THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1972, the New Democratic Party government of British Columbia mandated provision of kindergarten classes for children up to one year younger than the compulsory school attendance age; henceforth any five year old could attend a public school kindergarten. The government considered this move to be a milestone in British Columbia educational history, but like much social legislation, it did little more than recognise in law what was already taking place in fact.

This thesis examines the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia, from the opening of the first classes by the Vancouver School Board in 1944, to the legislation of 1972. It attempts to trace not only the physical establishment of classes, but also to discover the goals and objectives of those who supported the inclusion of kindergartens in the public school system.

In order to place British Columbia developments in international perspective it is necessary to take into account the kindergarten movement throughout the rest of North America. The first chapter, therefore, deals with the German origins of the kindergarten in the first half of the nineteenth century and the subsequent development of the kindergarten idea in the United States half a century later. It examines the reasons for the enthusiastic acceptance of kindergartens in the United States as well as the changes that took place as a result of increased research in areas such as psychology and human development. These changes resulted in a concept of kindergarten that was quite different from the Froebelian original.

The second chapter deals with developments in British Columbia from
the mid 1940's to 1972, examining the war-time conditions that led to the first serious discussions of the need to provide some sort of facilities for preschool children. It then traces the gradual expansion of kindergarten classes in the Vancouver and Victoria School Districts. These two School Boards in the province's two largest cities were for some years alone in their concern for provision of kindergarten classes although they had the enthusiastic support of many parents and educators. The Department of Education on the other hand showed a marked lack of interest in kindergarten.

The final chapter identifies and explores the changing theory of kindergarten education in British Columbia during the same time period, 1945-1972. This again necessitates some reference to events and contemporary educational thought throughout North America. It also requires a re-examination of much of the material used in the second chapter, for example, the Report of the 1960 Royal Commission on Education, to show why kindergartens were being called for by both educators and laymen, what role they were expected to play within the public school system and how that role changed over the years.

Two main points arise from the study. First, the momentum for the establishment of kindergartens came largely from those who had the greatest contact with the children themselves, namely, parents and educators. The school Boards were initially reluctant to commit themselves although they eventually entered the field with enthusiasm. The Department of Education and successive Liberal and Coalition governments avoided the kindergarten issue as best they could and the eventual legislation simply recognised the consensus that had developed. Second, although educators continue to
talk about the importance of freedom in the kindergarten classroom there has been an increase in emphasis on beginning formal school work, particularly pre-reading and writing skills, in the kindergarten year. The result is an effective lowering of the age of school entry.
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INTRODUCTION

Toronto has the distinction of being the second public school system in the world to include kindergartens as an integral part of the educative process. This took place in 1883, and within four years there was provision throughout the province for all other School Boards to do likewise. Why, then, was it nearly ninety years before a similar step was taken in British Columbia? In 1972, the New Democratic Party government of British Columbia mandated provision of kindergartens for all children of five years of age, and yet there had been kindergartens, at least in Vancouver and Victoria, the province's two largest cities, for nearly thirty years. Did the legislation then have any real impact, or was it simply a ratification of the status quo?

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia from the establishment of the first classes in the closing years of the Second World War up to 1972. The kindergarten, and the philosophy behind it, however, had their origins in the early decades of the last century. By the time the first classes were begun in British Columbia, both the philosophy and its practical expression, the kindergarten class, had changed considerably. Most of this change and development took place in the United States, and the study therefore initially examines the kindergarten in this setting.

The first kindergartens in Vancouver and Victoria were few in number and were established on an experimental basis by the two Boards concerned. Although the Department of Education provided some funding, it showed little further interest in the issue, either at that time or for some years to come. However, there was an immediate positive response from many
parents and educators and the Boards were unable to provide places for all the children whose parents wanted them to attend. Indeed, the Boards themselves were often doubtful about the value of kindergartens and the amount of their limited finances that should be expended on them. The study attempts to identify the various reasons for the enthusiasm, on the one hand, and apparent apathy, on the other hand, that characterized the several sections of the community and the government that were or should have been concerned with this aspect of education. It also links the piece-meal development of further classes with these conflicting attitudes.

During the 1960's, interest in early childhood education grew, not only within the province, but throughout North America and the western world. The impact of this renewed interest, and, more importantly, the research that resulted from it, was felt in British Columbia and produced an increase in the rate of establishment of kindergarten classes, both within and without the public school system. There was also a growing consensus that all children should have a year of kindergarten before beginning their primary schooling. Was this consensus the result of the new research or was it rather a result of the fact that more children were now able to attend classes, making the results of kindergarten more visible?

By the end of the decade, although the Department of Education still showed only a limited interest in this area of education, school boards in many parts of the province were providing an increasing number of kindergarten classes for five-year-old children. The rate of increase was such that by 1972, most five-year-olds in the province would, in all likelihood, have been able to attend a public school kindergarten, even if the legisla-
tion of that year had not been enacted.

But was the kindergarten experience offered in the early 1970's the same as that offered in the first classes to be established in the 1940's? Or did the increased interest in early childhood education, the resulting research, and the consensus as to the desirability of the kindergarten year, alter the classroom atmosphere and objectives? If so, what was the major agent of change? Was it the teachers, the School Boards, the Department of Education? Or were there more general influences? The second intention of the study is to examine the theory of kindergarten education in British Columbia and to attempt to identify any changes in intent or method that occurred in the course of the thirty year period from 1944 to 1972. This is not easy, for a multiplicity of philosophies and objectives may co-exist in education without necessarily becoming apparent. An examination of Department of Education publications, local education journals, and local and national reports of Committees and Commissions on the question of kindergartens may shed some light on these problems. Finally, a comparison with contemporary American thought and method will serve to place developments in British Columbia in the total North American context.
CHAPTER I

EARLY KINDERGARTEN DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AMERICA

Any examination of the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia must consider two important factors. First, some school systems included kindergartens as an integral part of the educational process more than a century before British Columbia took this same step. Second, during this century-long period, School Districts in both the United States and other parts of Canada experimented considerably with the theory and practice of kindergarten education. British Columbia, therefore, was able to adopt a system that had been modified by time and use to the North American situation; this province had the advantage of the experience of other areas that had chosen to use the kindergarten as a part of the educational system. It is therefore necessary to discuss the first century of kindergarten education in the wider North American context before the situation in British Columbia can be dealt with.

The kindergarten movement in America rode on the crest of a wave of enthusiastic humanism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. Educational historians have advanced two conflicting theories to account for the sudden interest of philanthropists, reformers and teachers in the idea of kindergarten at this time. Marvin Lazerson maintains that the upsurge of interest and the incorporation of kindergarten classes in many public schools exemplified the dilemma of urban educational reform. He admits that both reformers and philanthropists saw the kindergarten as an innovative and less harsh educational beginning for the children of the wealthy. But he maintains
that these same reformers and philanthropists supported the idea of kindergarten largely as an agent of social reform. The kindergarten offered a new way of reaching the poor, of helping them to deal with the problems of rapid urbanization and of bringing some measure of social harmony into family life in the slums. The dilemma that Lazerson identifies arose when reformers attempted to put their theory into practice. If kindergarten was to be of any value as an agent of social change, it was necessary that a large majority of urban children attended a class. It seemed to many of the reformers that the obvious way to reach the majority of children was to include kindergartens in the public school system. But the already struggling public schools could rarely afford the expenditure required for a complete traditional kindergarten system. Moreover, this new concept of the school as an agent of social reform extended the school far beyond its traditional responsibilities. Though many kindergartens were opened, limited finance prevented the maintenance of small class numbers. Teachers did not have the time to involve themselves in home visits and parent education, and some did not consider this work a part of their professional duties. Public kindergartens became increasingly a downward extension of the primary grades, more concerned with education than with social welfare or reform. Lazerson sees this as a failure on the part of the reformers to achieve their goals fully; even though public school kindergartens proliferated in many parts of America they did not have the far reaching effects on society that many of their supporters envisioned.

Unlike Lazerson, Lawrence Cremin and Timothy Smith identify no such dilemma in the introduction of kindergartens into the school system. Smith sees the reforms of the Progressive era as having a 'creative social
function' rather than a controlling social function: Cremin identifies Progressive education as only one strand of the broader programme of social and political reform which historians have labelled the Progressive Movement. While Cremin and Smith agree that social reform was the ultimate goal, both place much more emphasis on the new educational methods that came to be used rather than the goal itself. The new education was to be 'education for life'; a many sided effort to use the schools to improve the life of the individual. Schools were to broaden their programmes, both in content and function, and were to centre on the child himself. The kindergarten movement, with its emphasis on the individual child and learning through doing, fitted admirably with these aims and so became a part of the new educational movement.

Lazerson differs with Cremin and Smith as to the exact purpose educational reformers had in mind when they championed the kindergarten cause. This paper will take a position that is in line with Cremin and Smith rather than with Lazerson because it seems to me that those individuals who were involved with the establishment of public school kindergartens were indeed more concerned with educational than with social issues.

A brief examination of the origins of the kindergarten are necessary at this point. Friedrich Froebel opened the first kindergarten in Blankenburg, Germany, in 1837. He based the curriculum on his own metaphysical doctrine of Unity, or what he believed to be the interconnectedness of all things in life. God, he believed, was the Divine Unity and the source of all subsequent unity. Therefore, education, in the broad sense, must be the process of leading man to an understanding of and conscious appreciation of the principle of Unity. Froebel saw childhood education
as a process of unfolding from within of the child's physical, intellectual and moral nature through freely chosen self-activity or play. He wrote:

Play is the purest, most spiritual activity of man... and, at the same time, typical of life as a whole - of the inner hidden natural life in man and all things. It gives, therefore, joy, freedom, contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world... The plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later life; for the whole man is developed and shown in these, in his tenderest dispositions, in his innermost tendencies.

Froebel's system was unique in two respects: it emphasized the importance of the years from three to seven in the educative process, and it placed the child himself at the centre of learning rather than relying on a content-centred curriculum. The very name 'Kindergarten', which Froebel chose for his school illustrates his belief that education was akin to cultivating plants. The kindergartner, as he called the teacher, was to provide the proper conditions for the young human plant just as a gardener would provide suitable climate and soil. But the growth itself came from within the child; it could not be imposed from without. A suitable atmosphere and freedom for self-directed activity allowed the unfolding of full potential.

His theory emphasized freedom, but in fact, much of Froebel's programme was quite rigid and adult directed, particularly in regard to his Gifts and Occupations, described below. But, with his tortuous philosophy of Unity and his aim of 'rendering the inner outer', Froebel justified this imitation and direction as the child's own creative activity. He designed his own teaching equipment with considerable originality but did not allow the same originality to children as they used it. His Gifts consisted of soft woolen balls, a wooden cube, cylinder and ball, and a series of sets of wooden geometric blocks, which, he argued, all expressed his philosophy of
Unity and inner connectedness. His instructions for their use were most specific. The geometric wooden blocks, for instance, were to be used only on a tabletop marked off in a grid of one square inch, on which they were to be placed exactly by the child in a series of forms and designs minutely prescribed by Froebel. He expected that children would learn for themselves the cosmic truths of his philosophy as they used the equipment. Nevertheless, despite the structured nature of many of his activities, Froebel's concept of the nature of learning was to have a strong impact on the school systems of North America, where learning was still commonly understood as memorization of facts.

Initially, the establishment of kindergartens in the United States was slow, and it was not until interest in them began to blossom there that Canadian educators also began to show an interest. A short review of developments in the United States is therefore in order.

The first kindergarten in the United States was opened in 1856 by Mrs. Margarette Schurtz, in Waterton, Wisconsin. Like a handful of other women who began similar enterprises in the next fifteen years, Mrs. Schurtz had become acquainted with the kindergarten in Germany and worked privately in America for the benefit of her own children and those of a few friends and neighbours. The kindergartens were conducted in German and attracted little attention outside the communities in which they were established.

While education continued to be understood by a majority of teachers, as no more than instruction in the 3R's, the kindergarten could hope for little recognition. But as the early stirrings of the Progressive Movement quickened, Froebel's theories roused growing interest.

Perhaps the best known of the early American supporters of the kinder-
garten were Elizabeth Peabody, Henry Barnard, William T. Harris and Susan Blow. All were members of the Concord School of Philosophy, established in 1879 by Bronson Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and all were deeply imbued with the German Idealism which had strongly influenced Froebel. They readily identified with the philosophical basis of his teachings and although each was attracted to different aspects of his theory, all worked to the same end of seeing his principles put into practice.

Peabody had taught for many years, as a governess, in her own school and in Bronson Alcott’s Temple School. In 1860 she read the German edition of Froebel’s *Education of Man* (Leipzig, 1826) and immediately opened her own kindergarten. However, she doubted her application of some of Froebel’s principles and so she travelled to Germany to study the kindergarten at first hand.

On her return she wrote and lectured, particularly in the kindergarten training schools that were being established as the demand for more kindergartens grew. With five other women from the Boston area Peabody founded the Boston Froebel Association which later developed into the American Froebel Association. Many prominent educators, including Barnard, were members and they actively promoted adherence to the letter of the Froebelian gospel although there were already those who were calling for less dogmatism and more adaptation to the American situation. In all her activities Peabody managed to involve, directly or indirectly, numerous people in the kindergarten cause, by her sheer vitality and enthusiasm. One of her early pupils, Lucy Wheelock, who later became a prominent kindergartner in her own right, says of her: "She proclaimed the Gospel of Froebel and had the spirit of the true missionary. She believed in this gospel as a means of
regenerating humanity, and so all her mind, might and strength were dedicated to the cause."^{12}

Barnard, the first United States Commissioner of Education, visited London, England, in 1854, and became an enthusiastic supporter of the kindergarten system when he saw the work of Mme. Bertha Ronge, one of Froebel's disciples. In 1890 he assembled a large volume of literature on the subject, entitled *Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers* (Hartford, 1890). It was the first publication of any importance in the English language and did much to spread the kindergarten idea. In his position as Commissioner of Education, he was ideally placed to encourage the establishment of kindergartens and this he did, through his writings, correspondence and public speaking.

William T. Harris moved from Boston to St. Louis to become Superintendent of Public Schools and for several years Elizabeth Peabody corresponded with him, urging him to introduce kindergartens into the St. Louis school system. She had attempted this task herself in Boston in 1870 but despite initial success, the one public kindergarten closed in a short time because of lack of funds.^{14} Harris' enthusiasm for kindergartens stemmed from his interest in the concept of self-activity or play as a learning experience, and he welcomed Froebel's Gifts and Occupations into the classroom. He was also impressed with the social value of kindergarten for children of both rich and poor and saw it as a transitional step between home and school.^{15}

Harris recommended, in 1870, that the St. Louis School Board incorporate kindergarten classes in its schools. But it was not until three years later, when Susan Blow volunteered to superintend a class and instruct a
teacher, that the first class was opened. Blow had become acquainted with the kindergarten while touring Europe in 1871 and had then studied for a year in New York with Mme. Maria Kraus-Boelte, a student of Froebel's widow.

Despite this relatively early breakthrough into a public school system, kindergartens were not to be established in other areas for some years. Toronto was the next school district to open public kindergartens in 1883, as a result of the zeal and enthusiasm of James L. Hughes and by the end of the century other Boards in cities such as Indianapolis, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia in the United States, and Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Fredericton and Moncton in Canada had established some classes.

The last decades of the nineteenth century saw an increasing enthusiasm for kindergartens. North Americans were engaged in an extensive attack on the problems caused by urbanization and industrialization and kindergarten classes were established as a part of the progressive reform movement. During this period the slow but steady growth of kindergartens in public school systems was outdistanced by the rapid proliferation of philanthropically established kindergartens. It is in this area that Lazerson's argument about the aims of reformers has most validity. Many avid supporters of the kindergarten were not educators but philanthropists and their first concern was for the welfare of the children of the urban poor. They saw the kindergarten as offering a safe and enriched refuge from the street world of the slums; a place where the children could be washed, fed, given love and discipline and an educative environment for their personal development. At the same time, the kindergarten could reach into the home and influence family life through the education of the parents, for in many
philanthropic kindergartens, classes were held only in the mornings, giving
kindergartners the afternoons free for home welfare work. 19

In pursuit of this goal, philanthropists began to establish Kinder-
garten Associations in cities across the United States. One had been
organized in Milwaukee as early as 1870 and two more followed in San
Francisco in 1878 and 1880. By 1897 there were over 400 listed by the
Commissioner of Education. 20 They were certainly concerned with the
possibilities for social change that could be wrought through the kinder-
garten but not, I feel, to the extent that Lazerson maintains. Their aims,
in fact, varied from city to city; some worked for the incorporation of
kindergartens in the public school systems, some co-operated with school
authorities in the supervision and maintenance of existing kindergartens;
still others operated independently to supplement public school classes or
to provide kindergartens where no public school classes existed. 21 All
aimed to advance the kindergarten cause and to work with parents in an
effort to improve home life. This was felt to be increasingly necessary if
children, the hope of the future, were to be started on the correct path in
life.

By the 1890's kindergarten was by no means an accepted part of the
public school system, but nevertheless, it had sufficient support to make
it a legitimate force on the total educational scene. It was already
different to a certain extent from the original small kindergarten in
Blankenburg; no system can be transplanted intact through time and space.
Moreover, the sheer size of the movement in the United States, in compari-
son to Froebel's one small class must have led to further differences.
But more and greater changes were to come. The first of these was
concerned with the theory and practice of learning in the kindergarten. It struck right at the heart of Froebelian philosophy and had an equally profound effect on the character of the kindergarten class.

The earliest kindergartners in the United States, women like Margarete Schurtz, trained in Germany with Froebel, or, after his death, with his disciples, who continued to adhere to his mystical religious philosophy and to follow his methods closely. But by the turn of the century, a new generation of kindergartners had arisen who had neither the close German connections nor the philosophical background to accept Froebel's principles unquestioningly. Rather, they began to criticize the formality of the Froebelian programme, to reject the principles on which it was based and to experiment with new equipment and a freer programme.

As early as 1890, Anna E. Bryan, a graduate of the Chicago Free Kindergarten Association, questioned the blind acceptance of Froebelian principles in a speech to the National Education Association. Although trained in Froebelian method, she had always encouraged experimentation with both method and materials in her teacher training classes. One of her first student teachers was Patty Smith Hill who was to become one of the leading advocates of the reformed kindergarten programme; one of the progressives. The progressives' main objections to Froebel revolved around his symbolism and the lack of self determined purpose in the kindergarten child's play. One of the major changes was to allow the child to play freely with the wooden blocks rather than following Froebel's prescribed sequences. Later they replaced these tiny blocks with larger ones more suited to the physical capabilities of the young child.

The attempts of individuals to reform the kindergarten programme was
aided tremendously by changes in educational thought that were taking place at the turn of the century. The child study work of G. Stanley Hall and John Dewey was particularly influential. In complete contrast with the fixed beliefs of Froebelian philosophy, Hall and Dewey sought for a more scientific basis on which to place their observations and analysis of child behaviour.

