

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT - 1963/64

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the period of eleven months which ended on 30 June 1964, the date approved at the last Annual Meeting as the close of the Union's financial year.

It is fitting, in this seventy-fifth year of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association, hosts for this Conference, that gratitude should be expressed to the founders of our movement and that tributes should be paid to all who have so loyally continued to work for the education and welfare of pre-school children. The Executive extends its appreciation to the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board, whose generous financial assistance made it possible for the Union to mark the occasion by the publication of the movement's history from 1889 to 1964.

OBITUARY

The Executive records, with deep regret and sincere sympathy for their families, the passing of two of the Union's devoted supporters, Mrs R. D. Richards and Miss I. M. Jamieson, MBE.

Mrs Richards' sudden and untimely death is a sad loss to the Temuka Free Kindergarten Association, where she had been President for the past ten years, and to many other causes which she so willingly served in her community.

From the time of her arrival in New Zealand over fifty years ago, Miss Jamieson gave generously of her talents to education and welfare. She was a foundation member of the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association and actively concerned with the establishment of the system of kindergarten teacher training in that city; President of the Hamilton Association from its beginnings in 1945 until her retirement in 1962; member of the Union Executive from 1945 to 1954, its representative on the Advisory Committee of "Kindergarten of the Air" from 1951 to 1961 and one of the first Honorary Life Members. All who have been privileged to enjoy her friendship and benefit from her wise counsel will long remember her with deep gratitude and affection.

MEMBERSHIP

The number of affiliated associations remains at sixty-five but the Union has proudly welcomed and acknowledged its appreciation of outstanding service given by Mesdames A. K. Hadfield, MBE, J. A. Hanan, A. F. Johnson, H. McCreanor, MBE, and E. H. B. Milsom by conferring Honorary Life Membership upon them.

The Executive extends thanks to those associations whose Annual Reports were sent to the Union office and offers sincere congratulations on the progress and success of their work. Enquiries received from time to time point to the need for many associations to adopt a more satisfactory system of handling and filing Union correspondence, in order to ensure that members of their councils and committees are familiar with their responsibilities and obligations. The effort involved in providing this information warrants its fullest use and understanding and calls for greater co-operation than is given by some associations.

OFFICIAL OPENINGS OF NEW KINDERGARTENS

A halt in expansion, which began in October 1961, with the introduction of a "period of consolidation" to overcome an acute staffing shortage, has prevented the establishment and recognition of new kindergartens during the year but there have been official openings of buildings erected in 1962-1963. Four of these, Brooklands (New Plymouth), Howick (Auckland), Tauranga (Bay of Plenty) and Gisborne, are new kindergartens, while the remainder, Richmond (Nelson), Meadowbank (Auckland), Northland (Wellington) and Allenton (Ashburton) replace temporary premises which have been in use for some years.

It is most pleasing to report a return to the normal policy of

expansion and the approval of fifteen kindergarten projects by the Minister of Education in May of this year. If, as expected, these buildings are ready for use in 1965, there will be 250 recognised kindergartens which, provided full use is made of the accommodation, will give pre-school experience to approximately 20,000 children. This is a magnificent achievement for voluntary workers and cause for appreciation of generous Government assistance. Nor is it the full story, for sixteen committees have qualified for and await permission to proceed with a building programme and as many more have been established with the same objective in view.

PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL

At the invitation of New Plymouth and Gisborne Associations the President had the honour of officially opening new kindergartens in those cities. She also addressed meetings in Te Awamutu, Te Kuiti, Leamington and Mount Maunganui. At the time of the Summer School of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association the President attended the opening meeting and later had discussions with the Executive. With Mrs Keys, an Executive member, she represented the Union at a meeting called by the Teachers' Association to consider a proposal to establish a national organisation of those concerned with the education and welfare of children under eight years of age. In May she was privileged to attend the Tenth Conference of the Australian Pre-School Association in Brisbane. Sincere gratitude is extended to all who offered generous hospitality to the President in the course of her visits to associations and who contributed to the Union travel fund.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

Although some concern was felt that recruitment might be adversely affected by the decision of the Department of Education that fifty per cent of students accepted for 1964 must have a minimum educational qualification of School Certificate, this requirement was more than met, as the average, over the four Colleges, reached seventy per cent of entrants holding the certificate. To some extent this success may be due to the raising of qualifications for entry to Teachers' Colleges, but it also points to a growing awareness of the value of the kindergarten training course and the excellent conditions of employment in recognised free kindergartens, appreciation of a greatly-improved salary scale and recognition of the importance of pre-school education.

