

**THE
FREE
KINDERGARTEN
MOVEMENT
IN
NEW ZEALAND**

by Myrtle Simpson



**for
The New Zealand
Free Kindergarten Union
(Incorporated)**

1970

**THE NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION
(INCORPORATED)**

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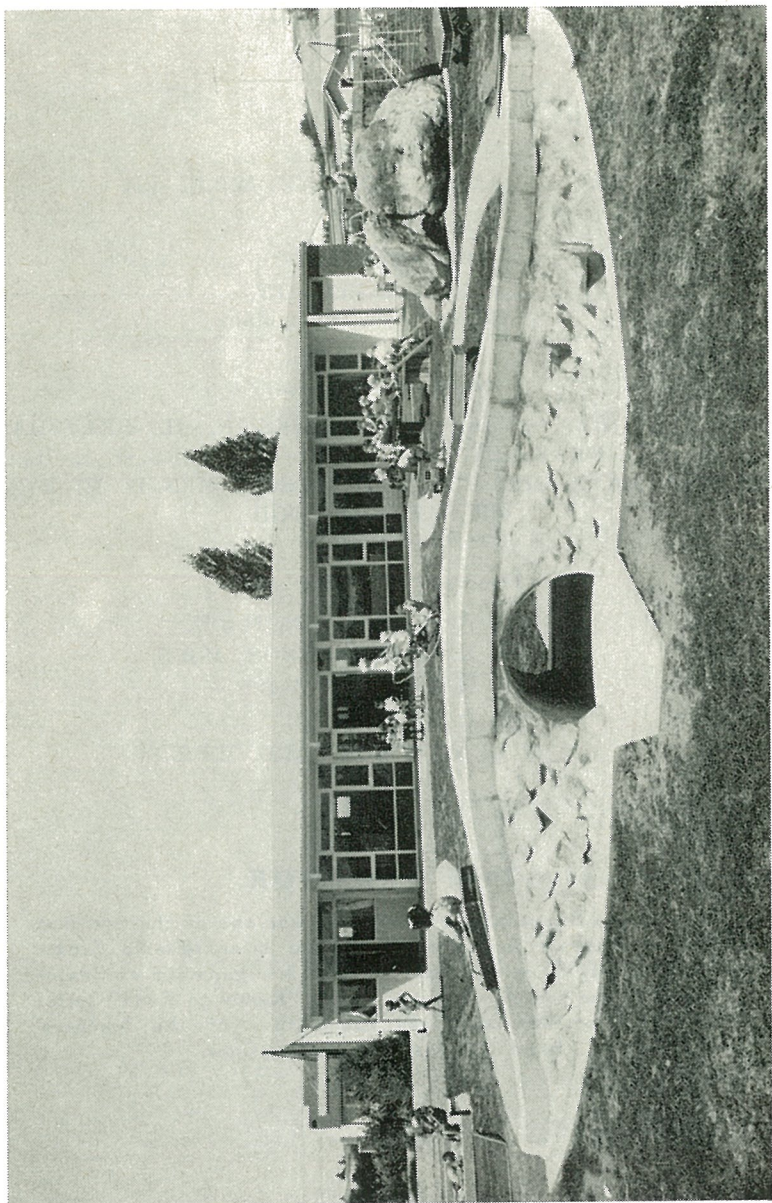
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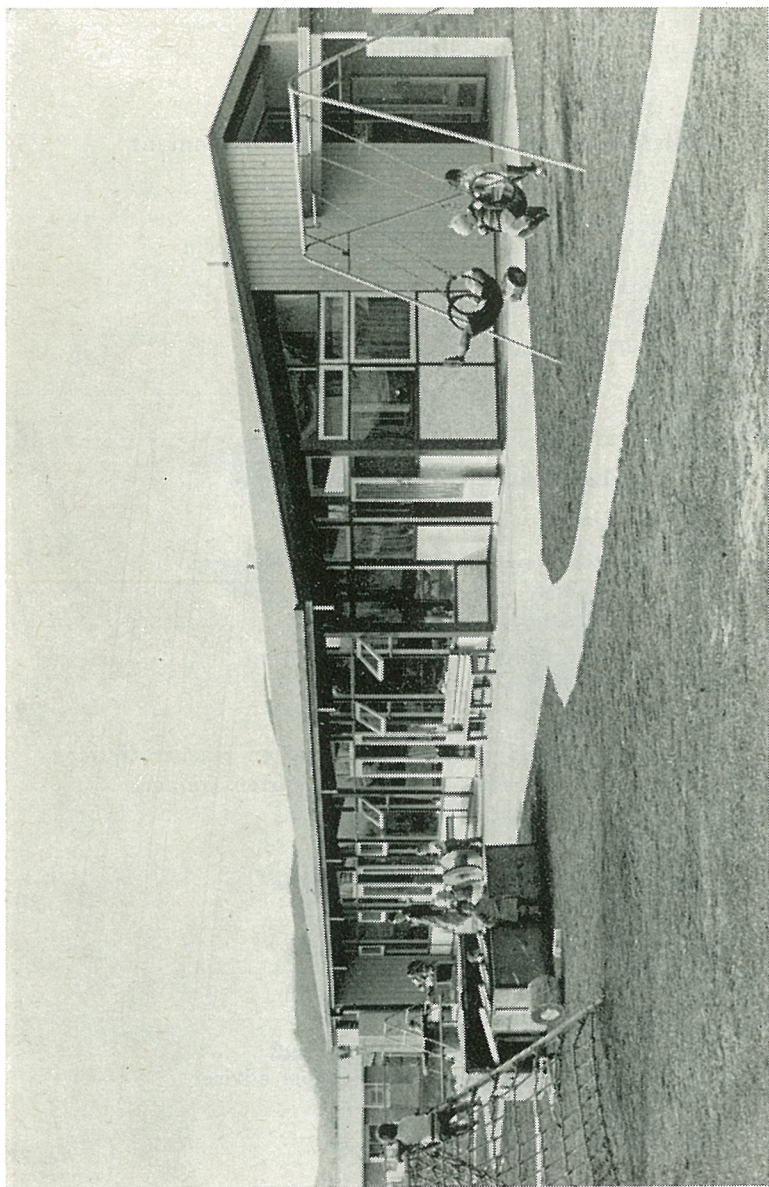
THE AUTHOR

Miss Myrtle Simpson, M.A., Dip.Ed., was one of the two first visiting teachers in Christchurch and later became Senior Inspector of Schools in that city. In her capacity as Senior Inspector she served as editor of the "Ready to Read" series of infant readers and was the author of the teachers' handbook for these publications.



