

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT - 1965/66

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the year which ended on 30 June, 1966.

At the last Annual Meeting three new members joined the Executive. For Wellington Mrs D. M. Ryan replaced Mrs B. E. Orchiston and for Dunedin Mrs R. M. Boyd was appointed to succeed Mrs W. M. Patrick. Mrs B. J. Brayshaw was elected as a non-training representative. To these new members a warm welcome was extended and to those who have retired sincere appreciation of their conscientious service was recorded. Because of her impending departure from Dunedin Mrs Boyd has advised that she will not be able to continue to represent that area and Mrs F. B. Keys, who has given enthusiastic support since 1955, has given notice of her intention to retire. It is a matter for regret that Mrs Boyd and Mrs Keys must relinquish their positions at this time for both have made valuable and thoughtful contributions to Executive deliberations and have most ably undertaken any tasks assigned to them.

Since the last Conference the Executive has met on two occasions - directly after the meeting in New Plymouth last September and again in March of this year. Circumstances beyond the Executive's control have caused delay in reporting the outcome of some decisions reached in New Plymouth and, in at least one matter, that of discussions between the Department, the Federation of Play Centre Associations and the Union to ensure that pre-school education be made available to all children, it has not been possible to make the necessary arrangements.

The reply given by the Director-General to remits which were passed at the 1965 Annual Meeting has been circulated to all associations. It will have been noted that further thought is to be given by the Department of Education to the case which the Union presented on the manner in which existing kindergarten premises might be utilised to provide for increased numbers of children.

The Executive is very pleased to report that the Honourable Minister has given sympathetic consideration to a request for financial assistance in the establishment of a permanent office for the Union and that he has advised the President of his approval of an annual grant of £500, to commence at the beginning of the 1967/8 financial year. Until this decision was known it was not possible to make firm plans to set up a permanent office, but, as a first step, the present Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs Elliott, has generously agreed to continue, if necessary, for an interim trial period of one year, when the situation will be reviewed.

The appreciation of the Union was conveyed to Mr A. E. Campbell when he retired from the post of Director-General in March and good wishes were extended for happiness and improved health in his years of retirement. The Union owes much to Mr Campbell for his interest in its welfare and for his helpful guidance at all times. It was most fitting that his long and distinguished service to education should be recognised by the award of C.M.G. in the New Year Honours List.

All members of the Union shared pleasure in the award of M.B.E. to Miss M. F. Gallagher in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June, when very sincere congratulations were offered to her on this richly-deserved acknowledgment of her outstanding contribution to pre-school and other fields of education.

All associations will join, too, in warm congratulations to the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of its service to the kindergarten movement.

MEMBERSHIP

With the affiliation of Otorohanga membership stands at sixtyfour associations, controlling two hundred and fiftytwo recognised kindergartens. But for delays in site development with some projects, through bad weather, this number would have reached two hundred and fiftysix at the end of the Union's financial year.

A warm welcome is extended to the Otorohanga Associations, and congratulations are offered to all associations where new kindergartens have been opened. The Executive is grateful for the receipt of Annual Reports from member associations and shares the pride which they reveal. It also shares the concern of some associations that some parents tend to take the service for granted and do not fully realise that it is a voluntary effort which can only prosper when all who benefit from it are prepared to support it.

RECOGNITION AND OFFICIAL OPENINGS OF NEW KINDERGARTENS

Nine new kindergartens have met the requirements for recognition by the Honourable Minister during the year. They are Marie McFarland, formerly Castlecliff, (Wanganui), Western Heights (Bay of Plenty), Wairoa, Onekawa (Napier-Taradale), Moira Gallagher, formerly Porirua East, (Tawa), Camberley, formerly Frimley, (Hastings), Solway (Masterton), Portsmouth Street, formerly Wainoni-Aranui, (Christchurch) and Wainui-o-mata (Lower Hutt).

There have also been nine official openings of new buildings - Te Aroha, Kowhai (Timaru), Marie McFarland (Wanganui), Otumoetai (Bay of Plenty), Te Kuiti, Wairoa, Onekawa (Napier-Taradale), Solway (Masterton) and Camberley (Hastings).

