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an examination of the educational and social aspects of its impact, with a study of a reception area, West Sussex

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LONDON EVACUATED A FIRST "WAVE" OF 400,000 CHILDREN ON SEPTEMBER 1, IN CHARGE OF 22,000 TEACHERS; OTHERS GOING ON LATER DAYS. HERE A PARTY IS SEEN ENTRAINING AT A MAIN LINE STATION IN THE SUBURBS, EQUIPPED WITH GAS-MASKS AND CARRYING THEIR BELONGINGS IN BAGS AND HAVERSACKS. (S. and G.)

The Evacuation of English Schoolchildren during
World War Two; an examination of the educational
and social aspects of its impact, with a case-
study of a reception area, West Sussex.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of
Philosophy in the Faculty of Education,
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by
Edward Mills Jones
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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION.

Master of Philosophy

THE EVACUATION OF ENGLISH SCHOOLCHILDREN DURING WORLD WAR TWO; AN EXAMINATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ITS IMPACT, WITH A CASE-STUDY OF A RECEPTION AREA, WEST SUSSEX.

by Edward Mills Jones.

The intention of this thesis is to study the impact of the evacuations of 1939 - 1940 upon the educational service of England and Wales, and the extent to which they may have contributed to the remarkable war-time growth of interest in education, and to subsequent educational legislation and wider social reform.

The operation of the 1939 evacuation, its immediate effects, the "phoney war" period, and the evacuations which came with Dunkirk and the aerial offensive are considered in Chapter 1.

The general effects on the national education service, with special reference to premises, occupy Chapter 2. The next two chapters are devoted to educational difficulties in the different types of zones. Chapter 3 indicates how reception areas coped with the initial mass invasion and the subsequent two-way traffic of evacuees. Chapter 4 looks at the problems of providing education in areas which should have been evacuated of schoolchildren, and at the comparatively trouble-free neutral areas. After an introductory section on the inspectorate, the teachers themselves are the subject of Chapter 5 which shows the problems they met, the roles they accumulated, the consequent strain under which they lived and worked, and their many achievements.

The following three chapters are concerned with the social aspects of the evacuation. Chapter 6 concentrates on the unexpected extent of social deprivation which was revealed, while Chapter 7 looks particularly at the health of schoolchildren as shown by the evacuation and the role of the school medical service. Welfare aspects, especially school-based services and pastoral responsibilities are dealt with in Chapter 8.

West Sussex is taken in Chapter 9 as an example of a reception area. In it the impact of the arrival of the evacuees and the subsequent effects, educational and social, upon visiting schools and the local educational service are examined. It is shown that a reception area was not necessarily remote from the war.

The degree of success of the evacuation operation and the extent and impact of the educational and social repercussions are summarised in Chapter 10, where also the events of 1939-1940 are related to pre-war educational developments and their contribution to subsequent educational and social reconstruction is identified.

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Abbreviations

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Weitzmann Box | - | see Appendix 1 |
| D.E.S. | - | Department of Education and Science |
| P.R.O. | - | Public Records Office |
| B/Ed. | - | Board of Education |
| M/Ed. | - | Ministry of Education |
| W/S | - | West Sussex Records Office |

CORRIGENDUM

For 'Weitzmann' read 'Weitzman'
throughout

INTRODUCTION

While on a year's secondment at the Cambridge Institute of Education the present writer had the opportunity of extended reading on the history of education and became interested in the relationship between war and educational advance in twentieth century England. In particular he was impressed by the passing of the 1944 Education Act before the ending of hostilities and, even more, by the appearance of the "Green Book," the precursor to the Act, as early as June 1941. This meant the drafting must have been done during the darkest days of the war. What, then, had impelled its architects - a sense of idealism born of a time of national peril, or some other influence?

Some years later study of the period, 1939-1940, revealed that the evacuation produced both a high degree of dislocation and considerable disquiet at its revelations linked with demands for positive governmental action. At that stage the Weitzmann papers (see Appendix 1) became available to students and it was immediately obvious that here was an unsifted mass of documents and papers which would throw light upon those confused years. The work for this thesis was therefore undertaken in the hope that the story of the evacuations of 1939-1940 could be told in detail and the effects of evacuation assessed. These effects would be both short-term and long-term, with the latter likely to include background evidence relating to the discussion so early in the war of the need for widespread social reform and new legislation. The original intention of basing much of the thesis on two local areas, namely Southampton, an evacuation area, and West Sussex, a reception area, had to be abandoned because of the shortage of documentary material. The situation in West Sussex is, however, considered in Chapter 9.

The development of the thesis is summarised in the Abstract. After a description of the evacuation operation, the educational effects

are considered first and then its social revelations and repercussions. The West Sussex case-study follows. Finally, the evacuation, its disclosures and its impact are summarised and related to pre-war educational developments and later educational and social reform.

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CHAPTER 1THE EVACUATION(i) Planning

Ever since World War 1 the Committee of Imperial Defence had become increasingly concerned about the vulnerability of Britain to air attack. In 1931 an Evacuation Sub-Committee was set up under Sir John Anderson, and all its assumptions henceforth were based on Air Ministry estimates of probable blitz effects on London, estimates which worsened each year. This Sub-committee was delegated the task, in 1932, of preparing an evacuation scheme. Three years after this, the Board of Education and Ministry of Health, produced a joint report in which they laid down as priorities in "Reception Areas" housing, education, health and poor law relief. By 24 April 1938, when the "Anderson Committee on Evacuation" was appointed, official estimates of potential air raid damage were horrifying, and with the Committee's report on 28 July 1938 it became clear that little constructive preparation had been done to meet this expected situation. This was confirmed by the feverish improvisations which accompanied the Munich Crisis, and which, for example, consigned East London children to the very areas on the Essex coast whence the local children had already been evacuated, and sent London evacuees to King's School, Canterbury whose own pupils had been allocated to Scotland.⁽¹⁾

This was the situation after the Munich false alarm when, on 14 November, 1938, it was decided to allot to the Ministry of Health overall responsibility for preparing and operating any future evacuation. The three-fold tasks which this involved were (a) to designate priority classes (these became: schoolchildren in supervised groups; younger children with mothers or older adults; expectant mothers; and

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

blind or crippled adults.), (b) to zone the whole country into Evacuation, Reception and Neutral areas, and (c) to prepare detailed operation plans both for emergency and long-term evacuations.

From this brief analysis of pre-1939 attitudes and experience emerge two elements which were to have serious effects both on the conduct of the evacuation and on the resultant educational difficulties. There were the principles that, firstly, modern aerial warfare demanded rapid and mass evacuations from population centres, the complex business of reception being regarded as of lesser urgency; and secondly, that the Board of Education was subordinated to the Ministry of Health. The officials there were under constant pressure and racing against time, (The Home Defence Sub-committee complained in January 1939 that "Evacuation plans are at present very backwards,"); and in common with all those who had to give regard to Air Ministry calculations they were conditioned to expect wide-scale and highly destructive aerial attack. They were also working in a national climate provided by a background of call-ups, gas masks, shelter drill, trench digging and crises on the continental mainland. No wonder the PEP Broadsheet No. 153 of October 1939 was able to state: "One of the chief causes of muddle and confusion has been the fear of disastrous air raids on London and other key areas."