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FOREWORD

Time, I would say, is the most expendable of all commodities.

How it has been spent, kindergarten-wise, over the past eighty years in New Zealand, is a proud story for all those who have given voluntary service to this form of pre-school education.

The impetus for growth is still the same. We face the challenge of the '70s with the same faith and confidence with which we started out—an earnest desire on the part of parents, and others interested in education, to provide a stimulating environment in which little children can build a life full of endeavour and enjoyment.

Parent involvement is the life-blood of the kindergarten movement. In fact, it is the only way we can grow. The addition of another kindergarten must be at the request of parents. With a full knowledge of all this implies it is quite a heavy task, but a stimulating and rewarding one.

This booklet will make you more aware, I am sure, of the important part the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union plays in the field of education.

We record our thanks to the J. R. McKenzie Trust and to the Department of Education for financial assistance, and to Miss Myrtle Simpson, who has spent many hours in research and writing this publication, we say a most sincere "Thank you". Miss Simpson's generosity in undertaking this task for the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union has its own reward, for in the words of Socrates, "He who helps a child, helps humanity".

LAURA INGRAM.



1. THE HISTORY OF THE FREE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

In his foreword to "Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand", Mr A. E. Campbell, Director of Education at the time of its publication, wrote, "The social function of the kindergarten has indeed been transformed. In the early days it was thought of as a welfare agency—a mitigation of a slum. We now believe that it has very much to offer very many children who are in no sense 'underprivileged'—in fact that it can often supplement in valuable ways what the best of homes can provide." The story of how the attitude of the community towards pre-school education has been gradually transformed is in itself the history of the free kindergarten movement.

A. The Early History of the Movement

a. The answer to a social problem

The Rev. Dr Waddell, writing from Auckland on the occasion of the laying of the foundation of the Rachel Reynolds Kindergarten in Dunedin, recalled how he conceived the idea of providing for the needs of at least one group of pre-school children. He wrote that as he passed up and down Walker Street daily he saw "little ragged, unkempt, bare-footed children spilt about the streets." He thought of gathering them together into the church hall and asking some of the young women of his congregation to entertain them. At this stage, though he was concerned mainly for their physical and moral welfare, he suggests that the idea of pre-school training may have been at the back of his mind, since he consulted Mr Mark Cohen, a man interested in educational work, and talked with Mrs Reynolds and with Miss Kelsey who, he heard, was doing some kindergarten work at her school.

The "Otago Daily Times" of March 5, 1889, contained a report of a public meeting held to consider establishing a kindergarten in Dunedin. Bishop Suter of Nelson gave the address, a resolution was passed, and a committee formed to consider establishing a public kindergarten. Mrs Reynolds, Miss Kelsey, and Mr Cohen, with whom Dr Waddell had discussed the project, were members of that committee.

Dr Waddell had already talked about his plans with the church authorities and they had promised him the use of the church hall free of charge. When Mr James Gray offered to donate £25 a year for two years, and an equal sum was raised locally, Dr Waddell began his search for a teacher. He had heard from Miss Kelsey of a trained teacher, Miss Wieneke, who had a sort of kindergarten in a small way at Papanui in Christchurch. He visited her and explained the scheme, and, since she was very interested in the missionary character of the work, she agreed to become the teacher of the first kindergarten in New Zealand.

In Christchurch, as in Dunedin, public-minded citizens were conscious of the need to make provision for young children who were not adequately cared for in their own homes. Mrs E. R. Mc Combs, the secretary of the Children's Aid Society, urged that kindergartens

should be set up to provide for the children of sick and working mothers, and in 1899 the Sunbeam Kindergarten was opened under the auspices of the society and maintained by private subscriptions and small payments from parents until 1910.

By 1905, two hundred and thirty-five children were attending free kindergartens under the society, but the movement was in danger of having to close when the Mayor, Mr T. E. Taylor, convened a meeting in the City Council Chambers. Mrs Taylor, who was President of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, pointed out that charity did not enter into it. While working mothers could not get help, some provision for their children was needed, and there were hundreds of parents who would willingly pay a reasonable amount.

And so, on September 25, 1911, the Sunbeam Kindergarten was re-opened under the control of the Creche and Kindergarten Association, as a Government-aided school, the Government paying £2 per child, provided that an equal sum was raised privately. The Phillipstown Kindergarten opened in the St. Asaph Street Hall on November 11, 1911, and the Sydenham Kindergarten in the Hastings Street Hall in March, 1912. Therefore in its first annual report the Creche and Kindergarten Association was able to record that almost two hundred children between two and five years of age had been enrolled. But, as the following statement shows, the kindergarten was still thought of primarily as a welfare agency:—

"As the funds of association allow, it is intended to establish either a creche or a kindergarten or both, in every district where possible, not only as a relief to mothers with large families, but also as a means of keeping young children off the streets."

In Wellington and in Auckland, as in Dunedin and Christchurch, it was the need to provide for the social and physical welfare of young children that led to the establishment of kindergartens. In Wellington, Miss Mary Richmond saw children too young to go to school sitting about in the street and felt that some provision must be made for them. She addressed meetings of women who organised schemes for raising funds and, in 1906, the first kindergarten was opened in a mission hall. A second began in 1909, and by 1915 there were four kindergartens operating in Wellington.

In Auckland the Kindergarten Association was formed in 1908, and again the citizens who initiated the movement were concerned with providing a social service for small children. It was Mrs Leo Myers who tried to make public-spirited citizens aware of the need, and Sir John Logan and Lady Campbell who donated the funds for the first kindergarten building in Auckland on a site in Victoria Park owned by the Auckland Harbour Board. The kindergarten opened first in temporary premises (the cricket pavilion in Victoria Park) while waiting for the new building to be completed. Since that time many kindergartens all over New Zealand have begun in similar buildings while waiting for funds to be raised for permanent quarters.

b. The answer to an educational problem

Although the first kindergartens were developed to meet an urgent social need, even at that stage there were people who felt that

kindergarten education had something to offer all children, regardless of their material circumstances. Bishop Suter, who addressed the first general meeting held in Dunedin, had discussed the work of Froebel and Pestalozzi and pointed out how much could be achieved by people trained to work with young children. He spoke of truths now generally recognised but not so familiar to the parents of those days — the importance of first impressions upon the receptive minds of young children, their need for the company of other children, and the need to recognise and cater for individual differences.

