

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

1965 CONFERENCE

The President's opening remarks covered all aspects of the building programmes which had been approved in 1964 and traced the reasons for varying rates of progress. In order to assist committees to avoid delay in future projects, she made certain recommendations which the conference requested should be circulated to all associations. They are as follows:-

"I have some recommendations to offer to those who are likely to be building kindergartens in the future," said Mrs Downer. "I am sure they will speed their projects.

- "1. While you are raising funds study carefully and often the Department's booklet "Sites, Buildings and Equipment for Free Kindergartens", and as soon as you engage an architect, put a copy in his hands. There is absolutely no excuse for not knowing what is required and approved for a kindergarten. If you decide to have features which are not approved, discover their price and state clearly, from the outset, that you are prepared to pay for them yourselves. Don't argue about them. Visit other kindergartens, study the layout of grounds, and be sure that, as far as possible, you will have no vain regrets because you did not think of this or that. If plans are Greek to you, ask someone who can read them to interpret them for you, for once plans are approved you must seek fresh approval if any changes are made, either before the contract is signed or later. Changes made once the contract starts can be very expensive.
- "2. As soon as you qualify for a position on the priority list engage your architect to prepare preliminary site and sketch plans. This will involve payment of a portion of his fees, but as these will have to be paid sooner or later and as they will be subsidised when your project is approved, it should not be a hardship. To have plans and an estimate of the total cost ready to post the day you receive an invitation to present them will mean an immense gain in time and, during the period of waiting, they are valuable for publicity and for boosting the morale of your hard-working committee.
- "3. When you receive advice that you are included in a building programme read the Department's letter carefully, acknowledge it promptly and carry out its instructions quickly. Notify your architect at once in writing. I cannot stress too strongly the need for all your dealings with your architect, and his with you, to be in writing, so that you have a full record on your files and he on his. Please remember that he is a busy man and cannot be expected to remember or act on verbal instructions."

The President concluded her remarks by reviewing the twenty years that have elapsed since the setting up of the Consultative Committee in 1945.

"It is now twenty years", said Mrs Downer, "since a committee was set up, with Miss Gallagher as its secretary, "to consider and report on educational services for children below school age, with special reference to the financing and control of such services and the training of personnel". I do not need to remind you of the impact on our movement of the report of that committee, for you have all participated in the privileges it conferred on those willing to work for the establishment of kindergartens. What do figures reveal for these twenty years?

"In 1945 there were 62 kindergartens. In 1965 there are 243 and more will be operating before the year is out. Almost 20,000 children benefit from their service. In 1945 100 grants of £70 per year were made available for students in training. In 1965 the Minister has approved 260 grants of £290 for students with School

Certificate and £325 for those with University Entrance, plus a boarding allowance of £66. In 1945 the number of kindergartens in permanent quarters was negligible. In 1965 the fingers of one hand would more than account for those not conducted in attractively-designed and well-equipped buildings. In 1945 kindergarten teachers were trained in premises which were far from suitable for the purpose. In 1965 all four Colleges are a source of pride to the staff and students alike. To achieve all this in twenty years many thousands of pounds have been raised by voluntary effort and subsidised by Government. Our record is a proud one.

"But there is still much to be done. More than ever the kindergarten has a significant role to play in the education and welfare of little children. Scarcely a day passes without reference to its value, commendation of its influence and demand for its service. We face an urgent challenge to plan wisely and well for its advancement."