That this confusion was already being fore-shadowed in the last pre-war months cannot be surprising. On the one hand, complete railway movement timetables for the evacuation programme had been completed in April 1939, and on 22 May the national press⁽¹⁾ was generous with its praise of the Board's Circular 1,469 which contained contingency plans for school meals, school-sharing, cultural activities, etc. On the other hand, authorities in Reception areas, although ready with

(1) News Chronicle and Times, 22 May 1939

their estimates for such anticipated needs as crockery, bedding, footwear, and blankets, were steadfastly refused the expenditure on these essentials. Only growing panic in government departments produced the authorisation which came as late as August, a month that saw an absolute frenzy of local hunting, buying and commandeering.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, it was during those same months that the widespread seizure and earmarking of school premises in Reception areas was permitted. Some idea of the foreboding felt in high places can be found in the minutes of a hurriedly arranged meeting at the House of Commons between the Prime Minister and a deputation headed by Sir Walter Citrine of the TUC and Herbert Morrison of the LCC on 29 August. Strong pressure was put on the Premier to authorise immediate evacuation with highly emotional reference to the effects of bombing and of shell-shocked Spanish children wandering bewildered in shattered streets during the Spanish Civil War.⁽²⁾

The scene was now set; and as the international situation worsened, the tempo of evacuation preparations increased. The activity of those last fateful days can best be represented by the final timetable:

| | | |
|----------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Thursday | 24 August | - Teachers re-called from holiday. |
| Monday | 28 August | - Evacuation rehearsals. |
| Tuesday | 29 August | - The deputation to Chamberlain. |
| Thursday | 31 August | - The order given for evacuation. |
| Friday | 1 September | - Evacuation began. |
| Sunday | 3 September | - Declaration of war. |

(1) R. Titmuss, Problems of Social Policy (History of Second World War, U.K. Series, H.M.S.O. 1950) p. 94

(2) P.R.O. Prem/1/382

(ii) The Operation

No amount of criticism of the effects of the evacuation can detract from the success of the operation in its sheer scale, speed and complexity. The statistics of dispersing 1,500,000 evacuees from danger centres, in three days, without a single accident, are daunting, covering, as they do, many sheets of tightly-packed figures, but a look at the details of the London evacuation is rewarding. From 1,600 assembly points in London and the eleven boroughs of Middlesex, Essex, Surrey and Kent, through 172 Underground stations and 98 main line stations, shepherded by 40,000 teachers and helpers⁽¹⁾ and many thousands of WVS, 659,527 persons were moved out, 379,780 being handled by LPTB, and 376,652 being unaccompanied schoolchildren.⁽²⁾ It is interesting to note that the LCC system, based on its twelve Education Officers - who became Dispersal Officers - remained an unchanged model for the duration. The organised and orderly evacuation was in marked contrast to what happened to most of the evacuees at their destinations.

The virtual completion of the mass movement in the first three days of September is not only a measure of the success of the operation, but also an indication that the numbers involved were nothing like as enormous as originally estimated for a four-day operation. The 1½ million moved was a disappointing fraction of the 3½ million expected, and only half of what the Times of 4 September estimated as having been transported. The actual percentages of schoolchildren who were officially evacuated ranged regionally from 76% to 15%, those of mothers with young children being lower still. No-one has been able completely to explain this enormous range beyond quoting the excellence of some authorities in administration and public relations. The final percentages for all unaccompanied children and mothers with accompanied

(1) Titmuss, op.cit. p. 107

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

children in England and Wales can be seen from these examples: ⁽¹⁾

| | | | |
|-------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Gosport | 67% | Birmingham | 21% |
| Bootle | 66% | Portsmouth | 20% |
| Newcastle | 57% | Sheffield | 13% |
| Manchester | 44% | Grimsby | 7% |
| London | 37% | Rotherham | 6% |
| Southampton | 28% | | |

The immediate result of this was that, as the national average of evacuable who turned up for evacuation was only 47% in England and 38% in Scotland, the movement controllers, concerned primarily with the speedy moving of children to safety, re-scheduled trains, re-grouped parties and re-arranged destinations, unwittingly compounding the resultant social and educational complications in the reception areas. As for the evacuation areas, with school premises closed and staffs evacuated, the seeds for their problems were sown with the continuing presence of many thousands of school-age children in the wartime streets of British cities.

Details of those actually moved are as follows: ⁽²⁾

| <u>Classes</u> | <u>London</u> | <u>Other Areas</u> | <u>Scotland</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Unaccompanied children | 393,700 | 371,200 | 62,059 | 826,959 |
| 2. Mothers and accompanied children | 257,000 | 169,500 | 97,170 | 523,670 |
| 3. Expectant mothers | 5,600 | 6,700 | 405 | 12,705 |
| 4. Blind, cripples, etc. | 2,440 | 2,830 | 1,787 | 7,057 |
| 5. Teachers and helpers | | 89,355 | 13,645 | <u>103,000</u> |
| | | | | <u>1,473,391</u> |

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2133/2 and Titmuss op.cit. p. 552 App. 4

(2) Titmuss ibid. p. 103

(iii) Reception

By the very nature of things, the reception of such vast numbers of newcomers could not possibly be as smooth as had been their departure from home. Some of the reasons for this have already been touched upon, such as: the subordination of the educational to the Health authorities; the miscalculation of numbers involved; the hasty re-organisation of trains and groups; and, most of all, the overriding urgency to speed evacuees out of danger zones with what was virtually a blind faith in their efficient reception.

Before the faults which were exposed in reception areas are examined, it must be said that there can be no questioning the compassion and generosity shown by the bulk of the population towards the strangers at their doors, and the tireless devotion demonstrated by so many helpers, official and voluntary, who were responsible for their reception and dispersal. The general pattern was that evacuees would be met at the railhead by officials and helpers. From there they would be taken to the Distribution Centres, and then to their billets; some kind of medical facilities and refreshments would usually be available. This is borne out by the reports that HMIs were called upon to make on the workings of the reception in their areas, and which largely represented their own first-hand experience and eyewitness accounts. These included detailed, eloquent, and often moving descriptions of local turn-outs and "royal" welcomes. At Shawford, Hants, for example, "There was something of pity and indignation in the attitude of the onlookers as they watched some tiny human Christmas trees labelled and laden with little parcels."⁽¹⁾ At Folkestone, Shorncliffe station saw 5,167 evacuees (only 50% of the numbers expected) greeted by the Mayor, officials and nurses, a meticulous

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12

organisation which included grammar school messenger boys, Girl Guide helpers, four Reception centres with an immediate card-indexing system (which would have been invaluable if used nationally), a local population anxious to participate and disappointed when their billets were not needed, and - a natural conclusion to all this - a contented set of guests and hostesses.⁽¹⁾

At Horsham, 510 Streatham evacuees found things so well organised, including medical and sanitation provision, that they were processed and dispersed in 45 minutes.⁽²⁾ Colne, in Lancashire, took in its stride, smoothly and happily, not only 165 Bradford children, but also 27 non-English-speaking Continentals, (15 Basques and 12 Austrian Jews).⁽³⁾ However, although there were large numbers of similarly happy receptions, the fact remains that, by their very efficiency in speeding children to billets, more often than not the officials were unwittingly contributing to the subsequent problems of misplacement, fragmentation and overcrowding of schools.

