

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT - 1964/65

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the year which ended on 30 June 1965.

This year saw the retirement of Miss M. F. Gallagher, Officer for Pre-School Education, after nineteen years of outstanding service. To the detriment of her health, she gave unstintingly of her time, wide knowledge and unbounded enthusiasm, for which the Union will always be grateful and deeply indebted. The Executive records the Union's sincere appreciation of her invaluable contribution to the progress and development of the kindergarten movement and extends best wishes for a long and happy retirement, and a speedy return to good health.

The Executive welcomes Miss I. J. Christison as Miss Gallagher's successor and offers warm congratulations to her on her appointment.

Congratulations are also extended to Miss L. M. C. Ingram on the fitting recognition of her many services to the community through the award of M.B.E. in the New Year Honours.

MEMBERSHIP

Resignations of two associations have reduced the number of affiliated members to sixty-three. Opotiki has now become part of the Bay of Plenty Association and Cromwell, with no prospect of meeting the requirements for recognition of a free kindergarten, has linked with the Federation of Play Centre Associations.

The Executive is grateful to those associations whose Annual Reports have been sent to the Union office and proud of the success these reports reveal. In his report to Parliament the Honourable Minister of Education speaks of the uniformly-high standard of accommodation, the well-balanced programmes, the ample provision made for children and the work being done for handicapped children, particularly those who are deaf, in free kindergartens.

RECOGNITION AND OFFICIAL OPENINGS OF NEW KINDERGARTENS

A return to the normal policy of expansion has brought an increase in the number of kindergartens from 235 to 243. Those recognised during the year are Irmgard Ritchie (Upper Hutt), Te Aroha, Te Kuiti, Tui Park (Tawa), Manurewa (Franklin), Takaro (Manawatu), Otumoetai (Bay of Plenty) and Kowhai (Timaru). Official openings have taken place at McFarlane Park (Christchurch) and Devon (New Plymouth) where new buildings have replaced temporary premises, at Tui Park (Tawa) and Irmgard Ritchie (Upper Hutt).

Fifteen kindergartens, seven approved in 1964 and eight in 1965, are in the course of construction and are expected to gain recognition before, or in time for, the opening of the 1966 school year. Five committees are preparing working drawings and specifications while a further nine have qualified for a place on the Union's priority list.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

At the end of 1964 a record number of 123 students successfully completed the kindergarten teachers' training course and were awarded the diploma of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union. These are the first teachers to enter service under bond for two years, and for the first time many associations found themselves in the happy position of receiving more applications for positions in their kindergartens than they could accommodate. It was extremely disappointing therefore, for the Executive to learn that a new factor, that of finance, had to be taken into account when consideration was given to the number of new kindergartens in 1965. Because of slow progress of kindergartens approved in 1964, a large percentage of the funds allocated for subsidy had not been taken up and had to be carried over into the next financial year. This, in turn, limited the number of new projects which the Minister of Education could approve. Five of the thirteen in the 1964 "plans only" policy had to accept deferment of approval to build their

26

kindergartens. The Union's recommendation of eight approvals was based on readiness to proceed with a building programme and, in that order, they were Western Heights (Bay of Plenty), Porirua East (Tawa), Onekawa (Napier-Taradale), Wairoa, Birkdale and Westlake (Auckland), Frimley (Hastings) and Newfield (Southland). Those deferred were Te Awamutu East, Kihikihi, Lucknow, Reid Park and Naylands.

At its meeting with senior officers of the Department of Education the Executive was also concerned to learn that the "plans only" policy was to be discontinued, at least for this year. At the President's request this policy was introduced some years ago as a means of ensuring that associations ready to build would have time to prepare plans while awaiting permission to call tenders. Where proper advantage has been taken of this privilege it has more than proved its worth and the Executive is grateful to the Minister for meeting the President's request to reverse the decision that it be withdrawn. It follows, therefore, that a number of associations with committees on the Union's priority list will receive an invitation to present preliminary drawings in October. How soon they will proceed to a firm building programme may depend to some extent on the progress of those already so engaged. The Executive urges all associations to recognise their responsibilities when establishing new kindergartens, so that those waiting to do so will not suffer unnecessary delay and disappointment.

