

into independence too fast. They must be careful not to ask too much of them at a very young age.

The child needs the security of a stable environment. The child becomes confused when parents are in disagreement. Discipline should be consistent and understanding.

Dr. Cantwell concluded by expressing the hope that his address had helped a little towards understanding the child a little better in putting them on the road to normal emotional and mental health.

REPORT OF THE IXth ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD ORGANISATION  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. LONDON, July 15 - 22,  
1962.

Current Officers:

President: Miss Hazel Gabbard (U.S.A.)  
Vice-President: Mlle. Alice Claret (Belgium)  
Mr Jens Sigsgaard (Denmark)  
Mme. Herbinier-Lebert (France)  
Dr. Ernst Kothbauer (Austria)

British National Committee:

39 Queen Anne Street,  
LONDON, W.1.

Founder President: Lady Allen of Hurtwood  
Chairman: Miss P. M. Pickard  
Treasurer: Miss W. B. C. Lovell  
Hon. Secretary: Miss M. B. Denny.

Lecturers: Dr Anna Freud, Director, Hampstead Child-Therapy Clinic,  
"The Emotional and Social Development of Young Children".

Dr Andre Berge, Psychopedagogic Clinic of the Paris Academy  
"The Understanding Adult".

Dr Lois B. Murphy, Research Psychologist, The Menninger  
Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A.  
"World Wide Implications of the Education of Young Children".

I have just attended the most exciting meeting of my life - the IXth Assembly of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, known as OMEP from the initials of the French Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire. I was indeed privileged to be at this meeting in London where nearly 400 members from more than 30 countries were in attendance. I will do my best to give you a brief account of the proceedings, but feel whatever I write here cannot possibly convey either the tremendous value of OMEP's work in promoting healthy human relationships and understanding among the peoples of the world, or the great spirit of sincere friendliness and positive enthusiasm of every member at the Assembly.

Miss H. F. Gabbard, World President of OMEP, presided at the opening of the Assembly on Monday morning, July 16th. Miss Gabbard welcomed all members who, she said, were at the Assembly to share ideas and learn what is happening to children in all parts of the world.

Then Miss P. M. Pickard, as Chairman of the British National Committee of OMEP, also welcomed the delegates. Miss Pickard pointed out that as OMEP is international the Assembly Programme had been decided by the World Council and the British Committee had only been responsible for carrying out the details of the meeting. She explained that as OMEP provides opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas about young children at an international level, it has a great contribution to make towards world peace. It is only 83 years since



the foundation of the first Psychological Laboratory and it is really only 60 or 70 years since we have been systematically gathering information about children. We are still discovering children are not what we thought they were; they are far better and far worse! Through our lack of knowledge and understanding we often find we are not helping but hindering their development, for when children need help they need highly-specialized help. This latter point was reiterated time and time again during the Assembly.

His Worship, the Mayor of Battersea, welcomed members on behalf of his borough as the Assembly was held at the Battersea School of Technology.

The Rt. Hon. Sir David Eccles, K.C.V.O., M.P., Minister of Education, extended the greetings of Her Majesty's Government to the Assembly. We had the unique experience of meeting two British Ministers of Education within the space of three days, due to the British Government's Cabinet reshuffle.

Miss Gabbard, as President, spoke on the "Task of OMEP". Its aims and objects are -

1. To promote the study and education of young children in all countries and so foster happy childhood and home life and thereby contribute to world peace.
2. To promote nursery school education (pre-school) education.

