

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT

1962/63

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the year which ended on 31 July 1963, a period which has brought significant developments in the free kindergarten movement.

Eighteen new kindergartens, for which permission to proceed with a building programme was granted before the introduction of the period of consolidation in 1961, have met all requirements for recognition by the Minister of Education.

With the approval and ready co-operation of all associations a new system of equal sharing of the administration costs of training kindergarten teachers has come into operation with the minimum of difficulty and has eased the heavy burden carried by Training Associations for very many years.

A limited number of bursaries, on the same terms as those offered in other branches of the teaching service, has been made available to kindergarten students and teachers seeking to improve their qualifications by University study.

The N. Z. Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association has achieved notable success in its application for a new and realistic scale of salaries which recognises service and positions of responsibility as well as offering stimulus to recruitment of students.

All matters arising from the 1962 Conference have received attention and, although not all have reached finality, associations have been informed of their progress.

PATRONESS

The Executive records with pleasure the gracious acceptance of the office of Patroness of the Union by Her Excellency, Lady Fergusson. Your President was privileged, at the time of the Vice-Regal visit to Rotorua in May, to meet Lady Fergusson and to give her detailed information of the kindergarten movement in New Zealand.

OBITUARY

The Union suffered a great loss in December in the death of Miss Margaret Magill M.B.E. Sincere sympathy is extended to her relatives and friends who will long remember her selfless devotion to many causes, her ready wit and her penetrating grasp of administration and procedure.

MEMBERSHIP now stands at 65 associations, an increase of one with the affiliation of Wairoa, to whom a warm welcome is extended. The Executive gratefully acknowledges receipt of Annual Reports of member associations and congratulates all on a record of progress and service to the kindergartens under their control. It continues to be a matter for concern that some associations fail to meet their obligations to the Union in providing information requested and needed from time to time. This would surely be overcome if the suggestion, offered at the last Annual Meeting, to appoint a Union reporter, were adopted.

HISTORY OF ASSOCIATIONS

Despite frequent appeals for assistance in the preparation of a booklet to mark the 75th anniversary of the first free kindergarten in 1889, there are still some seventeen associations who have provided no record of their activities. There is now little time to complete this task and it is hoped, therefore, that there will be no further delay in making the information available.

NEW KINDERGARTENS RECOGNISED

Among the 235 functioning kindergartens the following received

Recognition during the year: Taradale, Te Puke, Edgecumbe, Tarawera, Tauranga, Melville, Cambridge, Merrilands, Brooklands, Eltham, Tahunanui, Corstorphine, Rangiora, Sunbeams, Howick, Taita, Gisborne and Taihape. Sincere congratulations and good wishes are extended to these new groups on the success of their efforts to provide pre-school experience for the children of their districts.

OFFICIAL OPENINGS

Fifteen new kindergarten buildings have been officially opened since 31 July 1962. An interesting feature has been that four associations held these functions on the same day, 23 February, - Hamilton (Cambridge and Melville), Lower Hutt (Taita) and Christchurch (Rutland Street), while a further three celebrated the occasion one month later, on 23 March, - Christchurch (Rangiora), Nelson (Tahunanui), Auckland (Sunbeams). Other openings were held at Thames, Napier (Taradale), Bay of Plenty (Te Puke, Tarawera and Edgecumbe), New Plymouth (Merrilands), Dunedin (Corstorphine) and Taihape.

VISITS TO ASSOCIATIONS

Your President was honoured by invitations to present diplomas to successful students at Wellington and Christchurch and to visit associations at Hastings, Opotiki, Gisborne, Wellington, Tawa, Wigram, Burnham, Franklin and Hamilton. The Executive acknowledges, with gratitude, hospitality extended to the President in the course of these visits.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

Recognising that the stability and progress of the movement are closely allied with adequate numbers of trained teachers, associations have undertaken campaigns to recruit students for the training course. The measure of their success may be judged by reports from Principals of the Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges which show that the number of applicants is greater than in previous years, and well in excess of the vacancies available. In part, this may be attributed to the raising of the qualifications for entry to the Teachers' Colleges to Endorsed School Certificate. At the same time it points to the fact that the introduction of a bond for kindergarten teachers, as in the case of other teaching services, has had no detrimental effect on recruitment. The Union's recruitment aids have been in constant demand and it is pleasing to report that the film being made in Auckland will be ready for use next year.

TRAINING

New proposals for the future of kindergarten teacher training, which were approved at the 1962 Conference, have been presented to the Director of Education and discussed with the Minister, who has suggested some amendments to the Union's requests. Although he is not prepared to approve a pilot scheme in which the full cost would be borne by Government, the Minister is willing to allow this development to proceed on the present basis of equal sharing of administration costs by all recognised kindergartens.

The Executive has now requested that the Department of Education should take steps (1) to set up Boards of Studies in each College with the following composition :

- Principal of Teachers' College (or his nominee)
- Professor of Education (or his nominee)
- Principal of Kindergarten Teachers' College
- One representative of Kindergarten Teachers' Association (not a member of College staff)
- Three representatives of kindergarten associations in the University district in which the College is situated)
- Three additional co-opted members,

(2) to invite two Training Associations to participate in a pilot scheme under a Regional Board of Management of seven members:

- Two elected by associations
- Two appointed by the Minister

Principal of Teachers' College (or his nominee)
Professor of Education (or his nominee)
A headmistress of a post-primary school.

