

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT 1960-61.

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the year which ended on 31 July, 1961. Increasing demands on the Union's services have made this a very busy period.

Attention has been given to all matters arising from the 1960 Conference, which has involved:-

1. the presentation of remits to the Minister and the Director of Education and the distribution of their replies;
2. the preparation and presentation of submissions to the Commission of Education in New Zealand.

In addition arrangements were made for reprinting the pamphlet "Introducing Your Child to Kindergarten", for the revision and printing of the Kindergarten Handbook and for re-designing and printing the Union's brochure for recruitment.

NEW APPOINTMENTS.

Although the Director of Education could not accede to the request, from the last Conference, for the appointment of rural supervisors, it is pleasing to note that two new positions have been created and that appointments of pre-school advisers have been made in Auckland and Wellington. This development should ensure more frequent visits to rural areas and help to relieve the professional isolation which so many young teachers face in this service.

MEMBERSHIP.

Steady development in the formation of district associations has reduced the number affiliated to the Union to 64. Resignations have been received from Eltham, now part of the newly-formed South Taranaki Association, and from Tauranga, Te Puke, Whakatane, Kawerau, Edgecumbe, Taupo and Rotorua, which combine to form the Bay of Plenty Association. At the direction of the Minister, on receiving permission to build, Howick has joined the Auckland Association and is no longer a separate member of the Union.

The Executive again reminds associations of the responsibilities of membership, which include the obligation to send prompt replies to enquiries from the Union office. Failure to provide information frequently causes difficulty and delay in the Union's service to the movement.

HISTORY OF ASSOCIATIONS.

Very few associations have responded to the President's suggestion that they should furnish a history of their service for inclusion in a commemorative booklet, to be published in the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Dunedin Association in 1964. If this idea is to be pursued preparations must soon be undertaken to ensure its success.

NEW KINDERGARTENS RECOGNISED.

With the recognition of Gonville, Raureka, Opotiki, Waitara, Ngongotaha, Hei Hei, Hornby, Cottle and Elstree there are now 207 kindergartens functioning throughout New Zealand, and a further 11 are in the course of construction.

OFFICIAL OPENINGS.

New buildings have been officially opened at Auckland (Belmont-Bayswater and Campbell), Blenheim (Mayfield), Christchurch (Lyttelton, Sunbeam and Hei Hei), Dunedin (Kaikorai), Hastings (Raureka), Manawatu (West End), Nelson (Stoke), New Plymouth (Waitara), Opotiki, Rotorua

(Ngāmotaha), Waiouru, Whangarei (Hora Hora). Ten of these buildings replace temporary premises, in which the kindergartens have been conducted for some years, and reduce the number similarly placed to 10. This is a fine achievement and the Executive extends warm congratulations to all committees on the success of their efforts.

VISITS TO ASSOCIATIONS.

The President was honoured by invitations to attend Diploma-Giving Ceremonies at the four Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges and to present diplomas at Wellington and Christchurch. 83 students successfully completed the course of training and were awarded the Diploma of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union.

During the year the President visited associations at Taupo, Te Puke, Whakatane, Kawerau, Hastings, Havelock North, Manawatu, New Plymouth, Hawera, Nelson and Motueka and addressed meetings at Murupara, at Te Kuiti, where a new association was formed, at Manurewa, where a committee of the Franklin Association was established and at Otumoetai, where a branch of the Bay of Plenty Association was set up. The Executive is most grateful for the hospitality extended to the President in the course of these visits.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY.

A serious and unexpected deterioration in the staffing position, which made it necessary to defer any decision on new kindergartens for six months, also emphasised the need for an active recruitment campaign if the high standards of the movement are to be maintained and if the progress it deserves is to be achieved. It is small comfort to know that all teaching services face the same problem of staff shortage, because it is this very fact that increases the difficulty of attracting suitable students to the kindergarten training course. Believing that a realistic review of the kindergarten teachers' salary scale is overdue, the President, on behalf of the Executive, approached the Minister and the Director of Education to request that urgent and favourable consideration be given to the case for improved salaries which has been presented by the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association. This is the first direct approach by the Union since 1955.

With relatively few recruitment aids, the Union office has faced some difficulty in meeting requests for assistance in this field. Full use has been made of the collection of coloured slides and of the film "Modern Kindergartens in Hamilton". It is hoped soon to have a further film available, when the material generously supplied by Mr Walter Harris, Supervisor National Film Library, has been developed and a script prepared.

At the suggestion of the New Plymouth Association, an approach was made to, and approval secured from, the Director of Education for printing a notice on the kindergarten teachers' training course in the Education Gazette. The first notice will appear in the issue of 2nd October.

COMMISSION ON EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND.

The Executive agreed to support and endorse submissions presented earlier by the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association which claimed that the fundamental needs for the continuance and growth of the movement are:

1. That the national system of education be extended to embody the free kindergarten system and that this be given 'recognition' in the Education Act.
2. That kindergarten teacher training be extended to cover the age range 3 - 7+, as recommended in the Campbell Report 1951, and that the Minister of Education assume full responsibility for kindergarten teacher training.
3. That steps be taken towards organising New Zealand kindergarten

education into regions comparable with the major university districts, each with its statutory regional authority, eventually, to organise and administer all kindergarten activities, including kindergarten teacher training. The long term development would be that this regional authority became authority for education in early childhood and, as such, a division of the Board of Education.