In Christchurch, the term kindergarten was used to describe a development in the state school system as early as 1878, when Miss Amelia Quinney, who had received a Froebel training, was appointed to the Normal School as Kindergarten Mistress. She was hampered in developing her work by lack of suitable premises, and then, in 1880, the education vote was cut, and kindergarten training ceased. Some years later, in 1911, Miss A. Inkpen was appointed Director of the Normal Kindergarten and Lecturer in Kindergarten Method. She seems also to have had a close contact with the Creche and Kindergarten Association. There is a report that in 1912 she visited the Sunbeam Kindergarten and reported that a well-planned programme was operating under the direction of a trained director and two probationers. When the Creche and Kindergarten Association was formed the committee realised from the outset that they must employ a trained teacher and appointed Miss Hull as the first teacher. She is described as a "lady who comes from England, who is well versed in kindergarten methods, with considerable experience among young children, and very highly recommended."

Miss Richmond, who provided the stimulus for the kindergarten movement in Wellington, was herself president of the Froebel Society in that city. Certainly it was initially the plight of young children turned out to amuse themselves in the street that stirred her to action, but she, too, believed that people who were to work with young children must be professionally trained, and in Wellington, as in other centres, there were people who realised that pre-school education had something to offer all children from all sections of the community. There, as in Christchurch, there was emphasis upon the need for adequate training for teachers who were to work with pre-school children, and Miss Freeman, who was appointed as the first Headmistress, held the National Froebel Certificate of England.

In Auckland, too, the need for professional training for kindergarten teachers was recognised from the beginning. There is reference in "Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand" to some opportunity for training being offered as early as 1908 when students attended lectures at Auckland Teachers' Training College, and gained practical experience in two private kindergartens operated by graduates of the Sydney Training College. Then, in the first term of 1910, Miss M. E. Gibson, who held the higher Froebel certificate of Great Britain, was appointed as the first Principal of the Kindergarten Training College.



B. Later Developments

While we cannot record in detail the statistics of kindergarten development in New Zealand, we can follow the general pattern of growth. The accounts written for "Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand" represent something more than a tedious repetition of facts. They tell of persistence in the face of difficulties, of sacrifices made by parents to secure pre-school education for their children, and of community help and support for them. Groups all over the country showed considerable ingenuity in providing some form of pre-school education until they had raised enough money to erect and staff a permanent building, and having achieved this, they often continued their efforts by helping parents in adjacent areas to plan for and establish a kindergarten.

Parents living in new housing areas, or under unusual conditions in large military or air force establishments, wanted pre-school education for their children. That they achieved their aim without a lowering of standards says much for their persistence in the face of difficulties and for the ability of the kindergarten movement to adapt to rapidly-changing conditions and the growing demand for expansion. The strength of the movement lies in the adoption of a policy that is definite yet flexible, that insists upon standards yet gives scope for the exercise of initiative, that accepts a measure of state control and yet gives opportunity for variation to suit local conditions.

a. Providing the stimulus

As we have already seen the early phase of kindergarten development was stimulated by an acute social need, the need to provide for young children living in unfavourable social and economic conditions, and the movement will always honour the people who were conscious of the need and worked to arouse public interest and to secure public support for their plans.

In the later history, while individual citizens have still played their part and there are many who will always be remembered for the service they have given, the initiative has passed to the parents of children attending kindergarten. Many of the people who administer the movement today are either parents or older people whose association with the movement began in the days when their children were attending kindergarten and who have continued to serve even after their children have grown up and have children of their own. If any of us were asked to name the most important development in the movement we would probably answer, "The part played by the parents".

In the very earliest days parents and their children were being given a service. In Christchurch Mrs McCombs had stressed the need to provide for sick and working mothers, and Mrs Taylor had pointed out that while working mothers could not get help there was need for some institution to care for their children. Now, even though there are public-spirited citizens who assist in fund-raising efforts and professional workers who direct kindergarten programmes, it is largely

parents who administer existing kindergartens and work for the establishment of new ones.

When we consider the expansion of the movement over the years, and particularly over recent years, we are made aware of the part played by women's organisations, and sometimes by individual women, in stimulating that growth. This has been the case especially in growing areas where there have been examples of the merging of groups of women working to secure pre-school education for their children, of community effort, and of sacrifice for the common good. In one area, a Housewives' Association, realising the need for some form of pre-school education in a settlement that had grown up around a newly-established industry, began raising funds for a play centre, but when a kindergarten association was formed, donated their funds, £409 in all, to the new group. As late as 1950 a small group of women in a South Island town, disturbed by the sight of small children playing about in the streets, stimulated community effort and, within two years, two kindergartens were operating in that town.

Sometimes in the later history of the movement, as in its earlier days, it has been individuals who have awakened the public conscience and stimulated effort to establish a kindergarten in an area where a need existed. In 1919, after the influenza epidemic, when two women members of the Southland Hospital Board were visiting the homes of patients suffering from the after effects of influenza, they found young children in need of care that their sick mothers were unable to give. It was this discovery that led to the establishment of the first kindergarten in Southland, in a house given for the purpose by a public-spirited citizen. One section of it was converted into living quarters for the staff whose salaries were so small that they were not able to pay for ordinary accommodation.

In other areas it has been teachers working in primary schools or post-primary teachers interested in kindergarten teaching as a career for their pupils, who have inspired the initial efforts made by a community for the establishment of a kindergarten in their district. Several of these women have later held high office in the Kindergarten Union and in local associations. Because of their professional experience and their intimate knowledge of children they have been able to make a unique contribution to the movement.

From the time Dr Waddell became convinced of the need to make some provision for the underprivileged children of his parish, when Mr Cohen advised him on some of the professional aspects of his problem, and when Bishop Suter addressed the first public meeting to form an association, men, as well as women, have given their personal support to the movement as fathers, as members of local committees and associations and as advisers, practical and professional, on many aspects of pre-school education. Some organisations with a predominantly male membership have done a great deal to stimulate the growth of the movement. In the booklet, "Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand" there are records of such organisations calling the initial meeting to form an association, sponsoring fund-raising efforts and often working themselves to convert

an old building into a temporary home for a kindergarten, to make improvements to the grounds and to establish a garden. Throughout the booklet there are constant references to such help being given by members of Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and Junior Chambers of Commerce. There are also references to help given by local authorities and government departments, to the provision of building sites by the Ministry of Works, and by the State Advances Corporation, and to sites being offered at a peppercorn rental by city, borough, and county councils.

b. The era of achievement

This began when the community generally had accepted the idea that pre-school education had something to offer all children, regardless of the economic status of their parents, and when parents themselves were willing to make considerable sacrifices to secure this experience for their children. Since it was necessary to find a fairly large sum of money before a kindergarten could be established, the group sponsoring the project had to set about raising funds. Until 1953, when the Department of Education announced that it could no longer give official recognition to kindergartens opening in halls, many associations opened their first kindergarten in a rented building when they had enough money to buy equipment, pay the rent of the building and the salaries of staff. At the same time they continued with their money-making efforts until they had enough in hand to think about erecting their own building.