Through the nationwide surveys that Hall conducted, he drew attention to such previously unstudied characteristics as fear, anger and types of play. Much of the data used in his book The Contents of Children's Minds (1907) were collected with the help of teachers in Boston kindergartens. The result of this new close observation of the child's physical and psychological development, rather than the Froebelian concentration on the moral and spiritual, led to the use of larger equipment and freedom for large bold movement. Dewey included a pre-primary class in his laboratory school at the University of Chicago in 1896. His functionalist philosophy called for education to direct the child's play toward effective social living, not through symbol and imitation, but by real life experiences that were as straightforward as possible. 'Constructive' work, in the context of real life experience was, he felt, of utmost value to the child. By these means the child could learn to think by managing experience and developing the ability to cope with new knowledge and situations.

In 1892, during a meeting of the National Education Association, the formation of an independent kindergarten organization was proposed, as NEA meetings allowed too little time for discussion of kindergarten subjects. Thus the International Kindergarten Union was formed. For several years it had little impact but after 1897 its Convention programmes
began to include problems of everyday practice, and interest grew rapidly. Membership increased even more sharply when the subject of changing the traditional Froebelian curriculum was raised. By 1900 it had sixty-five branches and 6,225 members and by 1918 it was considered the third largest educational body in the world, with 132 branches and 18,000 members. It is not surprising that the more conservative members, still deeply infused with Froebel's symbolic and spiritual philosophies, should be suspicious of and antagonistic to the new ideas. Some of the most bitter criticism of the progressive viewpoint came from the old generation of Froebelians including Harris and Susan Blow, who remained faithful to the gospel they had preached for so long. The two points of view, based, as they were, on widely differing philosophical bases, were irreconcilable.

A rift developed within the IKU that was to be of vital importance to the future of kindergartens; the progressives continued to move with the mainstream of educational theory, advocating continuing experimentation and the need for more freedom of choice for the child. The conservatives were increasingly forced into the background, although to the end of her days Susan Blow maintained her faith in Froebel's detailed prescriptions and was sure that these would eventually triumph.

Despite the importance of the split it appears to have been glossed over by many of those involved as well as more recent writers. Patty Smith Hill, one of the main protagonists, wrote several decades after the event:

> These opposing views led to wholesale criticism, and a friendly but stiff battle lasting from 1890 or 1895 to 1910. The controversy finally culminated in a happy adjustment with a truce called. From this time forward both groups united in studying under the direction of all recognised leaders who could illuminate their common problems and enable them to initiate a more scientific program for young children.
Perhaps this was said with the modesty of the victor, or perhaps there was a desire to minimize personal antipathies in what was a reasonably close-knit group, but there can be no doubt that for fifteen years or so the battle was bitter and the split irreconcilable.

A Committee of Nineteen was formed by the IKU in 1903, for the purpose of clarifying both of the viewpoints within the Association, in the hope that a united front could be maintained. But after ten years of meetings and discussion the committee found it necessary to produce not one but three reports to cover all points of view. The first was strongly influenced by Susan Blow and was labelled 'conservative', the second was sponsored by Elizabeth Harrison and was called 'conservative-liberal', and the third, supported by Patty Smith Hill, was 'liberal'. Even at this stage an attempt was made to brush aside the importance of the disagreement.

The introduction to the report stated:

While diversity of opinion undoubtedly existed, there was evident a unity of spirit and a common desire to reach the best and see the best in the work of others. 29

Lazerson and Evelyn Weber both recognize that the differences of opinion within the IKU at this time were irreconcilable, but more recently Elizabeth Ross has attempted to minimize them by pointing to similarities that she feels are more important. 30 Certainly, both groups used terms like 'self-activity', 'self-expression', 'development from simple to complex' and 'development of the whole child' but their understanding and interpretation of the terms were very different.

The kindergarten movement owed its beginnings very much to Froebel and his philosophy but after the first decade of the twentieth century very little of his practical teachings survived. Changing social conditions and
a rapid increase in scientific knowledge brought about the first radical change in the kindergarten; in the new century it was only the name that remained unchanged.

A second important influence in changing the original concept of kindergarten came with its incorporation into a number of public school systems. In the 1880's, many teachers and reformers perceived kindergarten as a valuable agent of social reform and they worked, not only for the establishment of philanthropic kindergartens, but for the incorporation of classes in the public schools so that as many children as possible might receive its perceived benefits. The decade 1890-1900 saw much growth in this direction and expansion continued at a slower rate in the following ten years. Two factors impeded progress even amongst those who were convinced of the desirability of kindergarten classes. One was the problem of using public school funds for children who were below the state age for school entry, and the second was simply a general lack of funds. The original Froebelian kindergarten class dismissed at mid-day, leaving the kindergartner with plenty of time to visit homes and work with parents. Some of the philanthropic kindergartens had also managed to operate in this way. But to run half-day classes with a small pupil-teacher ratio was economically impossible in the public school systems. Class numbers increased to forty or even fifty children and teachers were expected to take two sessions per day, a requirement that effectively ended their home visits and welfare work. Consequently, their emphasis came to be on the child in school rather than in his total environment.

But while the public school changed the kindergarten, the kindergarten also changed the public school to some extent. Its influence was felt even
in schools that did not have kindergarten classes as well as in the higher
grades, where kindergarten songs, books, construction activities, plants,
and pictures began to appear. And no longer were the benefits of kinder-
garten perceived as being solely for the poor. Middle and upper class
children were now seen as having as much right to the educational and moral
foundation that kindergarten provided. Supporters of the kindergarten
believed that classes would both prepare children for their future lives,
and, more immediately, serve as preparation for and introduction to the
primary grades. The organization of kindergarten departments in state
and city Normal Schools also indicated the wide acceptance of kindergar-
ten. Thus, kindergarten came to be seen as the first step in the educa-
tional process for all and an increasing number of children were given the
change to attend. Ross cites a total of 900 cities in the United States in
1912 with altogether 6400 kindergartens and 312,000 children enrolled. This
accounts for 85 per cent of kindergartens. The remaining 15 per cent were
run by private or philanthropic bodies.

In the 1920's, research into child development, parent education,
curriculum and method led to the birth of the American nursery school move-
ment, based on the work of the McMillan sisters in England. In their
Deptford School Clinic in 1909, they began to provide an environment that
catered not only for the child's intellectual development but also for his
emotional and physical growth.

Abigail Eliot, a student from Radcliffe, worked with the McMillan
sisters in their nursery school and in the same period Edna Noble White, a
social worker, visited the school to observe the programme. Eliot is
credited with opening the first nursery school in the United States, the
Ruggles Street Nursery in Boston, in January 1922. Later in the same month White returned to Detroit where she established the nursery programme at the Merril-Palmer School.37

Nursery schools were soon established as part of research centres at many North American universities and teachers' colleges. Along with child development research came a renewed interest in parent education which many educators saw as necessary for the well-being of the whole child. The similarity to the aims of the early kindergarten settlement workers in their attempts to reach parents, however, is more apparent than real. They worked through the child to improve the home, whereas the nursery schools worked through the home to reach the child. Moreover, the parents of children in nursery school were invariably middle or upper class. They saw their parenting role almost as a profession and sought to increase their skills. The nursery schools were welcomed by kindergarten teachers because the age of kindergarten attendance had increasingly risen as classes became a part of the public school system and fewer and fewer under-fives were being accepted.38 Nursery schools catered for the lower age groups with children as young as eighteen months being accepted.

With the onset of the Depression in 1929 kindergartens entered a period of stagnation that was to continue until well into the 1950's. Then increasing affluence and the sheer weight of numbers of the pre-school population once more brought the problem of early childhood education to public notice. Weber identifies two reasons for the halt in development. First, the kindergarten was caught between the obvious benefits of the research programmes being conducted with the younger age groups in the nursery schools, and the academic achievements of children in the primary grades. Kindergarten was the no-mans land in between. Kindergarten
supporters felt that their task was worthwhile, but their aims, and more importantly their results, became less and less obvious to the public. Second, many kindergartens were faced with budgetary cutbacks that threatened their very existence. Weber pinpoints 1930 as being the high point in public school kindergarten enrolment with almost 750,000 children attending American public kindergartens. Within a few years the number had dropped to 600,000.  

Dolores Durkin includes a chapter on the history of kindergarten in her book *Teaching Young Children to Read*, and suggests a cause for the separation that existed between the kindergarten and the primary grades. She maintains that it was a result of the type of research undertaken. In the kindergarten it remained concerned only with child development while in the higher grades it dealt chiefly with learning skills. Some researchers suggested that child development research could profitably be extended to the older age group but there appears to have been no thought of extending learning skills research to the younger children. Durkin further suggests that this was the result of kindergarten teachers' satisfaction with the status quo; basing her suggestion on the lack of self-criticism in kindergarten publications of the period 1930-1950.

Meanwhile, nursery schools flourished through federal funding during the depression years as the government attempted to relieve the effects of poverty on the pre-school child. Many of the adults working in day-care nursery schools were employed through funding from the Works Progress Administration, a scheme designed specifically to provide jobs rather than competent teachers. This lack of trained staff tended to separate nursery and day-care even further from the educational system but it did provide
care for thousands of children between 1933 and 1942. Under the Lanham Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1940, nursery schools were also established for the children of nearly one-third of America's women who were engaged in war work. 41

Day-care facilities were by no means newcomers to the scene during the depression, but their sudden proliferation made them more visible. It is not always possible to distinguish any difference between day-care and nursery schools. Durkin and Osborn both suggest that day-care was associated with young children whose parents worked or were too poor to provide adequately for them, while the term 'nursery school' was reserved for programmes begun by professional educators or researchers for their own, or other middle class children. 42 Certainly, a research programme would distinguish a nursery school from a day-care centre, but many of the nursery schools that came into being during the depression, and later during World War II, probably differed little from day-care centres.

This, then, was the development of kindergarten and early childhood education in the first seventy years of their existence in the United States. But what of Canada? Were there parallels or did the movement follow a different path? In fact, the path was quite different. With the exception of Ontario, little interest in the kindergarten was shown in Canada until well into the twentieth century. Ontario, however, embraced the idea of kindergarten wholeheartedly as a part of the school system.

The city of Toronto has the distinction of being the second public school system in the world to include kindergartens as an integral part of the programme. This was accomplished in 1883 after nearly a decade of campaigning by James L. Hughes, Inspector of Schools for the Toronto School
Board.

In 1874, the first year of his appointment as Inspector, Hughes visited Boston and came into contact for the first time with kindergartens and Froebel's philosophy. He was sufficiently impressed to begin reading both Froebel's own writings and that of contemporary Americans. Two years later, returning from the Centennial display in Philadelphia, he met Marie Kraus-Boelte and, with a view to opening a private kindergarten in Toronto, he asked her to recommend a kindergartener. She suggested Ada Marean, one of her own students and in 1878 Ada moved to Toronto and opened a private kindergarten. 43

Hughes continued to crusade vigorously, visiting Susan Blow's kindergarten in St. Louis and arranging for her to speak in Toronto. 44 As a result, the first public school kindergarten in Canada was opened at Louisa Street Public School in inner Toronto, in January 1883 with Ada Marean as Director. Seventy children were enrolled and Miss Marean was assisted by seven unpaid student teachers whom she began training in Froebelian method. A class for mothers was also begun but there is no evidence to suggest that any further work was done with families. 45

Thus, in Toronto, the kindergarten moved directly into the more impersonal setting of the public school, without first passing through the stage of a philanthropic welfare organization.

In 1888, Hughes and Ada Marean were married and both continued to work in the kindergarten field; Hughes in a public capacity, through his position as Inspector and through his writing and public speaking, and Ada in teacher training. Both retained very close ties with the kindergarten movement in the United States. Ada founded the Toronto Kindergarten
Association in 1892 and was a planner and charter member of the kindergarten section of the Ontario Education Association. She was also a charter member of the American based International Kindergarten Union, its President in 1906 and a member of the conservative faction of the Committee of Nineteen. By 1887 the kindergarten was formally accepted throughout Ontario. The Education Act of that year provided for the organization of classes, training of teachers and a system of grants for those Boards who wished to adopt the system. Provision of classes was not mandatory, but expansion of kindergartens was quite rapid in the larger urban areas, particularly Toronto and Ottawa. By 1900 there were 166 kindergartens in Ontario, attended by 11,000 children. Four years later 78 out of 88 schools in Toronto had classes.

No other province adopted kindergartens with the enthusiasm of Ontario. New Brunswick had several classes in Saint John, Fredericton, and Moncton by 1898, and Nova Scotia established a class in conjunction with its Normal College in 1891. But these did not become a permanent part of the education system. Lethbridge, Alberta also experimented with kindergartens in the early part of the century but did not persist.

The Montreal Protestant School Board began a limited programme in 1892 and Regina followed in 1900. Some classes appear to have been conducted in both Montreal and Regina right up to the present time. Manitoba does not appear to have had any early public kindergartens but a Free Kindergarten Association and kindergarten class were begun in 1892. In 1904, it was still in operation and a second was run in Winnipeg by the All Peoples Mission.

In British Columbia, there was little action taken in regard to the establishment of kindergartens in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. The reason
for this is not easy to pinpoint but it was certainly not through lack of
knowledge of the kindergarten, its aims and its possibilities. At this
time there was an increase in professional awareness amongst teachers
throughout the whole of Canada with both local teachers Associations being
formed as well as a national group, the Dominion Education Association.
The first Convention of this group was held in Toronto in 1892 and the
suggestion was made that kindergartens be established as a part of the
education system of each province. British Columbian attendance at this
Convention was meagre, due probably to the distance involved. Further
Conventions were held at two or three yearly intervals and, depending on
the distance of the host city from British Columbia, representation from
this province either decreased or increased. Regardless of the number of
rank and file teachers at the meetings there was always representation from
the administrative side of the school systems for the Provincial Ministers
and Superintendents of Education both supported the Association and assumed
responsibility for its organization.

From the first Convention in 1892 a kindergarten section was included
in the Elementary Department but by the 1901 Convention in Ottawa a separate
Kindergarten Department had been created and papers were presented on
several kindergarten-related topics. Miss M. MacIntyre, of Toronto Normal
School Kindergarten for instance, spoke about Chicago Kindergartens,
particularly those attached to Dewey's school. Two of the Association
Directors elected by the Kindergarten Department in 1901 were a Miss C.
Newman and a Miss Campbell, both of Vancouver. The former was most
probably the same Miss Newman who ran a private kindergarten in Vancouver
but no further information is available on the latter. At the next two
Conventions, in Winnipeg in 1904 and Toronto in 1907, a separate kindergarten department was maintained, though few delegates from British Columbia attended.\(^5\)

The Seventh Convention was held in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1909. It was the biggest and best organized meeting of the DEA to that date, with over 350 local delegates, as well as representatives from all the provinces and several from the United States.\(^5\) James L. Hughes was one of the guest speakers, but his paper, "Modern Tendencies in Education", was very brief and general in character.\(^6\) His emphasis was on the necessity for activity in education. "Doing," he said, "is coming to be recognized as an agency for the development of powers, and power is greater than mere learning."\(^6\)

However, he made no specific mention of the kindergarten.

The Victoria Convention departed from what had become the norm in that it had no Kindergarten Department. In fact, there is no mention of kindergarten in the entire Proceedings of the Conference. This cannot have been for lack of knowledge, for Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education for British Columbia had served in several different capacities on the Executive since the establishment of the DEA, and several other Education Department and School Board officials had also held office on various occasions.\(^6\)

Nor can lack of expertise be the reason, for even if there was no one in British Columbia qualified to present a paper on a kindergarten subject, there were many kindergartners in the eastern provinces or in the United States who could have done so. The reason must lie in the fact that there was simply not enough interest in the subject both amongst those organizing the programme and, presumably, amongst the local teachers themselves.
And yet some interest certainly did exist. As early as 1895, A.N. Scarfe, the editor of *The Province* newspaper, wrote to the Ontario Minister of Education, requesting copies of the Department of Education Annual Report for the years 1891-1894, because much interest has been evinced lately in the question of kindergartens and I am desirous of being fully posted in the matter and knowing how it has worked in your Province, the acknowledged leader in educational matters on this continent.

None of the apparent 'interest', however, is shown in issues of the paper at that time.

The expansion of kindergartens in America generally followed the pattern of limited numbers of classes for the children of the wealthy, philanthropically provided classes for the children of the poor and finally, inclusion of kindergartens in public school systems as a pre-primary experience for all children.

In British Columbia, little evidence remains as to the existence of early kindergartens, let alone to which children they served. One of the first appears to have been opened by Mlle. Marie-Louise Kern (later Mrs. Melville Thomson) on West Georgia Street, Vancouver, in 1894. Mlle. Kern later ran a boarding school for girls at Bute and Haro, and it seems reasonable to assume that the kindergarten, like the school, was for children of the well-to-do.

Another kindergarten was run by Miss C. Newman in the Presbyterian Church on Oppenheimer Street (now Cordova) during the same period. Miss Newman had trained at one of the eastern Canadian kindergarten schools and from her description of her work it appears to have been traditionally Froebelian. Four years later, in 1897, she was forced to close 'through
lack of support. Thirty children were enrolled but this was not a sufficient number to make the school a financial success. The students paid fees and most likely came from middle and upper-class homes as did Mlle. Kern's students. This assumption is supported by the fact that Alderman Townley's children were all past students. At the closing exercises, Miss Newman stated that it was "with deep regret that she had decided on this course, but for four years the school had been conducted at a loss and she did not feel able to continue it any longer." The Rev. L.N. Tucker, of Oppenheimer Presbyterian Church, called for a united effort to be made "by the citizens" so that the school might continue. Present also was Alderman McQueen, who recommended that an effort be made to amalgamate the kindergarten with the public schools "as a primary class".

Dr. McGuigan, a member of the Vancouver School Board, endorsed the proposal but explained that no legislation existed whereby this could be accomplished. He personally believed, however, in the method of teaching adopted by the kindergartens.

A public meeting was held in the following January at which McQueen, Townley and Tucker pledged themselves to promote the kindergarten to the public in the hope that the fifty children needed for a successful class would be found. Mr. T.E. Knapp, teacher of the primary class at the West End Public School, to which many of the children progressed, also supported the kindergarten work as an excellent preparation for formal schooling.

At the next School Board meeting, in February 1898, Tucker and McQueen were present to persuade the Board to ask for an amendment to the School Act "so as to permit any city which so desires the privilege to adopt kindergarten work in connection with the Public Schools." At the same
meeting it was agreed that Miss Newman be allowed to rent a spare room in the Burrard Street School building, so that she could continue holding her kindergarten classes but no further mention of her work is to be found.

The Vancouver School Board subsequently appointed a deputation to wait upon the Minister of Education, the Hon. James Baker, concerning kindergarten and other matters. His reply was typical of all those to be given by successive Ministers of Education, right up until 1972, whenever the government was asked to assist in establishing or expanding kindergarten classes within the various School Districts that wanted to provide them. He said:

I heartily agree with your statement that the kindergarten system is acknowledged to be an excellent preparation course for the younger children. Its introduction into our school system would in my opinion be a very desirable step forward, but such action must necessarily depend upon the ability of the Province to meet the extra expense entailed by its introduction. At the present time the cost of education is such a heavy burden on the revenues that it is not deemed advisable to expand the system in the direction named.

The issue of kindergartens in public schools was not to be raised again for nearly a quarter of a century. During this time, however, two allied topics were very much in the minds of British Columbia educators; manual training and school playgrounds.