At the same time the Executive outlined the functions of the Union, elaborated its history and emphasised the following points:

- (a) Urgent need for realistic appraisal of the free kindergarten movement.
- (b) Recruitment. Training. Salary Scale.
The key to advancement and expansion.
- (c) Need to maintain local interest and maximum voluntary effort for each kindergarten.

The preparation of this material was undertaken, on behalf of the Executive, by the President, and two Immediate Past Presidents, to whom the gratitude of the Union is due.

TRAINING MATTERS.

At the time of the March Executive meeting an invitation was extended to Principals and representatives of Education Committees of the four Colleges to discuss problems associated with training. From this meeting came a decision to support the attitude of the 1960 Conference that the Department of Education be asked to accept full responsibility for the cost and administration of training and to request that the Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges be affiliated with the Teachers' Colleges. The matter is now under review by the Department and the final decision is awaited with interest.

Further meetings have been held in the four University areas and, with very few exceptions, associations have honoured their agreement to contribute £10 per recognised kindergarten to the College in their area.

FINANCE.

The Executive records its sincere appreciation of the very real assistance provided by the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board and the Sargood Trust, from each of whom a donation of £100 was received. Without these generous grants, the Union would face difficulty in meeting its commitments.

Although the year's activities show a debit balance of £127, it should be noted that the Union holds assets in the form of Handbooks and lapel badges to the value of £149. The acceptance, at the 1960 Conference, of the proposal for a registration fee for future general meetings, will provide additional income to meet the growing cost of stationery and postages on these occasions. It has been most gratifying to the Secretary-Treasurer to receive such prompt settlement of accounts from so many associations.

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Union continues to enjoy close contact with the Executive of the Teachers' Association and to have their support in all questions affecting the welfare of the movement. It is a matter for regret, however, that so few teachers take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Union to increase their qualifications through post-graduate study. Congratulations are extended to Miss P. M. Varcoe and Miss Anne Johnson who were awarded bursaries this year and to Miss Varcoe who was selected for overseas study as the I. M. Jamieson Scholar.

A Summer School, to be held at Lincoln College next January, should stimulate leadership and readiness to accept positions of responsibility in the professional field.

FEDERATION OF NURSERY PLAY CENTRE ASSOCIATIONS.

With the Federation the Executive has been exploring the possibility of setting up a New Zealand Pre-School Association to act in the same manner as does a similar body in Australia. The Executive will welcome the opinion of associations on the proposal, expressed at the last meeting of representatives of the two branches of pre-school services, that an attempt should be made, in 1963, to organise a Pre-School Convention in New Zealand, when members of the professional and administrative fields would come together for meetings for mutual benefit and understanding, and for public enlightenment on the importance of early childhood education.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS.

As a constituent member of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, (O. M. E. P.) the Union receives regular, though infrequent, information of the development of pre-school education in other countries. It is interesting to note that all face the same problems - shortage of staff, difficulty in recruitment of students and insistent public demand for extension of the work. The IXth World Assembly, to be held in London, in 1962, will centre round the theme, "A Happy and Healthy Coming Generation."

Through the generous decision of the 1960 Conference to establish and contribute to a Travel Fund for Union representation at overseas conferences, it was possible to arrange for the President to attend the Australian Pre-School Association in Hobart in August. This experience, coupled with that of an earlier President at the Melbourne Conference in 1955, should be of great value to the movement.

The Union office has received enquiries for information from Fiji, South Africa, Kenya and Palestine. It is evident that the pattern of our service is held in high esteem and envy by many countries. Particular interest has been expressed in the work of the Union.

At the request of the Conference, the following paragraph has been included in the report:

The Executive extends sincere congratulations to the President on the recognition by Her Majesty the Queen of her services to the kindergarten movement with the Honour of M.B.E.

Associations have shown a wonderful spirit of unselfish service to the welfare of pre-school children. To them all and to the Union Secretary, Mrs Elliott, without whose quiet efficiency and conscientious attention to the many matters included in her duties we would be indeed lost, the Executive offers sincere gratitude and good wishes for the coming year.

For the Executive,

H. DOWNER

President.

September, 1961.

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THANKS.

The Executive records its deep appreciation to all who have assisted the work of the Union in the past year. The Minister, the Director of Education and Miss Gallagher, Supervisor of Pre-School Services, have, as always, extended the greatest courtesy and shown sincere interest in the movement. The Hon. Solicitor and the Hon. Auditor have been most willing to assist with their specialised knowledge. The Hamilton Association, host for the 1960 Conference, spared no pains to provide generous hospitality and happy arrangements for all who attended that meeting. Member associations have shown a wonderful spirit of unselfish service to the welfare of pre-school children. To them all and to the Union Secretary, Mrs Elliott, without whose quiet efficiency and conscientious attention to the many matters included in her duties we would be indeed lost, the Executive offers sincere gratitude and good wishes for the coming year.

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