



**THE OFFICIAL** party at the opening of Wairoa's North Clyde Free Kindergarten on Saturday included, from left, Dr Sullivan, the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Social Welfare Mrs Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, the national president of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Miss L. M. C. Ingram, the Mayor of Wairoa Mr J. S. Standring, and the president of the Wairoa Free Kindergarten Association Mr Trevor Parker. The \$25,000 kindergarten was opened only 18 months after its conception.

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# Kindergarten record is to Wairoa's credit

Wairoa can claim a record for opening a second kindergarten in the town within 18 months of its conception, the chairman of the Wairoa Free Kindergarten Association, Mr T. Parker, said at the official opening of the North Clyde Free Kindergarten on Saturday.

The kindergarten, which cost \$25,000, opened its doors to its first intake of children on March 5, and within several weeks should be catering for a maximum intake of 80 children in two daily sessions.

The national president of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union, Miss L. M. C. Ingram, of Nelson,

who officially opened the kindergarten, said pre-school education represented the forward thinking of both Maori and pakeha.

In the last 6½ years attendance at kindergartens in New Zealand by Maori children had increased by 236 per cent, she said.

About 75 per cent of the North Clyde roll is expected to be made up of Maori children.

"About 47 per cent of pre-school age children in New Zealand attend kindergartens, and on a population basis Wairoa must be above this," Miss Ingram said.

### UNCHANGED IDEALS

The kindergarten movement is one of the oldest establishments in New Zealand where voluntary efforts continue, she claimed. "The movement began in

1899 and the ideals of the movement have not changed over the years."

The New Zealand movement maintains \$14 million worth of buildings, 87 acres of children's playgrounds and spends \$600,000 a year to maintain them," she said.

"Today we stand on the threshold of kindergarten education in New Zealand," the chairman of the kindergarten's establishment committee and its first elected president, Mr Whare Cotter, said.

Two of Wairoa's former leaders, Mr R. E. Shortt, a former Mayor, and Mr Tom Couper, a former Maori welfare officer, had launched the kindergarten project, he said. "Their untimely deaths caused a lot of sorrow, but their work carried on and it is only a pity they can not be here to see their work as a reality,"

he said. There was a lack of communication in Maori education between pre-school and primary school, and he hoped the new kindergarten would solve this problem.

The Mayor of Wairoa, Mr J. S. Standring, said the project involved a great number of people and organisations.

It was highlighted by a common interest, which places European and Maori co-operation in this town and district on such a high level," he said.

The special guest at the opening, Mrs Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Social Welfare, congratulated all on the establishment of the kindergarten and stressed the importance of pre-school education.