questions of concern were answered. The panel was made up of: the District Pre-school Adviser; the Assistant Divisional Officer (buildings) and the Section Officer (primary-pre-school buildings) both of the Department of Education; the President of the Association; the Chairman of the Association Building Committee; A Member of the above Committee.

This proved to be an invaluable exercise especially for the Chairmen of the many establishment committees who are almost always new to the Kindergarten Movement when they take on the chairmanship. Other Associations may like to

try the same exercise at a future date so the questions put to the panel are reprinted here for that purpose. Only the answer to the first question is included.

1. What is the percentage of the education vote allocated to pre-school? For the financial year 1976-1977 \$9,065,000 was allocated. The total education vote was \$698,000,000—1.3 percent to pre-school.
2. How is it spent and by whom?
3. What percentage is spent on new buildings?
4. How and by whom is the distribution of new buildings spread throughout New Zealand?
5. Why is it not possible to proceed with buildings after the Department has given permission to draw up working drawings and specifications?
6. Are there two priority lists—Union and Department?
7. What can affect a place on the establishment list?
8. What can an establishment committee do to help win a place on the building programme?
9. What can hinder an establishment committee in gaining a building of its own?
10. How are boundaries determined for the survey of a new kindergarten? by whom? and when?
11. Is there a special fund for special case kindergartens?
12. Can temporary buildings be used for kindergartens?
13. It has been noted in the paper that there are discarded school rooms for sale. Could these be used for kindergartens?
14. When a school is being built in a new area would it be possible for a classroom to be allotted as a kindergarten (and possibly open before the primer block)?
15. Would it be possible to know the definite date and number of kindergartens to be built in an area two or three years ahead?
16. When a new suburb is planned, is land set aside for a kindergarten and who is responsible for this?
17. If and when the extended roll policy is accepted, will this affect the number of new kindergartens built each year?

Napier

**The Abode of the Middle Sized (Association)
Secretary**

Large associations usually rent office space and employ full-time office staff. Small associations usually provide a small honorarium for an interested council member to work from home. But what about the middle-sizers?

Napier is one of these and our answer may be worth sharing.

Until 1970 the secretary-treasurer was an accountant working from a city office. But with an expanding association the work became too time consuming to be a viable proposition for such a person. Most associations cannot afford to pay for the work load to be done in this manner. I had many reservations about undertaking this work. Having been a kindergarten teacher and secretary of a one kindergarten association, I felt reasonably confident in the staffing and correspondence areas, but what about the monetary side and where would I keep the steel filing cabinet and numerous cardboard cartons—the contents of which made up the filing system? Our house did not have spare rooms for office space. However with the aid of a tolerant accountant husband the first problem was overcome. The second took longer. Why not build an association office where everything could be kept in one place and business with staff discussed in private? This too was done.

What we needed was a small relocateable building. This could then be shifted by fork lift from one secretary's home to another. Costly? Not necessarily.

The President had been involved in the building trade so was able to design a suitable construction. My task was to canvass likely suppliers for materials. All where more than generous. A door from one joinery firm, windows from another, timber from one merchant—iron from another and so on until all the materials had been donated. But what of construction? A plea to local committees for available "carpenter fathers" brought an incredible response and the "office" was erected in one day. The only expense to the association being the all important "catering" costs as well as remarks such as "Fancy working in a dog kennel" "Don't get lost in the mansion". The next step was wallpaper, curtains and paint—they too were donated. Electricity and telephone were arranged—then the hunt for furniture. Luckily a local firm was having an internal facelift and we were able to acquire a formica topped desk with four drawers, swivel chair and a large rubbish bin. Another firm also eager to help the cause of pre-school education donated a second chair. My husband built a set of floor to ceiling shelves and the moving in and sorting out began. This took days but slowly order was restored from chaos, files were put in shelves rather than boxes.

As time went by a typewriter and adding machine were added to the office contents. More recently an antique but efficient Gestetener was purchased. With the association having doubled

in size, paper and books are increasing and space is at a premium.

However the "Office" has proved invaluable. Situated in my back garden with citrus trees on one side and roses on the other it is quiet, ideal for discussing confidential business, all equipment and papers are together and can be locked away. At times when I am out of town the President or an Executive member has ready access and can continue with urgent business.

MARY COLLIER
NAPIER

Whangarei

"For twenty years and more I have been persuaded that mothers are the most maligned of people. Among professional people who deal with mothers and children **there is an unspoken law which says that all mothers are idiots . . .**

"The fact is that mothers know more about their own kids than anyone else alive and I am scared to death that we professionals are going to talk them out of their maternal instincts and bully them out of their innate good sense."

I think these two paragraphs bear a significant message for the Kindergarten Movement.

