

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TRAINING

REPORT TO CONFERENCE - SEPTEMBER, 1962

After consideration of the proposals put forward by the Director of Education in his letter of 2 April, 1962, it is recommended on broad educational grounds that the Union affirms its view:

- (a) that the Department of Education should assume responsibility for the training of kindergarten teachers;
- (b) that students under such training should receive the same allowances, status and conditions of work as students training for primary teaching, and
- (c) that, in the long term, kindergarten teachers should enjoy the same salary, status and conditions of work as teachers in the primary service.

If the Department does not see its way to meet these recommendations in the near future, the Union should take some steps towards this objective.

It is recommended:

- (a) that each kindergarten teachers' college should set up a professional committee on the lines of the proposal for a Board of studies put forward by the Director of Education;
- (b) that, in the near future, a development of an exploratory character should be undertaken in one area, corresponding with that of the local University district, where the College would be placed under the control of a Regional Board of Management, which would control and administer the funds for the running of the College;

- (c) that, since one College only would come under the new scheme, at the initial stage, all kindergartens, including those in the area of the Regional Board, should make an equal contribution to the cost of running the other three Colleges, in order to maintain equity over the whole kindergarten system and that this requirement should, ultimately, be withdrawn when the Department of Education assumes responsibility for the full cost of training in all centres, to enable kindergarten committees to give more attention to parent education, parent participation and other educational activities;
- (d) That the Union support, in principle, the proposal of the Commission on Education for the setting up of University Institutes of Education. It is noted that, in England, where the Institute scheme was developed, the training of teachers for pre-school work comes within the ambit of the University Institute of Education;
- (e) that the Union request the Department of Education to grant an opportunity for consultation on urgent measures to overcome the present shortage of trained staff. The Union offers for consideration a proposal for the introduction of an emergency training scheme for kindergarten teachers, a special one year course, followed by a probationary year, for mature women, say, between 25 and 40 years of age, who have, at least, School Certificate or its equivalent. Such a development might take place in one College only and should be subject to annual review;
- (f) that an Advanced Dip. K. should be established, where holders would receive a substantial salary increment. Those seeking the award of an Advanced Diploma should be holders of Dip. K. who have had, at least, three years' successful professional experience. The scheme should be modelled on the Department's scheme for a Diploma in Teaching, and
- (g) that immediate steps should be taken to provide in-service training for practising kindergarten teachers.

BOARD OF STUDIES

The Union offers the following proposals for the composition and functions of the Board of Studies:-

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)
 One Infant Mistress
 One Senior Mistress of a Post-Primary School
 Three representatives of kindergarten associations in
 the University district
 The right to co-opt three additional members.

Functions

1. General oversight of the educational programme of the College, and particularly of the curriculum and examining and assessing students.
2. To recommend the system of selection of students and to nominate the selection committee.
3. To recommend all appointments and dismissals of College staff.
4. To make recommendations in cases of termination of studentships.

5. To make recommendations on accommodation needs, educational apparatus, equipment and amenities which affect the welfare of the students and the efficiency of the College.

It is suggested that the Board should have about three meetings per year and that a small Executive should deal with matters which do not warrant the calling of a full meeting of the Board.

REGIONAL BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Union suggests that this Board should consist of twelve members, lay and professional, as follows:

- (i) Some elected by associations in the area through the mechanism of electoral colleges.
- (ii) Some appointed by the Minister of Education.
- (iii) Holders of certain offices (or their nominees) e.g. Principal of Teachers' College, Professor of Education.
- (iv) A headmistress of a post-primary school.

It is suggested:

1. that the Regional Board should meet once per term, other than in exceptional circumstances, and that a small Executive should meet monthly, or more frequently if required;
2. that Government should meet the full cost of the work of the Regional Board, including the cost of an officer who would serve as secretary to the College, working under the direction of the Principal, and to the Board, under the Chairman, in dealing with the business of the Board. Payment would be made on a basis comparable with that made to the other Colleges, with the exception that Government would meet the present gap between subsidy and total cost;
3. that the College in this area should have a professional committee with the same functions and responsibilities as those of Boards of Studies in other centres;
4. that in the centre chosen for the proposed development the Association now controlling the College should be invited to hand over its responsibilities (other than the provision of practising kindergartens for students) to the Regional Board for a period of, say, three years, at the end of which period the whole scheme would be subject to review, and
5. that the diploma issued by the Regional Board should continue to be that awarded under the authority of the Union.