Both of these aspects of child life and education were integral parts of progressive education. Manual training, which had no immediate vocational goal, appeared as arts and crafts in the lower grades and developed into the study and practice of carpentry, metal and machine work, sewing, cooking, and drawing in the higher grades. The playground movement, which likewise had no immediate connection with school work, developed too as an aspect of the education of the 'whole' child rather than just of his mind.
In this sense they were very closely allied with the idea of kindergarten. Many educators who advocated reform in one particular area also supported the others. James L. Hughes was one of these. He believed that the construction work of kindergarten began the development of manual skills which should be continued and expanded in the elementary grades, climaxing in the more formal skills learned in the manual training classes. Not all supporters of manual training, however, wanted to see it extended downwards into the primary grades.

The greatest expansion of manual training in Canada came through the Macdonald-Robertson scheme, whereby school districts were provided, free of charge, with workshops, equipment and trained teachers for a period of three years, after which they could continue with their own finance or drop the scheme. In this way the first manual training classes in British Columbia were established in Victoria and Vancouver in 1900. There were many, both educators and laymen, who were skeptical about the value of and need for such a programme, but no active opposition. At the end of the three years both cities continued the classes and Vancouver extended its programme. For two years the entire cost was borne by the two School Boards until the Department of Education stepped in and assisted by paying the salaries of the two instructors. 72

In 1906 a Manual Training School was opened in New Westminster. This was not a part of the Macdonald-Robertson scheme, but was funded in full by the School Board, which claimed it was the first locally funded Manual Training School in Canada. 73 By 1910, there were seventeen centres in British Columbia, in Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster and Nelson. In his report for that year, Inspector H. Dunnell called for the teaching of
handwork, as a preparation for manual training, from the primary grades onward. The work, he said, "should have a progressive character, starting with paper folding and cutting, and leading on through clay modelling, paper and cardboard modelling to woodwork and metal work."  

The value of play and activity in the learning process was fully realised by some educators but was not readily incorporated into actual school time. However, in 1908 all playgrounds in Vancouver schools were thrown open to both children and adults after school hours and 'competent' persons placed in charge of each ground to supervise activities. Each school was provided with equipment for basketball, football, baseball and lacrosse, and in a few schools simple outdoor gymnasia were constructed. All children were encouraged to take part in supervised play. For a time, response was good but the perennial problem, lack of money, closed the programme on the eve of the First World War.

Despite the interest in these two areas education authorities showed no further interest in the provision of kindergartens and what activity did take place was confined to the private sector. It is difficult to know how many, if any, private kindergartens or child centres existed as few records remain. A Children's Creche operated in the Old Hospital Building in downtown Vancouver for some years in the first and second decades of the century. Its purpose was purely to look after the children of working women and as attendance seems to have been fairly irregular it is doubtful that any sort of educational programme was offered.

In 1919, an Anglican Chinese Kindergarten was operating somewhere in Vancouver, possibly at the Anglican Chinese Mission on Pender Street. From a description of the handwork done, it appears to have been run on Froebe-
lian lines. It is most probable that similar kindergartens were functioning in other urban areas of the province.

In 1924, the Putman and Weir *Survey of the School System* in British Columbia was published and this could have given impetus to the establishment of kindergartens, for Putman was Inspector of Schools in Ottawa and was a strong supporter of the Ontario kindergartens. However, the *Survey* dismissed kindergartens as "beyond the scope of our present study." The reason for this is hard to see for the *Survey* generally made some exciting recommendations for a much more child centred curriculum. In fact, recommendations for the elementary grades sound almost like kindergarten classes, with the children learning through life experiences. The report noted that although no kindergartens existed in the provincial education system, the kindergarten spirit was alive in many primary classes, particularly in Vancouver. The *Survey* commended this and suggested that work in this area could be extended. It also suggested experimentation with kindergarten-primary classes as an improvement that would require little expenditure; primary teachers could be used and the rooms equipped with moveable desks. No formal recommendations were made in this area, however, and the suggestions and implications of the *Survey* were ignored.

The *Survey* did make one very interesting comment that perhaps sheds some light on the lack of support for kindergartens in the early years. It concerned the apathy shown towards public education by "a very intelligent part of the community" - those citizens who supported private schools for their children. Not that British Columbia was unique in having private schools but perhaps, in cities where kindergartens were established successfully, similar groups were prepared to work, not only for their own child-
ren, but for those of others also.

It was not until 1944 that the first public kindergartens were to be opened by the Vancouver and Victoria Schools Boards and, by this time, both the concept of kindergarten itself and the reasons for including it in the public system had altered considerably.

America was the land where Froebel's kindergarten blossomed and came to life; Ontario, too was an early leader in the kindergarten field. Despite British Columbia's proximity to and close ties with both America and Ontario, this province did not choose to follow their early lead. Instead, British Columbia waited until changed social, economic and educational conditions were forcing school authorities all over the world to reconsider early childhood education.
FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I


5 Ibid., p. 55.


10 Ibid., p. 2.


16 Ibid.


20 Vanderwalker, The Kindergarten, pp. 57-58.

21 Ibid., p. 56.


23 Ibid., p. 45.


26 Ibid., p. 67.

27 Ross, Crusade, p. 70.


30 Ross, Crusade, p. 80.


32 Ross, Crusade, p. 92.

33 Vanderwalker, The Kindergarten, p. 186.

34 Ross, Crusade, p. 85.


36 Ross Crusade, p. 90.


39 Ibid., 194-95.


42 Ibid., p. 40; Durkin, *Teaching Young Children*, p. 7.


44 Ibid., p. 99.

45 Ibid., p. 100.


50 Logan and Logan, *Educating Young Children*, p. 15.


55 Ibid., p. 8.


57 See below, p. 23.


60 Ibid., p. 64.

61 Ibid., p. 66.
Ibid., 1892-1909, passim.

A.N. Scarfe to Hon. George Ross, 16 November 1895. RG2 P-2 Box 34, Archives of Ontario, Toronto.

Sun, 7 February 1951, p. 5.

Daily News-Advertiser, 23 December 1897, p. 3.

Daily World, 8 January 1898, p. 2; Ibid., 10 January 1898, p. 6.

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Vancouver School Board, Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Trustees, Meeting of 9 February 1898, (n.p.) (hereafter cited as VSB Minutes.)

Ibid., Meeting of 16 February 1898.

Daily World, 10 March 1898, p. 7.


Province, 1 February 1906, p. 3.


Ibid., 1908-09, p. A29.

Ibid., 1912-13, p. A56.

The Creche Day Book 1912, Ad. Mss. T24, Vancouver City Archives.


Ibid., p. 23.
CHAPTER II

PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia was slow and piecemeal. Serious discussion of the subject began towards the end of World War II as a result of the concern which developed during war years for children of women in the work force. The Victoria and Vancouver School Boards both opened a small number of kindergarten classes in the mid-1940's, but although further classes were opened in the following decade, they were insufficient for all the five-year-old children who wished to attend.

When the Royal Commission on Education was appointed in 1958, those parents, teachers and School Trustees who favoured the expansion of public school kindergarten classes were hopeful that the recommendations of the Commission would give some support to their point of view. The Commission did favour the establishment of kindergartens to meet local needs, but did not go so far as to recommend their establishment on a province-wide basis. The legislation that resulted from the Commission's recommendations, allowed interested School Boards to proceed with the establishment of kindergarten classes at a faster rate, but there was no compulsion for them to do so.

Throughout the decade of the 1960's, more and more kindergartens were opened as School Boards found themselves in an easier financial position and as a consensus gradually developed as to the desirability of kindergarten as an integral part of the public school system.

The election of the New Democratic Party government in 1972 was the final step towards province-wide establishment of the public school kinder-
gartens. In the following year, amendments to the Schools Act required Boards to begin providing kindergarten experience for all five-year-olds who desired it. By 1975 the goal that had been pursued for three decades was a reality.

The Second World War triggered the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia. Initially, welfare and charity workers demanded nursery and day-care services for young children as their mothers entered the work force. Although it would appear that few British Columbian women were actually employed in war industries, the argument that facilities must be provided for the children of women doing war work was frequently cited at this time. Many women did, however, enter the work force to replace men who were on active service and the number of women in British Columbia engaged in non-agricultural industries rose from 43,000 to 72,000 between 1941 and 1945.

A second reason for the demand for day-care services was the fact that, in urban areas, many families were living in cramped housing conditions and it was becoming increasingly obvious to welfare workers and educators that this was a far from optimum situation for child-rearing. Bad housing conditions, and the adverse effects on those forced to dwell in them, were not new discoveries, nor were they exclusive to Vancouver and Victoria, but the upheaval of the war years seemed to make the effects more noticeable.

Welfare workers, in Vancouver particularly, were concerned for children who were being deprived socially, emotionally or physically by these conditions. Many felt that these children should receive some compensation through attendance at a nursery school or day-care centre where there was nutritious food, space to run and play, other children and adults for social
interaction, and a stable, secure emotional climate. Welfare workers also saw that single parents, whether temporarily separated by the war, or permanently alone, needed respite from the constant demands of young children, even if they were not in the work force.

Several types of child care facilities were considered, but voluntary welfare agencies did not have the resources to deal adequately with the problem. After some discussion, the School Boards in Vancouver and Victoria, the two largest urban areas in British Columbia, became involved. Their solution to the problem was the establishment of a limited number of kindergartens.

The extent of public interest in the subject can be gauged by the fact that the newspapers of the day reported not only the more official debates that took place in the legislature or at School Board meetings, but also ran articles on the needs of children and on the various centres both public and private, official and unofficial, that were established. In marked contrast to the situation in the pre-war years, letters to the Editor on pre-school topics were also numerous.

On several occasions in 1943 and 1944, the provincial legislature discussed the provision of child care services and stimulated reaction from both private and public agencies already active in the field. The discussion arose partly as a result of the Dominion-Provincial co-operative plan for provision of day nurseries for children of women in war industries. The plan was only operational in Ontario and Quebec, the two most industrialized provinces, but would have been extended to British Columbia if sufficient women were engaged in war industry to warrant it. It provided for several types of care for children from two years of age onwards, but
required that at least 75 per cent of the mothers be engaged in officially recognised war work. There were very few women in this category in British Columbia, but many women, forced to work because of the war, felt that they should receive child care services.

While many people could accept that under wartime conditions it was necessary for numbers of women to work, some felt that once the war was over women would and should return to their traditional roles as homemakers and mothers. If this was going to be the case, no organization, government or otherwise, wanted to be left with unused nursery schools.

There were thus two strands in the debate that began on the question of nursery schools. The first concerned whether or not mothers of young children should be in the work force at all and the second centred on whether the need for nursery schools was to be a permanent one or whether it would cease once the war ended.

Two of the most vocal protagonists on the whole question of working women and child care were Mrs. Laura Jamieson, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation member for Vancouver Centre, and Mrs. Tilly Rolston, Conservative member for Vancouver-Point Grey. Both had an interest in young children. Mrs. Rolston had herself been a teacher for many years, and Mrs. Jamieson was a Juvenile Court Judge in Burnaby from 1927 to 1938. Mrs. Jamieson enthusiastically supported the establishment of day nurseries in British Columbia, not only for war workers' children but for children of all working women. She felt that children living in cramped housing conditions and children of shift workers would also benefit greatly from attendance at nursery school where the programme was designed to encourage orderly habits in work and play and in eating and sleeping. She also
pointed out the beneficial effects on parents, and the role of the nursery
school in preventing juvenile delinquency. The stress of constantly look­
ing after young children or leaving them in unsatisfactory care was removed
with the provision of nursery schools, she said and through educational
programmes, parents could learn much about their children thus providing a
more satisfactory home life. Mrs. Jamieson had no doubt that women would
continue to work after the war and therefore saw no reason to delay
establishment of nursery schools. She was, however, aware that there were
few qualified nursery school teachers available in British Columbia at the
time.  

Tilly Rolston vehemently upheld another point of view. She was
supported by several male M.L.A.'s and some members of the public. The
government did not appear to have a policy on the subject so that even
though she was on the government side of the House, she cannot be said to
have been voicing an official attitude. She scorned Jamieson's suggestions,
saying that it was "an insult" to mothers to suggest that they could not
bring up their own children better than "some parched, dried up, starched
and cultured academician." A woman's place she maintained, was in the
home "with the meals ready, beds made and not a speck of dust to be seen."
It was "wicked", she said, to "lure" women from home; absentee mothers
had already produced the worst juvenile delinquency that British Columbia
had ever known. Women in a democracy should be able to recognise their
responsibilities, but if necessary, she suggested, they could be paid to
stay at home, or, as she put it, be drafted for duty in the homes of the
nation to preserve those homes. In reply to a telegram of protest from
Mrs. Lillian Newitt of the Strathcona Nursery School, she grudgingly
admitted that nurseries had a role to play in very congested areas, but felt that a better solution lay in improved housing conditions and a lowering of school attendance age so that the government could establish infant schools. She seemed to feel that this would provide some relief for children living in cramped housing. At the same time, because school finished at 3:00 p.m., the mothers of these children would not be encouraged to look for jobs.

Although Rolston's comments drew much opposition from those in favour of nursery schools, there were many who supported her views on working women and child care. The Ontario Labour Minister was reported in the Province as also suggesting that working women be sent back to their homes and prevented from unloading their responsibilities on child care centres, thus creating future juvenile delinquency problems. Local nursery school authorities denied that this was the case in British Columbia. Women here were doing real war work, they maintained, and so child care was essential. But at the same time, they contradicted themselves by stating that only approximately one-third of mothers with children at nursery school did in fact work at all. It would appear then, that while certain sections of the community needed or wanted nursery schools, the debate was very much clouded by changing societal norms and the threat that many saw in the increasing number of women no longer tied to the home.

Although there was discussion in the legislature, no action was taken at official levels. However, in the summer of 1943, the Council of Social Agencies, an associated group of charitable welfare agencies in the Vancouver area, opened three experimental playschools. The programme was funded by the Welfare Federation, another association of voluntary organi-
zations whose main function was to raise and distribute funds to charitable organizations. The playschools were situated at Alexandra Neighbourhood House on West Seventh Avenue in Kitsilano, Gordon House at Jervis and Nelson in the West End, and at Jackson and Powell in the East End. This third playschool was named Strathcona. So successful were they, that at the end of their trial period they were closed briefly for renovations before being opened again in the fall. They were open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for children aged three to six years. A hot lunch was provided and fees were assessed on a sliding scale.

Although they managed to keep the three centres running, the supporting agencies were constantly looking for government aid. The Vancouver City Council was approached for funds but saw the problem as being only related to the war. It was cautious, therefore, of committing itself to a project that it considered might be unnecessary in a few years time. Nor would the City Council attempt to obtain a revision of the basis on which the Dominion-Provincial grant for nursery schools was based. The Housewives League and the Council of Social Agencies suggested that the City Council attempt to have the required percentage of war working mothers needed for the grant reduced from 75 per cent to 50 per cent, but it declined to do so. In light of the small number of working mothers at the three Welfare Federation nursery schools, this would seem to be a reasonable stand. The Consumer Council of British Columbia also requested funds for nursery schools from city, provincial and federal governments, and experienced the frustration of being referred from one to another and back again. Miss Zelda Collins, Director of Social Welfare for the Provincial Department of Welfare, said the government attributed the need for nurseries chiefly
to poor housing. The government did not simply want expediency, she stated, and suggested that an alternative to nursery schools might be a city-wide system of recreation centres, perhaps in the now deserted Japanese schools, which could each include a pre-school group. She also suggested the use of vacant school buildings in some areas. However, no action was taken on these suggestions.

While welfare agencies were the first to concern themselves with the problem of nursery and day-care facilities for pre-school-age children, they were not alone in the field for long. Soon the Vancouver School Board began to consider the situation. Quite naturally, the Board viewed the problem in a different light than the social agencies; its traditional concern had always been education rather than welfare. But as no assistance seemed likely from other levels of government, welfare agencies and interested members of the public appeared content for the School Board to shoulder the problem. The Council of Social Agencies continued to operate its three nursery schools, but fully supported School Board efforts to provide further services.

The Vancouver School Board called a Special Meeting in August 1943 in order to discuss the subject. The following November, a committee consisting of Trustees Ada Crump and Dr. A.B. Jamieson, H.A. MacCorkindale, Superintendent of Schools, R. Straight, Senior Education Officer, O.J. Thomas, Inspector of Schools, and Elsie Roy, Primary Supervisor, was appointed to make a survey as to the total cost, advantages and necessity of organizing nursery schools.

The Committee presented its three page report in February 1944. It examined the enrolment and home conditions of children at Alexandra House
and Gordon House and included a brief survey of nursery school planning and provision in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia. Everywhere but in Canada, the report noted, "provision is...anticipated for an increase of school life at both ends." The report recommended that the Schools Act be amended to give school boards the authority to establish infant schools; that the government give financial aid towards the establishment of such schools in areas where there was a definite need for the accommodation of children aged three to five years; that these infant schools be separate from elementary schools, and that plans for such schools be very soon in the process of preparation.  

These recommendations were quite advanced considering the fairly general lack of provision for the pre-school child in the rest of Canada, with the exception of Ontario and parts of Quebec. The report could have led to important changes in education in Vancouver. But the Board must have been aware, even as the report was accepted, that in view of the economic situation, the government was unlikely to make large grants available. The Board itself was in no position to finance such an expansion. The extent of its commitment was perhaps shown by the fact that the infant schools were only recommended for areas "where there has been shown to be a need." Pre-school education was still seen very much as a remedial measure for the economically and socially underprivileged. The Vancouver School Board did not see it as the right of every child but it did initiate some action when all other public bodies repeatedly avoided the question. 

Almost immediately the Vancouver School Board and the Council of Social Agencies petitioned the Minister of Education, the Hon. H.G. Perry, for the financial aid needed to establish some pre-school services. School
Boards had been authorized since 1922 to establish kindergarten classes at their own expense but none had done so. The Vancouver Board considered that the circumstances now justified a request for extra funding.

The provincial government, perhaps feeling that this would reduce pressure on itself to establish separate and more expensive day nurseries, agreed to provide a grant towards the salary of kindergarten teachers on the same basis as for other teachers but Boards were required to shoulder the cost of equipment. The classes were to be for children aged four to six or up to two years below the age of compulsory attendance, but they ignored the very young child whom many wished to see provided with nursery school care.16

Vancouver School Board immediately launched a further survey as to kindergarten needs which indicated that classes would be of most benefit at Dawson, Strathcona, Seymour, Henry Hudson and Cecil Rhodes Schools. All five were in inner suburban areas with a high percentage of the population in the lower socio-economic bracket. The School Board criterion for the establishment of a kindergarten was solely the number of four to six-year-old children living in the vicinity. However, the five schools that were identified as in greatest need were also in the areas in which the Council of Social Agencies and other organizations were heavily involved with welfare work. Strathcona and Seymour Schools were close to the Strathcona Nursery School, Dawson was near Gordon House, and Hudson was near Alexandra House. Cecil Rhodes School was in the Fairview area, another district in which the welfare organizations were active. It was finally decided to organize trial classes at Hudson and Dawson beginning in September 1944.

In Victoria, the second largest urban area in British Columbia, the
situation in regard to pre-school-aged children was similar, but the Victoria School Board acted more rapidly and in a slightly different way to its counterpart in Vancouver.