On the other side of the coin, there were many areas where the Billeting Officers had been capriciously appointed, and where chaotic scenes were common, at the railheads. It was frequently reported that harassed officials whisked the pupils away in buses, straight from the train, in arbitrary groups. "In one case," it was recorded in 1940, "a bus load landed up 25 miles from the rest of the school and has never been able to join it."⁽⁴⁾ On Ryde Pier, so great was the confusion, with milling crowds of holidaymakers returning from the Isle of Wight, that each arriving boat-load of evacuees, regardless of the overall composition of school parties, was immediately entrained

(1) B/Ed. 182 B(2)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12

(3) B/Ed. 168 B(2)

(4) Helen Bentwich in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 169

and despatched.⁽¹⁾ At Lytham St. Annes, where the local Secretary of Education was drafted to Food Control and no teachers nor educationalists took part in reception, the system simply broke down and in some cases evacuated teachers had to take over.⁽²⁾ At Bedford, bungling inefficiency in producing a billeting register had unhappy consequences, with the Billeting Officers trailing around, after midnight, expectant mothers, unwanted slum families and unintelligible foreigners.⁽³⁾ There were "scenes reminiscent of a cross between an early Roman slave market and Selfridge's bargain basement."⁽⁴⁾ Pretty little girls and strong potential farm-lads were the objects of selfish, thoughtless or even mercenary selection.⁽⁵⁾ One of the most bizarre stories is of the 14,000 children from the Dagenham district who were loaded into a seaborne flotilla which "sailed downstream into the mists of early morning" to a farewell fluttering of handkerchiefs. Later in the day, officials at Felixstowe, Lowestoft and Yarmouth stood aghast at the numbers which poured ashore. No organisation was waiting, no beds, no blankets, and many of these unfortunates from Essex spent four nights on sack-covered straw.⁽⁶⁾

What happened in the reception areas at this stage was to have serious repercussions on the schooling of many thousands of children, and one letter, from a Berkshire MP to the Parliamentary Secretary in mid-October 1939, is of particular interest, for it contains reference to some of the issues which were already having their effects. He writes of one village with 40 local pupils and two teachers who had

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12

(2) B/Ed. 190 B(2)

(3) B/Ed. 148 B(2)

(4) G. M. Lindsay, West Hartlepool Evacuated Schoolchildren (W. Hartlepool L.E.A.) p. 9

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

(6) J. C. O'Leary, in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 20

received two separate London parties of 50 pupils with seven teachers, and 24 pupils with three teachers, none of whom had any LCC equipment. The normal school population of his area was 18,367, to which had been added 7,756 official and 2,855 unofficial evacuees, a mixture of secondary, technical, elementary and central, mixed and single-sex schools. Only 84 of the 212 local schools were functioning normally, 89 of the remainder being on double-shift.⁽¹⁾

With individual school populations spread far and wide, fragmentation of schools was one of the prime problems giving rise to the subsequent controversy of maintaining school identity. Just as Glasgow's schools were stretched from Kintyre to Ross and Cromarty, Liverpool's penetrated 120 miles into West Wales, while London's covered England from Land's End to the Wash. The LCC Chief Inspector reported, among many examples, one school spread over 400 square miles and 23 villages;⁽²⁾ one Head took 88 miles to visit his boys;⁽³⁾ another's school was "38 miles across."⁽⁴⁾ What can happen in an operation of such vast scale is illustrated by a group from a West Ham school; their particular train, being non-corridor, was obliged to make a "nature" stop at Wantage, where they remained for the rest of the war, never re-joining their school.⁽⁵⁾

It was inevitable that under such circumstances there were many cases of evacuees being misplaced in their billets. An extreme example showing the close connection between misfits and what became known as "the drift back" is the Roman Catholic, English-speaking, Liverpool children who found themselves billeted on Non-conformist,

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 113

(3) Spectator 29 Sept. 1939

(4) Clara Ractham Highway February 1940 p. 103

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

Welsh-speaking, Anglesey families. The insoluble dilemma facing the Welsh foster-parents was whether to take their little charges to chapel, to leave them untended, or to forgo their own deep-rooted habits of worship. For many of the children the situation was resolved when they were returned home on the advice of their priest that the risk of death in war-time Liverpool was less than the risk to their eternal souls in Wales.⁽¹⁾ Among the many cases reported by HMIs of billeting gaffes are: a dear old 71-year-old, quite unable to cope;⁽²⁾ a house with only one bed and four evacuees (two shared a couch); one Lancaster house where seven Salford children shared one room (two double beds, one for four, one for three);⁽³⁾ children billeted in public houses; a frightened evacuee child who ran from the house when her foster-mother came home, late and drunk.⁽⁴⁾ Incidentally, an irritant later to multiply significantly with the developments in hostilities was already discernible in those first weeks in September; this was the to-ing-and-fro-ing between danger area homes and safe areas. One family in early September had the distinction of twice returning home to Liverpool and then going back yet again to Hoylake.⁽⁵⁾

Another unsatisfactory aspect of billeting arrangements frequently commented on was the social distribution of accommodation, and it was not until the Incorporated Association of Headmasters carried out a survey that a widely-based picture could be put together. They found that 55 out of 85 schools were not fairly distributed, that the burden fell generally on the lower classes who responded magnificently, often on inadequate resources, and that the more well-to-do shirked their

(1) Sydney Herbert in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 236

(2) B/Ed. 210 B(2)

(3) B/Ed. 204 B(2)

(4) B/Ed. 210 B(2)

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12

responsibility. Places as far apart as Bournemouth, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Worcester, Tunbridge Wells, Leek, Fakenham, Lewes and Wisbech were all criticised with such verdicts as: "The upper classes never did their share at any time."; "The boys were forced on the poorer homes."; "The Mayor and Councillors refused evacuees while the poorer houses were actually overcrowded."; "The well-to-do find ready excuses for not having evacuees."⁽¹⁾ This attitude, which undoubtedly contributed towards the "drift", persisted into the 1940s. In early 1940 a local paper carried details of the Salisbury City Council Meeting where it was disclosed that there had been only six replies for volunteers to offer billets to answer the desperate shortage under the new scheme; one Councillor found the prospect of an evacuee "terrifying", another said bluntly, "Let them go back home."⁽²⁾ (to Portsmouth.) The Daily Herald reported just after Dunkirk that Ealing doctors had queues of women asking for certificates to show their health was unfit for evacuees.⁽³⁾

Another situation which often faced the inspectorate - and which, in some cases, took all their power of diplomacy to smooth out - was where education suffered as a result of petty inter-departmental squabbles, administrative feuds, and local "little Hitlers." The Director of Education in Northumberland, for example, as part of a personal feud with Newcastle, forbade Newcastle officials to enter his area;⁽⁴⁾ the Director of Buckinghamshire rode roughshod over local and evacuated teachers, abolished Teachers' Advisory Committees and produced an atmosphere of intolerable strain;⁽⁵⁾ in East Sussex, where the

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249

(2) B/Ed. 252 (B)2

(3) Daily Herald 17 July 1940

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2017/7

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

billeting authorities did not consult the LEA, the result was prolonged fragmentation of evacuated schools and neglect of secondary evacuees.⁽¹⁾

(iv) Private Evacuation

The President of the Board of Education, Lord de la Warr, speaking to the AMA in January 1940, confessed that "the unofficial evacuation probably surprised us by its size They crowded out the schools."⁽²⁾ Considering that two million people officially disappeared during the war, this is an understandable admission. The first official estimates show that, between June and September 1939, no fewer than 2,000,000 had privately evacuated themselves to safe areas.⁽³⁾ Predictably enough, Devon was a popular haven, having seven private evacuees to every official one; in fact, in all of the five West Country counties a quarter of the surplus accommodation had been booked as far back as February, 1939. Other popular counties were Buckinghamshire (27% accommodation privately booked), West Sussex (26%), Berkshire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire (25%), and East Sussex (24%).⁽⁴⁾ An interesting barometer of demand in those early days of the war was the advertising columns of the Daily Mail, which, on the first wartime weekday, carried advertisements for "safe" houses and "safety zone" hotels, and by the middle of September had a special section, "Safety Zone Hotels."