Some concern has been expressed, in reports of regional meetings, that, if these requests are met by the Department of Education, the average cost per kindergarten may rise steeply. It should be realised that there will be no compulsion for any Training Association to accept a change in management of its College, and that formal application will be required from an Association willing to accept the Department's invitation to participate in the pilot scheme. This application would surely not be made before the scheme had been fully examined and evaluated in terms of its effect on the Association concerned and on all other associations. The Union will be given ample opportunity to study and comment on draft changes in the Kindergarten Regulations necessary to implement the proposals and no changes will be made without the Union's consent.

This year has seen a start towards School Certificate being the minimum educational qualification for entry to the training course. Fifty per cent of students entering the Colleges in 1964 must have passed this examination and the number will be gradually increased over the next few years until the total intake holds this qualification.

PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION

In March, when the Executive met the Director of Education, five kindergartens were operating with no trained staff and a total of 79 positions were held by untrained teachers. To have asked for the period of consolidation to be lifted, at this time, would have removed from some kindergartens the protection its terms afford in order to allow others to proceed with building programmes. As a first step towards a return to the normal policy of expansion, the Honourable Minister agreed to invite nine committees on the Union's priority list to submit sketch plans for approval and, thereafter, to proceed with working drawings and specifications. This generous gesture will not only enable these committees to be ready to call tenders for their buildings as soon as the staffing position allows, but will also provide at that time for a further nine committees on the priority list to participate in the "plans only" policy.

July staffing returns revealed what appeared to be a slight worsening of the position, as a sixth kindergarten had lost the services of its trained director, and, in all, 84 vacancies existed. Taken in conjunction with the fact that, since February 1963, 12 new kindergartens had attracted trained staff to qualify for recognition, the situation is reasonably hopeful, provided there is no marked increase in the rate of resignation for the remainder of the year. If all senior students succeed in gaining their diplomas in December there will be 107 newly-trained teachers seeking employment in 1964.

N. Z. FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

All associations will join in extending very sincere congratulations to the Executive of the Teachers' Association on the success of its application for revision of the salary scale, which, for the first time, brings kindergarten teachers' salaries to a point of relativity with those of other teaching services. These new rates should be the means of encouraging longer service and a return to employment in kindergartens of teachers who had left for more lucrative remuneration in other fields.

The passing of the Superannuation Act 1962, made necessary by the introduction of "Equal Pay", affects the age of retirement for all women teachers. Although it may not be necessary for many associations to be concerned with the age for compulsory retirement of any teacher, all associations, after careful study of the memoranda issued by the Department of Education during the year, should take steps to provide for this possibility in their rules and conditions of employment.

It is a matter for regret that so few teachers have taken advantage of the Union's offer, through post-graduate bursaries, to increase their academic qualifications. Only two awards were made this year - to

Mr B. Cosson, Auckland, and Miss H. Cartridge, Christchurch. As opportunities for University study have now been made available to kindergarten teachers and students through the Department of Education the Executive has decided to discontinue these bursaries, in the meantime, and to use the funds to increase the value of its overseas scholarship.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS

Advice has been received of two overseas conferences in 1964. The first, the tenth Conference of the Australian Pre-School Association, will be held in Brisbane from 25 to 29 May, with its theme "The Enrichment of Childhood", while the second is the tenth Assembly of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, O. M. E. P., to take place in Stockholm, Sweden, from 12 to 18 August. The President of O. M. E. P., Dr Skard, who lives in Oslo, is enthusiastic about the development of the theme for this Conference, "Children in a Rapidly-Changing World". Dr Skard is also hopeful that New Zealand will soon make progress towards the establishment of a pre-school association which will enable it to become a full member of the World Organisation. The Executive believes that initial impetus towards this goal must come from co-operation between pre-school services at local level before any co-ordination can be achieved at national level.

The Executive commends those associations that have shown their interest in the advantages to be gained by the movement through representation at overseas meetings and sincerely thanks them for their generous donations to the Travel Fund which now stands at £117/7/0.

MAORI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Your President has had several meetings with the Executive of the Foundation and with its Pre-School Adviser, Mr A. Grey. The Executive holds strongly to the belief that the greatest encouragement to Maori parents and their pre-school children, to take advantage of the service which kindergartens offer, will come where the director is, herself, a Maori. It is pleasing to note that several Maori girls have entered the training course, and, because the Maori Women's Welfare Leagues have this year taken as their theme "Pre-School Education", it is likely that more will be drawn to this career.

FINANCE

This year's accounts show a healthy surplus, as a result of increased subscriptions and lower printing and travelling costs. It is impossible to budget for printing costs which rise quickly when the need for new issues of handbooks and other literature develops. The Union is deeply indebted to the J. R. McKenzie and Sargood Trusts for their continued generosity. Without their help much of the Union's work would be seriously hampered.

After careful consideration of its financial position the Executive decided to increase the salary of the Union Secretary-Treasurer to £400 from the beginning of August, 1962. All associations will surely agree that this is little enough for the responsible task which the office demands.

THANKS

The Executive acknowledges with gratitude all who have assisted the work of the Union during the year. Apart from member associations, to whom deep appreciation is due for their loyal co-operation, sincere thanks are extended to the Honourable Minister and the Director of Education, to Miss Gallagher, Supervisor of Pre-School Services and her staff for their unfailing interest, support and advice; to the Hon. Auditor and Hon. Solicitor for their professional assistance; to the Wanganui Association for generous hospitality and very happy arrangements made for the 1962 Conference and to the Secretary of the Union, Mrs Elliott, for all that she undertakes on behalf of the Executive and member associations.

The best wishes of the Executive are extended to all who serve the movement for continued success in the coming year.

For the Executive,
H. DOWNER
President.

September, 1963.