In July 1943, the Victoria Board planned a pre-primary class for thirty children of women working in war industry. The class was to begin in September of the same year and was to be open from 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. every day except Sunday, providing up to three meals a day depending on each child's hours of attendance. If it had been successful, this would have been one of the most comprehensive schemes established by a School Board anywhere in Canada to that time. But eligibility depended on the mother being engaged in officially recognised war work, and a sufficient number of children with mothers in this category could not be found. Even when the preliminary enrolment list was opened to children of any working women a sufficient number was not forthcoming and so the project was left in abeyance until the fall term.

Despite the lack of support for the School Board day-care centre, Victoria social agencies continued to pressure the government for facilities. The Vancouver Island Joint Labour Conference was one group that was concerned at the plight of children of working women, although it appears to be the only labour body that was. It had no objection to women in the work force, but it urged that women not be encouraged to take employment unless their children could be adequately cared for. The Conference also requested that day nurseries be opened under government control.

At a public meeting called on 28 October 1943 by the University Women's Club, a Nursery Association for Greater Victoria was formed. Its objects were to act as an educational body to carry on research and to co-
ordinate the activities of all individual groups furthering the nursery school movement. Mr. H.L. Campbell, Municipal Inspector, Victoria School District, was present at the meeting and stated that he was very sympathetic to the nursery school movement and recognised its value for all children, not just the underprivileged, but that cost was the major factor preventing establishment of such schools.

In December 1943, a large delegation of representatives of Greater Victoria Social Agencies and public organizations asked Hon. George Pearson, Provincial Minister of Labour, to bring about the establishment of day nurseries for children of war workers and women replacing men in industry. They also asked for after school care and hot lunches for school children. Pearson was sympathetic and promised to take the subject up with Ottawa if the need for such services could be demonstrated with facts and figures.

In line with the Victoria School Board's expressed interest in nursery schools, Miss Marian James, Director of that Board's Primary Department, visited Oregon and Washington State early in 1944. She saw several different kinds of nursery schools, ranging from the two conducted by the University of Washington, to basement rooms in Seattle equipped with furniture made by the mothers themselves. She also visited the federally funded nursery school for children of shipyard workers in Seattle, and, what was to be the largest nursery school in the world, at Kaiser dockyards on Swan Island, Portland, Oregon. It had only just opened, but was already catering for 1800 children in three eight-hour shifts, coinciding with the workers shifts. On her return, Miss James urged that nursery schools must not be considered solely a war-time measure, but must be continued in peace-time as well. The public must be educated to their need, she said,
and suggested that the University of British Columbia include nursery school training in its Home Economics programme. 22

Once the government announced that it would give assistance towards the establishment of kindergarten classes, the Victoria School Board shelved its plan for nursery schools. It now aimed to use the kindergarten class mainly for preparing children for entry into Grade 1. 23 This preparatory work was currently being done in the Grade 1 classrooms but because children entering were initially at different levels of readiness, much time was perceived as being 'lost' before all children were ready to begin formal schoolwork. Trustees felt that the kindergarten class would give children time for physical, emotional and mental adjustment to school life. Their skills would be increased, their range of interests broadened, and their language developed, so that they could enter Grade 1 as pupils rather than as babies. 24

These rapid changes in plans displayed by both School Boards illustrate quite clearly that there was no real understanding or commitment to provision of pre-school classes on the part of the Department of Education or the Boards themselves. The Boards, however, did at least take the initiative by attempting to provide some pre-school experience for some children in their districts. Very few people, at any level, considered that pre-school education, whether in day nurseries, infant schools or kindergarten classes, should be an essential part of the education system and even had school Trustees wished to, they could not have provided such services for all children without massive government funding. 25

There were two reasons for the vacillation on the part of the School Boards. First, the suddenness with which they found themselves facing a
situation that was entirely new to them, and second, the fact that they had to form policies from the often conflicting views of the Trustees and permanent officials. This would explain the several schemes that were considered before the kindergarten class was chosen as an answer, at least in part, to the problem of many young children with working parents or inadequate home conditions.

Both School Boards opened their first kindergarten classes in September 1944. Vancouver had two classes, one each at Henry Hudson and Dawson Schools, and Victoria had one at Spring Ridge School. These classes were considered experimental and both Boards retained the option of closing them the following year if they were unsuccessful. They were, however, extremely successful and in 1945 Vancouver opened a third class at Norquay School. In 1946, three more were opened at Begbie, Cecil Rhodes and Wolfe Schools, bringing the total enrolment in the Vancouver district to just under 300 children. Victoria's initial expansion was even more rapid. From the single class opened in 1944, the number was increased to eight in 1946. Four hundred and eighty children were enrolled in these eight classes but many other applicants had been turned away.

Not only was there a limited enrolment, but also the number of available teachers trained in kindergarten work was small for there were no training facilities within British Columbia. To qualify for the provincial government grant, teachers in the kindergarten classes were required to possess an acceptable primary or elementary qualification and it was preferred, but not essential, that they have some kindergarten training or experience. To facilitate this, the Department of Education began to include courses that dealt specifically with kindergarten in its Summer
Schools. In 1945, two classes, one in kindergarten-primary methods and one in observation and demonstration were conducted by Miss Lucille Fenn, Director of Elementary Education in Portland, Oregon. Further courses were offered in following years.

The Extension and Adult Education Department at the University of British Columbia soon began to offer courses in kindergarten subjects too. These grew out of parent education courses offered in the mid-1940's, but by 1947 the programme was greatly accelerated. Some classes were aimed at parents interested in forming their own co-operative play groups, others were to develop into part of a training programme for pre-school teachers.

Public demand for even more kindergartens continued but no further classes were opened until 1951. There were two main reasons for this. The first was the perennial one of finance. Enrolment in the primary grades was beginning to show an increase as the first of the war boom babies reached school age. School Boards were obliged to cater for these children before they made provision for the younger ones. Second, not all Trustees were completely convinced that kindergarten was necessary or desirable. On both the Vancouver and Victoria Boards there were one or two members, generally women, who appeared to support the principles and practice of kindergarten, and they, along with public pressure had managed to influence the Board up to a point. But as the finances became tighter the more skeptical Trustees gained support. The Vancouver Board was approached for help six times in two years by a delegation from the Grandview YMCA Mothers Club. This group operated a kindergarten that had several problems, not the least being a waiting list of up to 100 children. It sought aid from the Board which grudgingly agreed to once more investigate all phases of
the kindergarten question. The Board warned, however, that its own kindergartens had only been successful "up to a point" and that the wholesale introduction of kindergartens would be extremely expensive.\textsuperscript{33}

The most obvious result of the limited establishment of public school kindergarten classes was the fact that, from the very beginning, they had no hope of catering to all those who wished to enroll. Thus, although they were technically for four to six year olds, eligibility was restricted from the start to those who would be five before the end of December. Enrolment was supposedly on a first-come first-served basis but of necessity older children were given preference.\textsuperscript{34} Despite School Board intervention, then, relatively few children in the pre-school age group were being catered for. E.J.M. Church, Supervisor of the Teachers Services Bureau of the Department of Education in Edmonton, estimated the pre-school population in British Columbia in 1948 as 81,220, and noted that only 781, or 1 per cent, attended public school kindergartens. A further 2,792, or 4.4 per cent attended other pre-school groups.\textsuperscript{35}

Just how many pre-school groups and kindergartens were operating outside of the public school system in the late 1940's and the 1950's is impossible to say, but the number was large. A lengthy article in the Sun in March 1947 mentions fifty privately managed kindergartens in the Greater Vancouver area alone.\textsuperscript{36} Some of these were clearly parent co-operative groups but others were obviously run by their owners.

Co-operative play groups were based on the co-operative of faculty wives, organised at the University of Chicago by Dr. Katharine Whiteside Taylor in 1916. This type of pre-school group had spread quite rapidly in the United States, each individual co-operative fulfilling the needs of its
own community. The main feature of such a group was the fact that it was wholly owned and operated by the parents themselves. A teacher was generally hired to lead the work with the children, but she would be assisted, to a large degree, by the parents themselves. Emphasis was also placed on education of the parents concerning the growth and development of their children.

In the summer of 1944, Mrs. Gertrude McGill organized the first British Columbian co-operative play group for children aged three to eight. It was held in the large back garden of her own home in Victoria and as its focal point was a well stocked library, she called it the Children's Garden Library. Seven volunteers attended three mornings each week to read stories to and supervise the play of an average of 75 children. The following year the programme was expanded to include nature study, music, art and drama and the attendance doubled. Soon other groups were begun by interested parents who initiated, financed and administered their own co-ops and carried on their own study groups. In 1949, the play groups amalgamated to form the Vancouver Island Co-operative Play Group Association and soon after a similar Association was formed in Vancouver.

Because play groups could be established wherever there was a group of interested parents willing to support one, their influence was far greater in terms of the number of children served, than that of more official establishments. Because of their voluntary nature, they have left little behind in the way of records even though both Associations are still in existence today and still catering for large numbers of children. Local PTA's who continued to pressure School Boards for more and more public school kindergartens during the 1950's, often also supported the
establishment of co-ops, because they saw them as an immediate alternative for their own pre-school children in the absence of kindergarten classes. In 1955, Mrs. McGill travelled throughout the province as Pre-school Convenor of the British Columbia PTA, and encouraged the establishment of more co-op groups. By this time approximately 80 groups were functioning province-wide. For children outside the Victoria and Vancouver areas, where public school kindergartens were non-existent and where there was less likelihood of finding a private kindergarten, a co-op play group was often the only pre-school experience available.

While all pre-school premises were required to be licensed by the provincial Department of Welfare, there was no standard of training required of those in charge. Many of the teachers working in private kindergartens were most concerned that a minimum standard of training be maintained. The Vancouver Kindergarten Teachers Association, which had been formed as early as 1932, was particularly concerned about standards. By 1950, there were 60 members in this Association and all had at least the minimum qualification of high school graduation plus at least a year of specialized kindergarten work, including demonstration and observation. The Association called for suitable equipment and environments for pre-school teachers, which suggests that not all private kindergartens were operating at a level that they considered acceptable. Twenty-three Greater Vancouver private kindergartens advertised, in 1950, that they had Directors that were member of the Association.

By this time, however, the Association appears to have lost some of its force and in 1951, the British Columbia Pre-School Education Association was formed as a central co-ordinating body for pre-school matters.
throughout the province. It had representation from the Vancouver Kindergarten Teachers Association as well as other interested bodies. By 1954, there were 62 registered nursery schools, kindergartens and play groups in Vancouver and of these only seven classes were in public schools. It is most likely that in Victoria, too, a great majority of pre-school establishments existed outside of the public school system.

In the five years between 1947 and 1951, the Vancouver School Board established no new kindergartens. In Victoria, the number remained stationary at eight until the early sixties although in those years classes in several areas were closed and new classes opened at other schools as enrolment figures fluctuated.

During this time, the situation in the two districts was somewhat different and it is best to examine each separately. In Vancouver, the lack of further expansion was certainly not due to the fact that the subject was no longer being considered by the Board. Each year during the five year period, the Special Committee on Kindergarten was re-formed, and while it was not as busy as it had been during the period 1943-46, it continued to keep a close check on the number of eligible children in some of the more crowded areas of the city, and to reiterate its support, in principle, of an expanded kindergarten programme. But in the face of continued requests for more kindergartens from PTA's and social welfare agencies, the Board's standard answer was that "while the whole question of kindergartens has been and is being studied expansion is not financially feasible." Even an offer by mothers at the Mount Pleasant School to assist in painting and cleaning to make an outside classroom habitable for a kindergarten class, brought no positive results. The Special Committee examined the
building but considered it unsuitable. Earlier the Board had estimated that to establish a fully equipped class of acceptable standard would cost between $3,000 and $3,670 per annum. While the Board felt financially unable to spend this amount, it also seemed unwilling to open classes that were less than fully equipped or housed in less than ideal rooms.

The tight financial position of the Board arose from the already increasing number of primary grade enrolments caused by the baby boom that followed the war. A halt in expansion of school accommodation during the war years had resulted in a certain lack of classroom space and the increased post-war birthrate exacerbated this problem. At the beginning of the 1948 school year, six elementary schools, Begbie, Douglas, Kerrisdale Annex, Lloyd George, Renfrew and Van Horne were already using swing shifts to enable twice the number of classes to use the rooms available. Two other schools, Tecumseh and Mackenzie, were avoiding this, only by utilizing far from ideal accommodation for some classes. They considered this solution the lesser of two evils.

In December 1948, Dr. R.F. Sharp, Inspector of Schools for the Vancouver Board, presented his report to the Board on "Population Trends in the City of Vancouver". According to this report, one of the worst hit areas would be Douglas, where the population peak was expected to begin in three years and last from ten to twelve years, mainly as a result of a new housing development in that area. The expected population in that district, in 1950, was 100 five-year-olds, 100 four-year-olds, 253 three-year-olds, 250 two-year-olds and approximately 500 children under one year. A similar, but not quite so serious situation was expected in the Renfrew area, and several other areas were also expecting above normal increases in school-
age population. This increase appears to have been confined to specific areas rather than being a province-wide phenomenon. Faced with providing accommodation for these numbers of children once they reached compulsory school age, the Board felt that expansion of kindergarten services was at the present out of the question. The report suggested three methods of dealing with the expected increase in enrolment; swing shifts, which were already being used in the hardest pressed areas; transport of students from areas of heavy enrolment to schools with vacant rooms; and the use of portable classrooms. Board members felt that although provision of permanent buildings was expensive, it was of top priority so the third option was rejected. They were then faced with two alternatives for dealing with the large numbers of children until the permanent buildings could be completed. They considered bussing to be the more disruptive of the two alternatives and so they decided that swing shifts would continue where necessary until the new accommodation was available. Although swing shifts were most unsatisfactory from all points of view, it was perhaps a wise choice under the circumstances, for it forced the Board to go ahead immediately with a comprehensive building programme. If either alternative had been chosen, the Board may have been able to convince itself that the problem was not really so grave, and so have delayed the building programme for years.

The provincial government apparently shared the Board's view that more accommodation was essential at this time, for its expenditure on education increased significantly, from just over $9 million in 1946-47, to nearly $26 million in 1950-51. In that year, however, the federal government requested that all unnecessary expenditure be curtailed in the interests of
national defence, and so the provincial budget for education remained virtually stationary for the following three years.

The Greater Victoria School Board had much the same problems as Vancouver, with a vastly increased school population but there was also less support of kindergartens from trustees. One or two trustees actively opposed the idea on the grounds that the existing kindergartens were all in the Victoria area and so could not be used equally by all Greater Victoria residents.

The shortage of trained teachers was also a problem and those who were unsympathetic to kindergartens felt that the eight teachers involved with the already established classes would be more useful teaching in the primary grades.

There were repeated requests from PTA's throughout the district for the establishment of more kindergarten classes, just as in Vancouver, but the Board gave Greater Victoria parents much the same answer as the Vancouver Board: that expansion of the kindergarten programme would be considered as classroom space became available. Of course, with the increasing number of enrolments, space just did not become available. In an attempt to accommodate more kindergarten classes, those already established at Oaklands, Oak Bay and West Victoria Schools went onto a modified swing shift system. This involved the children attending on alternate weeks rather than the two sessions a day used for higher grades. Kindergartens had always catered for two sessions per day; now a single teacher was expected to cope with up to 100 children in each two-week period; a formidable task. Nevertheless, this system was continued throughout 1950-51 on a trial basis and was considered sufficiently successful to be kept in operation until the early
1960's.

The Vancouver School Board was initially fearful that the rapid expansion of school accommodation would prevent it from offering anything more than a basic education to children of compulsory school-going age. But within a few years the situation was under control. In fact, once the principle of expansion had been accepted, delays in carrying out the programme were caused mainly by physical factors; an over-worked Architect's Office and the actual time involved in building. By the summer of 1952, the Board felt it was again in a position to consider kindergartens. It was also spurred on by a letter from the Community Chest and Council, formerly the Council of Social Agencies, which was still providing as many services as it was able to the crowded inner city communities. The letter requested increased kindergarten facilities throughout the city and was probably prompted by the fact that the six private kindergartens operating in the Strathcona area were, at this time, unable to cope with the numbers of pre-school children applying for admission. The Board rapidly approved the opening of three more kindergartens, pending available finance, and its Kindergarten Committee strongly recommended that at least one should be started in the coming year. 55 Seymour School was chosen and its kindergarten class began operating in September 1952.

Further requests for kindergartens continued to be placed before the Vancouver Board, but in the next three years only two more were opened, at Mount Pleasant and Macdonald Schools, bringing the total kindergarten enrolment in Vancouver to about 440, compared with the Grade 1 enrolment of some 6,000. 56

At this point, the provincial government requested that no more
kindergartens be opened until further notice because of lack of funds and 
the teacher shortage. The Kindergarten Committee was discharged but the 
Board continued to keep its priority list for new classes up to date for 
future use. 57 There was no shortage of either permanent or substitute 
staff in Vancouver at this time and only the withdrawal of the government 
subsidy was now preventing the opening of more kindergartens. 58 When the 
grant was reinstated in 1956, seven more classes were opened and the Board 
felt that it was making satisfactory progress. It even began to talk about 
extending to a point where all children of kindergarten age would be 
offered a place in the public schools. It also expressed the hope that the 
newly established College of Education at the University of British 
Columbia would provide an increasing number of skilled kindergarten teachers 
so that this could be done. 59

Meanwhile, requests for enrolment still exceeded the number of places 
available in some areas. Until the government allowed further classes to 
be opened, the Board decided to operate, where numbers warranted it, an 
alternate-week attendance plan in the same way that the Greater Victoria 
Board had been doing for some years.

In 1957-58, the Vancouver School Board found itself in constant con­ 
lict with the provincial government over the opening of new classes. 
Seven more were opened in 1957 but then the government once again withdrew 
it's subsidy. Under the referendum of 1958, the Board committed itself to 
including kindergarten rooms in all new school buildings but the government 
refused to accept them as a shareable cost under the Schools Act even though 
the Board offered to use them as primary rooms until the pressure of en­ 
rolment died off. 60
A meeting with the Minister of Education did little to clear up what the Board saw as the ambivalence of the government approach. Board members were still not certain whether the government agreed in principle with the plan to open kindergartens as soon as space became available. However, it did appear to the delegates that approval might be given to another seven kindergartens that the Board wished to open. From enrolment figures, however, it seems as though this approval was not forthcoming.

The unwillingness of the government to commit itself on the subject at this time probably arose from the fact that in January 1958 it had appointed a Royal Commission on Education, headed by S.N.F. Chant, Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of British Columbia, and was awaiting the Commission's report before taking any further action.

In 1959, the Board felt it could detect something of a change in the government attitude and indeed a new approach to kindergarten education did seem to be developing.

In 1959, the Department of Education appointed a committee to investigate the question of kindergartens. It was known as the Pre-primary Committee on Education and its purpose was to investigate this area of education on behalf of the Chant Commission. This purpose was not divulged at the time, however, and the Vancouver School Board took its appointment to mean that the provincial government was intending to tackle the problem of pre-school education at last. It is probable that the government was interested to a certain degree, even if only because of pressure from School Boards and early childhood educators. But, even if it was not, then the results of the research certainly would have kindled interest for they indicated that kindergarten attendance, particularly public school kinder-
garten attendance, had favourable effects on children's subsequent school work.

