

## *Need for larger Maori element*

**"One of the greatest things you can do is bring Maori mothers into your movement to help them understand the needs of their children," the Minister of Education, Mr Kinsella, told the annual conference in Blenheim last night of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union.**

One of the Maori child's greatest problems, he said, was he or she could not speak either the English or the Maori language well.

This was because Maori parents, although they loved their children, all too often did not communicate with them. Maoris were naturally shy people.

"You see a Maori woman on a bus or train, loving her children and looking after them, but she doesn't talk to them."

Mr Kinsella stressed the importance of improving the education of Maori children "as quick as we can."

### PRODUCING RESULTS

He said 24% of Maori children were attending kindergartens or play centres. At the end of 1967, 920 Maoris were attending these establishments, and at the end of the first term this year the figure had risen to 1070.

"This shows," he added, "that the movement is really producing results."

## **PAYMENT BY COMPUTER WILL HELP**

The New Zealand kindergarten movement will save thousands of dollars a year

It emphasised the importance of the kindergarten movement in the education system.

## **A quarter of N.Z. children go to "kindy"**

Twenty-five percent of all New Zealand children attended either kindergartens or play centres, the Minister of Education, Mr Kinsella, said in Blenheim last night.

"But we can still do a lot better," he told the annual conference of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union.

In the past few weeks he and the Department of Education had been examining problems of pre-school education, and at the end of this year the Union would be brought into the discussions "to see if we can improve things a bit more."

Mr Kinsella assured the conference that the Department had no intention of taking over the running of kindergartens.

Earlier, Mr Kinsella emphasised the importance of kindergartens to the development of children in the first five years of their lives.

"Imagine how much a child advances from the time he is born until the age of five," he said. "I do not know of any other period in life when we learn so much."

### DEVELOPMENT

During the first five years, the child learned to walk, talk, understand and recognise things, and generally to use the brain.

"As time goes by and towns and the countryside become more crowded, the child's opportunities of getting to grips with his environment lessen, and this must be a major handicap in the early years."

All children, from all types of families and from all environments, needed contact with other children.

New Zealand, the Minister said, was regarded as having one of the most efficient kindergarten systems in the world.

This was a great tribute to the Free Kindergarten Union, but it had perhaps progressed too fast because it was now feeling the stresses and strains of expansion.

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