To dispel any suggestion that these figures reflect a mass of middle-aged affluent refugees who had no effect on the educational system it is only necessary to consult some of the official reports

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2017/7

(2) A.M.A. Jan. 1940 p. 10

(3) Titmuss op.cit. p. 102

(4) Ibid. p. 38

which reached the Board of Education. On 13 October all the 2,875 evacuees of school age in Glamorgan were unofficial;⁽¹⁾ from Aberystwyth came the news on 14 October that there were more than 800 private evacuees in the county;⁽²⁾ on 4 November it was learned that there was not a single official evacuee in Breconshire, but over 500 private ones.⁽³⁾ By Spring 1940, the private evacuees were in the majority in many areas, including Gloucestershire (which had over 600 from the Eastbourne area alone), Warwickshire and Worcestershire.⁽⁴⁾ Not surprisingly, Blackpool was a very popular retreat; on 2 October it was coping with between 5,000 and 6,000 private guests, and some of its schools were working a three-shift system.⁽⁵⁾

A Parliamentary statement on 27 September confirmed that the reception area LEA was under a statutory obligation to provide elementary education; secondary education was to be settled by liaison with the home LEA. The financial implications were serious and immediate, causing widespread indignation, voiced by Sir Percival Sharp^{*} in Education of 3 November. The whole question dragged on acrimoniously until the Davidson Report of January 1941, as a result of which unofficial evacuees became a charge on the evacuating LEA, providing a home was maintained there.⁽⁶⁾

The problems posed by, and for, unofficial evacuees were by no means solved by the ruling of 27 September, because it was originally thought that numbers would be too small to cause any financial distress

(1) B/Ed. WE 357 G

(2) B/Ed. 352 B(2) WE

(3) B/Ed. 351 B(2) WE

(4) B/Ed. E 424/120 (1)

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(6) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

* Secretary of the Association of Education Committees

to reception LEAs. On 25 October the Board suggested that the evacuation LEAs should, if necessary, pay for the extra staff needed, as well as £2 per head as a basic charge. But on 30 October the Secretary of the Association of Directors and Secretaries of Education wrote to the President of the Board pointing out that certain areas, especially the South and West, the Dales and the Lakes, were supporting large numbers of private secondary pupils whose "sending Authorities were legion," so much so that it would be impossible to claim from them on salaries. He quoted examples from the length and breadth of West Yorkshire, notably Harrogate Secondary School which already had 100 unofficial evacuees with 50 applicants waiting.⁽¹⁾

The staffing problems which accompanied this private exodus were aggravated by the very generous pupil-teacher ratio which resulted from the large numbers of stay-at-homes. For example, the LCC ratio in Devon was one teacher to 13 or 14 official evacuees.⁽²⁾ It is not hard to imagine the abrasive staff relations in the many schools operating a shift system where local classes, inflated with private evacuees, had very unfavourable ratios in contrast to the guest schools with staff to spare. Unfortunately, this aspect of school life was made worse by the "drift," starting quite soon in September, for those who returned home were mainly official evacuees, thus increasing the disparity between the staffing ratios.

There were, however, some parents, especially those now made unemployed by the war situation, who were forced, for economic reasons, to bring their children home. A letter from the National Association of Boys Clubs to the Parliamentary Secretary, ~~Sir~~ Kenneth Lindsay, drew his attention to Londoners who were in this position mainly because, as

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 12/485

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

they had evacuated their children unofficially, they did not qualify for billeting allowances.⁽¹⁾ Although this anomaly was eventually adjusted, it did rankle in some quarters that "the officially evacuated and billeted were largely selected by their inability to arrange - or buy - safety in the country as 2,000,000 people had done."⁽²⁾ Later, in 1941, when Harold Laski was describing the unschooled children spending their grim nights in the Underground, he wrote, "That is not an experience in which children of the comfortable classes are asked to share."⁽³⁾

(v) Overseas Evacuation

The "flight to the West" did not end with Devon and Cornwall, but crossed the oceans. All attempts to unravel the true statistics of the overseas evacuation have failed for various reasons: few passenger lists were kept, and such as there were did not always define the age and relationship of passengers; many people did not use passenger ships but travelled on freighters; large numbers used ships of other nationalities; some sailed from other countries on the western seaboard, including neutral Eire and Spain. In fact, the only official figures are those shown below, which relate to those officially handled by the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB). It must be sadly admitted that the main impressions that linger after any study of this aspect of evacuation are of warmth at the generosity shown by those offering shelter and of disappointment at the way it was claimed.

It was reported on 1 September 1939 that 5,000 people had left Southampton in the previous 48 hours,⁽⁴⁾ and thereafter there was a

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 135

(3) H. Laski in Programme for Victory Routledge 1941 p. 27

(4) Times 1 September 1939

steady drain during the "phoney war." These were, of course, all unofficial, and with the German advance to Dunkirk their numbers increased considerably, quite independent of the short-lived official scheme. In October 1941, this was still going on, for it was learnt then that the Bermuda Bank was embarrassed with a glut of pounds sterling, "almost entirely the property of residents from overseas."⁽¹⁾

As soon as the real significance of Dunkirk was realised offers to take children came pouring in from the Commonwealth and USA. Although the Government was dubious from the outset about encouraging the idea it agreed to the formation of an Inter-Departmental Committee under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary for Dominions, ^{Mr.} ~~the~~ Geoffrey Shakespeare, and representing the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Scottish Authority. The result of this was the formation of the CORB as announced on 20 June 1941. Under the scheme, priority would be given to the 5 - 16 year-olds from evacuation areas; parents could still send their children privately with the approval of the Board, and children travelling with the Board could still go to friends or relatives. LEAs were to be responsible for the suitability and medical inspection of the candidates. Despite Government warnings about the risks involved, the response was immediate and enthusiastic.