In shaping its Constitution, OMEP made emphasis on the fact that it is striving "to help all those who work with children and to provide opportunities for all professions and organisations to co-operate in serving those needs". Whether we are parents, teachers, doctors, architects or whatever the aspect of our work in relationship to the needs of children, there is a growing awareness that the whole climate of living affects the way a child grows. The following is a brief list of some of the things OMEP has accomplished:-

1. A collection of information about children in other countries - i.e. a survey.
2. Collaboration with UNESCO in ways in which parents and teachers work together.
3. Conducting surveys on Nursery School education programmes in various countries - Ministries of Education, UNESCO.
4. International Bibliographies of outstanding books and materials in many countries - 60 countries assisted in this work.
5. With emphasis on teacher-training a pamphlet has been printed on "Preparation of Teachers in 17 Countries".
6. OMEP has a number of representatives on other organisations - e.g. Mental Health in Peru, Research in Education in both Oslo and Denmark.
7. Projects are under way for exchange of leaflets and pamphlets on Early Childhood Education.
8. The Newsletter from OMEP is proving a satisfactory channel of communication.

These things are illustrative of a few of the ways in which OMEP works. Miss Gabbard also stressed one of the broad purposes of this meeting was leadership-training of OMEP's workers; therefore much time was devoted to Talk-It-Over groups following each of the lectures.

Dr David Morris, Vice-Chairman of the British National Committee, spoke on "Early Childhood Education in Great Britain". He said that at the present time only 1 child in every 20 has the opportunity of



having a place in either a nursery school or nursery class in Great Britain. Since 1956 people have heard a lot about the problems of education and the teacher shortage and consequently nursery school progress has been temporarily set aside. He emphasised that nursery schools are not minding-centres. He said Great Britain accepts Free Play, whereby children "learn by doing" instead of being passive receptors of education. Dr Morris made an invaluable contribution to discussion groups throughout the entire week's Assembly.

On Monday afternoon we were able to take part in either a conducted tour of London or a river trip to Greenwich. At 7.30 p.m. there was a reception to delegates by kind invitation of the Save The Children Fund at Crosby Hall, Cheyne Walk.

On Tuesday, 17th July, we were privileged to hear an outstanding address by Dr Anna Freud, Director, Hampstead Child-Therapy Clinic, on "The Emotional and Social Development of Young Children". Dr A. G. Skard of Norway presided. Dr Freud stressed the importance of parents and teachers understanding their children. She pointed out various aspects of misunderstanding which invariably occur between adults and children, e.g. an adult's ability to be reasonable and logical is supposed to govern his behaviour, whereas with a young child, although the capacity to reason is present, his behaviour is governed by his emotions. Dr Freud gave many examples of this, one of them being the behaviour of a child with traffic. The child knows it is dangerous to run across a busy street, but if he sees his mother on the other side of the street his strong emotions will obliterate his reason as he runs across to his mother.

Another difference between adults and children -- adults have long-term views and children have short-term views. The concept of time means one thing to adults and another to small children. If we understand the time-sense of children we can save them an enormous amount of unnecessary stress. Dr Freud enlarged upon the various developmental stages of a child's growth from complete dependence of babyhood through to his independence as he grows up.

Many questions were raised in discussion groups and then brought back to Dr Freud. Here are some of the final points I noted:-

1. Personality develops by what is inherited and also by the environment. Therefore growth is due to maturation, adaptation and experience. We must "feed" the child with experience.
2. Frustration and fulfilment should be properly balanced.
3. Teachers must be able to recognise that every stage of growth has its own dominant need and therefore primary and secondary needs are always changing.
4. It is important for the teacher to have an interest in and an understanding of "the process of childhood".

I attended a "Talk-It-Over" group on the subject of Teacher Recruitment and Selection. The language barrier presented so many problems in this particular group that actual discussion was almost nil. Questions raised were -

1. Age of student entrants.
2. Length of training.
3. Educational qualifications - emphasis on intelligence, personality, skills and abilities.
4. Types of selection, i.e. interviews and, or, written examination.
5. The apparently universal need to publicise the fact that educators of young children must be intelligent and highly-trained people.

Following this discussion we visited the London County Council's



Exhibition of Children's Work and Equipment. This was a good display and it was gratifying to note that the equipment and educational materials provided for the under-eight-years-old here was of the same type as that to be found in use in New Zealand.