The report also contained statistics on kindergarten attendance within the province. The majority of children in public school kindergartens were in Vancouver and Greater Victoria, but some other school districts had been providing kindergarten experience for their under-age children for some time. In the five years between 1945-51, five other school districts, Vernon, Central Coast, Prince Rupert, Lake Cowichan and Courtenay admitted small numbers of kindergarten children into combined Kindergarten-Grade 1 classes. Between 1951-59, eleven districts did so and of these Peace River South, Lake Cowichan and Kitimat established two, two and three separate kindergarten classes respectively. In 1959, when the survey was taken, public kindergartens were serving a total of 3,495 children, or 11 per cent of the Grade 1 population. In addition, 215 private kindergartens were licensed throughout the province with a capacity of about 6,000, and 57 further license applications were pending.

The report also gives figures on the total number of kindergarten-age children in both the Vancouver and Greater Victoria districts. In Victoria, there were 1,950, with approximately 880, or 40 per cent, attending public kindergartens. In Vancouver, the attendance percentage was slightly lower, with 1,690, or 35 per cent attending, out of an estimated 6,000. Despite Vancouver's struggle, then, it was still providing a smaller percentage of kindergarten places than Victoria, which had not expanded its services since the mid-forties. On the other hand, it must be born in mind that all Victoria's kindergartens were still operating on alternate week shifts. That is, children attended five sessions every other week. In
Vancouver, the swing shifts were only in operation in some schools and even then they were not always on an alternate week basis. Some children missed only one week in three, four or even five depending on the demand for places. Nevertheless, it is clear that public kindergartens were still catering for only a small number of the total pre-school population and even taking into account the places available in private kindergartens and play groups, the pre-school population was not well served. No four-year-olds were attending public kindergartens although the School Act had originally envisioned including them. For these younger children the only pre-school experience that was available was in the private establishments that were willing to take them and had room to do so.

The report of the Pre-Primary Committee may have led the government to regard kindergartens with less misgivings than previously, but it was the recommendations of the Chant Commission that led them to act, and act quickly. The Commission was impressed by the findings of the Pre-Primary Committee, particularly in regard to the research which pointed to the academic advantages to be gained from kindergarten attendance. The recommendations of the Commission, though, were not as strong as they might have been. A recommendation that provision of kindergartens be mandatory would not have been surprising, considering the support given to the principle of kindergarten education in the body of the report. However, the Commission did no more than recommend that School Districts be allowed to establish kindergarten classes as they saw fit. The report of the Commission was published in 1960, and in the same year the Schools Act was once more amended to give any Board the right to establish kindergartens at its own discretion for children of not more than one year below school age. This
gave Boards only a little more freedom to act than they had had a decade earlier.

But while provision of kindergartens was not yet mandatory, as many of the briefs to the Commission had suggested they should be, at least it gave those Boards that wished to, the right to establish kindergartens in all their schools with operating costs shared by the government.

This legislation was what the Vancouver School Board, at least, had been waiting for; by the end of 1961 it had a total of 64 classes in operation. In the following year, 107 were operating, which represented at least one class in each of the District's elementary schools. This provided places for approximately 5,000 children, which was still less than the estimated five-year-old population. But considering that attendance was voluntary, and many children still attended private kindergartens and pre-school groups, it probably accounted for most five-year-olds whose parents wanted them to attend. Children below the age of five, however, were still largely ignored.

The Greater Victoria Board, on the other hand, established no further classes, even though each kindergarten teacher was still dealing with up to 100 children on week about shifts. This continued until 1963, then in the course of the next two years, kindergartens were opened in six more schools to make a total of 17 at which 74 classes were held on a rotating basis. By 1970 the classes were located at 28 different schools and most had an enrolment of about 50, enabling about 1,600 children to have full-time half-day attendance.

Of the other school districts in the province, it is interesting to note that some quite small and isolated districts were offering kindergar-
ten experience to virtually all five-year-olds who desired it long before the Chant Report, while others which were large and urbanized offered little or even none until 1972 when kindergarten provision became mandatory. In 1961, Cranbrook, Princeton, Lillooet, Ocean Falls, Cowichan, Courtenay, Kitimat and Creston Districts were all providing kindergarten for nearly all of their five-year-olds. The Annual Reports of the Department of Education give no reason for or explanation of why this was so. Presumably, the Boards in these areas considered kindergarten an important part of education and were financially able to provide it. It must be born in mind, however, that some of these districts were quite small and the number of kindergarten children being catered for in each ranged from only 60 to 180. Burnaby also began a few classes in 1961, but discontinued them after two years, when a referendum on the kindergarten question was lost. Property owners in that district were unwilling to pay the extra costs that kindergartens would entail even with the new subsidy. In the following year, Penticton, Kamloops, Surrey, Delta, Richmond, Coquitlam and Salmon Arm began classes, but of these only Kamloops, Coquitlam and Salmon Arm continued them for more than a year. Expansion in Coquitlam was rapid with enrolment climbing from 220 in the first year to 1,602 in 1965 and reaching a peak of 2,164 in 1968. This was several hundred higher than the highest enrolment in Victoria, despite the fact that the Victoria school population was slightly higher than that of Coquitlam.

From the mid-1960's on, more and more districts offered kindergarten, until by 1971, all but ten districts had at least some classes. Of these ten, eight were country districts, most of which were small with scattered populations. The two city districts, North Vancouver and Richmond, offered
no kindergarten until it became mandatory to do so.\textsuperscript{75}

This, then, was the educational situation when, in 1972, the question of changing the legislation regarding kindergartens was again raised in British Columbia. The question had been raised many times before in the legislature, but the Social Credit government, despite its acceptance of kindergartens in principle, had been unwilling to act on the matter. With the defeat of the Social Credit Party in 1972, the New Democrats found themselves in a position to at last move on the kindergarten issue.\textsuperscript{76}

Although amendments were made to the Schools Act in the first sitting of the legislature under the New Democrat Party government in Fall 1972, the amendments concerning mandatory provision of kindergartens were not introduced until the second sitting in Spring 1973. There was no opposition at all on the kindergarten amendments, indicating that at last there was a consensus on this particular aspect of education. The Conservative, Liberal and Social Credit parties all indicated that they would give their full support, with the first two expressing pleasure that action was at last being taken.\textsuperscript{77} Mrs. P.J. Jordan, (SC North Okanagan) expressed opposition to any attempt to make attendance compulsory, but she too was in favour of mandatory provision.\textsuperscript{78}

The only question that concerned some members from outlying areas was the difficulty of transporting young children over great distances to attend.\textsuperscript{79} However, the government gave assurances that school regulations would allow for an alternative form of kindergarten service in remote areas so that small remote school districts and their pupils would not be handicapped.\textsuperscript{80} Finally, with no fuss or fanfare, the legislation that had been sought by so many Boards, teachers and parents was passed on April 17, 1973,
the final day of the second sitting of the New Democrat government.

School Districts were given two years to comply with the legislation. There was an immediate increase in enrolment from 24,217 in 1972-73 to 33,142 in 1973-74. In 1974-75, the deadline for kindergarten provision, there was a further increase to 36,874 but it is obvious that most Boards were willing and able to act within the first year. Ironically, the kindergarten population peaked in the following year at 37,072, and from then on the enrolment slowly declined in response to the fall in the birth rate that had begun several years previously. The battle that had been fought for nearly three decades was won just as one of its main causes, the post war population boom, began to disappear.

The legislation of 1972 is often considered the most important point in the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia. The aim of this chapter has been to show that, although important, it was only the final step in the three decade battle for the inclusion of kindergarten classes in the public school system. The groundwork was laid in the period between the end of World War II and the publication of the Chant Report in 1960, when concerned educators and laymen worked unceasingly, against the twin barriers of government apathy and lack of finance, towards a goal that must often have seemed unattainable. The Chant Report could have had much more effect than it did. By the time it was published, kindergarten was considered much more important than it had been in earlier years, but it was still not accepted as an integral part of education. The election of the New Democratic Party, after so many years of Liberal, Coalition and Social Credit Party rule, marked a turning point in public awareness of the need for government involvement in areas of social
concern. Although the New Democratic Party may take the credit for the enabling legislation, the battle for kindergartens in British Columbia was fought and won by many individuals who, in the course of thirty years, all contributed to the growing realization that education consists of more than just the 3R's and does not begin magically at age six.
FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

1 Only 12 out of 119 mothers at three Vancouver nursery schools (probably Strathcona, Gordon House and Alexandra House) were involved in officially recognised war work; Sun, 17 August 1943, p. 13.


4 Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 4234-5.


6 Province, 2 March 1943, p. 8; Ibid., 26 February 1944, p. 6; Sun, 2 March 1943, p. 8.

7 Colonist, 4 March 1943, p. 13; Victoria Times, 5 February 1944, p. 5.

8 Sun, 25 February 1944, p. 6.

9 News Herald, 8 March 1943, p. 12; Victoria Times, 4 February 1944, p. 3; Province, 17 May 1944, p. 4; Ibid., 15 March 1944, p. 4.

10 Ibid., 14 December 1943, p. 12.

11 Ibid., 20 August 1943, p. 5; Ibid., 7 September 1943, p. 22.

12 News Herald, 10 August 1943, p. 5.

13 Province, 17 August 1943, p. 21.

14 Sun, 1 September 1943, p. 5; Province, 1 September 1943, p. 7.

15 VSB Minutes, Meeting held 7 February 1944, pp. 8071-69.

16 British Columbia. Statutes, ch. 45, sect. 6 (7) 1946.

17 Victoria Times, 15 July 1943, p. 16; Colonist, 10 February 1944, p. 12.


20 Victoria Times, 29 October 1943, p. 16.

Ibid., 22 January 1944, p. 6; Colonist, 22 January 1944, p. 7.


Colonist, 10 February 1944, p. 12.

Although some country districts began to accept a small number of children in the next few years, initially Vancouver and Victoria were alone in the province in considering kindergarten.

VSb, Minutes, May-August 1943, passim.

Ibid., Meeting held 15 July 1946, p. 9410; see below Table 1.

Kindergartens were opened at Spring Ridge, Oaklands, Sir James Douglas, Victoria West, Margaret Jenkins, Oak Bay, Cloverdale and North Ward Schools.

Victoria Times, 20 June 1946, p. 11.


In particular, Ada Crump in Vancouver and Gertrude McGill in Victoria.

Province, 20 August 1946, p. 7.


Sun, 22 March 1947, p. 3.


Wycherley, Brief History, p. 4.
40 Province, 9 August 1950, p. 37.

41 Wycherley, Brief History, p. 11.

42 Sun., 10 November 1954, p. 46.

43 Greater Victoria School Board, Minutes of the Board of School Trustees, 1947-60. passim. (hereafter cited as GVSB, Minutes.)

44 VSB, Minutes, 1947-51. passim.


46 Ibid., Meeting held 10 March 1947, p. 9775.


48 Ibid., Meeting held 20 December 1948, p. 995-4.

49 The third option was chosen by the Education Department in South Australia and portable classrooms remained a large percentage of classroom accommodation until the end of the 1960's.


51 VSB, Minutes, Meeting held 12 April 1951, p. 3033.

52 GVSB, Minutes, Meetings held 18 July 1949, p. 238; 18 January 1950, p. 324; 9 February 1950, p. 332; 6 March 1950, p. 340; 18 June 1951, p. 454. In fact, two of the kindergartens were in Oak Bay and South Saanich districts, but only just outside the old Victoria boundary.

53 Ibid., Meeting held 2 February 1953.

54 Ibid., Meeting held 14 June 1951, p. 454.

55 VSB, Minutes, Meeting held 7 July 1952, p. 3892.


57 VSB, Minutes, Meeting held 3 October 1955, p. 8748.


59 Ibid., 1956, p. 1719.

60 Ibid., Meeting held 21 July 1958, p. 822.

61 Ibid., Meeting held 23 June 1958, p. 747.
62. Ibid., Meeting held 7 December 1959, p. 1622.


65. Ibid., no. 1. p. 2.

66. Ibid., no. 2. p. 2.

67. Ibid., no. 5. p. 1.

68. Ibid., no. 8. p. 1.

69. Ibid., no. 9. p. 1.


72. Ibid., 1962, p. 1340.

73. See below Table 1.


75. Ibid.


77. Ibid., pp. 2617-18.

78. Ibid., p. 1144.

79. Ibid., pp. 1144, 1158.

80. Ibid., p. 2749.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTEN THEORY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The previous chapter dealt with the establishment of public school kindergartens in British Columbia; this chapter will examine the development of the educational theory that was both a cause and an effect of the growth in the number of kindergarten classes in British Columbia public schools. This is no simple task, for the educational climate at any given time consists of many different points of view which may nevertheless co-exist with little friction. There are three distinct levels within the educational hierarchy in which differences in educational goals may be manifest. First, at the governmental level, where the basic legislation of the system is formulated. Second, at the School Board level, where the legislation becomes an administrative reality. And, third, at the classroom level, where the education takes place. All three are totally distinct and yet totally interdependent and all must be taken into account if an overall picture of the educational climate is to be obtained.

Furthermore, any examination of educational development in British Columbia must consider contemporary theory and practice elsewhere in Canada, as well as in the United States and in Britain, for the growth of kindergarten education was by no means unique to this province in the years after the Second World War.

This chapter, then, will deal first with the changing theory and practice of kindergarten education outside of British Columbia and then turn to developments within the province.
In the United States, the late 1940's saw the beginning of an increase in public school kindergarten enrolment. Neith Headley estimates that by the end of the decade, 49 per cent of all kindergarten-aged children in the United States were enrolled in public school kindergarten.\(^1\) The expansion in the number of public school kindergartens was partly a response to increased numbers of pre-school-aged children, the vanguard of the post-war population explosion, and partly due to changing attitudes to kindergarten education.

The changes in attitude were brought about by increased numbers of research studies dealing with various aspects of kindergarten education. These studies were mainly concerned with the effects of kindergarten attendance on the child's later achievement in school. The results generally indicated that the kindergarten was, in fact, beneficial in promoting readiness for reading, writing and number skills.\(^2\) As a result, the role of kindergarten as a preparatory class for Grade 1, and, more specifically, as a promoter of reading and number readiness, became dominant in discussions of early childhood education.

Weber identifies this push towards the more formal use of the kindergarten year as coming largely from researchers, subject specialists and administrators, rather than from kindergarten teachers themselves. She sees the pressure exerted by the former as putting kindergarten teachers on the defensive and therefore preventing the development of curriculum change from within their ranks.\(^3\) Certainly, until the early 1960's, there were no major leads from within the kindergarten movement to alter the curriculum that had been developed in the first two decades of the twentieth century.
In the twenty years after the Second World War, kindergarten teachers and supervisors did put much effort into explaining and interpreting the aims of the kindergarten to the general public. In 1930, the International Kindergarten Union and the National Council of Primary Education had amalgamated to form the Association for Childhood Education International and the Journal of the Association, Childhood Education, was perhaps the leading forum for current opinion and interpretation of kindergarten philosophy.

The literature of kindergarten supporters in this period tended to be generalized, sometimes to the point of vagueness: perhaps partly as a reaction to the very specific goals of those who saw kindergarten as no more than a preparation for the first grade. The emphasis, in both textbooks and articles, was on the kindergarten year as a foundation for further learning. But the importance of living fully and richly in the present was also noted. All the child's powers, physical, emotional, mental and social were perceived as being developed, with the greater emphasis being placed on the social and emotional. The curriculum was seen as being "as broad as life itself" with the major aim being to help every child make the best possible adjustment to life. Kindergarten teachers agreed readily that in their classrooms children learned "reading readiness" but their understanding of the term was far broader and less formal than that of people who wanted pre-reading skills actively taught to pre-schoolers.

Until the end of the 1950's, these opposing positions on the type of intellectual content in the curriculum formed the main basis of debate on the subject. During this period public school kindergarten enrolment continued to increase slowly, for even if there was no consensus on kinder-
garten curriculum, there seemed to be agreement on the fact that it should become a part of the school system. Headley estimates that 52 per cent of all kindergarten-aged children in the United States attended public school kindergartens by 1962. Those enrolled in private and parochial school kindergartens brought the number up to 65 per cent.

Two occurrences that initially lay outside the field of educational interest, also came to have far reaching effects on American society in general and on early childhood education in particular. The first was the launching of Sputnik 1 by the U.S.S.R. This event impressed upon many Americans the increasingly rapid pace at which scientific knowledge was advancing. They felt that if the United States was to draw even with and eventually pass Russia in technological expertise, then a new look must be taken at the education system. To many, an early academic push, beginning in the kindergarten year was the answer to the Space Age speed-up.

This attitude was strengthened by the work being done at the same time by cognitive psychologists like J. McVicar Hunt, Benjamin Bloom and Jerome Bruner. Their research pointed strongly towards the responsiveness of intelligence to experience. Growing familiarity in America with the ideas of Jean Piaget further influenced this point of view.

The second influential factor was the civil rights struggle which began to dramatize the problems of minority groups and the poor in the 1960's. Educational concern came to be framed in the language of a "war on poverty". The Headstart Program of 1965 directed massive federal funding into early childhood education for impoverished sections of society. Along with the intervention efforts, much research was begun, to explore the relationships of early experience, poverty and compensatory education.
From these developed the idea of intellectual stimulation in the kindergarten year, not only for the poor, or for minority groups, but for all children. As in the past, intellectual stimulation was again interpreted largely as increased emphasis on early reading, writing and number work.

Some experimental programs had children reading at three years of age, but many kindergarten teachers increased the emphasis on formal work only slightly. Nevertheless, this did effect the classroom climate and the change was heightened by a new approach to curriculum. Previously, the child's spontaneous interests had been advocated as the main guide to curriculum planning, but it was now felt by some educators that these interests could not be relied upon to lead the child into all areas of knowledge necessary in a technological world. Therefore, "needs" curricula were developed to lead the child into areas perceived as necessary for its future education.

By the late 1960's, a wide range of programs, from the traditional socially oriented kindergarten to highly experimental cognitively oriented programs, were in operation throughout the country. The mainstream of philosophy and practice, perhaps best represented by ACEI, still strongly stressed "fulfilment" education, in which the three values of self-actualization, creativity and relevance were of greatest importance. Nevertheless, it would appear that with the increased acceptance of early childhood education as a vital part of total education, the kindergarten was drawn closer to the primary grades and the beginnings of formal work, particularly in the cognitive area, were to be found more and more in the kindergarten curriculum.

Within British Columbia, the gradual change in emphasis from a socially
oriented to a cognitively oriented kindergarten curriculum took place in much the same way and at much the same time as in the United States. This was because British Columbia educators tended to look first to the United States whenever the question of kindergarten was raised. They did so when the question of child care was raised in the mid-1940's and continued to do so, well into the 1960's. Many Americans, too, personally influenced the kindergarten movement in the province. For instance, Helen Heffernan of the Bureau of Elementary Education in California visited the province regularly in the 1960's and worked closely with the College of Education at UBC. Britain, too, provided a model to some extent; its infant schools were briefly considered as a pattern for similar schools in British Columbia. Canada itself is the one place that, with few exceptions, was not considered when the question of kindergartens was raised. Immediately after the war, only Ontario and Quebec had any kindergartens, but in the former they had been in existence for more than half a century. Much help and information could have been gained from this source, but it was almost totally ignored. It was not until the late 1960's and early 1970's, when Alberta and Saskatchewan began to consider the problem of pre-school education, that British Columbia took much notice of what was happening elsewhere in Canada.