By 2 July there were 40,000 LEA applications, 12,000 from "other schools", and 20,000 overseas offers. The Government continued to point out the dangers involved and how shipping restrictions would limit numbers, but still the applications poured in. These even included requests from some public schools (including Wellington and Stoneyhurst Colleges) for transatlantic transfer "in toto," a policy which was opposed as being too obviously smacking of special privilege.⁽²⁾

(1) Times 15 October 1941

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

By now the rush of applications was becoming a source of worry to the Government; what had been a gesture to show the solidarity of the Commonwealth and United States well-wishers was now already producing rumours about the wholesale exodus of the affluent when danger threatened, rumours which, as Whitehall well knew, were being exploited in Nazi propaganda.⁽¹⁾

On 4 July, 120,000 applications had been received from LEAs and 16,000 from other schools; 50,000 more were expected from LEAs and 25,000 from Scotland;⁽²⁾ 100,000 offers of hospitality had been given. There were even cases of parents who wanted their children, now ex-pupils, re-admitted to school so they could qualify.⁽³⁾ Not surprisingly, on 5 July the Government announced that no more applications would be accepted, a decision which followed fast on the sinking of the Andorra Star on 3 July, after which tragedy official policy was to use only escorted transport for evacuation. As there was only one ship available up to 11 August, with space for only 150 children, it was estimated that 12 years would be needed at that rate to complete the overseas evacuation programme.⁽⁴⁾

The plain fact was that the new vulnerability of those post-Dunkirk days, with Britain isolated on the edge of Europe, put shipping and escorts at such a premium that the Government was forced to hold the official scheme in abeyance from 10 July, although the CORB still continued to handle some movement of children. There was, however, no ban on the private evacuation of individual children or schools, but the authorities would not accept any responsibility should they be on

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/11

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/244

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/11

unescorted transport. Press re-action was immediate and critical, and the whole question of discrimination in favour of the well-to-do was raised by Labour MPs. "M.P. REBUKES MINISTERS WHO SEND CHILDREN ABROAD" ran the Daily Herald headline over a report of the Commons on 17 July. Cheers greeted James Griffiths (Lab. Llanelly) when he claimed that the country was very disturbed at the announcement that the children of Ministers had been evacuated overseas. Rather coincidentally, this copy of the Herald carried a picture of a very spruce 10-year old John Cooper, son of Duff Cooper, Minister of Information, being met on arrival in New York.⁽¹⁾ This produced a reply from Churchill himself, deprecating the idea of a "larger scale exodus" and agreeing to regulate any future emigration to "restore the balance between the classes."⁽²⁾ But criticism still mounted, aimed especially at the inequality of the social distribution of the scheme, and led so effectively by Lady Simon of the Manchester Education Committee that she forced a Parliamentary admission and apology from the Board of Education that their allocation of CORB places was unfair and based on incorrect figures.⁽³⁾

In an explanatory Memo. of 27 July, Geoffrey Shakespeare revealed that out of the 224,000 applicants, 1,500 would be found places by the end of August, and that to date only 82 had sailed. These figures had been so drastically curtailed because of the shortage of places with the slow, escorted convoys to which the CORB was committed. This was directly in contrast with the 10,000 well-to-do who sailed in fast, unescorted ships during June and included 2,345 children; moreover, there were 8,000 fast places a month available on these speedier crossings, but which CORB would not use. Shakespeare revealed that, apart from the

(1) Daily Herald 18 July 1940

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/244

20,000 private cases already registered, he had had applications or enquiries from 353 preparatory or private schools, covering a further 20,000. In an effort to meet Churchill's requirements, he suggested a 90% to 10% ratio in favour of the grant aided schools.⁽¹⁾

By now, Britain's avowed determination to stand and fight had so stirred the imagination of the Commonwealth and United States that offers of hospitality were numbered in the hundreds of thousands. After much discussion the CORB increased its monthly targets, by widening its responsibility to "poor" children on fast, unescorted vessels.

This, then, was the situation when, on 17 September, The City of Benares was sunk, with the tragic loss of seventy three children and six of their adult helpers. With them died the official scheme. The total of official child evacuees was 2,664 (1,532 to Canada, 576 to Australia, 353 to South Africa, and 203 to New Zealand.); the unofficial total from June to December was 11,000, (6,000 to Canada, 4,200 (+ 1,100 adults) to USA).⁽²⁾ These figures apart, the only other estimates available are those unearthed by Titmuss: between 1938 and 1940, shipping figures showed there was an excess balance of 47,500 outwards to inwards passengers for non-European countries; during 1939 and 1940, 202,120 British passengers left for non-European destinations.⁽³⁾

Although every effort was made to stress how socially representative were the official parties, the main impression conveyed to the public came from the newspapers.⁽⁴⁾ These two items are from the same edition: firstly, a letter saying, "We were the lucky ones who could raise our passage money, get into the Toronto University hospitality scheme, and

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/11

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

(3) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 247-8

(4) Manchester Guardian 21 August 1940

English Children at a School Fête on Long Island



The Hon. Mrs. Stephen Vivian-Smith, American daughter-in-law of Lord Bicester, bought a "cookie" from young Timothy Wagg at his school's fête, he goes to the Friends' Academy Kindergarten. Mrs. Vivian-Smith has her two younger boys, Angus and Hugh, in America with her. John, her eldest son is at school in England where his father is soldiering



At the school fête on Long Island little Jeremy Warburg, a girl with a boy's name, and granddaughter of the well-known publisher Condé Nast, sold a biscuit in the shape of a British lion to Mrs. Nelson Doubleday. Staying with Mrs. Doubleday are the Kenneth Wagg's children and Somers' Maugham's two and a half year old grandson, Nicholas Vincent Somers' Paravicini



The Hon. Mrs. Leslie Runciman, and her only child, six-year-old Garry, are among the many English refugees on Long Island. Garry goes to the popular Quaker school, Friends' Academy at Locust Valley. His mother, the former Miss Katherine Schuyler Garrison of New York was married in 1932 to the Hon. Leslie Runciman, elder son of Viscount Runciman, the shipping magnate



The two branches of the English speaking peoples, are getting better acquainted, as this group shows: (at back) the Hon. Mrs. Stephen Vivian-Smith; her sister-in-law, the Hon. Mrs. Francis James Rodd (in front) Ann Dart (American), James Woodbury (British), Mary Rodd (British), George Dartt (American), Saul and Rachel Rodd, Angus Vivian-Smith (British)

remove our children from England."; secondly, a report of six child survivors from a torpedoed freighter, none with the CORB, two were the children of an ophthalmic surgeon and one was a public schoolboy. The Schoolmaster, in its report on the safe arrival in the USA of the Britannic with 600 children on board (272 "private" evacuees) made special mention that millionaire John Pierpoint Morgan came to the quay to meet his personal guests, "the children of a London banker, and Lord Primrose, the 11-year old son of Lord Roseberry."⁽¹⁾ In the Times correspondence columns was a letter from Sir Farquhar Buzzard; "The Government scheme for the poorer classes should take precedence over all other claims."⁽²⁾

One of the most intriguing publications of that time was Canada's Guests, produced by Canadian Pacific, a miniature, Junior Tatler, lavishly illustrated. It was presumably intended for a "well-to-do" clientele for it featured the children of RN officers, farmers, doctors, solicitors and the like, many of them with their mothers. Among the schools it reported on as being transplanted "in toto" was Whitby College (160 girls), and "Fritham House School (26 children), brought out by Lady Eden and situated for six months in Vernon BC has been moved to a country mansion near Quebec City."⁽³⁾

Elusive though the actual figures are for private overseas evacuation, and it seems that there were many thousands, the figure of 225,000 applications in two weeks to the CORB is beyond dispute. As this organisation moved only 2,664 children - and there are no figures available to break these down into elementary and secondary pupils - there could have been but few children from lowly homes who were evacuated overseas.

(1) Schoolmaster 1 August 1940

(2) Times 15 July 1940

(3) Canada's Guests (published monthly by Canadian Pacific. 1941.) passim.