On Wednesday, 18 July, Dr Andre Berge, of the Psychopedagogic Clinic of the Paris Academy, gave an address on "The Understanding Adult". Some of the points Dr Berge made were:- Childhood is a modern discovery, for until fairly recently the infant mortality rate was so high that little interest was given to early childhood. However, we have now learnt, through pediatrics, to treat the child as a most important person and it is through understanding the child that we now try to understand the adult. Dr Berge explained that there were a great variety of studies made about childhood, but that we must not confuse knowledge with understanding. Book knowledge does not give automatic understanding or an emotional link with children. He talked about "intelligence of the heart" being most important.

Understanding should be a combination of "external" knowledge, from scientific studies of children and "internal" knowledge, based on our own contact with our own childhood. Dr Berge emphasized that if a teacher had liked his own childhood this would be of immeasurable help to him. However, he said, too, that some people who have had unhappy childhoods are excellent teachers. The greatest disaster for a person would be a childhood with no emotional content. As educators we must know how to use our faults. There is not much difference between a defect and a quality. In his concluding remarks Dr Berge said that teachers must have qualities of confidence, patience and sympathy and the ability to recognise each child as a person.

On Wednesday afternoon I attended a discussion group on "Television and Young Children". B. B. C. television representatives were present and there was a great deal of forthright criticism which led to a most stimulating discussion. Many delegates from different countries felt so strongly about the disastrous effects on children of poorly-chosen T.V. programmes that the interpreters had difficulty keeping up with the arguments. In Great Britain 87% of the population own T. V. sets and over 400,000 under-seven-years-old children are up until 8.30 or 9 p.m. watching programmes. The younger the child the greater the impact of television.

I feel we have a responsibility as teachers and educational administrators in New Zealand to make ourselves conversant with illuminating surveys, such as the "Pilkington Report" and then make every effort to avoid the misuse and abuse of television in our own country.

On Wednesday evening there was a reception at Lancaster House for delegates, given by Her Majesty's Government. We were received by the newly-appointed Minister of Education, Sir Edward Boyle.

On Thursday we heard an address on "World-wide Implications of the Education of Young Children" given by Dr Lois B. Murphy, Research Psychologist, the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, U. S. A. In pointing out the need for common understanding among the peoples of the world, Dr Murphy commended the gradual integration of the ideas and work of great educators in showing the great similarity of children's needs in growth and development. She spoke at length on the harmful effects of a very young child's separation from his mother. She said that at each stage of social development, orientation to the new situation must be such that a child feels safe.

Dr Murphy said much about the child as a member of a group within the nursery school environment. She stressed the dangers of over-stimulation, the misuse of freedom, the value of small group games and activities, suitable equipment and, most important of all, the necessity of a "working situation" in a child's play environment. If the teachers themselves have understanding leaders to whom they can turn for help and guidance, their work will be strengthened. Dr Murphy suggested OMEP



consider collaborating with UNESCO to formulate housing-development plans for the future.

There were a number of films shown to delegates. These films showed a great similarity in the ways in which different countries are meeting the needs of their children.

I attended a meeting of OMEP's constituent members to learn more about the constitution and how one moves towards being a National Committee.

At the closing Plenary Session of the IXth Assembly Professor Viola Theman recalled the "highlights" of the lectures and discussions of the past week. Miss H. F. Gabbard, as retiring President, was thanked for her tremendous work and inspiring leadership. Professor A. G. Skard, of Norway, was welcomed as the new President.

It was a truly wonderful conference and I feel very privileged to have been there. As Miss Gabbard said in her farewell speech, "We leave for home with courage, knowing we are not alone in our work, that we have friends and will meet again in two years to share our thinking and to make further progress". I trust the New Zealanders who attend the next Assembly will be as thrilled as I have been.

MARY PATTRICK

London,  
July 26th, 1962.

#### 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;