In most areas people who worked to establish the first kindergarten did not rest from their labours when that kindergarten had been opened, but continued their efforts by helping newly-formed committees to build kindergartens. During the period when the Government refused to authorise the building of new kindergartens because they feared that trained teachers would not be available to staff them, many associations concentrated their efforts upon building up a capital fund that could be used to promote further expansion.

Since the last war ended there has been a steady growth in the population, new industries have been established, and cities, towns, and country areas have had to provide for a large increase in their population. This meant an increased demand for educational facilities at every level. Since, in the community generally, there has been a growing awareness of the value of pre-school education, there has naturally been a growing demand for extending the services of the kindergarten movement. This has been especially evident in areas adjacent to large cities. With the great improvement in transport and communication, townships that formerly served a farming area or provided accommodation for city dwellers on holiday, have become towns with a large residential population. Naturally, in these areas the Government has had to provide for increased primary and post-primary educational services, but parents themselves have had to take the initiative in securing education for their children below primary school age.

"Seventy-five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand", published in 1964, gives accounts supplied by individual associations



of the activities of the movement in their areas. When we read these accounts we cannot help but be impressed by the courage and resourcefulness of parents and public-spirited citizens who were determined to establish some form of pre-school education. Before they could do this they had to find suitable premises in which to establish a kindergarten and until 1953, when the Department of Education decreed that, in order to receive recognition a kindergarten must open in its own building, many kindergartens opened in rented halls. Sometimes rented premises proved unsuitable or their owners needed them for other purposes, so that a kindergarten often had to move several times before it was finally established in its own building.

Even after problems of accommodation had been solved some associations were unable to find staff and so opened a private kindergarten with untrained staff. Because a serious shortage of trained teachers had been caused by the rapid growth of the movement, in 1956 the Department of Education imposed a period of consolidation during which no proposals for new kindergartens would be considered. This period was extended until 1958 when a new policy of controlled expansion was imposed. Three kindergartens were given permission to build during this year, and in the following year five kindergartens were allowed to proceed. In 1960 fifteen kindergartens were able to erect their own buildings, but in 1961, because committees were again finding it difficult to secure trained staff, another period of consolidation was imposed until 1964, when there was a return to the normal policy of expansion.

Parents living in closely-contained communities such as army and airforce establishments have worked hard to secure kindergarten training for their children. Usually such communities are situated some distance from centres of population and this makes it difficult for them to find trained teachers, increases building costs and cuts them off from participation in the activities of the movement. In spite of these difficulties parents have persisted in their efforts and gained their objectives. The experience of one such association is typical of others throughout the country.

In the early days of this settlement a group began to work for the establishment of a kindergarten. In the first fifty homes that they visited they found seventy-two children who would attend a kindergarten if one were established. This survey was made in 1951 but it was 1955 before they found a suitable hall, and the alterations needed to comply with departmental regulations had been carried out.

After the kindergarten was established the association and the staff still had many difficulties to contend with. There were forty children attending in the morning and another forty attending the afternoon session, and many more on the waiting list. Parents were transferred frequently so that many children passed through the kindergarten in the course of a year. Even after the association had raised enough money to begin the erection of their own building problems still remained—the greatest of them that of obtaining staff. Single girls who had completed their training were not likely to come to a remote area when they could find positions close to towns. When the kindergarten had first opened a trained kindergarten teacher was living in the area and she was able to direct the programme with the

help of mothers and untrained staff, but there were times when it was quite impossible to secure trained teachers and untrained helpers had to carry the full responsibility. There was even the possibility that staffing problems might delay the building of a permanent kindergarten, because, in order to obtain the government subsidy, the association must have a trained teacher to supervise the work of the kindergarten. This association and others operating under similar difficulties have solved their problems and secured pre-school education for their children.

II. ADMINISTRATION

Administration as it applies to the kindergarten movement can be thought of at three levels—at the level of local associations concerned with the individual kindergartens and committees, at the level of the Kindergarten Union that co-ordinates the work of local associations, and at the level where the Government provides assistance and exercises a measure of control.

A. The Local Association

When a group of people decide to work for the opening of a kindergarten in their area, they must first carry out a survey and obtain certain information. They must be able to show that there are at least sixty children who would attend a kindergarten if one were opened, that there is a reasonable chance of maintaining the roll at this level and increasing it to eighty.

When this preliminary survey has been carried out a public meeting must be convened. Many years have passed since the first meeting to consider making some provision for pre-school children was held in Dunedin in 1889. At many meetings since that time educationists, social workers, and prominent citizens have discussed the value of pre-school education and committees have been set up. At such meetings a resolution is passed and a council elected to work for the establishment of a kindergarten. Members of the association are enrolled and pay a subscription. Membership is open to any adult who pays the annual subscription.

Later the council meets to elect its officers and to draw up a constitution based on a model supplied by the Union. This is submitted to the Union for approval and, when that approval has been given, the honorary solicitor of the association submits the constitution to the Registrar of Incorporated Societies with a request that the association be accepted as an incorporated society. The association then begins to work for the opening of a kindergarten. It must raise one-third of the cost of the building (at least four thousand dollars), secure a site approved by the Department of Education, and then employ a registered architect to draw up plans for the Department of Education's approval. When approval has been given to call tenders the association may proceed with its building programme. In an area where there is

more than one kindergarten the association continues to control the affairs of the individual kindergartens through the council elected at its annual meeting.

Local Committee: When a group of people in an area where there is already a kindergarten begin to work for a second in their immediate locality, the association may delegate certain responsibilities to the new committee. As more groups in an area work to establish kindergartens, the relationship between the association and the committees resembles that existing between an education board and the committees of the individual schools in its area. The Union considers that a local committee should have at least five thousand dollars in hand to meet the cost of a new building and initial equipment. The Department of Education will pay a subsidy of \$2 to \$1 upon buildings, sites, and all approved permanent equipment, but the committee must bear the cost of the future maintenance of the building, equipment, and grounds.

Because parents who support their local kindergarten have to accept responsibility for the maintenance of the kindergarten building and the grounds, many people question the use of the word "free" as applied to kindergartens. But kindergartens are free in the sense that primary schools are free. That is, no fees are charged for attendance.