(vi) The Drift Back

It is a truism that the guiding principle behind the great evacuation of 1939 was the saving of innocent young lives by moving them away from vulnerable centres; but a corollary of this was that all schools in those centres should be closed, not only for reasons of safety, but because, in theory at least, staff and pupils would be miles away. One of the greatest causes of concern, both educational and social, was the vast number of children in those wartime, school-less districts. Many of these never left home at all, but many others drifted back from reception areas; it is this second group whose movements must be examined if their effects are to be appreciated.

The initial problem is in assessing actual figures, because of the number of authorities involved, the high degree of individual movement, and the unknown extent of private evacuation. The writer knows one young man who was evacuated, privately, seven times, to seven different LEAs. Accurate and up-to-date information was, therefore, extremely difficult to produce, sometimes impossible; for example, the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the LCC never did agree on numbers. The first official figures even for the evacuation itself, let alone the drift, were not produced until 2 November, and, as late as August 1940, Mr. Ramsbotham outraged The Guardian with his Parliamentary answer on the number of children still receiving no schooling; "The Board cannot spend time during the war on obtaining non-essential statistics."⁽¹⁾

In the absence of national figures it is to those published locally that one must turn, and these started appearing in November 1939.

(1) Manchester Guardian 28 August 1940

By 2 November the figures for Sheffield were:⁽¹⁾

| | <u>Evacuated</u> | <u>Returned</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Unaccompanied children | 5,093 | 2,066 |
| Mothers and young children | 2,775 | 2,033 |
| Expectant mothers | 36 | 35 |
| Adult cripples and blind | 10 | 8 |

By 1 December, of 344,182 children evacuated from London, 119,550 had returned home.⁽²⁾ Of the 16,160 elementary school evacuees from the North Riding only 6,036 were still away from home in December, (all but 603 of the 2,680 secondary evacuees had returned by June 1940).⁽³⁾ In Romsey, which had received 1,500 evacuees, 498 remained in March 1940.⁽⁴⁾ Titmuss estimated that of the original 1,473,000 evacuees, 900,000 had returned home by 8 January 1940,⁽⁵⁾ but all that was admitted to in the Commons on 25 January was a 43% drift. The figures for evacuated children in Blackpool are:⁽⁶⁾

| | | |
|--------------|---|--------|
| 7 Sept. 1939 | - | 19,000 |
| 10 Nov. | - | 7,632 |
| 19 Jan. 1940 | - | 4,284 |
| 31 March | - | 2,363 |

Of particular interest are the details for Manchester, in view of the special dispensation given to Manchester Grammar School to re-open on 19 October.⁽⁷⁾ There the figures of evacuees returned were as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-----|
| By 7 Sept. 1939 | - | 15% |
| 7 Oct. | - | 50% |
| 25 Dec. | - | 67% |
| 31 Dec. | - | 71% |
| 10 May | - | 85% |

(1) Schoolmaster 2 November 1939

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 26

(3) North Riding Ed's Comm. Report for 1940

(4) Andover Advertiser 16 March 1940

(5) Titmuss op.cit. p. 171

(6) Jessie Hudson in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) pp. 247-248

(7) Shena Simon in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 210

From hindsight, the reasons for this great counter-movement are not difficult to find, and it would appear that the main one, predictably enough, was the renewing of family ties. As early as 9 December the Southern Daily Echo, reporting that quite a number of young Southamptonians had already returned home, suggested loneliness as a cause.⁽¹⁾ In what was probably the most detailed and exhaustive investigation into child re-action to evacuation, by far the commonest reason given by parents for their children drifting home to West Hartlepool was sheer homesickness. Some of the Hartlepool mothers frankly admitted they missed their children and so brought them home;⁽²⁾ this basic need is borne out by an HMI report of several authenticated cases of Liverpool mothers (invariably of elementary children) clubbing together to send one mother to Llanelli to bring home as many as 8 or 9 children, willing and unwilling alike.⁽³⁾ An interesting confirmation of this was made by Ritchie Calder who, as well as his journalistic on-the-spot reporting for the Daily Herald, was sending private reports directly to Lord de la Warr, President of the Board of Education. In one of these reports, from Portsmouth, he claimed that mothers on week-end visits, finding their children happy and being afraid of losing them, re-claimed them.⁽⁴⁾

Another serious problem which so often resulted in the homewards trek was social incompatibility in one form or another. "The (West Hartlepool) children who were evacuated were almost entirely drawn from the congested areas where they lived in closed community with their parents, neighbours, and friends. The brightly-lit shop-window, the malodorous back-street, the cinema, the fried fish shop, the thronging crowds of the street, were the ever-present background of their lives."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Southern Daily Echo 9 September 1939

(2) Lindsay op.cit. Appendix II p. 22

(3) B/Ed. 371 B(2) WE

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(5) Lindsay op.cit. p. 2

"Fancy putting people down in a hole like this!" said one mother; "We feel naked in open country," said another.⁽¹⁾ Added to this was all the maladjustment which could make life intolerable for the guest, the foster-family, or both, resulting from, for example, personal uncleanness or lack of social training.⁽²⁾ In January 1940 a high-powered WEA deputation to the President of the Board claimed that unsatisfactory billets were the main reason for the drift; among the evidence put forward was the case of one child - not a difficult one - having been in nine billets in eight weeks.⁽³⁾ When the evacuee came from the bottom layer of urban society, and when maternal cupidity was added, the situation followed as reported by HMI from Durham County.⁽⁴⁾ He found returning mothers indignant that the householder, not they, were receiving the billeting allowance. One had said, "What the hell's good of coming if we can't get nowt out of it?"

But even allowing that this attitude was not typical of the poorer families, there can be little doubt that the Government demand for cash contributions from the evacuees' parents after 28 October stimulated many poor people to bring their children back. The Hartlepool survey put the question of expense second only to homesickness; "The number of children who returned to West Hartlepool in November and December 1939 because their parents were unwilling or unable to meet the additional cost was very considerable indeed."⁽⁵⁾ Ritchie Calder gives a graphic account of coachloads of evacuees returning to Portsmouth at the end of October because of the impending levy.⁽⁶⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(2) Lindsay op.cit. p. 11

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/10

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(5) Lindsay op.cit. p. 14

(6) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

It only remains to list three more reasons for the move back to school-less danger zones. Foremost was the persistence of the "phoney war;" when it became apparent that the expected horrors of aerial warfare were not materialising, many parents could see no need for prolonged separation. Secondly, some parents were dissatisfied at the educational facilities available in country areas. Finally, and related directly to the operation of the evacuation, many parents, having been comforted to see their children leave in school parties, learned that the schools had been fragmented, and that their children were isolated and lonely; in fact, it was significant that the fewest returned from the school units which remained relatively intact.⁽¹⁾

(vii) Stemming the flow

Although the drift started almost immediately after evacuation, (there were even cases of returning on the same day), it was some six weeks before it reached sufficient proportions to attract high-level attention. This happened on 18 October at the Whitehall Home Policy Meeting when this pressing issue was debated; should all evacuation area schools, including private ones, be closed or should they be re-opened, thus possibly encouraging the drift, undermining the whole evacuation and jeopardising the safety of the children? This was subsequently to become a most crucial dilemma with serious educational consequences. After the President of the Board expressed the view that the position could not be held for much longer, the Committee recommended the re-opening of these schools if adequately protected against air attack.⁽²⁾

A week later, "to intensify propaganda" an official approach was made to the Palace requesting the Queen to visit a reception area school.