Much remains to be done to ensure that post-primary principals and careers advisers understand the full scope of responsibilities of kindergarten teachers when they recommend pupils to enter the profession. This is a course which associations should pursue in recruitment campaigns in all areas.

The Principal of the Auckland Kindergarten Teachers' College reports that work on a film, using material supplied by the National Film Library, is now completed. The Executive is most grateful to all concerned in the production of this film which will be a valuable addition to recruitment aids.

TRAINING

The Executive records its appreciation of the ready co-operation of all associations in meeting their share of administration costs of training, which has enabled the Union office to make speedy distribution of these funds to the Training Associations.

Advice has been received of approval in principle by the Minister of Education of the proposals for changes in the administration of Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges, which have been under discussion for the past two years. These provide for:

1. The creation of a Board of Studies in each of the four centres to take over the responsibility for the colleges which rested previously on the Education Committees. The composition of the Boards is:

The Principal of the nearest Teachers' College (or his nominee)
The Head of the Department of Education of the nearest
University (or his nominee)
The Principal of the Kindergarten College
Three members of the Kindergarten Associations in the
"regional district"
Three co-opted members (if thought necessary or desirable).

2. The equalisation of responsibility among all associations for administrative costs, by way of levy on all recognised kindergartens. (This is already in operation.)
3. The introduction of an experimental scheme for a change in the control of one, or possibly two, of the kindergarten colleges, where the college, or colleges, will be placed under the control of a Regional Council of Management, for a period of three years in the first instance. The composition of the Council shall be:

The Principal of the nearest Teachers' College (or his nominee)
The Head of the Department of Education of the nearest
University (or his nominee)
Three members elected by associations in the "regional district"
Three members appointed by the Minister of Education.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that any transfer of control from a Training Association, and any extension of the initial period of three years, will be approved by the Minister solely at the request of the Association or Associations chosen for the experiment.

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The Executive of the Teachers' Association organised a Summer School at Massey University in January of this year. Poor response from members must have been disappointing and indicates, perhaps, that regular in-service courses which are now being offered in each training area are filling the needs of kindergarten teachers and that Summer Schools should be arranged at less frequent intervals than every two years.

It must have been ample reward for the Executive, on the day after the close of the Summer School, to find such enthusiasm for the proposal to establish a national organisation of those concerned with the education and welfare of children under eight years of age. The Union congratulates the Teachers' Association on this step, which called for courage and careful preparation, and offers full co-operation and good wishes for success.

Congratulations are offered, too, for efforts made by the Association to keep its members alive to their responsibilities through the preparation and distribution of a guide to directors leaving a kindergarten. This information is equally valuable to employing associations.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS

Through the generosity of associations' contributions to the Union travel fund it has been possible for direct contact to be made with the Australian Pre-School Association and the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), through attendance at their conferences by Union representatives. The President attended the Tenth Conference of the Australian Pre-School Association in Brisbane in May, when the theme, "The Enrichment of Childhood", was developed by an excellent panel of lecturers, while Miss Phyllis Varcoe, 1960 I. M. Jamieson Scholar, represented the Union at the OMEP Tenth World Assembly in Stockholm when she was returning to New Zealand after completing her studies at Birmingham University.

As a constituent member of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education the Union receives regular bulletins from the President of this body and exchanges information and reports with many

of its members. Several enquiries for advice and guidance have been received from developing countries during the year.

FINANCE

The annual accounts show that the Union is financially sound, although in some items, expenditure has been heavier than in the previous year. It will soon be necessary to reprint the Kindergarten Handbook in order to meet the demand for this guide, but until training proposals are in operation it would be unwise to undertake the work. The Executive acknowledges with gratitude continued assistance from the Department of Education and the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board.

THANKS

The Executive records its thanks to all who have assisted its work in the period under review. Special appreciation is extended to the Honourable Minister and the Director of Education for their interest and encouragement and to the Director in particular, this year, for his gracious tribute to the movement in his foreword to "Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand". To Miss Gallagher, Supervisor of Pre-School Services, and her staff the Union is deeply indebted for their unfailing support and ready attention to all matters affecting its welfare. Gratitude is also expressed to the Hon. Auditor and the Hon. Solicitor for professional advice so willingly given; to the Bay of Plenty Free Kindergarten Association for generous hospitality and happy arrangements made for the 1963 Conference at Rotorua; to member associations for their co-operation and loyalty, and to the Secretary, Mrs Elliott, for her cheerful and competent handling of the Union's business.

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

For the Executive,

H. DOWNER

President.

September, 1964.