B. The Union

Early in the history of the movement people working to establish and administer kindergartens throughout New Zealand began to feel the need for mutual consultation and assistance. In 1912 delegates from the four main centres met to consider forming a national organisation. In 1913 a second meeting was held and a national association formed. Because war broke out in 1914, it was 1920 before another conference met in Wellington. There seems to have been little more consultation on a national scale until 1926 when, at a meeting in Wellington the old Free Kindergarten Union was revived. Delegates from five associations, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill, decided that membership of the Union should be open to all associations receiving Government recognition, and that conferences should be held biennially. A standing committee representing the associations was set up.

An association was admitted to the Union when it adopted a constitution approved by the Union and became an incorporated society. The Union is able to help new associations during the period when they are most in need of support and advice—when they are raising funds, planning their kindergarten and appointing staff. When an association has become established and is the controlling authority of one or more kindergartens, it may still count upon the support of the Union, which co-ordinates the work of all associations and provides the means whereby they may communicate with the Department of Education.

Associations affiliated to the Union have the right to be represented at all national conferences where policy is formed. The Union is not itself an executive body but it is the body that is recognised by the Minister of Education as representing all kindergarten associations and



having the right to speak for them on all matters relating to kindergarten policy. We discussed earlier the action of the Government in imposing a period of consolidation during which no proposals for new kindergartens would be considered. When this was followed by a period of controlled expansion it was the Union that held the priority list and recommended which kindergartens should be allowed to proceed with a building programme.

It is the Union that awards diplomas to kindergarten students who have completed their course, thus recognising that they have been trained for a national service.

C. The Department of Education

From the early days the Government, through the Department of Education, has accepted some responsibility for giving financial help to the movement. In return it has exercised a measure of control by laying down minimum standards for buildings and equipment, for the qualifications of kindergarten staff, and for the programme offered in kindergartens.

Since 1946, when the first Supervisor of Pre-School Services was appointed, it has offered an increasing amount of professional advice through its pre-school advisory service, but it has not absorbed the pre-school service into the state system of education.

a. Financial assistance

Over the years the Government has increased the amount of financial help that it gives to the movement. While associations were responsible for paying the salaries of teachers the capitation grants based upon average attendance were gradually increased, until by 1942 the grant paid by the Government was £4. When the Government agreed to pay the salaries of teachers capitation grants were withdrawn but it continued to give financial help in other forms, and the amount of help given has been gradually increased until the Government now accepts responsibility for:—

(1) The salaries of kindergarten teachers, of full-time lecturers at Kindergarten Training Colleges, an annual grant to students attending Kindergarten Training Colleges and an additional grant to those who have to live away from home in order to attend college. Formerly a grant was made towards the salaries of part-time lecturers but, on August 5, 1969, the Government announced that it had approved payment being made for the salaries of part-time staff and for the part-time training centre typist.

(2) The initial cost of training centre buildings and, again, since July 21, 1969, the maintenance of training centre buildings, the running costs of heating, water, caretaking, cleaning, insurance rates, and the full cost of necessary furniture, equipment and library books.

(3) A subsidy of \$2 for \$1 on money raised towards the cost of new buildings and initial equipment.

(4) An annual grant to the Union for administration.

Before the Minister of Education will recognise a free kindergarten the association must provide a standard building, the site must be cleared and provided with paved areas, lawns and fences. Liaison with parents has always been recognised as important, and so, before the kindergarten can open the association must have held three well-attended meetings of parents, where they are told about the procedure governing waiting lists and admission to kindergarten, and about kindergarten principles and practices.

b. Professional assistance

As the movement expanded and as citizens generally became more aware of the value of pre-school education, the Government recognised that it had a responsibility to support the efforts of local associations and to formulate a long-term policy. Therefore, in 1945, a consultative committee was set up to review the work of pre-school services in New Zealand and to make recommendations for future development in the field of pre-school education. Its terms of reference were to consider and report upon educational services for children below school age, with specific reference to the financing and control of such services, and the training of personnel. Professor C. L. Bailey, Professor of Education at Victoria University, Wellington, was the chairman of the committee, and Miss M. F. Gallagher, who later became the first Supervisor of Pre-School Services, was its secretary.

The Free Kindergarten Union, the Nursery Play Centre Association, the Education Boards Association, the New Zealand Plunket Society, the National Council of Women, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the National Council of Churches, and the Auckland Kindergarten Association, which was not at that time a member of the Union, were represented on that committee.

In its report the committee recommended that pre-school services should be extended as soon as possible, that attendance should continue to be voluntary, and that the Government should institute a state pre-school service and absorb existing play centres and kindergartens into the state school system. The report suggested that there should be a developmental period of five years during which the Department of Education should make preparations to take over full responsibility and train enough teachers to inaugurate a state system, since the expanded system that the commission envisaged could not be carried on by voluntary organisations. It suggested that existing play centres and kindergartens should be taken over by the state, but that for a number of years following this move, local areas should raise a percentage of the capital cost, that the pattern adopted should be that of the kindergarten rather than that of the all-day nursery school, and that pre-school services should be available to all children whose parents wished to use them. It suggested that a period of five years would be needed to work out the details of the scheme, that during this period voluntary associations should be given increased aid, and that an officer for pre-school education should be appointed by the Department of Education.

It is now nearly a quarter of a century since that commission was set up. Though its suggestion that the Department of Education should

take over full responsibility for pre-school has not yet been acted upon, its report has certainly influenced the development of pre-school services in this country. Pre-school education is not yet available to all children whose parents desire it for them, but pre-school services have expanded greatly and that expansion is continuing, stimulated by voluntary effort and helped by an increasing measure of Government support.

The Government, by assuming responsibility for paying the salaries of teachers and gradually increasing its share of the cost of student training, has made it possible for associations to extend kindergarten services so that a higher proportion of children are now attending kindergartens than in the past. But perhaps the Commission made its most important recommendation when it suggested that the Department of Education should appoint an Officer for Pre-school Education. Miss M. F. Gallagher, who had acted as secretary to the commission, was appointed to that position in 1946.

The pre-school services section now consists of:—

(1) An Officer for Pre-school Education and her assistant who have their headquarters at the Department in Wellington.

(2) Pre-school Advisers stationed at each of the regional offices of the Department in Auckland, in Wellington, and in Christchurch, and in other centres. These officers are responsible for giving professional advice to kindergarten teachers and helping kindergarten associations to solve administrative and professional problems, and so providing a valuable link between the Department of Education and local associations.

Two later commissions have made some reference in their reports to pre-school education. The Campbell Report, published in 1951, was the work of a committee set up to make recommendations on the recruitment, training, and education of teachers. This committee recommended that the state should assume full responsibility for training teachers of kindergarten children but not during a time of teacher shortage, and that teachers' colleges should offer a course for teachers of children in the three to seven year age group. Then a commission was set up in 1960 under the chairmanship of Sir George Currie to consider the system of primary, post-primary and technical education in relation to the present and future needs of this country. Although pre-school education was not specifically mentioned in these terms of reference, the Kindergarten Union and at least one association presented submissions to this commission.