(1) Lindsay op.cit. pp. 13 + 14

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2133/2

Royal agreement was unhesitating, the selected area was chosen - Horsted Keynes in East Sussex - and a date fixed, 10 November. The visit was highly successful, the Queen, typically, calling in at an extra, unscheduled school.⁽¹⁾

On the same day as the royal visit, Circular 1482 from the Board urged that every effort should be made to prevent the Christmas holidays from accelerating the drift. It suggested that the holiday be shortened, that teachers go home on a rota system, and that they organise activities to occupy the children.⁽²⁾

Two days later, on 12 November, the Board produced its 6-point draft plan to combat the drift. It entailed: a personal official letter to parents; church involvement with lonely mothers; posters; cinema messages, (a film was already being made on the evacuation, showing happy, healthy evacuees in the country); publicity for reception areas and hostesses, including a tribute from the Prime Minister; BBC holiday programmes, local press coverage, cinema programmes and the co-operation of local clergy; and social involvement of evacuees in, for example, Scouts, Guides, clubs, and local jollifications.⁽³⁾

On 17 November, the Ministry of Health issued Circular 1913 which was also aimed at curbing the drift. It urged the development of communal services, like meals, and the redistribution of evacuees such as misfits or those isolated from their schoolmates. During the next weeks, the Ministry of Information circularised nearly 100 voluntary organisations asking for help, the Educational Settlement Association launched a scheme to draw evacuated youngsters into social and cultural activities, and the Boy Scouts Association proposed to send trained

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

A ROYAL MOTHER VISITS "EVACUEES": THE QUEEN AT HORSTED KEYNES



THE QUEEN WITH EVACUATED CHILDREN FROM BATTERSEA—A LITTLE GIRL WHO WAS PLAYING "MOTHER" OBEYS HER MAJESTY'S INJUNCTION TO WASH BEHIND BABY'S EARS.

The Queen's visit to...

...four-year-old girl named Shirley, the Queen

organisers to reception centres to arrange leisure recreations.⁽¹⁾

And so it went on, a determined and sustained attempt by the authorities to combat the drift, which still continued relentlessly. The whole question of educational deprivation will arise later, but it is so closely linked to the drift back to evacuation areas that it is appropriate here to indicate the scale of the problem. In May 1940, just before Dunkirk, there were still 1,300,000 children "attached to" elementary schools in evacuation areas.⁽²⁾ On December 1940, at the height of the blitz, there were still 1,038,878 elementary children in danger zones.⁽³⁾ Only then did the Government finally yield to the persistent demands for compulsory evacuation. But this merely granted local powers for individual cases of strong medical recommendation, and only 471 cases were enforced in 1941. Finally, as late as April 1941 there was a total in England and Wales of 290,000 known children receiving no education, practically all of them in evacuation areas.⁽⁴⁾

(viii) The Second Evacuation

Nearly all evacuations subsequent to the main one of September 1939 fell into two groupings, those of 1940 coming with Dunkirk and the blitzes, and those of 1944 as a result of the flying bombs and rocket attacks. (For official statistics see Appendix 2.) The 1944 evacuations lie outside the scope of this study, but the movements of 1940 deserve more than a passing mention, partly because they formed a large part of the background against which the gentlemen at the Board of Education were formulating new educational policies. But they also reveal certain improvements and changes in attitudes from those of 1939 while at the same time compounding some of the problems that already existed.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Times Educational Supplement 18 May 1940

(3) Ibid. 25 January 1940

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 405

Plans were already afoot in January 1940 and in March the Inspectorate were given the task of assessing the capacity of their areas for absorbing new evacuees. This time a new criterion was added, that the density of evacuee numbers should be consistent with maintaining educational standards.⁽¹⁾ Churchill took over the helm at the same time as the enemy began their western offensive and evacuation preparations speeded up. Although paratroops and bombing could be expected there was no panic, for it was realised now that haste could produce more problems; moreover, the Whitsun holiday intervened and there was a poor response to registration for evacuation. Certain places on the Essex coast and near aerodrome targets were excluded from reception areas, the billeting allowance for older children was increased, the hostel system was extended and LEAs were urged to stimulate registration. New machinery was devised to secure proper consultation between billeting and education authorities so that there could be a better re-adjustment of billets to school requirements. A personal letter was sent by the President of the Board of Education to each Director inviting co-operation over the thorny question of keeping the instruction of Roman Catholic children in the hands of teachers of their own denomination. Now that reports were coming in from the inspectorate arrangements were being made to balance out the distribution of evacuees according to the capacity of different areas. It was found that the East Riding of Yorkshire, Devon, Somerset and East Suffolk were already over-crowded; the West Riding, Durham, Cheshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Warwick and Flintshire were under-subscribed; and certain towns were overloaded, such as Brighton, Eastbourne, Weymouth, Exeter, Maidenhead, Reading, Luton, Torquay, Bournemouth and Blackpool.⁽²⁾

As the military position on the continental mainland became more

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206 (Memo. to Insp. E. 426. of 4.3.40)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

serious, a ten-mile danger belt was defined from Yarmouth to Folkestone and 25,000 LCC children were evacuated from it to South Wales. They were followed by another 37,000 children, including some locals, who were sent to South Wales and the Midlands. Yet, despite news of successive military disasters during the rest of May, despite exhortations from the government to the authorities and the public, and despite harrowing tales of refugee columns in France and Belgium, registration for evacuation was desultory. Even while the retreat from Dunkirk (28 May - 3 June) was at its height only 2,793 children were registered in Greater London on Saturday, 1 June.⁽¹⁾

This, of course, brought up again the principle of compulsory evacuation and strong pressure was put on the government to implement it. After considerable consultation they decided it would be unpopular, resented and essentially impracticable. Furthermore, with the increasing probability of enemy airfields across the Channel, where could they force evacuees to go with any guarantee of safety? Finally, it was felt that a government must retain respect and confidence and not try to enforce the unenforceable.

After a preliminary broadcast warning, the second evacuation began on 13 June and in the next five days 103,000 were moved out of London (84.9% of those registered).⁽²⁾ A brief diary of the main events of those weeks reads as follows:

- 2 June: schools closed from Yarmouth to Hythe.
- 10 June: Italy declared war.
- 11 June: Aldeburgh, Southwold, Hythe designated as evacuation areas.
- 17 June: Petain's formed a French government
- 23 June: LCC children re-evacuated from East Sussex and Kent to Wales.

(1) Daily Mail 4 June 1940

(2) L.C.C. Evacuation Record pub. 1944

7 July: Evacuation began of 40,000 from east and north-east.

27 July: Coastal schools closed from Rye to Newhaven and in Portsmouth and Southampton.

Strong efforts were made at all stages of these evacuations to prevent the fragmentation of school parties and it was arranged that a representative of the LEA should be at each detraining point. Nevertheless, the response to all the radio appeals, LEA efforts, school closures and house-to-house canvassing was still disappointing. From the east coast, the Medway area and the south-east an average of 40% of all schoolchildren remained at home, the worst place being Frinton, where 80% did not move. In London 345,000 out of an eligible 450,000 stayed behind.⁽¹⁾

With memories still fresh of so many children "running wild" in the streets of evacuated towns in 1939, the government took care that the schools in evacuated areas re-opened as soon as possible, "emergency schools" in London in a few days and coastal schools after three weeks. Unfortunately, the inter-effect of evacuation movements and the deteriorating military situation produced confusion in coastal districts, with many schools being closed, opened, re-closed and re-opened from Yarmouth to Southampton. For example, schools in Yarmouth, Southend, Margate and Hythe closed on 2 June, re-opened on 25 June and re-closed on 7 July. Meanwhile, difficulties were increased by the relentless drift back home. While the "trickle" system of controlled moving of smaller groups of evacuees took 3,738 out of London between June and September, 31,000 drifted back.⁽²⁾ It was decided, after consultation with the NUT on 25 May, that, as a means of preserving normality and counter-acting this drift back, the reception schools, at LEA discretion, should remain open during the summer holidays.⁽³⁾ This placed yet more strain on teachers who had already kept their schools open over the Christmas and Easter

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/665

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

holidays and who were now limited to a fortnight's summer holiday on a staggered system.

