

MISS VARCOE

Perhaps my most interesting and valuable experience was the course undertaken in Psychology and the Child at the University of Birmingham. At the University there was a great deal of building going on. The Education Department is at present housed in an old red brick building which reminded me of Otago.

The course included lectures in educational psychology, experimental and social and included the teaching of reading and spelling. Lectures in child development included family life. In addition, we were each able to choose an additional topic and there was 100 hours' practical work. I have always been interested in the attitude of teachers towards different methods and my additional topic was along those lines.

The 100 hours' practical work included visits to schools of various kinds, nursery schools, approved schools and Hereford Training College. I would have preferred visiting an infant school in Bristol being run on family lines. The three nursery schools visited were all rather different. The first one reminded me very much of some of the schools in our own country and where we saw a free play programme. But the space was very limited compared with New Zealand and outdoor space was almost nil by our standards. The course for nursery nurses is something similar to our kindergarten course, but not of such a high standard. Educational qualifications are lower and theory is not nearly so intensified.

Professor Jeffries, Professor of the Institute of Education, is an outstanding lecturer.

I then attended a residential course where, together with other people who had not previously studied any psychology but who were interested in this subject, the subject discussed was "Psychology of the Mature Adult". All this contributed something towards one's overseas experience. This is part of one's growing up and is most valuable.

Later I went to Scotland to Moray House Training College. They have a three years' course and a two year probationary period and then go back to the college for a year's special training. In the same grounds as the college they had a primary school as well as nursery school but, once again, conditions were cramped.

From Scotland I went to Gloucester to join a staff of forty. With the expansion of teacher training programmes in England this college was asked to include a group who would be training for general teacher training. I joined the Education Department which included lecturing in educational psychology, child development and history of education.

The college is residential and all students live in for all of their time at the college, excepting two terms. This has much to commend it - I got to know all the students more quickly and became very involved in college life.

Each student chooses principal subjects from this list - art and craft, English, history and geography; then she chooses a secondary subject for two years as a complementary subject. All students follow a course of professional subjects; all students do education.

The time spent in practical work in the schools is of shorter duration than that followed by our own kindergarten directors - sometimes 3, 5 or 6 weeks. In addition, they spend some time on a particular afternoon in the week. Opportunity to lecture in these varying branches of education was of great benefit to me. As well it gave me the opportunity to see how a bigger college was organised. Students work mainly on the assessment system, which was really quite hard to work under in some ways - you were never done marking. On the other hand you had more personal contact with the students. Once a term lecturers had the opportunity to get together. We discussed together with the Area Supervisor teaching Art and Craft and the handling of all sorts of material in this subject. The importance was

stressed of all students experiencing this work in their training course, because unless they handle this material themselves they cannot help children to be creative.

I visited a private kindergarten conducted in a house. The person in charge lived in a top flat. The grounds were the part that fascinated me, a lovely formal old garden. I was overjoyed to see a child with a water pump at the water trough. It was wonderful to see outdoor space so natural and so streamlined.

O. M. E. P.

Study Tour of Norway.

In Norway a training course may be undertaken only after four years' secondary education. During training half the time is spent in kindergarten training and half in a domestic science college. Of what significance is this for New Zealand? New Zealand can be justly proud of its buildings, its equipment, its programmes, its amenities - something for which many countries envy us. We have a national pattern, our methods are more or less similar in all our colleges, so that we are the envy of many of the countries of the world. Many of these people seemed to me to have a tremendous task ahead and I admire them for their courage in attempting to solve these problems.

I met two young women from Africa who were going back to set up a training college in Uganda. I think we could well often stop and look and listen and realise how very fortunate we are. We have some wonderful buildings and we have a team of grand workers, but do not let us become complacent.

I think we should contribute something of our movement to the world scene. What should we do with all we have? We have a lot of wonderful things, but I wonder if we always make the most of them. I realise well that so many opportunities are open to us. I hope that together we will be able to encourage our people to make the most of all the opportunities they have to continue their education by attending summer schools and courses. The material is there - as good as you will find in any country in the world. We must try to encourage our people to take advantage of this.

We need to do some research into the growth and development of young children. This means New Zealand children. We need further research on parent-teacher relationships. It is necessary to have trained people to undertake this study.