They were written by Glenn Doman, Author and Specialist in the treatment of brain injured children, and on reading them **my mind was turned immediately back to Kindergarten**. Thus, what was intended to have been a quiet morning's reading was interrupted while I sat down and worked out exactly why they reminded me of Kindergarten.

We could say that Kindergarten exists to serve the children and that the mothers simply do not matter—IF the Government provided every cent towards building and running every Kindergarten in the Country, and IF it was compulsory for every child to attend Kindergarten.

However, this is not the case; I think we have to acknowledge that we have an enormous voluntary work force attached to Kindergarten and I am not entirely convinced that anyone has given much thought to how they are, or should be treated.

In my experience, mothers of Kindergarten children are inclined to be under-rated and this attitude where mothers are written off as being disinterested and of little use was very puzzling to me during my years on a Kindergarten Committee. I considered that my greatest challenge was to promote co-operation and understanding between parents, Committee and staff by keeping everyone well informed of what was going on, and what was expected of them.

I reasoned that most mothers who enrol their children at the age of two and bring them to Kindergarten, (often at no small expense—considering the price of petrol), are the very ones who are concerned, thinking, intelligent people who could be of great benefit to the Kindergarten. They should be treated as partners in the venture (after all, they are expected to donate money, plus time and effort towards fund-raising—and should be kept well informed of what is going on, what problems are being experienced at Kindergarten and how they can help.

Undoubtedly, the word, "FREE" at the Kindergarten gate causes many problems. To most people it is utterly ridiculous to display such a sign and, at the same time, explain that donations and fund-raising are need to keep the Kindergarten running. The word is a constant embarrassment to Local Committee Members who are often at a loss to explain what it means.

Most mothers have very high expectations of Kindergarten and I know of several who have been very sadly disappointed. We are told that the first five years of a child's life are the most vital so far as his education is concerned. Kindergarten Teachers themselves have stressed the importance of their work in television interviews when pressing for salary in line with that paid to Primary School Teachers. Parents are urged to work hard to raise funds to build new Kindergartens, and, even when they have their new building, are expected to contribute between \$20-\$40 each year their child attends; then there are the fund-raising programmes to support—baking cakes, buying raffle tickets, etc. Is it any wonder they get upset when little Johnny appears to be learning very little at Kindergarten?

I have heard so many criticisms of Kindergarten programmes that I think we should either take the time to convince all the parents that what we do is worthwhile, or assume that 50 000 mothers can't be wrong and listen carefully to their criticism to find out just where the system falls hort.

I, personally, would not have thought it unreasonable to expect that when a child had spent eighteen months at Kindergarten he would have reached a minimum level where he could play happily with other children, speak intelligently to adults, climb and jump, count to ten, recognise and name colours, match shapes, hold a pencil correctly, print his name and listen intelligently. From my observations, the Teachers have no particular goal to work for with each child, and a particular child might develop very poorly with some skills while the teacher shows apparent unconcern and loses opportunities during that child's play to assist and encourage

him to achieve those particular skills. (This is my own personal opinion, but it does show what misconceptions a mother can have about Kindergarten and how misunderstandings can occur.)

I think it is vitally important that all parents should understand how a Kindergarten works and what the teacher is trying to achieve, and I did think a recent programme on T.V.1's Sunday's World was excellent in this respect.

Teachers could also make more use of home visiting and pre-entry groups to explain to the mothers their aims and policy on education and, at the same time, learn from the mother about the child they are about to inherit. I know some Teachers think that both home visiting and pre-entry groups are a waste of time and have abandoned them, which is a great pity. It might also be helpful to have someone in authority (perhaps a pre-school Adviser) to speak to the parents on Child Development and explain the importance of some of the seemingly useless activities pursued by some children at Kindergarten.

It is also important to keep parents informed by way of regular Newsletters but these must be written in a manner which assumes that the parents are intelligent and potentially helpful people. The Committee Members and Teachers know about everything that is happening at their Kindergarten and it is very easy to say, "but there is nothing to say"!!! The author of the Newsletter must put herself in the shoes of the majority of parents who know NOTHING of what is planned, or what problems are being experienced, or who won the raffle, or how many weeks' holiday they can plan for in August, or why the afternoon session never goes out on field trips, etc., etc. On the other hand, a Newsletter which does nothing but nag the parents will do nothing but build up antagonism.

Basically, I think that while we have these two opposing points of view, we are bound to have trouble:

On the one hand, you obviously get some Teachers, who, from the outset, assume that the mothers will be a total liability. They give them credit for having very little intelligence, understanding of their child, interest, motivation or co-operation and this attitude shows through in their dealings with the mothers.

