

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

This movement continues to flourish. We believe that the school can function effectively only when it works in the closest harmony with the parents. While this is always true, it is particularly so in times of changing educational values. Parents quite naturally tend to question practices which differ from those they themselves experienced at school, and which they therefore do not understand, and this may lead them to under-rate the newer values as well as the schools that foster them. It becomes the function, therefore, of the school to ensure that these newer aims and methods are understood, and the most effective way of securing this end is through the Home and School Association Movement.

GRADING OF TEACHERS

The first general grading under the Education (Grading of Public School Teachers) Regulations 1948 was made on 1st February, 1949. The biennial increases of all teachers were, owing to the abolition of service marks, two marks less than under the old system. Before the general grading took place, the new regulations and the changes they had made in the system of grading were discussed at several conferences of Senior Inspectors. The aim of these discussions was to ensure uniformity of grading among the various groups of Inspectors.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Four new Free Kindergarten Associations were affiliated with the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union during the year, and 11 new kindergartens were established, making a total of 20 associations and 95 kindergartens. In addition to the children on the morning roll, all kindergartens are now admitting a group of children for kindergarten experience on two afternoons a week. During the year the Government adopted the principle of meeting in full the cost of sites and buildings for free kindergarten training centres.

The greatest difficulty facing those districts wishing to provide free kindergartens for their children is the shortage of trained teachers. There were 134 students in training at the end of the year, of whom 63 gained the Kindergarten Diploma. To meet the urgent need for trained staff, the number of student grants for 1950 was increased to 175.

The four Nursery Play Centre Associations have been very active in improving the standard of equipment in the centres, improving the quality of the supervision, and establishing more intensive training courses for Supervisors. There are now 52 active nursery play centres.

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

The peak roll of the Correspondence School in the winter term again exceeded 5,000 students, of whom approximately 600 were in the primers and 1,200 in the standard classes; 900 were full-time and the remainder part-time post-primary students. Ten per cent. of the total roll comprises pupils suffering from spastic paralysis, epilepsy, diabetes, and other physical disabilities.

Six permanent visiting teachers are engaged in travelling from home to home in various parts of the Dominion counselling and helping pupils and parents in their work.

Residential schools held at Otaki and Palmerston North (Massey Agricultural College) during the year were attended by 100 boys. These schools proved highly successful.

EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Extension of existing services for children who are physically handicapped was made along two lines. Two classes for partially-sighted children were established, one in Wellington and one in Christchurch. The class-rooms have special equipment, and the Wellington teacher spent a short period in Australia studying a class already in