I think we should all anticipate in the not-too-distant future our kindergarten teachers having a three-year training course. Some day our teachers will be trained to teach children up to the age of seven. In what direction must we then move?

STOCKHOLM - AUGUST 12th - 18th 1964

THEME: CHILDREN IN A RAPIDLY-CHANGING WORLD

Five hundred participants attended from thirtyfive countries from five continents. Members represented many disciplines interested in early childhood such as pediatricians, therapists, educators, administrators, architects, city planners, landscape architects and psychologists.

Professor Ase Skard, World Presidents of O. M. E. P., presided at the opening of the Assembly.

Miss Lisa Smedberg, Chairman of the Swedish National Committee of O. M. E. P. welcomed delegates, and pointed out that child psychologists had taught us to deal with the first simple maturation, and so prepare for later stages of growth and this was important from the point of view of mental health. Nations needed to understand each other for fruitful collaboration, and so establish peace and goodwill between individuals and nations.

Professor Skard spoke of our common concern for young children - this, she said, caused us all to contribute to education for young children. The world is changing rapidly and we needed to hear from the developing countries. Changing world communications made it possible for representatives to attend. We are concerned with the impact of our changing world on the children. Rapid urbanisation, densely-populated regions, parents going from home to work, changing mother-child relationships - all have repercussions on the children. Professor Skard then posed the following questions:

1. Are local authorities, parents' employers and governments aware of the need for provision to be made for the children?
2. How much time does the child require mother at different stages of development?
3. Is the increase in juvenile delinquency due to the loss of father-child relationship at the pre-school stage?
4. Have men a right to work in institutions for pre-school children?

The world around the home has been changed and because of the traffic crowded street the children can no longer "run out to play". This means that children need substitutes for the free areas they have been deprived of. Therefore we must provide play space for our children in this rapidly-changing world. O.M.E.P. is concerned with the problems of the children up to the age of eight to nine years. We desire to contribute to the development of these children with insight, and because of the specialists in O. M. E. P. we should be able to accomplish this. We must try, and improve our knowledge, and also our knowledge of the research that is being undertaken. All participants had something to give, and during the week we would all have an opportunity to share, to profit and enjoy ourselves.

Mrs Ulla Lindstom, member of the Swedish Government, said that the threats of poverty and tuberculosis had passed, but new demands had come; that is density of population in the towns and full employment of married women. Increased demands on the community for the care and attention of the children, in the form of provision of services such as institutions for children, and domestic help, have resulted from the changes in our world.

Burgomaster Helge Berglund, welcomed participants to the city and said that he hoped our discussions would contribute to a brighter and better adolescence for the children all over the world; those children whom we hope will grow into human beings in a world of cultural and material development in peace and freedom.

The first speaker was Mrs A. Myrdal, member of the Swedish parliament, and a founder of O. M. E. P., who gave a thought-provoking address on "The Changing Family Situation".

Firstly, she said, man must be made of very resilient material, because his environment is ever-changing. So often this change is rapid and thorough going that it amounts to almost total upheaval. Man has shown an incredible capacity for surviving psychologically - if he survives physically both wars and revolutions, and he seemed to be surviving the very thorough-going changes which often occur in that most immediate environmental frame of his, his personal family. So it is no wonder he is apt to survive also the transformation of the family as an institution which follows in the wake of the long-term transition of our social patterns, which is happening everywhere when the age-old society seemingly so static, is hit by industrialisation, modernisation and development.

In western societies women have been hardest hit by the changes brought about in their social conditions, while men have managed to pull through with their attitudes, their scales of values, their role image, their inner sense of security much more intact.

The question most urgently to be asked is what about the children? How far are children made to suffer or profit? In what way could remedies be brought about by purposive policies? Any changes affecting the present generation will reflect themselves also in some changes in the children's world, at least in their conceptions of men's and women's roles.

Today it is within the frame-work of changes as to social environment - in its widest sense, that we should focus attention on the specific fate of the young generation. We may scrutinise these relationships of changes and effects along four different axes, although they are all interdependent.