The choice of half-day, voluntary kindergartens in British Columbia was ultimately made by the Department of Education. The fact that it controlled, and in subsequent years sometimes withheld, finance for these classes also determined, indirectly, the fact that they would be limited for some years, in practice if not in principle, to children of five years of age in relatively crowded, low income, inner suburban areas. This does
not appear to have been a conscious policy on the part of the government, but rather to have stemmed from its unwillingness to give Boards more than token financing for many years. Boards were therefore forced to provide only for the most needy.

The Kindergarten Manual was the first clearly defined example of Department of Education policy on kindergartens. It was published in 1954, almost a decade after the first kindergarten classes began. Some guidelines for Boards and teachers must have existed prior to this but if so they are no longer available. It seems unlikely that the Department would allow classes to continue for such a long period without some kind of direction. The Manual was prepared by a committee of Victoria educators under the auspices of the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education. Individual committee members are not mentioned in the Acknowledgement but included Marian James, Director of Primary Education for the Victoria School Board, and Victoria teachers Dorothy Toader and Winette Copeland. The fact that all the Committee members were working in the field makes the Manual not only a guide to what the Department wanted to take place within kindergarten classrooms, but also a reflection of what was already taking place.

The Manual was intended as a guide for teachers, encompassing not only the philosophy and educational goals of the kindergarten, but also including suggestions for the physical set-up and day to day administration of a class. It was also a resource book of ideas, materials and literature for teachers. It opened with a series of statements about the purpose of kindergarten:
The Kindergarten is organized to promote the full development of the child through his natural activities. The Kindergarten gives the child the opportunity of working, playing, and living with children of his own age.

The purpose of the Kindergarten year is to ensure the maximum growth of each child, physically, socially, emotionally, as an individual and as a member of a group.

The Kindergarten is planned—
To form a bridge between home and school.
To provide a happy, wholesome, attractive, interesting, homelike setting which introduces the child naturally to a complex environment of persons, materials, and activities.
To lay the foundations of good social behaviour.
To meet the child's natural need for companionship and association with others of his own age.
To meet the educational needs of children between the ages of four and six.
To develop readiness for systematic instruction in basic skills.
To develop valuable habits, attitudes and appreciations.
To help children to live, work, and play acceptably with others.18

This was followed by two paragraphs on the kindergarten child and a full page on the kindergarten teacher.19 Much stress was placed on the importance of a free and unstructured programme in the kindergarten. There was no hint of a set curriculum or formal studies; rather the kindergarten was intended as a warm, open environment where the child, with the guidance and support of an equally warm and approachable teacher, could explore, discover and grow at his own pace. There was no hint of the philosophy, put forward a few years earlier by the Victoria School Board, that the kindergarten would be a downward extension of the elementary school in which "babies" would be turned into "pupils" in preparation for their embarkation on the all-important business of formal learning.20 The committee members did see the kindergarten, to some extent, as a downward extension of the primary grades. But they also saw it equally as an upward
extension of the informal learning that takes place from birth onwards. Their aim seems to have been to develop the kindergarten as a bridge between what many educators and laymen saw as two different worlds; the home and the school. There was no mention of the use of kindergarten as a remedial experience for children from deprived or under-privileged homes, although this had been one of the arguments put forward in its favour when pre-school facilities were initially called for. Formal introduction of reading, writing and spelling were also most pointedly omitted from all discussion throughout the Manual. A chapter was assigned to the various subject areas that the child would be introduced to in his year at kindergarten: social studies, science, language, music and art. The child's immediate environment and experiences both in kindergarten and out, were put forward as the basis for learning in these areas. Examples of learning experiences were included to illustrate the informal nature of teaching at this level. The final chapter in the book was listed in the Table of Contents as "Reading, Writing and Spelling", but the chapter itself left no doubt as to the place of such work in the kindergarten. It was a single paragraph placed in the centre of the final page. It stated succinctly:

Reading, Writing and Spelling.
There should be no formal teaching of these tool subjects in the Kindergarten. The alert teacher will see that the child has many experiences which will broaden his interests and create in him a desire to read, write and spell. He may learn incidently to recognise a number of words, but no attempt should be made to give systematic instruction in reading.  

This attitude, with its emphasis on the child's freedom to explore, follow his own interests and develop at his own pace and in his own way can be traced directly from the original concepts of Froebel via "progressive" kindergartners such as Patty Smith Hill. It was also very much in
line with current kindergarten theory in the United States at the time, which stressed the importance of social and emotional, rather than intellectual development.

But despite the endeavours of those who believed in a kindergarten programme as the best form of education for the young child, many educators were still concerned primarily with results. For them, the ultimate aim of schooling seemed to be to push a child, as fast as possible, through a set curriculum, although very rarely is any reason given for this haste. An article in the B.C. Teacher, in 1955, illustrates this line of thought. H.J. Beairsto, Principal of Vernon Elementary School, took a few paragraphs from the Programmes of Study for the Primary Grades and for the Intermediate Grades of the Elementary Schools of British Columbia, as justification for an experimental programme of "acceleration" and "deceleration" in schooling. His quotation from the Programme of Studies reads as follows:

Pupils should achieve their maximum level of third year performance, or in other words they should be ready to undertake satisfactorily the work prescribed for Grade IV, in from two to four years.

In order to allow children to finish their primary work in two, three or four years, depending on their ability, the traditional system of annual grade promotions was altered at his school by having fast learners in Grade 1 complete the Grade 1 course plus half of the Grade 2 course in one year. They were then promoted to Grade 3 where they completed the second half of the Grade 2 course plus the Grade 3 course in the second year. A similar system was in force in Grades 4-6, although Beairsto does suggest that a child should only be accelerated in one of the sequences.

Although arrangements were made for those children who would require either three or four years to complete the primary programme, the main
emphasis throughout the whole article was on those children who could be accelerated. Even the title of the article stressed this and although no explicit judgement was made, it was implied that to be a fast learner was good but to be slow was, if not bad, at least a bit of a nuisance. However, there was no mention of why a child should be accelerated in this way except for the implied reason that it was "good" to get the work done in a shorter time.

The letter which the school sent out to parents of children who were considered suitable for the accelerated programme stated:

In grouping children, all factors...should be taken into consideration. Where several of these factors are favourable, a certain degree of acceleration in school work should be possible and in some cases even desirable. Under such circumstances, however, some parents prefer to have their children progress at the regular school rate of one grade per year and allow him the opportunity of enriching his living with out of school activities.²⁴

It is not surprising that with such an implicit value judgement emanating from the school staff, that most parents allowed their so-called brighter children to be accelerated. There was no mention, however, of the parents even being contacted if it was felt that the child required four years to complete the programme.

It was in the decelerated programme that Beairsto perceived the kindergarten as being of most use. All children initially entered the kindergarten class, but after two weeks they were tested and the "slow learners" identified. These would then spend a year in the kindergarten while the rest would be placed in either a normal or accelerated Grade 1 class, according to their ability.

It is clear that in such a situation, the attitude to and results obtained from the kindergarten class would be far removed from those in a
class conducted by a member of the committee which wrote the Kindergarten Manual. To Beairsto, schooling appears to have been simply a process that the child must get through, and the quicker the better. Everything else must be secondary to this goal, including "the opportunity of enriching living with out of school activities." Certainly there appears to have been no thought of enriching living through in-school activities.

This article has been given more attention than it perhaps warrants. Vernon Elementary was a single school, and not necessarily representative of educational thought. But at this time, the subject of acceleration came under considerable discussion and it was Departmental policy to encourage experimentation in individual schools. Formal reports of such projects were not required, however, and no record was kept of those undertaken.

There have always been those who have spoken against kindergarten and who have emphasised the importance of formal schooling in the early years. I feel it is important to show that not only these people, but others, like the teachers at Vernon Elementary, who operated a kindergarten themselves and were therefore nominally in favour of kindergartens, were far removed in philosophy from those who understood and practised the kindergarten philosophy as stated in the Manual.

Two British Columbia journals, the B.C. Parent-Teacher and the B.C. Teacher, can be considered representative of local educational thought, both from the professional and parental point of view, from the 1940's to the 1960's. The former ceased publication towards the end of the 1960's but the latter is still published. Both had a wide circulation in the province in the period under consideration, and encouraged contributions from readers. Despite the general interest in pre-school education at the
time, less than a dozen articles on the subject appear in these journals. Those that were printed appear after a limited number of public school kindergartens had been opened, rather than in the early years when there was general debate over whether or not they should be established.

The first article on kindergartens to appear in the *B.C. Teacher* was printed in 1948. It was a one page article which dealt simply with the fact that several kindergartens had been opened in Victoria, and described some of the activities that took place in the classes, accompanied by remarks from Marian James, Primary Supervisor, on their educational significance. It ended with the hope that soon there would be sufficient kindergartens for all "youngsters" to attend.

In the next twelve years, only one further article directly concerned with kindergarten appeared in the journal. Written by Marian James, it was reprinted from the January-February 1954 issue of the *B.C. Parent-Teacher*. It strongly emphasised the idea that readiness for kindergarten is not a matter of chronological age, but rather the result of an important phase of the child's education; that which is carried out in the home by the parents in the first years of life.

The *B.C. Parent-Teacher*, made surprisingly little mention of kindergarten, considering the strong advocacy, by PTA's, for the establishment of pre-school facilities. In early 1955, an article written by Kathleen Collins, Primary Supervisor for Burnaby, urged parents to consider carefully before sending their under six-year-old children to school. At this stage Burnaby had no public school kindergartens but was obviously worried by the numbers of parents wishing their children to attend school as soon as possible. Mention is made of children hating school "because they were
not physically ready to accept the tremendous responsibilities of learning to read and write" and of teachers "begging parents to keep a five and a half year old home for another few months to help him develop enough to be 'ready' for school." The school, the article claimed, could not be blamed for the situation if the children were sent to school too young, but on the other hand the article gave no intimation that the school should perhaps consider catering for younger children.

In a later issue, Collins again dealt with the topic of readiness for school. This article was somewhat similar to the earlier one by James, except for the fact that it concerned itself with children a year older and about to enter Grade 1. There was also more emphasis on the child's knowledge of simple facts, such as name and address, and personal behaviour and habits. The general experiences of living and exploring the world, that were so important to James, did not seem to concern Collins at all.

In the previous issue of the journal, an article had appeared which described the three types of pre-school experience available to children in the Greater Vancouver area, namely, public school kindergarten, private kindergarten and play groups. It went on to describe the five-year-old from a physical, social, emotional and mental developmental point of view and to explain how kindergarten was especially organized to cater for the five-year-old's developmental needs. Whether Collins' article was intended as an answer is impossible to say, but the two articles certainly took an opposite view on how the five-year-old could best be prepared for Grade 1.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Education, more popularly known as the Chant Report, was published in 1960. It marked an important point in the development of public school kindergartens in British Columbia. The
Commission's call for briefs from the public provided an opportunity for both educators and laymen to express their opinions and aims on the subject of kindergartens. The general tone of the Report was very much in line with educational thought in the United States at the time. It has already been mentioned that the movement in that country, from the late 1950's onward, was towards an early start in education. The Chant recommendations, too, were largely concerned with increasing academic excellence by beginning formal work as early as possible, and cutting back on subjects considered academically unnecessary. The briefs presented to the Commission on pre-school education, however, were still very much oriented towards the philosophy being put into practice in public school kindergartens; a philosophy that was still emphasising social and emotional, rather than intellectual factors. Perhaps this point of view impressed the Commissioners to some extent, for although the report strongly supported kindergarten as an excellent and important beginning to public education, it did not go so far as recommending that kindergarten classes be made an integral part of the system. Instead, it simply recommended that School Boards be given the right to open kindergartens as they saw fit and be given financial backing to do so.

A short examination of some of the briefs submitted to the Commission will illustrate the climate of opinion at the time.

Of the more than forty briefs dealing with pre-school education, only three urged that kindergartens had no place in the public school system. Two briefs, submitted by private individuals, felt that parents should be responsible for their own children during the pre-school years, that children would gain physically by not beginning school until age seven and
would, moreover, escape being subjected to "undesirable conduct from older pupils." The third was from the Intermunicipal Committee of Greater Victoria, a body representing the four original municipalities that had amalgamated in 1946 to form Greater Victoria. It revived the old argument, peculiar to Victoria, that kindergartens should be available to all children, or none.

A large majority of the briefs consisted of no more than a short letter which did little more than recommend the inclusion of kindergartens as an integral part of the school system, with perhaps some very general remarks about the purpose and benefits of such classes. A number of the longer briefs, however, made their points most specifically, and while their general recommendations are usually similar, the philosophy and intent behind them are often quite remarkable for their difference.

The British Columbia Teachers Federation, for instance, revived the idea that had appealed to the Vancouver School Board fifteen years previously; that primary schools, including K-Gr 3 classes, should be established, separate from the elementary schools. This would be of particular benefit in the urban areas, the brief stated, where primary teachers working in the more flexible organization of small separate schools could bring a unity of purpose and diversity of talents to bear on the social and academic needs of young children. Discipline could then be based on an understanding of the emotional as well as the social needs of the children. The primary school would be a safe and warm environment that would generate a feeling of security in the small child. Although not openly stated, the idea behind this seemed to be not only to include kindergarten as a part of the system, but also to extend the kindergarten philosophy upwards into
the first three grades to replace the heavy emphasis on academic work found in some primary schools. The brief was prepared by groups of teachers working under the supervision of a Brief Committee. No kindergarten teachers appear to have been members of any of the sub-committees but there was certainly input from primary teachers, some of whom were represented on the Curriculum Committee. It is impossible to say, however, just how much they influenced the final recommendations of the brief.

The push towards early academic work has been mentioned previously in regard to the experimental programme at Vernon Elementary School in 1955. It appears again in the brief from people in the Sechelt District, which suggested an accelerated programme for those children with academic aptitude, and a modified regular programme for slow learners. The latter was to include kindergartens which five-year-old children might attend until a readiness test for Grade 1 was passed, and which would retain six-year-olds who were not yet able to pass the test. The kindergarten programme, the brief suggested, should be oriented towards preparing the child for Grade 1 work as soon as possible, with much pre-reading and number work and the development of habits and behaviour necessary in the primary grades. No mention is made of social or emotional development.

Of the School Boards that made submissions, two are of particular interest. The Vancouver School Board brief was extensive and dealt in detail with many specialized areas of education, but the subject of kindergartens was totally ignored. No reason for the omission is given, which seems strange considering the efforts the Board had been making over the past fifteen years to increase its number of classes. The Vancouver Parent
Teacher Committee, however, expressed the frustration that had been felt within the district for so many years. Its brief pointed out that Vancouver PTA's had been requesting kindergartens for more than twenty years through letters and delegations to their School Board. It complained about the action of the Department of Education in halting further expansion. "In view of the known values of kindergartens," it stated, "and in view of the widespread demand for kindergartens, we cannot understand the Department of Education's action in disallowing our School Board's request to open seven more kindergarten classes this year as a further step in making them city wide." The Committee's aim was to have one class per fifty children in every elementary school and primary annex.

On the other hand, the North Vancouver School Board, which was not to open its first kindergarten class until 1973, when provision of kindergarten became mandatory, did request that kindergartens be made a part of the school system. The brief mentioned the efforts of some parents to fill the gap in the education system by sending their children to private kindergartens. It also mentioned the role that Co-op Play Groups were playing but pointed out that these facilities were not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, nor did all children attend them, and therefore, their effect was not all that could be desired.

The brief of the British Columbia Preschool Education Association was, not surprisingly, very much in line with the philosophy of those kindergartens already functioning. Its members were almost exclusively connected with private kindergartens and play groups. During the 1950's the Association was very active, but by the mid-sixties it had become moribund. It should not be confused with the present British Columbia Preschool Teachers'
Association which was not created until 1970. The brief called for the provision of public school kindergartens for all children aged four to six, rather than just for five-year-olds. The belief of the Association was:

that skills of democratic living are best initiated at a time when the individual's life is relatively free from the demands of formal education. i.e. before the sixth year...
The skills include respect for others, co-operative effort, appreciation of deferred values, fair play, individual freedom, and responsibility and self-reliance. If education is concerned with the enhancement of the individual at all ages and with developing abilities, understanding and traits which he needs as a happy and contributing member of society, we must provide for this younger group.40

The brief also pointed out that the upper primary grades should continue "those aspects of the kindergarten programme which will centre around the total growth needs of the child."

The longest submission by far, concerning pre-school education, came from the Co-operative Play Groups Association, which at that time consisted of 52 play groups in the Vancouver Island and Greater Vancouver areas.41

The Association was very eager to expand its services, but most of its plans had no connection with public school kindergartens. Rather, the Association saw its future in providing a separate service, equally valuable and professional, but outside of the school system. To this end it made lengthy recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

1. That the Department of Education be the responsible body in all matters pertaining to pre-school education.

2. That the Department use its administrative facilities for training and certification of teachers and curriculum, and maintenance of standards, through the establishment of a Preschool Education Board with representation from all bodies concerned with young children.

3. That a child development centre be set up at UBC for the training of
teachers and parents, and for research.

From this it can be seen that the Association in British Columbia had not only a well defined philosophy of pre-school education, but also a practical plan to implement its aims and the commitment to carry them out. Its brief, however, had no effect on the final report of the Commission.

The brief of the Nursery School Association of Victoria is also somewhat oriented away from public school kindergartens. The Association had been established in 1943, to act as a research and co-ordinating body for the nursery school movement. Its main goal was still the establishment of full day nursery schools with fully trained staff and standardized buildings, grounds, programmes and equipment, in the tradition of the Merrill-Palmer and Columbia University nursery schools. The brief examined, in some detail, the kindergarten and play group facilities available in the province, and pointed out that lack of trained teachers and sufficient supervision by the government had led to some centres being of a lower than acceptable standard. It therefore recommended:

1. The establishment of a Demonstration Development Centre (in the form of a nursery school) at UBC, to be used as a training centre and a model for equipment and programming.

2. That standards of training for all supervisors of pre-school groups be laid down under the Schools Act.

3. That where play groups existed in any large numbers, an advisor be appointed to visit and advise on problems in programming, supervision, and parent education.

These last two Associations, then, although not directly interested in public school kindergartens, were most concerned about the quality of pre-
school experience available in the private sector, and strongly desired that it should be brought up to a professional standard equal to that available in the public schools.

The Report of the Pre-Primary Education Committee which made such a strong impression on the Chant Commission is interesting from several points of view; it illustrates the thinking of the Minister of Education, the Hon. Leslie H. Peterson, that of the Department officials and that of teachers in the field. These three attitudes differ quite significantly but seem to follow a pattern that recurs throughout the history of kindergarten in the province in the post war years; namely, that those with direct contact with young children, whether teachers or parents, were the strongest supporters of kindergarten, while those in administrative positions, if they were in favour of the idea at all, supported it more in principle than in practice. And the higher they were in the administrative hierarchy the more they seemed to be inclined towards the principle rather than the practical.