EXECUTIVE TRAVEL

The Union was honoured by invitations extended to the President to open the Tui Park Kindergarten in the Tawa Association and to present diplomas at the Auckland Kindergarten Teachers' College. The President also visited associations at Tokoroa, Kaitia, Kaikohe, Whangarei, Lower Hutt and Bay of Plenty and addressed meetings to assist new kindergartens to qualify for recognition at Te Aroha, Te Kuiti, Upper Hutt and Bay of Plenty Associations. Several members of the Executive have also helped in this way. On all occasions generous hospitality has been extended for which the Executive is most grateful.

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

Growing understanding of the meaning and value of kindergartens has brought forth an excellent response from girls seeking entry to the Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges, which has given an opportunity to select students well-qualified academically and by temperament, to undertake the training course. It is interesting to note an upsurge of appreciation of pre-school education among teachers in primary and post-primary services and recognition of the need for closer liaison between teachers of infant classes and those in pre-school centres. In this the Union is most happy to co-operate for it has long understood the value of a continuous form of education, particularly in the early years of a child's life.

The Executive congratulates those associations who have so successfully arranged recruitment campaigns. These have also served to give their communities a fuller realisation of what kindergartens offer to children and parents. The Executive records its appreciation of generous assistance from newspapers and radio stations in conveying this information to the public.

A film for recruitment, made in Auckland under the guidance of the Principal of the Kindergarten Teachers' College and entitled "A Lot to Learn", is now being processed by the National Film Library. It should soon be available for borrowing by those who wish to make use of it.

TRAINING

There have been some changes in the administration of Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges, following agreement in principle to proposals which have been the subject of discussion between the Union and the Department of Education for some time. In Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch Education Committees have been replaced by Boards of

20

Studies comprised of members as outlined in the proposals. Until this change becomes mandatory the Dunedin Association has elected to retain its Education Committee.

Regulations have been gazetted to allow the transfer of control of colleges from associations to Regional Councils of Management for a trial period, initially, of three years. Only one association, Wellington, has elected to make this change which took effect from 1 July of this year. The Executive extends congratulations to the Wellington Association and good wishes for the success of the experiment.

The Minister of Education approved 260 grants for students in training in 1965. Of the 240 allocated 90 are accommodated at Auckland, 50 at Wellington, 60 at Christchurch and 40 at Dunedin. Of these, 118 are senior students who will be seeking teaching positions in 1966. The Executive notes with pleasure the growing number of students with higher academic qualifications, that several have undertaken University study and increasing interest among Maori girls to enter training.

At the invitation of the Executive, Principals of the four Colleges have had two meetings this year, the first since 1958. In Dunedin last September and in Wellington in March matters of mutual interest were discussed, with particular emphasis on the curriculum, now in need of revision and extension to meet the needs of changing methods of training.

Gratitude is due to all associations for prompt payment of their share of the administration costs of training and to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union for the efficient and expeditious manner in which this extra duty is discharged. The Executive is grateful, too, to the Department of Education for revising and increasing the grant towards the cost of part-time lecturers' fees.

I. M. JAMIESON SCHOLARSHIP

In order to take advantage of the offer of the Director of Education to approach the Minister for payment of part salary, under certain conditions, to the recipient of this award, and in an endeavour to attract more and better applicants, the Executive revised its terms. The 1964 award was made to Mrs Betty Cosson, staff member of the Auckland Kindergarten Teachers' College. She is now studying at the University of Auckland to complete the Diploma of Education and has been granted half salary for her period of leave from 1 March to 30 November, 1965.