1. The change in cultural-moral perspective brought about by the trend to secularisation, rationality and realism.
2. The change in the demographic situation of the family when abandoning the large clan family in favour of the nuclear biological family, and having to count on a much longer life-span for all individuals.
3. The change in the economic structure of the family, transforming the joint productive unit into a group of individuals with specialised functions for income-earning and income-spending.
4. The change in physical environment encompassing a mass migration to urban households, but also the introduction of a wide variety of new amenities, which sever the visible connection between cause and effect, leaving us to live in an environment of 'un-nature'.

Mrs Myrdal spoke of the untold harm done to the new generations by the older ones bringing conflicting teachings to them. Introducing a rational, perhaps agnostic but anyway honest foundation in reality, on which children can judge all the various elements of beliefs and ethics they encountered, should, said Mrs Myrdal, be judged as a very wholesome influence, within the family and be particularly beneficial to the children. This would free them in the formative years of life from tremendous pressure of fears and guilt feelings, which were inherent in the teachings of old world religions. Issues must be "talked out", and this would serve to arrive at an objectivisation which could be helpful in interpersonal relations. Early in life children should become familiar with the "things", and the laws governing them, so that they get a basic feeling of security in the material world, and in their ability to manipulate it. Within the family or other closed groups, inducement should be given to freely talking about all matters, so that the young generation becomes accustomed to keep open "the communication lines" to a close personal environment.

External factors important for the family are the prolongation of the individual life-span, the diminishing size of the average family, the lower age at marriage and the greater frequency of marriage. It is sheer miscalculation if people think of marriage and parenthood as being practically synonymous, because actually the child-rearing period is becoming a short interlude in the life of adults. Our speaker considered that there is a trend to make the family, its housing etc., more instead

of less child-centered. This child-centration may not be beneficial to the children themselves, because there exists a risk of overprotection. Life being what it is in modern times means there is an urgent need to develop early a child's independence, his self-reliance, his ability to live on his own inner resources. This can be translated into a demand for a supplementary environment for development alongside the home i.e. the Nursery Schools. Nursery school, however, must have its continuum up through the years, schools, clubs and so on, which to an increasing degree should fulfil this need for development of an environment outside the home, valuable because it provides for social experimentation in a peer-group. School systems must not become institutionalised instruction-machines and forget to provide a process of maturing independence on the part of the young generation, both in relation to adults, to the outside world of material and economic reality, and to the co-operative society which the wage-peers might form. The decreasing size of the family means there is not so much scope for differentiation in personality roles and functions and therefore the home environment is a less variegated one. Of course this constitutes a further justification for the nursery school and its educational successors, as an outside supplementation of the family situation.

In conclusion Mrs Myrdal said that the foundations for the family have changed. As well there is an increase in leisure hours, and we should realise that we have material conditions for re-creating a more adequate family pattern. We must not let ourselves be "bogged down" by outworn cliches, as this would be a reflection on our ability to handle human group relationships successfully. Educators, be they parents, teachers or administrators, must realise for what a different future they have to prepare the next generation.

A symposium on "Children in High Houses and Crowded Streets and the need for Early Planning" was addressed by Mme Herbinier-Lebert (French General Inspector of Nursery Schools), Professor Flemmie Kittrell (Professor at Howard University U. S. A.), Professor Sten Egler Rasmussen (Royal Academy of Art (Denmark), Mr Hans Wohlen (Architect and Town Planning, Sweden), Lady Allen of Hurtwood (Landscape Architect of the United Kingdom).

Mme Ika Paul Pont (India and delegate from the Centre International de L'Enfance) spoke on "Problems of Children in Developing Countries". She said that the world is divided between those who can eat and those who cannot, and this does not make for good human relationships. We want to give equal opportunities to all peoples of the world. What does this inequality for children in the world mean to you?

In U. S. A. children have all the opportunities to help them over the difficulties of the beginning of their life. Child's environment will be provided for him - it will be a stimulating, planned environment. If his mother works a mother substitute will be provided. The school takes over the role of his education and if a family disturbance occurs this will be overcome.