The terms of reference of the Committee were set out in a letter from the Minister to the Chairman of the Vancouver School Board in July 1958 as follows:

I have always regarded kindergarten instruction to be educationally desirable. While it cannot be regarded as a necessity, I have felt correct to say that is is an enrichment of the basic programme. There is, however, a basic conflict of professional opinion concerning the educational advantages that accrue from kindergarten instruction. Consequently I have instructed my Department in consideration with experts in the field of primary education to make a study of certain aspects of pre-primary education somewhat along the following lines:

a) To discover what evidence there is, if any, that children who go to kindergarten make better progress in school than children who do not have this privilege.

b) To investigate the possibility of having children enter Grade 1 at an earlier age, say age five, based on a fitness or readiness test, thereby obviating the neces-
sity for having kindergartens, particularly in the larger centres.
c) To investigate comparative costs as between operating kindergartens or providing staff and facilities for testing and screening children who might enter Grade 1 at age five.
d) To examine thoroughly the present curriculum and methods of public kindergarten instruction in those school districts that have them.

In some quarters the opinion is held that children in kindergarten should be taught some of the skills of reading and number work, even at this level, and many of the private kindergartens follow this practice. In contrast we have the prevailing idea that kindergarten is merely a socializing process and that no formal teaching of any consequence should take place.43

This statement would appear to be fairly representative of the "support in principle" line of thought. Peterson did not commit himself fully in any direction but was obviously willing to be swayed by factors such as cost and academic achievement, factors which themselves were likely to raise political support from members of the public who were not already committed to the need for and establishment of kindergartens. This attitude is expressed at greater length in a letter to Eric Martin, Minister of Health and Welfare, in which Peterson stated that as no studies had been made of the success of kindergartens in achieving their goals he was faced with a clearly defined problem.

If the proponents of kindergartens are correct in their assumptions, then it is obviously unfair and educationally wrong to limit their benefits to a few favoured areas. If, on the other hand, kindergartens have not proven their value and justified their not inconsiderable expenditure of public funds, it is equally wrong to permit their expansion. Opinions on both sides have been freely stated, but the opinions have been based on feeling rather than on research.44

He went on to say that a committee was already investigating the matter and until its investigations were complete no further action in either
direction would be taken. In the light of research that had been carried on, in the United States at least, for the past decade Peterson's comments as to the known value of kindergarten were not fully correct. However, they did lead to local research that had not previously been undertaken.

The Committee was composed of five senior members of the Department of Education, E.E. Hyndman, Chief Inspector of Schools, Dr. C.B. Conway, Director of Tests, Standards and Research, J.R. Meredith, Director of Curriculum, B.A. Barr, Research Assistant and F.P. Levirs, Assistant Superintendent of Education (Instructional Services) and Chairman of the Committee.

The Committee tried its utmost, and succeeded fairly well, in remaining impartial within the parameters of its terms of reference. It concentrated, as directed, on examining research and opinion on the value of kindergartens as well as existing kindergartens and legislation. The search was directed as much as possible in Canada, which was a departure from the norm, but some reference was made to American research. The balance of evidence in the external studies was

in favour of the value of kindergartens in promoting academic readiness and social development of children. Children who have attended kindergarten show superiority in those respects to children who have not. This superiority is most marked in Grade 1 and tends to become less marked in the upper grades, disappearing entirely by the end of the primary division.

Also,

most Principals and teachers are apparently convinced of the value of kindergartens. This opinion is shared by the Ontario Royal Commission on Education of 1950 and the Alberta Royal Commission of 1959.45

The Committee further acknowledged the belief of administrators and supervisors, as well as some parents, in the benefits of kindergarten
experience. It commented that "Although professional opinion may not be based on objective evidence, it is usually based on trained observation and for that reason is worthy of attention."\(^{46}\) In addition, the Committee conducted its own research in Vancouver and Victoria kindergartens, through the Department of Education's Division of Tests, Standards and Research. In line with the terms of reference, the research concerned itself with report card ratings in Grades 1-3, adaptation to the school situation, intelligence, achievement, retardation and acceleration. Again, although evidence was not conclusive, it indicated that kindergarten attendance did benefit children in later school achievement.

In so far as lowering the school entrance age to five years was concerned, the Committee concluded that:

Neither evidence nor authoritative opinion would favour this on a universal basis unless there were provision for a readiness programme of approximately one year for the normal child. Evidence and opinion would favour admission to Grade 1 only of those children with a mental age of at least 6.0 since few below that mental age would have any chance of success.\(^{47}\)

Such a move would have required the extensive testing of young children and the Committee concluded that, although this would be considerably less expensive than the cost of operating kindergarten classes for all children, the testing would be "unreliable and lacking in validity" as well as generating "unfavourable reactions among parents of children rejected because of too low a mental age."\(^{48}\)

In examining what was currently taking place within the kindergarten classes in Vancouver and Victoria, Committee members visited classes and requested a number of kindergarten teachers to submit short statements on their own philosophies of kindergarten. The Committee found that the
general aims of the official kindergarten programme in British Columbia was in line with those in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, "that children should receive some preparation or readiness training before entering upon their formal education." This statement, however, is a very basic summary, not only of the statements made by the kindergarten teachers, but also of the philosophies expressed by pre-school authorities throughout the rest of Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. This lack of elaboration may have stemmed from the fact that the report itself was not intended to be extensive; indeed, time and resources were quite limited. Nevertheless, the brevity of the summary reflects the attitude of the Committee to a large extent. They were seeking justification for the expense of including kindergarten in the school system and their terms of reference directed that such justification should take the form of measurable academic superiority in children with kindergarten experience. They therefore had no need to take into consideration any benefits that fell outside these rather narrow parameters.

An important point that was made by the Committee, however, concerned the isolation of the existing kindergartens from the rest of the school structure. This was a problem that had worried some educators since the first inclusion of kindergartens in public school systems in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Some kindergartners, then, had tended "to look on their work as a closed system, complete in itself, having little relation to the next stage in the life of the child." In such cases, kindergarten tended to be seen as an imposing facade tacked on to the front of the school system rather than an integral part of the life of the child. Kindergartners, too, were sometimes resented by their primary colleagues.
because of their shorter hours of work, their more beautiful classrooms, their more liberal supplies of equipment and their smaller numbers of pupils. In British Columbia in the late 1950's, the resentment between kindergarten and primary teachers did not seem to exist but the difference in educational philosophies still tended to set the kindergarten alone rather than encourage its acceptance into the system.

The Chief Inspector of Schools visited Victoria and Vancouver kindergartens as part of the Committee's investigation, and concluded that in both cities kindergartens were operating efficiently and in line with the aims set out in the Manual. In most cases too, he considered the teachers superior. He noted that no two classes were run identically:

On the one hand there were teachers who pressed for reading and number readiness and who sought to provide an atmosphere similar to the usual one prevailing in primary classrooms. At the other extreme, some of the teachers emphasized more of a play school atmosphere where there was more emphasis on freedom of choice by the pupils and less restriction of movement.

In Victoria, it would seem that the former mode was the most common, for the Inspector reported, "The emphasis in the instructional programme is upon preparedness for entry into school rather than on the play school and free activities."

The Report of the Pre-Primary Committee was the first official examination, in British Columbia, of the question of the inclusion of kindergarten into the school system. Previously it had been only School Boards, teachers and parents' associations that had shown much interest in either debating the subject or working towards the establishment of classes. The Report itself shows clearly the differing views on kindergarten existing throughout the educational hierarchy.
The teachers and parent groups with whom the Committee met in the course of its investigation were by far the most enthusiastic about the need for and benefits of kindergarten classes, and, without exception, were in favour of extending the classes. This grass roots enthusiasm had been characteristic of the movement in British Columbia since the war years, but for the first time the Report gave official and "scientific" support to the demands. The Chant Commission was obviously more impressed by the research results than the force of public opinion, if the contents of its own chapter on kindergartens is any guide. But while its own recommendations opened the way for interested School Boards to act, mandatory kindergarten classes were still far from being a reality. The provincial government moved rapidly to change the kindergarten legislation, in line with the Chant recommendations, but in reality this did little more than place School Boards in the same position as they had been in before the restrictions on kindergarten expansion in 1958-59. Boards, such as Vancouver, that were already interested in kindergartens, were able to carry out their plans for expansion, but throughout the province generally, the establishment of kindergarten classes continued to be slow and piecemeal.

Throughout the early 1960's, following the publication of the Chant Report, debate on the subject of kindergartens lessened somewhat. Vancouver School Board expanded its kindergartens to the point where each of its elementary schools had at least one class. Other interested Boards opened classes as they saw fit, but all this expansion took place within the existing legislation and no moves were made to extend the legislation further. In the second half of the decade, however, a new emphasis came to be placed on early childhood education. This was largely the result of
a quickening of interest in the field outside of Canada. Operation Headstart, in the United States, was perhaps the most influential result of this new interest, and the research generated by many of its programmes not only strengthened the commitment of those working in the field, but also led to more and more experimental programmes and investigations in the areas of kindergarten and child care.

British Columbia, too, felt the effects, as interested sections of the community again began to call for more services and to investigate those already in existence. Provision of day care for working and single parents again became an issue, with welfare agencies and private individuals calling on the public to jolt an "apathetic government" into action. Calls for action in this area, however, were now directed to the Department of Health and Welfare rather than to the Department of Education.

As the early results of Operation Headstart in the United States began to show the benefits of pre-school experience for underprivileged children, similar programmes were considered for British Columbia. But despite the educational emphasis of these programmes, British Columbia School Boards were unwilling to become involved. In 1966, the Vancouver School Board received two requests to assist in Headstart programmes from the First United Church's Dunlevy Nursery School and from the National Council of Women. The first, which was a straight request for funds, was referred to the provincial Department of Social Welfare, while the second, a request for equipment, was tabled until such time as equipment might be available.

In 1968, the BCTF set up a Commission on Education, and its report, Involvement: The Key to Better Schools, emphasized the importance of the
early years in education. The Commission received briefs from schools and teachers throughout the province as well as studying research and trends in the rest of Canada and the world. The report itself was short, relying heavily on a multiplicity of illustrations, accompanied by shortly stated conclusions which were sometimes elaborated by quotations from briefs or research. But its message was clear; the education system needed changes. Amongst the more general conclusions were:

That education should be humanized and personalized.
That many pupils are 'lost educationally' in the first years of school, through excessive use of mass and group techniques.
That programs should be specifically designed for individual children, recognising the unique way in which each learns.
That remedial services in later years do little to compensate or to overcome the damage done by neglect in the early years.
That every child from his earliest years should be assisted in developing techniques for learning on his own and given opportunities to evaluate his own progress.

More specific recommendations for the early years were that

Top priority should be given to the elementary schools in terms of educational planning and financial assistance. Pre-school education should be provided for three and four year old children. Kindergarten should be an integral part of the public school system. Early childhood education should be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education rather than welfare agencies or private individuals.58

This last recommendation was strongly influenced by the report of the British Columbia School Trustees Association of the previous year. The report was titled Educational Innovation, and one of its chapters was devoted to the importance of kindergarten and the "critical years" hypothesis; the assertion that "the kinds of experience that a child has in the early years are the major determinants of his subsequent school
career." This theory was by no means new to those in the kindergarten field; it was, after all, the basis of Froebel's philosophy. But educators at all levels had been forcibly reminded of it by the research of Bloom and Worth in 1964-65 and the very influential Plowden Report on British Education in 1967. The BCSTA agreed with the research findings which held that "the base on which much school learning flourishes is laid before the age of six," and therefore proposed the extension of education downward to younger age groups. The term Early Childhood Education was used in reference to this downward extension and this was rather confusing as it tended to imply the inclusion of children as young as three or four, as was the case in the BCTF Report. Despite the use of the term, however, the BCSTA Report made it clear that it was referring only to kindergarten, as already defined in the Schools Act. This, it considered, "should become an essential and integral part of our educational program in British Columbia."

Amongst teachers, too, new interest was stirring and ideas were developing. Within the BCTF, kindergarten teachers had no separate association, but were included in the British Columbia Primary Teachers Association which published, from 1964 onwards, a monthly Newsletter and a tri-yearly journal, Prime Areas. Initially the contents of these two publications were of interest more to primary teachers, but in 1968 an effort was made to contact and improve communications with all kindergarten teachers in the province. By this time some districts had also organized kindergarten sub-associations, and the BCPTA was eager to encourage this move further. In line with this, it proposed including kindergarten ideas in Prime Areas, and requested articles for publication. From the winter of 1969 on-
wards, Prime Areas included a short section entitled "Kindergarten Korner" which included short articles on the philosophy and method of kindergarten. Most of the section, however, was taken up with suggestions for activities and craft ideas. It seemed to be in this area that teachers needed most help.

There was also some uncertainty on "what to teach" in the kindergarten since there was no set curriculum. A three part article, "A New Organization of Kindergarten Objectives to Serve Developmental Needs" by H. Woolley, B.J. Cox and C.J. Stewart, School Board Consultants, took up much of the Kindergarten Korner space in 1971-72 issues. The desire for structure and order within kindergarten rooms showed itself continually in this section of the journal despite articles dealing with work through play, the value of the process rather than the product, and the value of social development rather than academic excellence at this age. Whether or not this stemmed from the fact that a large number of teachers had previously worked with primary grades and could not adjust fully to the use of freedom as a teaching tool, or whether it was that Prime Areas was a primary journal edited by primary teachers which prevented the inclusion of freer ideas, is hard to say. What is important is that it was produced by teachers for teachers, and probably reflected fairly accurately what was taking place in a number of classrooms. If this was the case, then it can be assumed that a number of teachers had programmes that were quite structured and organized.

The movement towards a continuity between kindergarten and Grade 1 was not new. In theory, it had been in existence since the early days of public school kindergartens. The interest in early intellectual develop-
ment that grew rapidly in the second half of the sixties, however, gave new life to the theory and, in some cases, extended to the practice as well.

The Faculty of Education at UBC was very much concerned with this continuity. The January 1966 issue of its Journal of Education was devoted entirely to Early Childhood Education. Nineteen articles, most of them written by faculty members, dealt with all aspects of early education. The Editorial noted:

Aware that we have failed to recognise the full significance of pre-school and primary education, we are now more than ever concerned about the kinds of experience a child has in his early years...pressures from the adult world in the community and in administration in the form of unrealistic goals, rigid grade standards, damaging grouping practices, poor techniques of reporting to parents and policies that destroy worthy self concepts, restrict the learning activities of children and do much to frustrate the glowing promise of each child.

The various articles covered many of the aspects of education in the early years both in the kindergarten and in the primary grades but no effort was made to differentiate between the two groups. Early childhood education was viewed as an on-going process that must be made to straddle the artificial barriers that had previously been used to divide the learning experiences of children in the age range three to eight.

This, too, was a particular concern of the BCTF and was illustrated by several articles in the Federation's journal, the B.C. Teacher, in the late sixties. The BCTF believed that "The public school system should be viewed as a single unit. This unit should include what is now described as the elementary and the secondary school years as well as the pre-school or kindergarten period where provided in the public school." Alongside this belief there was growing interest in separating the early years of
education, kindergarten to Grade 3, from the rest of the elementary grades, and extending the kindergarten mode of learning throughout this period. The British infant school again became the model to be studied, along with techniques such as "individualization of instruction, the open area school, non-graded and multi-graded classrooms, continuous promotion, the use of teacher aides, the elimination of report cards in favour of parent-teacher conferences, and the discovery and enquiry approach to learning."68

The Newsletter of the British Columbia Primary Teachers Association reported, in 1968, that the Department of Education was forming a new committee to revise the existing kindergarten curriculum guide, the Kindergarten Manual.69 The committee members were all active in the kindergarten field, either as teachers, supervisors or teacher educators, and the editor was Ulah Watson, Supervisor of Primary Education for the Greater Victoria School Board. As it was expected that the committee would be some time at this task, the BCPTA undertook to collect and compile resource material for kindergarten teachers. This action further suggests that teachers were uncertain about their role and felt the need of a more definitive programme guide. Resource Materials for Kindergartens appeared in 1972 and was greeted with great enthusiasm, at least by some teachers. It is unfortunately no longer available but would have made an interesting comparison with the Department of Education's Resource Book for Kindergartens which was published a year later.70

The Resource Book, which is still the official Department of Education curriculum guide for kindergartens, was very different in style and format to its predecessor, the Kindergarten Manual. There was, too, a noticeable difference in the emphasis placed on academic skills. The main emphasis
of the book was on the integrated curriculum and the design and implementation of the kindergarten programme; subjects that were at the forefront of discussion and research in both the United States and the United Kingdom at the time. Blocks of time, activity centres, work period, subject areas, and field trips were all examined as separate yet inescapably related facets of the programme. Pictures, diagrams, quotations, descriptions of equipment, and suggestions for teaching plans were used, too, in an effort to clarify what should be going on in the kindergarten room. The effect was confusing rather than enlightening, for while there was constant reiteration of the need for freedom for the child to explore and discover, there was also more implicit emphasis on formal learning. This was most marked in relation to reading and writing. No longer was teaching in this area dismissed as having no place in the kindergarten. It was still not recommended as a class activity but several pages were devoted to the ways in which it could be encouraged informally. This was particularly noticeable when compared to the section on mathematics. Here the emphasis was on oral counting and the learning of basic arithmetical concepts such as quantity, size, similarity and difference and of acquiring a vocabulary to express mathematical relationships. But no suggestion that children begin doing simple calculations was even hinted at. However, it would appear that reading and writing held such symbolic importance, that children could not be allowed to remain at the preparatory stage in kindergarten. Instead they must always be encouraged to extend themselves as far as possible in this one area. This encouragement was never so marked in other areas perhaps because there was no set product that the child could display as in reading and writing.
It was in this respect, then, that the Resource Book differed most from the Manual. The style of presentation of each can be attributed mainly to changing fashion. In content some similarities still remained; the Resource Book, too, contained a large section on equipment, materials, supplies and sources, professional and children's books and ideas for activities. But the one difference is very important for it shows clearly that as kindergartens became more and more an accepted part of the school system the gap between them and Grade 1 was gradually worn away and not only did Grade 1 become more kindergarten-like but kindergarten began to adopt some of the attributes of Grade 1, namely the desire for a tangible product.

So far, this chapter has examined the development of kindergarten theory and practice in British Columbia as illustrated by professional publications and official and semi-official examinations of the system. From these sources, as well as from the few remaining reports of kindergarten teachers themselves, it has been possible to piece together some idea of what was taking place within kindergarten classrooms in the period from the opening of the first public school kindergarten in 1944, to the end of the 1960's. A further source, and one that is quite as important as those already examined, is that of kindergarten teacher training during the same period.

In British Columbia, no special qualification for teaching kindergarten has ever been required beyond normal teaching certification, although preference has always been given to teachers with training or experience in this area. When classes were first opened in Victoria and Vancouver, the teachers were presumably either primary specialists or had received
their kindergarten training outside of the province. Leadership in the kindergarten field in both districts certainly came from primary specialists for some years.

In 1945, classes in kindergarten theory and method were offered at Department of Education Summer Schools and within two years the University of British Columbia Department of Extension (now Continuing Education) was also offering similar courses. Despite the availability of local training, for some years a large number of teachers appear to have trained outside of the province. In 1958-59, the Pre-Primary Education Committee, preparing its report to the Chant Commission, visited eight classes in Vancouver. Of these eight teachers, three had studied kindergarten method in Ontario, two had trained overseas, and one had an Elementary Conditional Certificate but had taught "for many years" in both private and public kindergartens. The other two are simply listed as "experienced kindergarten teachers." 73

The University of British Columbia was the first in the province to undertake kindergarten teacher training as a part of its regular programme and for most of the period under examination it was the only school that did. Simon Fraser University did not begin to offer such courses until 1970 and the University of Victoria still does not do so.