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The Union Executive has had further discussions with the Director of Education on the possibility of a change in the minimum weekly schedule of duties for kindergarten teachers from two afternoon sessions of two and a half hours to three sessions of two hours. This matter was the subject of a remit from the 1963 Annual Meeting and, at that time, was supported by the Teachers' Association. The Union Executive holds the view that this is a professional matter which must be handled by the teachers themselves, that their wishes must be respected and that employing associations should support and understand any decisions the Teachers' Association may reach *in this matter*.

It has been disturbing to learn that, in some areas, teachers have resigned or declined membership of the Teachers' Association. The Executive recommends to employing associations that steps be taken to advise members of their staff of the privileges that the Kindergarten Teachers' Association has achieved for them, and to remind them that to accept these privileges without giving active support to their leaders is out of keeping with their professional standing. Recent increases in the salary scale have come as a direct result of the recognition of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association as a service organisation.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS

The Executive learned with deep regret of the great loss sustained by the Australian Pre-School Association through the sudden and untimely deaths of Miss Gladys Pendred, OBE, Federal Officer, and Mr G. G. Sutcliffe, CBE, Hon. Treasurer. Those privileged to know Miss Pendred will long remember her vital personality and intense devotion to the cause of pre-school education. New Zealand has benefited in no small measure from the service she gave as editor of Parents' News Sheets for use in kindergartens.

The Council of the Melbourne Kindergarten College generously advised kindergarten teachers in New Zealand of a bursary offered by the Council and of the Alice Creswick Scholarships for advanced study at the same College. The Australian Pre-School Association sent a complimentary copy of one of its publications "Planning the Programme in a Pre-School Centre" by Margaret J. Roberts, former Principal of the Adelaide College. The Executive warmly commends this book to all associations.

As a constituent member of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education the Union has been kept in touch with developments in other countries through receipt of reports of the World Assembly at Stockholm, of Council meetings and of National Committees. All these reveal the growing demand and need for pre-school education which is evident in New Zealand.

Through the President of OMEP the Union was asked to contribute information for a Study of the Preparation and Status of Pre-School Teachers to be published in a report to the next World Assembly in Paris in 1966. Further information on pre-school services in New Zealand was supplied to the UNICEF Secretariat.

Requests for advice and guidance on the establishment of pre-school services have been received from Fiji and Niue Island.

FINANCE

For the first time for some years the Union did not qualify for a grant from the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board, whose generous donations have been of great encouragement on many occasions. The Executive acknowledges with sincere gratitude the receipt of a grant from the Trustees of the Sargood Trust. This amount, £50, is the only income from outside sources in this year's financial statement, so that associations may see how the Union meets its many responsibilities on an income from subscriptions, the grant received from Government and profits from the sale of literature. Even when there are no heavy printing expenses the annual income is barely sufficient but with the growth in the number of recognised kindergartens income can be expected to increase.

For some time the Executive has given earnest consideration to the future administration of the Union and the need to establish a permanent office. Realising that the cost of the proposal is beyond the Union's present financial resources and conscious of the greater responsibilities placed upon the Union, the Executive has had preliminary discussions with the Minister of Education on the question of Government assistance.

THANKS

The Executive records, with sincere gratitude, its indebtedness to all who have assisted the work of the Union during the year. Special thanks are due to the Honourable Minister and the Director of Education for their helpful guidance and generous practical assistance; to Miss Gallagher and Miss Christison and members of their staff for their close personal interest, advice and friendship; to the Honorary Auditor and Honorary Solicitor for their specialised professional assistance; to the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association for most gracious and generous hospitality at the 1964 Annual Meeting; to member associations for their loyal support to and active promotion

of the kindergarten movement throughout the country and to the Secretary, Mrs Elliott, for her most competent discharge of the Union's business.

The best wishes of the Executive are extended to all in the coming year.

For the Executive,

H. DOWNER

President.

September, 1965.