On the other hand, the parents look to the Teacher as being an expert—after all, she has had two years' training, she gets a good salary and has a ratio of an average of one to 17 children—so when little Johnny is allowed to run wild instead of "learning anything" the parents are bound to feel that the teacher is bone lazy and can't be bothered to "educate" their child.

Written and submitted by an interested parent.

50th JUBILEE YEAR COMPETITION

It has been pointed out to the Editor that the time allowed for this competition was much too short. Several people only received their journals in December and with the long holiday break found it impossible to send in a contribution.

With the approval of those whose stories were received by closing date it has been decided to extend the closing date to 1 May 1977.

A preliminary notice to this effect was sent to all Associations in February for the information of all parents.

Those entries received will make a valuable contribution to our History. Your entry will not only record the contribution made by someone you consider worthy of mention, but may win you a \$50 prize.

Conditions of Entry

Contributions of no more than 2,500 words about any person who has made an outstanding contribution to the Kindergarten movement are invited. The winning entry will be published in the July copy of Kindergarten Education. All entries which become the property of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union should, be in the hands of the Editor, "The Mooring", 6 Zaida Way, Wellington 3, no later than 1 May 1977.

Copy must be typed using double spacing and on one side of the paper only. Name and address must be included. The winner will be notified by mail on completion of judging and will receive the Armstrong and Springhall Prize of \$50.

All entries must be the original work of the person submitting it.

READERS—Have you seen and read:

KINDERGARTENS IN NEW ZEALAND 1889—1975

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O.M.E.P.

For several years the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union was a member of O.M.E.P. The Union relinquished its membership to enable a preparatory committee to be set up in New Zealand. The following article will spell out to those who have asked about its function, membership etc.

Organization Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire (O.M.E.P.) is a world organisation dedicated to the total well-being of children throughout the world. Its main objectives are the development of the full potential of each individual, from birth and through the early years.

The main tasks of O.M.E.P. are to promote a greater understanding of children under eight years of age; and to share between different countries the experience and knowledge gained through the study of young children in their formative years.

O.M.E.P. is international, non-governmental, co-operating with UNESCO on projects of mutual concern and other international organisations having similar aims. Many professions are represented including medicine, social work, psychology, nursing, law, architecture—and parents, teachers and other interested persons. Membership is open to organisations and persons of any race, creed, nationality or political opinion.

At the present time, 43 countries are members of O.M.E.P. or preparing to be members; the number has grown in each of the years of the 28 years of its existence. Eighteen countries from five continents sent representatives to the first conference in 1948, held in Prague. The World Assembly is the governing body, meeting at three-year intervals in various countries. The executive body is the World Council which meets every year.

THE ORIGIN OF O.M.E.P.

In March 1946, when the world was still in a state of turmoil after the war, Lady Allen of Hurtwood from Great Britain travelled in Scandinavia lecturing. She met many people interested in early childhood education, such as Miss Ella Esp (Norway) and Mrs Alva Myrdal (Sweden), and discussed with them how to create an international organisation that would promote a greater understanding of young children and bring closer together those working in this field.

A group of interested people from different countries gathered in London in July 1946 and formed an informal preparatory committee which met again in UNESCO House, Paris, in November 1976. Representatives and individuals from many countries were invited to be present. Two outstanding educators joined the preparatory committee, Madame Suzanne Herbinier-Lebert, a

General Inspectrice of the Ecole Maternelle in France, and Mr Jens Sigsgaard, the Principal of a Training College for Nursery School Teachers in Denmark. The plans to create a world organisation for early childhood education were brought to the UNESCO Assembly for discussion some days later, where members warmly supported the idea. This work was continued by a further meeting of the preparatory committee in Copenhagen in May 1947.

Finally, at a meeting in May 1948, in Paris, the Committee decided to send invitations to all governments, many organisations and individuals to attend a World Conference of Early Childhood Education in August 1948 in Prague, to follow a World Seminar in Childhood Education organised by UNESCO at the same place. Eighteen countries from five continents were represented at this conference where lectures by leading psychologists and educators gave the basis for important professional discussions. The main task, however, was the systematic planning of the international organisation. Mrs Alva Myrdal (Sweden) was the President of this first World Assembly and became the first President of O.M.E.P. National committees were soon set up in 11 countries where they took up the work for early childhood education in the spirit of the Prague Conference.

The second World Assembly was held in August 1949 in UNESCO House, Paris, with Lady Allen of Hurtwood (Great Britain) as President. This Assembly, where 33 countries were represented, adopted the Constitution of O.M.E.P.

The World Assembly has been held in the following capitals: Prague 1948, Paris 1949, Vienna 1950, Mexico City 1952, Copenhagen 1954, Athens 1956, Brussels 1958, Zagreb 1960, London 1962, Stockholm 1964, Paris 1966, Washington 1968, Bonn 1971, Caracas 1974.