From 1947 onwards the Extension Department of UBC enlarged its programme to include ten non-credit courses which were required for the licensing of teachers in private kindergartens and pre-school groups. 74 When the College of Education was established in 1956, attempts were made to provide more for the needs of teachers in public school kindergartens. A major in Preschool Education was included in the elementary programme.
and preparation was begun of further courses for kindergarten teachers. Special nursery-kindergarten schools were set up off campus for use in summer courses and in the winter session, Mrs. Alice Borden's private kindergarten at Fourth and Blanca was used for observation. The courses for credit begun within the College of Education paralleled the non-credit courses of the Extension Department and for some years both continued to be given.

In 1961, a Child Study Centre was established on campus by the College of Education. It provided opportunities for observation and demonstration, research, and pre-service and in-service training for teachers in both private and public kindergartens. Alice Borden was its first Director and Dean N.V. Scarfe, who showed great interest in this area of education, was on the Management Committee.

By 1965, the Vancouver District College, run by the Vancouver School Board, was offering shorter and cheaper courses than UBC for teachers seeking qualifications for teaching in private kindergartens under the Welfare Institutions Division of the provincial Department of Welfare. The focus at UBC was therefore directed towards the Preschool Major degree or certificate. In the following year, administrative responsibility for the Child Study Centre was assumed by Mrs. Grace Bredin, who coordinated the Centre's activities with the courses offered by the Faculty of Education and the other Faculties and Departments that had an interest in young children. These included Social Work, Medicine, Home Economics, Psychology and Extension.

Faculty members in the Early Childhood Department were recruited largely by Grace Bredin, who, like Dean Scarfe, had come to UBC from the
University of Manitoba, when the College of Education was established. Although she had not trained in pre-school education, Grace Bredin had much experience in education and was convinced of the vital importance of the early years in influencing a child's future development. Dean Scarfe, who had been strongly influenced in England, by Susan Issacs and Dorothy Gardner, was also of this mind. As a result, new faculty members who were recruited had backgrounds in nursery education rather than in the more formal primary grades. The majority had trained in the United States.

Increasing concern amongst faculty members for the expansion of kindergartens in the public schools, led, in 1968, to the appointment of a joint committee from the Education and Extension Departments. The committee organized a symposium for administrators and School Trustees on "The Establishment of Kindergartens in Public Schools"; work was also begun on new courses for the preparation of teachers to fill the increasing number of places in public school kindergartens.

By 1969, four courses were being offered in Early Childhood Education:

1. Bachelor of Education Degree.
2. Master of Education Degree.
3. Education Extension programme for selected mature students for basic and continuing study in early childhood education.
4. Diploma in Education (Education of Young Children). This was a one year course for college graduates which integrated the contents of several of the courses in the regular Bachelor Degree programme.

Leadership for the profession and the community was provided through consultation services to School Boards and pre-school groups in the form
of kits of resource literature on the organization and administration of kindergartens. All staff members acted as resource persons, chairing and leading workshops throughout the province and giving off-campus courses. 

Increasing enrolment in all undergraduate courses in early childhood education made it necessary to provide both day and evening courses in the regular programme in 1971, as well as an extra-sessional schedule. In the Bachelor programme, by far the most heavily enrolled, approximately five hundred students took one or more courses. This included students of varying backgrounds and career orientations. Majors were required to take the four early childhood education courses as well as a kindergarten practicum.

It is clear that from the establishment of the College of Education in 1956, the Child Study Centre and the faculty members of the Department of Early Childhood Education played an increasingly large role in the preparation of teachers for the likewise rapidly increasing number of public kindergartens. The role was a double one, for faculty members worked both within the University and in the community with School Boards, Trustees, teachers and parent groups for the further expansion and understanding of kindergarten education.

One of the strongest uniting factors within the early childhood education field with British Columbia was the Association for Childhood Education International. By 1960, a provincial Board of this association had been established with representatives from the already established Victoria, Vancouver Teachers, British Columbia Preschool Education Association, Co-operative Teachers, and Greater Victoria Teachers branches. In the following few years, the British Columbia Preschool Education
Association and the Greater Vancouver Kindergarten Teachers Association gradually disintegrated and so the provincial Board of the ACE became more and more important as a link between the various groups in the field. A student branch was also organized at UBC, with faculty support.

The Board organized Conferences in April 1961, March 1963 and October 1964. At the 1964 Conference, Dr. Helen Heffernan of the California Bureau of Elementary Education, and Audrianna Allen of Seattle were guest speakers. Further contact with the international mainstream of early childhood education came with the attendance of local delegates at ACEI conferences in the United States, and with the appointment of Mozetta Downey to the Kindergarten Committee and Margery Thompson to the Nursery Committee of the ACEI. In the summer of 1966, the ACEI sponsored a ten-day workshop at UBC. Many local educators chaired sessions as did international visitors including Dr. Bernice Baxter from Mills College California, Dr. Helen Heffernan, and Dr. Vernon Haulnich of Teachers College, Columbia University. Dorothy Gardner, of the University of London, also made a valuable contribution to early childhood education in the province, both through papers delivered at conferences and as a visiting professor.

The provincial ACE Board began publishing its own newspaper in 1970, under the editorship of Dr. David Bain, Associate Professor of Education at UBC. The newly formed British Columbia Preschool Teachers Association also began publishing a newsletter at this time. Both served to draw together early childhood educators throughout the province.

Another international organization that influenced early childhood education on a worldwide basis is the Organization Mondiale pour l'éducation Primaire (OMEP), which has consultative status with UNICEF and
UNESCO. It was formed in Prague in 1948 and Grace Bredin was present at this inaugural assembly. For many years, Canada was not a member because it was unable to organize a national representative body. In 1965, as a result of the efforts of Grace Bredin and Elsie Stapleton of the Ministry of Welfare, Ontario, a satisfactory national Committee was organized and Canada became a member of OMEP.

The Department of Early Childhood Education at UBC helped, to a certain extent, to unify early childhood education in British Columbia. At this time, there were several areas of early childhood education in which expansion and change were taking place; public school kindergartens, private kindergartens and nursery schools, co-op play groups and day-care. Each group, naturally, was most interested in its own areas of concern. Faculty members from UBC had contact with all groups, and while they did not attempt to draw them all together, they did act as a form of liaison. This was true also of the provincial Board of the ACE. With its general concern for the education and well-being of the young child, it tended to draw together all groups working in the field. Moreover, as a local branch of an international organization it served to keep British Columbia educators in the mainstream of educational developments throughout the world.

Within Canada, British Columbia was not the only province to begin examining its education system, with particular reference to the early years, in the period from the mid-1960's to the early 1970's, but the examination was nevertheless not nationwide. At this time, all the provinces, except Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, had some legislated provision for public school kindergartens. In Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, however, there was provision for admitting children, at five
years of age, to a pre-Grade 1 programme. In New Brunswick, the establish-
ment and operation of kindergartens was at the discretion of the School
Boards, but they had to meet all costs themselves. Consequently, there
were few public kindergartens in operation in that province. 92

Two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, set up government Commissions
to report on various aspects of education and both Reports were published
in 1972. The Alberta Commission was a follow-up to a 1966 report,
commissioned by the Alberta School Trustees Association, and prepared by
Walter H. Worth of the Department of Elementary Education of the University
of Alberta. 93 This first report drew on a large body of research from
both Canada and the United States, as well as studying selected programmes
and practices in both countries, and environmental conditions in Alberta.
Amongst its conclusions were:
1. Readiness for schooling can be developed at an earlier age than pre-
   viously supposed.
2. All children can profit from early schooling.
3. Early childhood education is intended as a complement, not an alterna-
   tive to family life.
4. Early childhood education should be an integral part of schooling.
5. Early childhood education has certain unique objectives and character-
   istics.

It further concluded that opportunities for young children in Alberta were
vastly inferior to many elsewhere. As there was widespread public support
for the idea, the report recommended that the services should be extended
downwards to include five-year-olds on a voluntary basis, with the same
government financial support as elementary education.
The Report of the Royal Commission, entitled *A Future of Choices: A Choice of Futures*, was also prepared under the chairmanship of Walter Worth and drew similar conclusions on the question of early childhood education. It viewed education as a lifelong process and so recommended that schooling "should begin at the earliest age at which a child can derive benefit" and that the "principle of public responsibility for free education...should apply to younger children."\(^95\) It further recommended that the programmes currently offered by play schools, nursery schools, day-care centres, and programmes under preventative service legislation, be integrated with the programmes proposed by the Commission. This would enable early childhood education to be kept distinct in concept and practice from the basic system of schooling, which, the Commission believed, would be a stimulus to "energetic leadership and innovative activities."\(^96\)

The Saskatchewan inquiry took the form of a Minister's Committee and was intended only to examine the subject of kindergartens. Its terms of reference were:

1. To examine the need, feasibility and desirability of a province wide, publically supported kindergarten programme.
2. To recommend suitable objectives for such a programme.
3. To recommend appropriate means of achieving and implementing these objectives.\(^97\)

The committee was also requested to examine finance, admission policy, problems of implementation and legislative changes that would be necessary if kindergarten classes were established. The greater part of the report was given over to these latter problems. In a two-page introduction, the committee accepted the premise that "the experiences during the early
years of a child's life are crucial in determining his attitude toward learning and his ability to deal with subsequent experiences in school and in life." It therefore strongly recommended that publically supported kindergartens be established in Saskatchewan. This recommendation was subsequently backed up by a chapter which reviewed current literature and research on the subject, but the fact that the committee placed the recommendation at the head of the report indicates its complete acceptance of the importance of early childhood education.

In 1972, the kindergarten became an integral part of the British Columbia education system. It still bore the name that Froebel had given to his own small school nearly a century and a half before, and it still catered, in part, to the same age group, but the similarity extended no further. Many of the changes, discussed in the earlier chapters, occurred before kindergartens were seriously considered for the British Columbia system; others took place, throughout North America as well as in this province, during the thirty years in which kindergartens were gradually introduced. These most recent changes, as this chapter has attempted to illustrate, were mostly concerned with the intellectual content of the kindergarten curriculum. Some teachers and educational theorists continually stressed the importance of freedom for discovery and personal and social development during the first year at school; others were increasingly concerned with an early academic orientation. The Department of Education showed little real interest in kindergartens between 1944 and 1970, doing little more than to increase funding slightly in response to pressure from School Boards. Even after the 1972 legislation the Department made no change in kindergarten regulations or curriculum. As a result, kinder-
garten classes in British Columbia still vary today as much as they did in 1958, when the Pre-Primary Committee made its report. The emphasis and atmosphere within each class still depends very much on the philosophy of the teachers and principals concerned. Many classes still retain the atmosphere of freedom so strongly advocated in the 1940's but on the whole there has probably been a slight increase in the emphasis on preparatory work for the first grade. There can be no doubt, however, that kindergarten is now an integral part of the education system in British Columbia. If, during the period of this integration, the kindergarten lost some of its freedom and individuality, then the loss is probably balanced by an increase in the same qualities in the primary grades.
FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III


2 Ibid., pp. 34-35.


5 Headley, The Kindergarten, p. 23.

6 Ibid., p. 95.

7 Ibid., p. 73


9 Ibid., p. 176.

10 Ibid., p. 245.

11 Headley, The Kindergarten, p. 98.


14 Interview with Dr. Hannah Polowy, Chairman, Department of Early Childhood Education, UBC, 18 April 1979.

16 Mention is also made of some kind of curriculum guide in the late 1940's in Canadian Education 3 (1974):69.

17 Interview with Ulah Watson, former Supervisor of Primary Education, Greater Victoria School Board, 15 March 1979.

18 Manual, p. 5.

19 Ibid., pp. 7-9.

20 See above, p. 47.


23 Ibid., p. 316.

24 Ibid., p. 317.

25 Interview with J.R. Meredith, Senior Supervisor of Public Instruction, British Columbia Department of Education, 30 May 1979.

26 The B.C. Parent-Teacher was published by the British Columbia Parent-Teacher Association (BCPTA) and the B.C. Teacher was published by the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF).


28 Marian James, "Will He Be Ready for School?" B.C. Teacher (April 1954) pp. 311-16.

29 Kathleen Collins, "Five and a Half or Six?" B.C. Parent-Teacher (March-April 1955) p. 5.


32 A.K. Davies to Chant Commission, Brief #213; F.R. Bates to Chant Commission, Brief #2.

33 Intermunicipal Committee of Greater Victoria to Chant Commission, Brief #181.

34 BCTF to Chant Commission, Brief #327.
35 Interview with W.V. Allister, Director of Teacher Personnel, BCTF, 31 May 1979.

36 People in the Sechelt District to Chant Commission, Brief #154.

37 Board of School Trustees, Vancouver, to Chant Commission, Brief #231.

38 Vancouver Parent-Teacher Council to Chant Commission, Brief #196.

39 Board of School Trustees, North Vancouver, to Chant Commission, Brief #163.

40 British Columbia Preschool Education Association to Chant Commission, Brief #221.

41 Co-operative Play Groups Association to Chant Commission, Brief #160.

42 Nursery School Association of Greater Victoria to Chant Commission, Brief #168.


45 Pre-Primary Report, pp. 38-39.

46 Ibid., p. 12.


48 Ibid., p. 40.

49 Addenda to the Report, nos. 8-9.

50 Pre-Primary Report, p. 36.

51 Ibid., pp. 2-3.


53 Addenda to the Report, no. 8, p. 4.

54 Ibid., no. 9, p. 7.
55 Vancouver Times, 5 August 1965, p. 11.

56 Sun, 6 December 1966, p. 12.

57 BCTF, Involvement: The Key to Better Schools (Vancouver: BCTF, 1968).

58 Ibid., pp. 8, 13-14.


61 BCSTA, Innovation, p. 23.


66 Ibid., p. 1.


69 Newsletter, (May 1968), n.p.


71 Ibid., pp. 39-42.

72 Ibid., pp. 52-53.

73 Addenda to the Report, no. 8, pp. 1-2.


75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., 1962, p. 70.
77 Ibid., 1965, pp. 91-2.
78 Ibid., 1966, p. 122.
79 Interview with Grace Bredin, former Chairman, Department of Early Childhood Education, UBC, 11 June 1979.
80 Interview with N.V. Scarfe, former Dean of Education, UBC, 15 June 1979.
81 Dean's Annual Report 1968, p. 83.
82 Ibid., 1969, p. 60.
83 Ibid., p. 61.
84 Ibid., 1971, p. 67.
85 Wycherley, Brief History, p. 23.
86 Ibid., p. 24.
88 Ibid., p. 32.
89 Ibid., p. 46.
90 Ibid., p. 45.
91 Dean's Annual Report 1966, p. 123.
94 Ibid., pp. 65-69.
96 Ibid., p. 135.
98 Ibid., p. 1.
CONCLUSION

Despite its century-long history in the United States, the kindergarten in Canadian public school systems is a relatively new phenomenon. Ontario is, of course, the exception. That province adopted kindergartens very early in their history, but this was due largely to the efforts of James L. Hughes. Without his influence and dedicated work, Ontario would certainly not have taken such a step at that time.

But while kindergarten development in Canada has been slow and piece-meal, it has not been for lack of awareness of events in the United States. The educational innovations in that country during the Progressive Era were followed with interest in Canada and generally supported in principle. But the interest and support did not result in the same extent of change as was seen in the United States. Kindergarten was certainly not one of the areas of innovation that was given much support.

In British Columbia, the care and education of children under school age remained the responsibility of home and family until the closing years of the Second World War, when interest in the pre-school child was initially aroused by calls for child care facilities in Vancouver and Victoria. It seems that this interest was largely emotional, for the number of working women actually requiring such facilities was small, but the issue became public and began to develop momentum.

Most levels of government were unwilling to commit themselves, in any practical way, to providing any sort of facilities for young children. Although the reason for their action is not clear, the Vancouver and Victoria School Boards were the exceptions. No doubt their traditional association with children was an important factor. Certainly, they did not act
initially from any commitment to the kindergarten ideal or the notion of early childhood education. But once they showed an interest in providing some sort of facilities for young children, the problem was gratefully handed over to them by welfare agencies and other levels of government.

For some years, the fate of the first classes was in doubt because some Trustees were unconvinced of their success, or, indeed, their necessity. But from the start, large sections of the public, particularly the parents of those children who attended a class, were wholeheartedly in favour of kindergartens and more and more classes were called for. The two Boards were constantly held back in their expansion of kindergartens by lack of funds, for kindergarten had no priority with the Department of Education. The extent to which parents in particular supported pre-school education, however, is shown by the rapid expansion of Co-operative Play Groups and private kindergartens, which were soon enrolling far more pre-school children than the schools.

In the decade of the 1960's, the United States again experienced an upsurge of interest in and concern for the young child. This generated much research which in turn led to further interest, particularly in the area of early intellectual development. This time, the influence on Canada was more profound and British Columbia, at least, moved in the same direction as the United States, if not quite as far.

The movement in the United States, spurred on by the current research, was towards early academic work, and in British Columbia too, more emphasis came to be placed on pre-reading and number skills in the kindergarten. It is difficult, however, to judge exactly how much the emphasis changed. The Department of Education published two curriculum guides over the years,
one in 1954 and one in 1972. A comparison of the two does show an extra emphasis on skills learning in the second, particularly in the area of reading. Within British Columbia, and generally throughout Canada, educational theorists stressed the importance of freedom for individual development rather than academic work during the kindergarten year, but it is hard to say how much effect they had on the classrooms.

There has always been a dilemma associated with the incorporation of kindergartens into public school systems. It stems from the fact that both the methods and the aims of the kindergarten have differed to a certain extent from those of the primary classes. As kindergarten has become a part of the system it has always lost some of its freedom of outlook and method. On the other hand, it has generally managed to pass some of this same freedom on to the primary grades. This occurred when traditional Froebelian kindergartens were made a part of the system at the end of the last century. Class size was increased enormously, resulting in a much more structured programme in order to keep the class functioning smoothly. Moreover, two sessions were conducted each day, preventing teachers from working with parents. But, as a balance, some of the freedom and activity learning of the kindergarten began to penetrate the primary classrooms in the form of songs, books, plants, pictures and construction work.

The same loss of freedom also occurred in British Columbia between 1945 and 1972. In the kindergarten classes, more emphasis came to be placed on readiness skills and a tangible product, rather than simply the fullest development of each individual in his own time and his own way. But the kindergarten's loss was again the primary grades' gain. The continuity of both aims and methods in the early childhood years is now
commonly accepted in the primary grades, making many primary classes almost indistinguishable from the kindergarten. The difference between the two is now generally so marginal that it is fair to say that the 1972 legislation did have a major effect on the education system of the province; it effectively lowered the age of first school attendance from six to five years.
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## APPENDIX

### TABLE 1

**Kindergarten and Grade 1 Enrolment in Victoria and Vancouver 1945 - 1975**

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Department of Education figures taken from Department of Education, Annual Reports 1945-75.

Vancouver School Board figures taken from VSB, Minutes, 1945-75.

N.B. Department of Education and School Board figures do not tally exactly because School Board figures represent current enrolment and Department of Education figures represent total yearly enrolment for grant purposes.

*These figures appear to be incorrect, but no reason for the mistake is apparent. Given the number of kindergartens operating in these two years, the numbers are impossibly high.

**Victoria School Board figures not available.
TABLE 2

Total Kindergarten Enrolment in British Columbia 1945-1976

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