

NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION (INCORPORATED)

EXECUTIVE REPORT 1957-58

The Executive has pleasure in presenting its report for the year ended 31st July, 1958. It has been a busy year, with some important developments.

Her Excellency, Lady Cobham, graciously conferred her patronage on the Union, and closely identified herself with the movement by consenting to give her name to a kindergarten in Auckland.

The Hon. Minister of Education agreed to end the period of consolidation which was introduced in July, 1956, and announced a new policy to govern the establishment of free kindergartens.

A new and enriched curriculum for students in training was formally approved by the Director of Education.

The Executive was given the opportunity to study, and comment on, the proposed Kindergarten Regulations, which it is expected are to be gazetted before the end of the year.

A further approach was made to the Hon. Minister of Health to secure minimum standards for private kindergartens. Advice has been received that legislation has been prepared and will pass into law shortly.

The Union office accepted the task of distributing the Australian Pre-School Associations Parents' News Sheets.

Advice was received with pleasure that

- (a) a second assistant to the Supervisor of Pre-School Services has been appointed;
- (b) "Kindergarten of the Air" has been increased to three sessions each week.

For the first time, postgraduate bursaries were offered, to encourage kindergarten teachers to increase their qualifications.

Throughout the country there was a striking increase in the number of regional meetings of neighbouring associations.

One of the largest associations, Auckland, completed 50 years of service to the educational life of its city.

MEMBERSHIP.

The Union continues to grow. Three new associations, at Carterton, Taihape and Te Aroha, have become members, while three others, Greymouth, Tauranga and Waitara, have applied for affiliation. To them all we extend a warm welcome and good wishes for their success. One association, Lyttleton, has tendered its resignation in order to affiliate with the Christchurch Association. This brings the membership to a total of 76 associations - an increase of 20 in the last three years, and a number which places a heavy responsibility on the President and Executive and on the Union office. Quite apart from memoranda to associations - and there have been 10 of these - the Secretary has despatched over 700 letters since the last Annual Meeting. At Cromwell, Howick, Featherston, Hornby, Otorohanga, Rangiora and Ruawai, associations are working steadily for the establishment of kindergartens. The Union has kept closely in touch with these groups, to inform them of developments in policy, and has extended invitations to them to attend this meeting as observers. Besides these, new committees have been formed in older associations, and enquiries for information have come from several other communities.

Membership of the Union, as of any other organisation, brings responsibilities as well as privileges, and in this respect there are certain matters to be brought to the notice of associations for their attention.

It is a courtesy to the Union, and a duty to the Department of Education, that copies of Annual Reports and Balance Sheets should be sent forward each year. Only 48 have so far been received this year.

Any change in office-bearers should be reported promptly and record cards of staff members who have left the service should be sent to the Union office.

Term returns of attendance and roll numbers from kindergartens should be sent to the Director of Education, not to the Union office.

It would be appreciated if associations furnished prompt replies to requests for information. The frequent, and in some cases, regular, failure to meet this responsibility causes unnecessary delay and extra work in a busy office.

A request for a copy of the Constitution of each association was made early in the year. By no means all associations have given attention to this matter.

#### NEW KINDERGARTENS RECOGNISED AND OFFICIAL OPENINGS.

The Hon. Minister has recognised four new kindergartens during the year; Plimmerton, Westport, Carterton and Mayfield, in the Blenheim Association. Official Openings of new buildings have taken place at Hamilton, Christchurch (2), Paremata, Plimmerton, Westport, Auckland, Huntly, New Plymouth, Matamata, Nelson and Palmerston North, where, for the first time in the history of the movement, two kindergartens were opened on one day. Four-fifths of all recognised free kindergartens are now in their own buildings, and more are in the course of construction.

#### PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND NEW POLICY.

All associations will be familiar with the terms of the new policy announced by the Hon. Minister of Education in June, and will know of the increased responsibilities which committees must meet in order to gain recognition for new kindergartens. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Hon. Minister for his generous decision to waive the rule that all kindergartens in an association must have fully-trained staff before another may be established, and to allow associations a longer period of grace to secure trained staff, at the termination of the period of consolidation. We are conscious of the privilege offered to the Union to recommend the order of priority for his approval. It is inevitable that there will be disappointment in some associations, at this stage, but we believe that the best interests of the movement will be served by the new policy.

#### RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY.

Although the staffing position has improved, the need for continued recruitment of suitable girls for this important profession is still urgent. In January of this year, there were 85 graduates to fill 140 vacant positions throughout the country. There has been a steady demand for brochures on kindergarten teaching, which are valuable aids for recruitment, while many associations have sent newspaper cuttings of the publicity they have achieved.

#### VISITS TO ASSOCIATIONS AND REGIONAL MEETINGS.

The Union has been honoured by invitations to the President to open new kindergartens at New Plymouth and Matamata, and to present diplomas at Dunedin and Christchurch.

In order to discuss suggestions for the future administration of the movement, put forward by the Director of Education at the last Annual Meeting, the President has travelled to make contact with representatives of 60 associations this year, by attending regional meetings at Dunedin, Temuka, Lower Hutt, Hamilton, Pukekohe, Wanganui, Hokitika, Greytown, Motueka, Morningside and New Plymouth, and by visiting associations at

Auckland, Taupo, Wellington, Paremata, Westport, Pahiatua, Torbay, Whangarei, Kaikohe and Kaitaia. The President is most grateful for the warm and generous hospitality extended by all these associations.

Regional meetings have also been held at Hastings, Waipukurau, Palmerston North, Timaru, Christchurch, Nelson, Papakura and Masterton, while advice of further meetings has been received by the Union office. From all reports it is evident that associations have given careful consideration to the problems before them, and have gained much from the discussions which arise on these occasions.

#### TRAINING MATTERS.

Representatives of the Education Committees of the four Training Centres met the Executive in March, to consider the manner in which a national system of training might be set up. Their report has now been considered, and it has been agreed, in principle, that, for the purpose of training, the country should be divided into four districts corresponding to University boundaries, that non-training associations should share in the administration of Training Centres and that a separate board should be set up, within each district, to administer the Training Centre in its area.

#### FINANCE.

The balance sheet reveals a satisfactory position. The Union is most grateful to the J. R. McKenzie Trust Board, whose generous donation has provided the opportunity to offer postgraduate bursaries to kindergarten teachers and to supplement contributions to the I. M. Jamieson Scholarship Fund.

#### RETIREMENTS.

Two well-known figures, with records of long service to the movement, have retired this year. In Invercargill, Mrs. A. H. Aldridge, whose fine work was recognised by the Honour M.B.E. being conferred on her, retired after 30 years' continuous association with kindergartens in that city, while in Auckland, Sir John Allum, whose record extends over 33 years, has recently severed his ties with the Auckland Kindergarten Association. To them both we offer deep gratitude for their contribution to pre-school education and best wishes for the future.

#### NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Union offers congratulations to the Teachers' Association on its recognition by the Hon. Minister of Education as a service organisation, under the Government Services Tribunal Regulations. There is a close liaison between the Executive and the officers of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association, which must promote the welfare of the movement. Their Executive has expressed gratitude for the opportunity associations have provided for staff members to meet whenever regional meetings have been arranged.

Refresher Courses have been held at Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, while a Summer School at Lincoln College is planned for January, 1959.

#### OBITUARY.

The untimely death of Miss Doreen Coulter has robbed the movement of one of its most devoted workers. To Miss Coulter's family and the Wellington Association, we extend sincere sympathy.

#### OVERSEAS CONTACTS.

The realisation of the importance of the early formative years of a child's life, and the appreciation of the community's responsibility in this field, are revealed in the programmes of overseas conferences which have reached the Union office.

Two conferences have been held in Brussels this year, O.M.E.P. (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education), with the theme "The Challenge of the Children", and The National Work for Children from 1 to 6 years.

The Australian Pre-School Association has recently concluded its 8th Triennial Conference, centred round the theme, "The Community Plans for its Children."

THANKS.

To all who have assisted the Union in its work, we offer sincere appreciation and gratitude. We owe much to the Hon. Minister of Education, to the Director of Education and the Supervisor of Pre-School Services for their interest and advice, to the Hon. Auditor and Hon. Solicitor for their valued professional knowledge, to the retiring Secretary, Mr. Annand, for his work in transferring the Union's records to Rotorua and to member associations for their continued loyalty and enthusiastic support to the movement in their separate communities.

For the Executive,

H. DOWNER  
President.

September, 1958.