KINDERGARTEN BUILDING PROGRAMME

At the end of June four buildings approved in 1965 were completed and preparing for recognition, while, of the thirteen approved in 1966, five were under or about to start construction and two were calling tenders. The remainder were awaiting approval of plans. The Executive regrets to report that some associations have again suffered prolonged delay in gaining approval of plans by Regional Offices of the Department of Education. This circumstance was discussed with officers of the Department in March when it was agreed that, in future, all plans for new kindergartens will, initially, be sent to Head Office in Wellington, whence they will be forwarded to the appropriate Regional Office. This change in procedure will, in the Executive's opinion, ensure more satisfactory dealings with sketch plans and, later, with working drawings and specifications. Sincere gratitude is extended to the Director-General for his sympathetic attitude towards associations ready to proceed with building programmes and for his generous decision to invite preliminary plans from associations as soon as they have qualified for a position on the Union's priority list and can satisfy the Department that they will be able to meet the requirements for recognition. While this decision in no way commits the Department to approval of a building programme at any specific date, it provides opportunity to be ready to call tenders as soon as that approval is given.

There are six associations with committees on the priority list who are enjoying this opportunity at present. It is earnestly hoped that full advantage is being taken of it.

The Executive has expressed gratitude to the Department for preparing new basic plans for kindergartens and for the excellent explanatory notes accompanying them. These plans include new requirements by the Department of Health for the separation of the playroom area from the children's toilet room, under the Drainage

- 3 -

and Plumbing Regulations 1959.

EXECUTIVE TRAVEL

Te Aroha and Te Kuiti Associations honoured the President by invitations to open their kindergartens. The President has also visited associations at Huntly, Hamilton, Otorohanga, Matamata, Putaruru, Auckland, Taumarunui, Te Awamutu, Hastings, Gisborne, Tokoroa, Thames and Whangarei, has addressed public meetings at Turangi and Paeroa and met members of the Wellsford community where new associations have since been formed. The Vice-President met the Westport Association to discuss details of the 1966 Annual Meeting of the Union while other members of the Executive have assisted with meetings of new kindergartens seeking recognition or new groups wishing to establish kindergartens.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

It is evident that kindergarten teaching is attracting more and better-qualified applicants each year and that Selection Committees now undertake a heavy task in interviewing large numbers and making sound selection of students to enter the Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges. The Executive congratulates associations on the success of their efforts to encourage students of good quality for this responsible and rewarding career and records its appreciation of the assistance given by various news media in making known to the community what the work entails.

TRAINING

Of the 260 grants approved by the Honourable Minister for students in training in 1966 the quotas provided for ninety at Auckland, fifty at Wellington, sixty at Christchurch and forty at Dunedin. Twenty grants were held in reserve for allocation if needed in any particular area.

One hundred and nine students were awarded the Diploma of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union in December 1965. For the first time in the movement's history the number of newly-qualified teachers exceeded the number of positions available to them and, in February, 1966, there arose an unusual situation where thirteen teachers were employed as supernumeraries, in kindergartens near their homes, until vacancies appeared.

In Wellington where the Association accepted the Department's invitation to begin an experiment whereby administration of training would be undertaken by a Regional Council of Management in place of the Association itself, it appears that little difficulty has been encountered in making this change, apart from the problem of meeting financial obligations of the new Council. The Executive is most grateful to all associations who readily made an interim contribution to the annual levy for administration costs in order to assist the Council during this initial period. A report on the experiment will be presented by a member of the Council during the Annual Meeting.

It is most pleasing to record that prompt payment of contributions to the administration costs of training has allowed early reimbursement to the associations who undertake the important and responsible task of management of the Colleges. The Executive extends sincere gratitude to all associations for their co-operation in this matter and to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union for her competent handling of the funds. As a result of a meeting of representatives of finance committees of the four training associations last September agreement was reached on the form in which costs will be submitted and this, in turn, has assisted the Union office to keep associations fully informed.

Advice has been received of an in-service training course for twenty-two kindergarten teachers at Frank Lopdell House, Auckland,

in October of this year. The Executive warmly congratulates those who have been invited to participate and extends its gratitude to the Officer for Pre-School Education and her staff for arranging the opportunity, which will surely be of benefit, not only to those chosen, but to other staff members with whom they will share their experience.