In developing countries for the mother of the more privileged class conditions are fairly similar. However, for the under-privileged mother the baby is delivered in haphazard conditions, and in the sixth-seventh month of his existence nutrition difficulties arise. Thus this undernourished infant is open to all types of infection, and only one child in ten survives. Children who survive do not have a chance in life as there is no outer stimulus, the house is unfurnished, although ignorance and incompetence are offset by love. The mother does not go out to work, but already works from six o'clock in the morning until 3 p.m. While she works in the field the children are either looked after by an older child, by grandma, locked in hut or left by themselves. The motto is the best one will win. Educational research is needed, and we need to ask ourselves these questions:

Is there anything for children of pre-school age?
What work methods should we use?
How should teachers be prepared?

Every effort must be made to understand the conditions, and we cannot force our knowledge on others.

Mme Paul Pont concluded the discussion by saying the social function comes first, education comes second and that the teacher is a producer who distributes knowledge, as is the doctor.

Participants discussed each subject in groups and also met together to talk over problems and contribute their own personal experience.

In addition to films from many countries on the subject of the Assembly visits were paid to playgrounds, day care centres, kindergartens and nursery schools.

An exhibition of equipment, psychological material, children's paintings and drawings of handicapped children was well set up and one needed time to browse there.

At the conclusion of the discussions the Assembly stressed the importance of (1) instigating appropriate laws stipulating the requirements for sufficient free areas for children's play, creative programmes and other activities

(2) controlling the use of urban as well as rural areas for buildings and road construction so as to reserve protected areas of sufficient number, size and quality for the use of children in all age groups.

(3) enforcing the demands for the organisation of day institutions according to the report of the meeting of Ministries of Education called jointly by UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education held in Geneva in 1961.

At the closing plenary session Dr Morgan (Institute of Child Study, University of Maryland) recalled the highlights of the week's lectures and discussions. To every member, he said, the exhibition, lectures and discussions would mean something different. Basic convictions, beliefs and affirmations have been expressed about the becoming of mankind everywhere. The developing of one person is deeply embedded in the becoming of every person. In some countries there is little opportunity for self development. We hold the conviction that philosophy, scientific knowledge and resources are available to do something for that person. Distribution of these resources is important, and we must do something about the conditions under which children and adults grow and develop in all parts of the world. He stressed the need to keep alive in human beings the urge to grow, to strive to "become". We should look, said Dr Morgan, at the adolescent, because these present children will become adolescents of the future. The attitude of the teacher, the future of teacher training and the future of our children must be our concern. Basic experiences and activity not passivity, giving children what they need when they need it, experiences that call for stretch and growth, will keep the urge to grow alive, dynamic and ongoing through time. This will give direction to our future behaviour. We need to think about the kind of human beings we are trying to develop. Our aim should be to develop happy, effectively responsible, creative human beings, who (1) can deal adequately with change, (2) are not afraid of the unknown but who welcome it, (3) can deal with ambiguity, (4) are adventuresome, (5) can strike out on their own and learn on their own initiative. Such human beings are needed for the future of this world.

The real meaning of the Conference, said Dr Morgan, lies ahead. This experience has given us something, so that we will become facilitators of the becoming of boys and girls in the world. It is a question of how significantly do we wish to live.

So ended this truly wonderful conference, and I felt very privileged to have attended. At a meeting of O. M. E. P's constituents members, I learned more about the activities of a national committee and look forward to the formation of a New Zealand national committee. The next Conference is to be held in Paris in 1966.

MISS GALLAGHER

I cannot promise that I have anything new to say, but sometimes to say things again might be helpful. You will all know that the movement has for years now suffered from staff difficulties. In fact those of you who are in office today probably do not realise how precarious the staffing position was sixteen years ago. Staffing is a problem for obvious reasons. There must be somebody to care for the children; if we are going to do something of value in the educational field we must have trained teachers to do the job. This staffing difficulty has been dealt with in a variety of ways.

At one time associations opened new kindergartens where and when they felt them to be necessary. They could not always see the national picture or how precarious the position of the movement was. They felt an obligation to the community in which they worked. Somehow hope always survived, they always felt that the worst couldn't happen to them. There was also a feeling that there was somebody on the committee who could help, somebody had a niece who would like to come to their kindergarten. But it didn't always work that way, the niece preferred to go elsewhere.

In 1951 the first action was taken by Government. No new kindergarten would be recognised in an association's area unless the association had its existing kindergartens fully staffed by trained staff. This could only give breathing space; it was only a temporary relief, but it was hoped that it would be relief that would be lasting.