These submissions were concerned mainly with administration and teacher training. Those concerned with administration expressed the hope that the local interest and community support that the movement had inherited from the early days of its existence should not be lost. Eventually the whole cost of pre-school education would probably be borne by the state, but in the meantime, a share of the cost, substantial but not so heavy as to discourage effort, should be raised by local committees. Though the time would probably come when the state would offer education for all children from three to seven years of age

and bear the entire cost, the transition to this goal should be a gradual one. Kindergartens could be effectively staffed only when qualifications for entry to kindergarten training were the same as for the students entering the primary service and they were given the same basic salary as teachers in that service.

The report of the commission, while it paid tribute to the work of the two pre-school services, suggested that they were unable to satisfy the increasing demand for pre-school education. It suggested two measures for alleviating the burden carried by these associations:—

(a) That the Department of Education assume full responsibility for the training of pre-school teachers and supervisors and take such steps as appear necessary to ensure a better supply of teachers.

(b) That the district offices of the Department of Education that the commission had recommended to be set up, assume some of the administrative burden carried by large associations.

III. KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TRAINING

We owe a great deal to the founders of the movement for their determination to secure trained teachers for the early kindergartens and to ensure that there should be teachers trained in New Zealand to succeed them. In Auckland, where the first kindergarten was opened in 1910, a training course was offered before the kindergarten was opened. During their first year students attended lectures at Auckland Teachers' Training College and the Technical School and were given opportunity for observation and practical experience in two private kindergartens whose directors were graduates of the Sydney Training College. In 1910 Miss M. E. Gibson, who held the higher Froebel Certificate of Great Britain, was appointed the first Principal or Trainer. This position was created in other centres, where, as the movement developed, teacher training programmes were initiated. The Principal was a trained kindergarten teacher who directed the work of the kindergartens in an area and was responsible for arranging the lecture programme for students and for supervising their practical work in kindergartens.

In Christchurch Miss H. Hull, an English-trained pre-school teacher who held a Froebel Certificate of Great Britain, was appointed the first Director or Trainer. In Wellington in 1911 an experienced Principal was appointed. Miss Freeman held the National Froebel Diploma of Great Britain, and it was after her appointment that the systematic training of students was organised. Later, about 1913, associations agreed on the general content of training and the standards that should be set.

In the early days and for some years afterwards the pattern of training in most areas was closely associated with practical work in the kindergartens. Students helped in kindergartens during the morning and attended lectures during the afternoons. The lectures given mainly by the principal or by kindergarten teachers, were on child study, psychology, kindergarten method, and the more practical aspects of the kindergarten programme, such as handwork and nature study.

There are some references to music being taken privately. Students sometimes attended courses offered by other educational institutions. The School of Art is one such institution that is mentioned in this connection. Even in the early stages of training there seems to have been some contact between kindergartens and the primary school. Miss Christison, Officer for Pre-school Education, refers to the report of a supervisor of the education of girls and women who writes of kindergarten students being given a month's training in a primary school class. Students paid a fee of two guineas a term to be trained and each centre conducted its own examinations and awarded its own certificates. Associations received no government assistance allocated specifically for teacher training, but as the Government still made a capitation grant of £2 based on average attendance, some of this was probably used for training. Kindergarten colleges were established in the four main centres. Students in Dunedin are now able to gain additional experience in the Pre-school Centre which is classed as a nursery school concerned with child health and social development, and is administered jointly by the Plunket Society and the Kindergarten Association.

The development of kindergarten teacher training

Until 1941 associations in the four main centres conducted their own examinations and awarded their own diplomas. In 1941 the Government made awards of £50 a year to all students plus £25 a year to those who had to live away from home. The number of students increased each year. In 1945 there were one hundred students in training and the grant was raised to £70 a year. In 1949 there were one hundred and seventy-five students, and in 1964 two hundred and sixty.

The Government and kindergarten training

As the Government gave more financial assistance it naturally began to exercise a measure of control over kindergarten teacher training. Until 1941, the four main centres had provided their own training facilities, conducted their own examinations and awarded their own diplomas. It was not until 1957 that the education committees of the training associations conferred with the Union Executive to draw up a national syllabus of training. In 1950 the first diplomas of the new Free Kindergarten Union replaced the diplomas formerly awarded by the local associations. By this time the Government, acting on the advice of the 1945 commission, had appointed a Supervisor of Pre-school Services. Because of her contact with associations, training centres, and with kindergarten teachers throughout New Zealand, she was able to help those working at each level to appreciate the importance of striving for and maintaining high standards of training.

In 1941 when the Department of Education made the first grants to teachers in training, minimum qualifications for entry to colleges were set down. Since that time the qualifications of students applying for entry have risen steadily. In 1949 the minimum qualification for entry was school certificate or four years' post-primary education. By 1965 93% of students applying for entry had either school certificate

or a higher qualification. Today a number of students have a university entrance qualification and those who can do so, without too much strain, are encouraged to undertake university study along with their college work.

On page 19 of this booklet we have discussed the measure of financial support that the Government has given over the years in respect of teacher training, and mention has been made of financial help the Government has now undertaken in this field.

As we have already seen, the reports of the three commissions on aspects of New Zealand education have all had some suggestions to make regarding the training of teachers for the pre-school service. The commission of 1945 suggested that the state accept full responsibility for training teachers in the national system. The commission on teacher training suggested that one or more teachers' colleges offer a course to prepare teachers to work with children from three to seven years of age, and the commission of 1960 pointed out that, while the present partnership between the state and the pre-school associations was a proper and desirable one, the unsatisfied demand for pre-school education could not be ignored. It was suggested that, in lieu of taking over full responsibility for pre-school education, the Department might well assume responsibility for teacher training.

While these recommendations have not been fully implemented, there have been developments that could be thought of as preparing the way for a gradual merging of primary and post-primary teacher training. One of these has been the trend towards regional control of training centres. The Christchurch Association, in its submissions to the 1960 Commission on Education, had suggested that, while the kindergarten movement should aim at maintaining that sense of local responsibility that had been its source of strength in the past, the Department of Education might be asked to accept full responsibility for the kindergarten training colleges. As a step towards a more broadly-based form of administration for its college, this association appointed a Board of Studies whose members are: The Principal of the Teachers' College, the Professor of Education of the University or his nominee, representatives of the local association, and of other associations served by the college.