I. M. JAMIESON SCHOLARSHIP

The recipient of this award in 1964, Mrs Betty Cosson, of the staff of the Auckland Kindergarten Teachers' College, was successful in passing Education III and the special topic for the Diploma of Education, Psychology of the Adolescent. She is continuing her studies at the University of Auckland as well as holding her teaching position.

The scholarship will be offered again in 1968 when it is hoped that many applicants will seek to take advantage of the opportunity to increase their academic qualifications.

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Although it gave more work to treasurers the Executive believes that all associations welcomed the application of a recent ruling rates survey to kindergarten teachers' salaries. The salary scale now clearly shows the value which is placed on the work of teachers but the Executive considers that greater rewards might be offered for positions of responsibility in order to encourage teachers to increase their qualifications and to attract highly-qualified persons to enter the service. This opinion has been conveyed to the Teachers' Association for comment, and action, if thought desirable.

Advice has been received of the Association's intention to hold a Summer School at Lincoln College, Christchurch, during January 1967. The Executive urges associations to encourage members of their staff to attend this course and extends good wishes for its success.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS

It was confidently hoped that the Union would be represented at the 11th Assembly of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, OMEP, held in Paris in July 1966, by Mrs R. J. Waghorn, a member of the Board of Studies for the Wellington Kindergarten Teachers' College, but an unfortunate accident sustained by her husband while overseas prevented this. The Union office continues to receive interesting information from members of the World Organisation which reveal the same active efforts for pre-school children that are so evident in New Zealand.

In May 1967 the Australian Pre-School Association will be holding its triennial conference in Canberra. New Zealand has much to gain from representation at this meeting where problems so like its own are being encountered and explored. The Executive commends to all associations the value of making regular contributions to the Union Travel Fund which can provide the opportunity for attendance and increased knowledge at overseas gatherings.

Enquiries for advice have been received from the General Secretary of the Indian Federation of Pre-Primary Institutions. The Union office has been pleased to supply information and literature which, judging by the enthusiastic acknowledgment by Mr Bhandari, have been helpful and greatly appreciated.

The recent visit of Dr Lucile Lindberg, Professor of Early Childhood Education at Queen's College, New York, has brought many associations in touch with current world opinion on pre-school education and has provided stimulus for the work that is being done in New Zealand.

An offer by the N. Z. Secretary of U.N.E.S.C.O. to call an inaugural meeting of pre-school organisations for the purpose of examining the possibility of establishing a N. Z. Pre-School Association was welcomed by the Executive but no advice of any action in this matter has yet been received.

FINANCE

A grant of £200 from the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board enabled the Executive to produce a reprint of the Kindergarten Handbook without cost to the Union. For this generous assistance very sincere appreciation is recorded.

Although the Union's funds are in a healthy state constant care is needed to ensure that expenses for printing, stationery and postage are not excessive. Increases in the cost of these services have been significant in the past year. The venue of annual meetings plays an important role in the amount required for Executive travelling expenses, which are always lower when the meeting is held in a place of easy access and in a relatively central position.

The possibility of establishing a permanent office makes it necessary to safeguard funds for initial expenses and a good working margin.

THANKS

The sincere gratitude of the Executive is extended to all who have given help and encouragement to its efforts in the year under review. The Honourable Minister and the Director-General of Education, the Officer for Pre-School Education and her staff have at all times shown the greatest courtesy, kindly interest and practical assistance. The Honorary Auditor and Honorary Solicitor have made their services freely available. The New Plymouth Free Kindergarten Association will long be remembered for its generous hospitality and happy arrangements for the 1965 Annual Meeting and member associations everywhere have advanced the work of the movement with unselfish endeavour. To them all deep appreciation is recorded.

As this will be the last occasion on which I shall have the privilege of preparing the Executive Report I wish to express my personal gratitude to members of the Executive, throughout my term of office, for their loyal support, their friendship and their willing assistance. In particular, I shall always value the helpful co-operation and expert attention to the Union's business of the Secretary, Mrs Elliott, without which my contribution would not have been possible.

I wish the incoming President and Executive a very happy and rewarding term and sincerely thank the Union for the opportunity it has given me, during the last nine years, to serve it. It has been a most stimulating and valuable experience.

For the Executive,

H. Downer

President.

September, 1966.