Meantime kindergartens were beginning in areas where the work had not previously been done. This policy therefore applied a brake only and did not fully restore the position. With further deterioration the Government decided in 1956 to declare a period of "consolidation". The word was used rather loosely because there was a feeling that it covered the situation. That meant, of course, that by bringing expansion of the movement to a complete standstill we were able to catch up a little. But the Department also had to think of the best way out of this period of consolidation. There were large numbers of people waiting and simply to have opened the door would have meant a great number of new kindergartens. So we have the policy of controlled expansion and the priority plan with the list held by the Union and the policy to treat those who are waiting as fairly as possible.

It is as a result of these measures that the staffing position is better than it has been in my time in office. That indeed is something about which we should rejoice. At the worst time one teacher in three was untrained. That there at present are only 6.7% vacancies is indeed the measure of the progress made and an indication of the confidence with which the movement can go forward. The kindergarten service must always call on untrained teachers during the year. It will probably be necessary to call on untrained staff to fill vacancies as they occur next year. But the future outlook is most encouraging.

Kindergarten service loss can be one year 9%, and the next year 24%. One has to try to guess from one's finger on the pulse of the movement which way it is going at the present time. My forecast is usually an inspired guess.

Looking back I think what has happened was the beginning of a new trend - new salary rates, new working conditions, more people staying on in the service, but it was just long enough to make up for our losses. And once that trend was established things began to look most encouraging.

Next year, with the bond operating and with better salaries, I think staffing is now more likely to hold than ever before. We believe we must now begin to reduce the number of students taken into the colleges each year. This may not be a permanent reduction. There will be no increase in grants to training associations. With the reduction in the number of grants the kindergarten movement will be able to choose its students, to choose the best applicants, as far as possible the people best qualified to train as teachers for our kindergartens. With the improved staffing position the machinery should hold even if

we get to the point of catching up with the priority list held by the Union.

While the priority system continues the Minister will still decide how many kindergartens will be allowed to go forward each year. It will mean nobody waits longer than part of a year. It could be that he would allow ten kindergartens to go ahead when there are only four waiting.

The fact that, this year, bonded girls will come into the kindergartens for the first time brings two points for thought. One is that we propose to write to the girls reminding them of the bond and pointing out to each that the only thing that will release her from her obligation is ill health. Otherwise any girl who does not take a position will be sought out and the conditions of the bond will be pursued. It is now a matter of life and death for the girls that they get a position. Those who cannot get one in their home town will apply to other associations. Associations should realise this and should let the girls know if a position is available, and advise them of their appointment as soon as they possibly can. They must let them know quickly to be fair to the girls and to be fair to the other associations who are awaiting their decisions.

Associations must, in terms of the regulations, take trained teachers where available. Untrained teachers are appointed on a temporary basis only and can be dismissed at any time no matter how reluctant one is to do so.

Student Recruitment

It is quite evident that the increased numbers recruited over the last few years have been achieved at the expense of quality. To get the larger number it is necessary to go to a lower level of suitability for the work. The number of terminations of studentships help to substantiate that remark. My personal view is that if a girl is unsuitable the sooner that decision is made the better. Of those for whom studentships are terminated the general reason is unsuitability.

Last year the Director of Education decided that at least 50% should have School Certificate as a minimum qualification. Indeed one association achieved something like 86% and the overall average was 72%. This year 75% should have School Certificate or better. It would be greatly to the advantage of the movement as a whole if 25% had Endorsed School Certificate. If there is a basic weakness in the service it is due entirely to the fact that we have been recruiting a number of girls who are not basically and educationally fitted for the job. The kindergarten movement needs leaders in its professional staff. While the Union has done what it can to encourage girls to take up further study, may I suggest that while there are always people who are capable of growing up professionally, the number is all too few because of the proportion of those who lack the solid educational foundations on which to build.

The Minister introduced a new period of consolidation in 1961, but at the same time allowed fifteen kindergartens to go ahead. Since then no new kindergartens were allowed.