In 1965 the Department of Education suggested that the Union adopt a pilot scheme under which one or more colleges be put under the control of a regional council of management composed of: the head of the Department of Education of the nearest university or his nominee, the principal of the nearest teachers' college or his nominee, three members of the associations in the regional area and three members appointed by the Minister. The Union, at a conference, had already suggested that it would like to see the administration of the colleges removed from the control of local associations and the Wellington Association asked that it be allowed to try out the proposed scheme.

At the Union Conference of 1968 a member of the executive reported that the experiment in regional control had worked effectively.

The training programme

At the time of the national conference of the Union in 1947 the newly-appointed Supervisor of Pre-school Services met the principals of the four training colleges and discussed with them the need for a common policy in working out the essential features of kindergarten teacher training. She emphasised the importance of encouraging the study of child development and of giving students the opportunity to observe and discuss the behaviour of children in kindergarten so that they might grow into an understanding of how to provide for the full development of the children with whom they worked.

Since that meeting the pattern of kindergarten student training has changed greatly. Previously, students who had worked in kindergartens in the mornings were often too tired to benefit from lectures and discussions in the afternoons. When, as happens now, students spend periods in college followed by periods in kindergartens it is possible to plan a more flexible training programme. Training facilities, too, have improved. There are now better libraries, improved opportunities for individual study, research, and recreation. Training colleges are now able to attract better-qualified and more suitable applicants.

Miss Christison writes of a kindergarten college that she visited. She describes opportunities that it offered and compares them with those offered earlier—opportunities for practical work and observation and for study and discussion. The programme was organised so that, for a six-week period, one group of students worked in the college except for one half day in each week, which they spent in a kindergarten observing and discussing children's behaviour. Another group spent every day of that period in kindergartens, except for one day of each week which they spent in college.

The curriculum covered child development, children's literature, handwork, education, music, subjects that were taken by the full-time staff of the college. Part-time staff, who were often lecturers at Teachers' College or at University, directed the work in speech, drama, art, woodwork, psychology, and nature study. The Principal no longer had to serve as the senior professional officer of the association. By this time a supervising head teacher had been appointed to act in that capacity. The general picture is of a richer programme and improved facilities for both staff and students.

At a conference recently held at Lopdell House, teachers from kindergartens and primary schools, lecturers from Teachers' Colleges and Kindergarten Colleges, University teachers and members of the Pre-school Advisory Service, discussed the principles involved and made suggestions for the planning of future curricula. A draft, as worked out, covered the four main areas of the curriculum:—

(a) A general view of human development, of child development, from birth to eight years, and of the period from adolescence to adulthood.

(b) Curriculum studies covering four main areas:—

Language including story telling, children's literature, the begin-

nings of reading and writing (these to be studied not with the object of helping students to teach them at the kindergarten level but with a view to helping them to understanding the rich background of experience needed by children before they were ready for such teaching in the primary school).

English Language and Literature at the student level.

(c) **A choice of one subject from the following sections—**

1. Arts, crafts, music, drama, writing.
2. Physical and social sciences, or an environmental study undertaken in some depth.

(d) **The kindergarten system in early childhood** covering the planning of work with children and parents, the making of adequate provision for children's health and safety, details of administration, and the responsibility of the kindergarten in relation to the Department of Education, the Kindergarten Association, Parent Clubs, and the community served by the kindergarten. Already the formulation of this programme has had its effect on the college programmes. All the colleges have accepted its spirit and as staffing schedules, library facilities and college equipment generally make further progress possible, the main features of the suggested curriculum are being put into practice. What is even more important, the spirit of the suggestions is having its effect on the life and work of the colleges.

The conference afforded opportunity for co-operation among teachers and lecturers from the kindergarten and the primary service, and from University and Teachers' Colleges. The effect of this co-operation is enriching the programmes of the colleges and the work of the movement. There is an increasing measure of co-operation among Kindergarten and Teachers' Colleges, and staff members from both University and Teachers' Colleges who give valuable service to the kindergarten movement through their work on advisory and administrative committees.

IV. THE KINDERGARTEN IN ACTION

A. Buildings and Equipment

Although from the early days the ideal has been a permanent building planned with the needs of young children in mind, many kindergartens opened in halls and remained there while associations were raising funds needed for a permanent building. Indeed, as we have already seen, the first kindergarten in New Zealand opened in a church hall. As time went on many newly-established committees were able to open their first kindergartens in their own newly-erected buildings. This became possible as the movement received a greater measure of Government support. The Department's booklet on sites, buildings, and equipment defines minimum requirements as: one quarter acre of ground, a large playroom opening on to a playground, a cloakroom containing lockers, wash basins, and toilets suitable for

young children, a playground with a paved area, grass, trees, and outdoor equipment, e.g., sand pits, a slide and a jungle gym.

Requirements for indoor equipment depend largely upon the scope and character of the kindergarten programme. The early kindergartens provided the Froebel gifts, coloured woollen balls, wooden pieces that could be fitted together to form cubes, mosaics, and flat shapes, natural objects such as beans, lentils, seeds, leaves, pebbles, wax, wax pellets and sharpened sticks. Now a much wider and more unorthodox range of equipment is found in kindergartens. It includes, carpentry tools, messy materials such as finger paint, water and clay. There are water troughs and junk material, e.g., boxes, planks and barrels, old telephones, empty cartons, tins, string, fuse wire, off-cuts of wood, and car tyres. Such equipment encourages children to discuss, to plan, to build, to pull down and to rebuild. There are, of course, in addition, musical instruments of all kinds, story and picture books, clothes for dressing up, materials for modelling and painting, dolls' prams, dolls, and the things needed for play concerned with homes and families.

B. The Teacher in the Kindergarten

a. Qualifications

In order to be recognised as a trained kindergarten teacher, a teacher must hold a Kindergarten Teacher's Diploma—primary school teachers are not recognised as trained teachers in the kindergarten service—and overseas applicants are recognised only if they hold a nursery school teacher's certificate. The nursery nurse's certificate is not recognised as a qualification for the kindergarten service.

