



WORKING PARTY ON THREE YEAR TRAINING FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

The Working Party has now met on four occasions the last meeting being held on November 27.

The early meetings, July, September, were very positive. The group worked in sub-committees on various aspects of the draft report and it was generally agreed that much of the justification for three year training had already been produced in previous reports, e.g. Hill Report.

However at the meeting on 21 October a letter from the Director-General to the Chairman of the Working Party was tabled. This asked the Working Party to consider the wider issue of the training of all early childhood workers and also the issue of training for 0-8 years. Considerable time was spent discussing this letter. The Chairman (DEC) interpreted it to mean that the Working Party should be making recommendations for the training of all E.C. educators and also for training E.C. educators to working with 5-8 year olds. The Working Party expressed concern at this, members felt that it was not possible for the people present to deal with issues wider than kindergarten training.

The Chairman left the meeting during these discussions and in her absence it was generally agreed that the Director-General's letter in fact only endorsed the direction the Working Party had already taken, i.e. recognising the need for deeper knowledge of the 0-8 year range and indicating the implications for childcare training in teachers colleges.

The meeting then proceeded to consider further the content and format of the draft report. The report was subsequently circulated to members and comment requested by a certain date - NZFKU representatives spent some time working on the report and returned comment as requested.

At the next meeting on 5 November both the minutes of the previous meeting and the revised draft report were handed out. The revised draft report was vastly changed from the earlier version. We were told that this was because the Director-General's letter changed "the nature of the terms of reference", e.g. the report did not refer to kindergarten teachers but to early childhood educators (including childcare).

As the report had not previously been seen by any members of the Working Party the day was mainly spent in groups doing the preparation work usually done prior to a meeting. NZFKU representatives stated that if in fact the terms of reference had changed then this Working Party should be disbanded and the Minister should set up a new one with different terms of reference and more suitable representation.

It was necessary to call a further meeting on November 27 to once again consider the "final" draft report.

At the start of this meeting the Working Party was told that the Director-General would be attending at 2pm. We were also told, by the Director of Early Childhood -

- that the Director-General's letter had changed the course of the Working Party
- that NZEI were meeting with the department next week to talk about training E.C. educators to work in the junior school (5-8 years)
- that three year training for childcare would be starting in 1987.

The Director of Early Childhood then left the meeting and the report was considered.

The Director-General joined the meeting at 2pm and spoke about his letter. It transpired that, in fact, while his letter changed the direction of the Working Party in asking it to consider the wider issues of 0-8 training, it did not in fact change the terms of reference. The Working Party was correctly to consider extended training for kindergarten teachers, all that had been asked was that consideration be given to putting this in the wider context of working with 0-8 years.

A "final" draft is now being prepared and will be circulated to all members before Christmas. There will be no further meeting of the whole group but a writing party of Wellington based members may meet to complete the final tidying up.

The Working Party has made the following recommendations:

- (a) that as from 1987 a three year pre-service training course for early childhood teachers, beginning with kindergarten teachers, be established in Teachers' Colleges;
- (b) that the implementation of three year pre-service training for kindergarten teachers be phased into teachers colleges over three years;
- (c) that a period of induction of not less than one year for teachers working in the kindergarten service should follow the three year pre-service course;
- (d) that teachers colleges award the diploma of teaching on the successful completion of the three year pre-service training course, and the department of education a certificate to teach in kindergartens at the end of the induction period.
- (e) that a national in-service course meet to consider the content, structure and organisation of an early childhood education course as outlined in appendix E of the report, and to determine guidelines for the establishment of three year Division E training programmes in colleges; and

- (f) that the department of education hold immediate discussion with primary service, childcare groups and associated interest groups on the implications of this report.