In May 1963 nine associations were invited to begin work on plans in readiness for when they were allowed to proceed. I am dismayed at the delays that have occurred and the slowness of these associations in taking up the opportunities offered. Of those nine who were invited to begin plans in May 1963 six are under construction after fifteen months. Of the fifteen authorised in May of this year some have not submitted sketch plans. I am very concerned about this. One of our objects is that everybody should be ready to go ahead at full speed to absorb staff and take advantage of available staff. There must be associations on the Union's list not ready to proceed. Long delays might make staff difficult for the association concerned and might create problems for the movement as a whole, and it is most unfair to others who are still waiting. I think in future when associations invited to submit plans do not do so promptly, they should be withdrawn from the list and the Union should be asked to nominate the next association.

This is a practice which could be open to the gravest objection. Your association is the responsible body for all the kindergartens in the area, and while there is no legal objection to lending a new committee money to build, there is this problem. Very often they are in places where the need is greatest, but where there are young families with heavy commitments in their new homes. They are the most difficult places and this is something which must be watched. There is the practice of associations lending money to the committee and requiring them to pay it back. They manage with a minimum of equipment, they scratch along without financial support they need so much and all their resources are being used to repay their loan. Paying back is a very bad thing indeed. Why not give the money? The other difficulty is that an association, in supporting and backing a new kindergarten, will divert all available funds to the new project, thus depriving established kindergartens of the maintenance money.

And now what of the future? The kindergarten movement has shown from its early existence that it is capable of change and development. Dunedin proudly stands as the leader who took steps to provide kindergartens because of the social needs of the children of the day. In doing this those leaders of long ago called on the knowledge that was available and found out what was being done in overseas countries to decide what could be done for these children and how best it could be done. There was a general looking to the future and hope of the great things to come, but the saying in this day is "in this changing world of ours".

I would hope that the kindergarten movement would continue to show that it was aware of changing needs in our immediate society and aware of our changing needs in the world at large and be able to make use of knowledge available about young children, how they grow, how they develop and how best we can help them to reach their optimum in each stage of development. There is the danger that the kindergarten movement may have reached a plateau in its development or that it may become stagnant in its education knowledge. I say this because I wonder if, in its efforts made to provide the money, we have begun to lose sight of the children for whom we are all concerned. Annual reports show that there is nothing constructive or creative being done about the children for whom we are so deeply concerned. How refreshing it is to read of the aspirations of an association who is developing its educational programme.

How much of this Union conference is taken up with business to the exclusion, to the cramping of anything that means knowledge, educational progress and educational aims of the movement? How much does the average council member have the opportunity to keep abreast of the trends in education. In education generally, but in pre-school work above all, the most important heritage of the child is his family. However good the provisions we make for the children in the kindergarten it is not sufficient without doing it for his family. He must have consistency in the attitude of the adults closest to him. Insofar as parents develop in their attitudes so it is that children learn to accept or learn what is the accepted thing. In extreme cases, where there is bad dissension in the home or where the child is handled by a large number of adults, he fails to make satisfactory progress. For a happy child we must have consistency in the home, and between parents and teachers outside the home. How can we proceed if parents do not understand what we are trying to do and if we do not understand the attitude of the parents towards what we are trying to do.

We find that it takes a certain time to generate energy for play. The child needs ample time to complete his task if he is to develop his powers of concentration. Interrupted play is spoiled play. There is the question of the programmes where the most significant change has taken place and the kindergarten has shown itself able to take and to make use of the knowledge we have gained. What must the teacher do in order to extend the children in her care? There are indeed opportunities that are not fully used. There is no kindergarten association that is availing itself at the present time of the facilities for adult education courses available. This service is available and if associations could see that on every association council there was an

education officer, then progress would indeed be real.

Associations could make more use of the pre-school officers of the Department in this direction. They are prepared to spend more time at this work if you will call on them and try to arrange for a meeting of this kind. Progress will be possible only by having an informed group of people, only by this can we meet the challenge of the future.

I have been in this work for nineteen years and there has never been a time that I have not been grateful for the opportunity this time afforded. I would say "thank you" to the Union and to the Presidents of the Union for always having given me the opportunity to speak to conference. I would say "thank you" to the people I have worked with, all the years when I knew everybody, "thank you" to the Councils who have borne with me when I have been at my most difficult and "thank you" to all for the joy that this work has brought me.