We have already discussed the rapid growth of the movement during the years from 1940 onwards when, though no kindergarten could open without a trained teacher, assistants in an increasing number of kindergartens were untrained. Indeed, by 1956 almost one-third of the teachers were untrained. As a result of restrictions imposed by the Department of Education during the late fifties upon the opening of new kindergartens, by 1964 there were only ninety-four untrained teachers working as assistants. By 1965 only five untrained teachers had to be employed to fill the vacancies that normally occur. The introduction of bonding has greatly stabilised the staffing position so that now, untrained teachers are mainly employed in emergencies caused by the absence of teachers on leave for marriage or ill-health.

b. The teacher and the association

Kindergarten associations appoint teachers and may also dismiss them. While teachers enjoy a large measure of professional freedom the association lays down certain hours and conditions of work. The kindergarten must be open for twenty-seven and a half hours during the week but teachers' working hours are obviously longer. The morning session runs for three hours on five days a week and the afternoon session for two and a half hours on three days. For one afternoon each week teachers work with parents. Some of this time is spent visiting homes. Afternoon sessions are concerned with work with pre-entry groups, general maintenance and care of equipment.

There is general preparation to be done for each session. The teacher has to plan for individual children and groups and to decide the type of materials that will help and stimulate. The head teacher of a kindergarten has responsibilities similar to those of the head teacher of a two-teacher school who is usually more experienced and somewhat older than she is. She is responsible for planning the programme, directing the work of her assistant and initiating the mother helper. It is she who must take the initiative in making contact with mothers, to co-operate with them and with social agencies such as the Department of Health. She has to attend the meetings of kindergarten committees and parent groups, and generally to act as adviser to them on professional matters. She keeps the waiting list and arranges the order in which children are admitted to kindergarten, and she has to receive and account for the voluntary donations of parents.

c. The teacher and the pre-school adviser

The pre-school advisers employed by the Department of Education are not inspectors, since kindergarten teachers are neither graded nor inspected, but because they visit kindergartens all over the country they are able to stimulate the interchange of ideas and to give help and support to young teachers. Even though they may not be able to visit all kindergartens at regular intervals, they do visit most kindergartens twice a year, they organise refresher courses for teachers and generally act as professional advisers to staff and to associations.

d. The teacher and the parent

The teacher's contact with mothers begins before their children enter kindergarten. When a mother enters her child's name on the waiting list she and her child become to some degree the responsibility of the kindergarten teacher. As most kindergartens have long waiting lists there is usually plenty of opportunity for the teacher and the mother to become acquainted. Teachers are encouraged to visit homes and, in their timetable, provision is made for this and for work with parents.

The wise teacher encourages fathers as well as mothers to visit the kindergarten. Indeed, fathers are taking an increasing interest in the kindergarten and in what it has to offer their children. Saturday morning sessions are sometimes held to give fathers some idea of what happens during a kindergarten session and to give them a clearer idea of the aims and methods of the service. They can learn how the programme and the equipment promote active learning. When they understand the use that can be made of waste material they are often able to supply off-cuts of wood, old packing cases, tyres and junk of all kinds.

The first time that the mother comes to the kindergarten to remain for any length of time is when her child is admitted to the pre-entry group. Here mothers and children get to know the teachers and the mothers get to know other mothers who are sharing a new experience with their children.

When children have gained confidence and become familiar with

their environment they enter another afternoon group but again the mother is encouraged to remain with them until they have settled in. The next stage comes when the child is admitted to the full morning session. Still the teacher encourages the mother to feel that she is always a welcome visitor to the kindergarten.

Mothers who are able to do so are encouraged to spend whole sessions in the kindergarten working alongside the teachers. The wise teacher realises that, when they have become used to the atmosphere of the kindergarten, they understand what teachers are trying to do, and they have a great deal to offer. Certainly their presence can pose problems for the young or insecure teacher, who has to help the shy mother to feel at home, or to help the professional mother, who may have taught in another branch of education, to understand the essential principles of kindergarten teaching. Above all she has to help all mothers to feel that they have an important part to play in the education of their children.

C. The Kindergarten Programme

a. General principles

The Officer for Pre-School Education, in her address to the Union's annual conference in 1968, recounted an experience of her own when she had been travelling with a visitor unused to kindergartens and their programmes. After they had visited a kindergarten where the children were busy planning, doing, making, and talking, they stopped at a kindergarten where it was story time. The visitor's relieved comment was "That's better". Miss Christison went on to point out that teaching children to do things means a lot of equipment, a lot of junk material which fits many situations and can be used in many different ways, and perhaps a lot of apparent confusion.

Kindergartens do not attempt to teach children to do things too soon, though the teacher knows, if she is observant and sensitive, when children are ready to be helped. Children may ask for a word in a story book when they have heard it read often and have browsed over it many times. When we hear of a four-and-a-half being troublesome we should realise that we need to give him the right kind of help at the right time. He is learning when he discovers that if he runs out of a large block, two small ones can be fitted in to take its place. He needs praise but it must be sincere and it needs to be given with tactful suggestions for improvement. Adults standing around in a kindergarten do not get far if they just stand around. They have to see that a child gets the praise and help he needs, and understand that he knows when they are really interested in his achievements. The kindergarten provides a learning situation for teachers, for committee members, for associations, and for parents as well as for children.

b. The programme in action

The kindergarten teacher, like the teachers in other branches of the education service, realises that her most effective work is done before the children arrive at school. She knows that the environment

must be carefully prepared to meet the needs of her children as she understands them. She knows, too, that it can never be a static environment and that changes must be made to cater for changing interests and developing skills. Emma D. Sheehy, in her book "The Fives and Sixes go to School", tells of a mother who said to her child's teacher, "I guess I know why the children like school and learn so much and how you handle them. You just set out the right kind of bait for them." The author goes on to describe the bait as: "legitimate thought-provoking bait, bait for individual interests, bait for constructive working needs, bait for growing muscles and bait for intellectual needs."

Already we have seen in the section on buildings and equipment the changes that have come about in the planning of programmes and in ideas about equipment. The programme now is generally more flexible than formerly. There was a time, even after children had been given more opportunity to initiate their own activities, when they were still called together for music or story. While children still enjoy having stories read or told to them and like to handle story books enjoying the pictures, and interpreting the story in their own way, teachers usually wait until the opportunity occurs to read to a small group of children. The teacher who knows and loves children will find many opportunities to kindle the enthusiasm of her children.

The freer programme makes greater demands upon the teacher. She needs to give more to the planning of her programme and the setting out of material. She has to know her children better and to have a better understanding of their backgrounds in order to provide for their varying needs and abilities, and she has to know when to give help and when to have faith in a child's ability to solve his own problems.

In her work with parents and in the advice she gives to mother helpers, she has to interpret for them new ideas about kindergarten programmes and methods of work. At the same time she must help them to feel that, because of their intimate knowledge of their own children and the bonds that exist between them and their children, they have their unique contribution to make to the life and work of the kindergarten.

In the words of Henry Adams, quoted by Viscount Cobham when he officially opened the Auckland Kindergarten Teachers' College in April, 1959, "A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops."

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