MEMBERSHIP

National committees are the units of the organisation. Each of them brings together for discussion and action as many disciplines as possible that have a concern for the education and well-being of young children and of their parents. Of importance in this respect are educators and teachers, parents, medical doctors, those who are concerned with mental health, representatives

from training colleges, architects, administrators at both national and local levels, religious bodies and others.

National committees are formed from the following types of members.

- (a) National organisations that have early childhood education as one of their main objects.
- (b) Persons designated by governments or government departments.
- (c) Organisations and agencies whose work is closely related to but not entirely concerned with early childhood education and which do not necessarily have a national coverage.
- (d) Persons supporting the aims and objects of O.M.E.P.

There can be only one national committee in each country.

Preparatory committees are those in the process of fulfilling the statutory obligations and awaiting recognition by the council.

National and preparatory committees follow the plan of work established by the assembly, but in all other respects are free to work in their own way. They promote research on early childhood education; conduct surveys of nursery schools; encourage parent education: prepare and publish pamphlets for parents and the public on child care and education, nursery schools and kindergartens, playgrounds, toys and books for children; foster the training of teachers for young children; hold national conferences and provide similar services.

Associate Members: In those countries where there is not national or preparatory committees national organisations or individuals can apply direct to O.M.E.P.'s headquarters.

Founders appointed by O.M.E.P.'s Council are Lady Allen of Hurtwood (UK), Miss Ella Esp (Norway), Mme Suzanne Herbinriere-Lebert (France), Mrs Alva Myrdal (Sweden), Mr Jens Sigsgaard (Denmark).

HOW O.M.E.P. WORKS

The Assembly is the highest authority of O.M.E.P. It meets every two to three years in dif-

ferent parts of the world to formulate the programme and to carry out the organisation's business. All members of national committees may attend. Each national and preparatory committee is entitled to be represented. In connection with each assembly an international convention is arranged that is open to everybody interested in its theme.

The council is the executive body. It is composed of one delegate and deputy delegate from each national committee and an observer from each preparatory committee and associate and affiliate member. The council meets once or twice a year to develop the programme and activities.

The officers (the bureau) are elected by the council for three years to carry on the work between the assembly meetings in various parts of the world.

The working committee meets between council meetings to carry out the plans made by the council.

O.M.E.P. has consultative status with UNESCO, UNICEF and UN Commission for Economic and Social Affairs, and sends representatives to the meetings of these bodies. Co-operation is sought with other international organisations having similar aims.

O.M.E.P. publishes an International Journal of Early Childhood twice a year and booklets on subjects related to early childhood, often in collaboration with UNESCO.

There are national committees in 38 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (DFR), Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, San Salvador, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, U.S.A., Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

Preparatory committees are in New Zealand, India, Monaco, Zaire, Bolivia; and co-operating groups in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ghana, Luxembourg is an associate.

The Next Conference of O.M.E.P.

**XV World Congress O.M.E.P. in Warsaw
22-26 August 1977**

Theme: To the Greatest Benefit of Children

I. Children and the Law.

1. Social welfare of the family/housing, allowances, social building, etc.
2. The problem of birth control.
3. Children in marriage and outside it.
4. Obligations of the full and the defective family/alimony.
5. Natural and social orphanhood/the problem of adoption.

6. Maternity protection/leave, social services.
7. Children's health and physical fitness care.
8. Ensurance of safety to children/highway code etc.
9. Children requiring particular care.
10. The right of children to education.

2. The benefit of children as the common goal of parents and educators:

- education in the family
- institutional education/creches, nursery schools and other institutions
- preparation to the role of parents and training of nursery school teachers and nurses

II. The Right of Children to Full Development and a Happy Childhood.

1. The aims and objects of educational work in reference to small children:
 - health care and development of physical efficiency
 - stimulation of mental activity and desire of knowledge
 - development of social attitudes
 - children as artists and sensitive recipients of art

3. Contribution of the grown-up world to children:

- children's literature in child education
- the stimulating role of "good toys"
- children as recipients of theatre and film, radio and television/the problem of initiation to film and theatre and the advantages and disadvantages of "TV education".

THE SECRETARY

If the Secretary writes tactfully, he's verbose;
 If he drafts a report, he is wrong;
 If he speaks to the Committee, he is butting in;
 If he doesn't, he is useless;
 If he sends a reminder, he's a pest;
 If he doesn't, he's slack;
 If he asks for resolutions, he's cheeky;
 If he doesn't get things done, he's incompetent;
 If the meeting is successful, it's the committee;
 If it's a failure, the secretary's to blame;
 If he asks for instructions, he has no initiative;
 If he doesn't, he's swollen headed;
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
 If others won't do it, the Secretary must.
 Best Wishes to all our Secretaries.