Then came the air raids, intensifying through the autumn and culminating in the burning of London at the end of December. It was a sign of the constant activity in evacuation planning that the movements of autumn 1940 came under what was known as "Plan 7." Apart from the organised movement of women and children - 30,062 of them were moved out of London in the week-ending 19 October - it enabled 140,000 Londoners to go under the "Private Scheme" whereby individuals could travel independently but with government financial assistance.⁽¹⁾ Even so, there were still huge numbers of children who stayed in such places as London, Southampton, Portsmouth and Liverpool. A letter from the President of the Board on 3 December disclosed that there were no fewer than 1,038,000 such children, of whom 284,000 were receiving little or no schooling.⁽²⁾ The plight of all these children, especially those in blitzed London, produced so much pressure from public and press that long meetings were held to reconsider the introduction of compulsory evacuation. As a result, a new Defence Regulation (31 (c) of 19 December 1940) was brought out. It was carefully contrived to base any compulsion on the medical grounds that enemy action had caused, or might cause, a child to suffer physically or mentally.⁽³⁾ As it turned out it was enforced on very few occasions.

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/665

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107

CHAPTER 2
THE EDUCATION SERVICE
AND THE PROBLEM OF PREMISES

(i) Introduction

Before examining the effects of the evacuation on the children in school, it is necessary to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the educational service as a whole under the impact of the emergency. Two features emerge which merit prior mention. Firstly, there is the status of education in relation to other aspects of social welfare provision. The original subordination of the Board of Education to the Ministry of Health in the planning of the evacuation may well have been a justifiable administrative move, but for many it served as a reminder of the lowly condition of education in national priorities. This feeling was stirred into resentment by the actual handling of the movements, what with the "truculent secrecy" about destinations and the consequent frustration of evacuating Authorities in attempting any educational planning,⁽¹⁾ the reduction of schools and children to impersonal units, the cavalier sweeping aside of schoolteachers by the billeteers, the ~~total~~ inability in most areas of the receiving Authority to anticipate educational requirements, and the wholesale fragmentation of schools over safe areas.

All this was accompanied by the predatory requisitioning of school buildings in both evacuation and neutral areas. This was done not only for the Emergency Services but apparently by "any person who was in a position to obtain official sanction or had the presence to commandeer first and obtain authority afterwards."⁽²⁾ Even the personnel at the headquarters of the Board itself were not inviolate, for in addition

(1) Ritchie Calder in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 145

(2) R. Padley Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) pp. 121-122

to 60 out of 323 Inspectors being seconded, 601 (25%) of its staff were transferred elsewhere.⁽¹⁾

With the prolonged deterioration, educational and social, of so many schoolchildren more and more criticism was aimed at the seeming insignificance of the Board, aggravated by its apparent inability to reclaim its schools or to procure the re-opening of empty ones. In September 1939 Margery Betts severely berated the Board for passively accepting that an emergency automatically meant "education went to the winds."⁽²⁾ On 16 November a Member protested in the House that in the competition for buildings and amenities "the Board of Education almost invariably gets elbowed aside."⁽³⁾

In February 1940, the periodical Highway saw the misuse and non-use of school buildings as "significant of an attitude of indifference to education needs in the Government as a whole." By March the Daily Herald was publishing a leader directed at the President of the Board and stating: "The Government in the war seems to have got it into its head that schools and school services are a luxury This evil disposition of Ministers must be checked."⁽⁴⁾ At mid-year there was considerable agreement with Padley's description of "the undignified position held by the Board of Education among other Government departments as the poor relation of the Treasury and the Ministry of Health."⁽⁵⁾ In the 1940 Education Committees' Year Book their President, George Tomlinson, wrote that the position of the schools would be

(1) Titmuss op.cit. p. 145

(2) New Era September-October 1940

(3) Times Educational Supplement 25.11.1939

(4) Daily Herald 5.3.1940

(5) Padley op.cit. p. 112

different "if Education occupied the position it is entitled to occupy in the minds of our Cabinet Ministers."

As the war progressed and conservation of manpower became more vital the diminished status and comparative impotence of the education service became marked even in the more lowly reaches of the labour market. In fact, there were even areas where it became impossible to recruit caretakers or cleaners with the ultimate result that, as schools could not function at this level they could not function at all and had to be closed.⁽¹⁾

To those who were already thinking in terms of educational reform, the position of the service, a proper standing in the eyes of ratepayers and local government, a realistic precedence in governmental policies, and a creditable place in ministerial rank were all central and pre-conditional to any new national system.

The second feature of the educational service as it stood in 1939 which commands our attention is the organisation of local administration, for of all the anomalies which were exposed by the evacuation as obsolete and obstructive it was that of the Part II and Part III Authorities, Oxford County Council, for example, itself having to deal with no fewer than 100 Education Authorities and Management Committees.⁽²⁾ The AEC, snowed under though its members were with an endless flow of circulars covering everything from footwear and billeting to ARP and teacher shortage, made repeated calls for an inquiry into the most suitable form of administrative unit.⁽³⁾ As it was, Lancashire had 46 Education Authorities, 19 for higher and elementary education and 27 for elementary only; Yorkshire had 21 (11 for higher and elementary, 10 for elementary

(1) Titmuss op.cit. p. 407

(2) T. C. Gardner in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 78

(3) A.E.C. p. 9

only.)

Elementary school populations ranged from West ^{Riding,} Yorkshire with 155,000 to Tiverton with 856.⁽¹⁾ It was hardly surprising that before long "the process of apportioning expenditure and income between local children and children from many different areas became so involved that the Board of Education set up a committee to construct some sort of formula to economise on book-keeping."⁽²⁾

As early as mid-November 1939 the Times Educational Supplement printed articles by W. A. Hobson, A Long Term View of Education and Out-of-date Machinery, which systematically exposed the archaism of the survival of the Part III Authorities. In the first he wrote, "The policy of assimilation during the period of evacuation admittedly gives rise to numerous problems. They are made especially acute by the fact that a number of reception areas are Part III Authorities of inadequate size and resources, whereas most of the children come from County Boroughs or the administrative County of London In such circumstances, re-organisation of the administrative structure, already long overdue, becomes a sheer necessity."⁽³⁾ He went on in the next article to attack as retrograde the expectation that the Part III Authorities, responsible only for elementary education, should take charge of Part II Authority senior and secondary children; "quite beyond their capacity," he called it.⁽⁴⁾ This assault was powerfully reinforced in the Editorial which pointed out the ridiculous situation whereby 169 Part III Authorities, complete with staffs and committees supervised the education of 7,000,000 children, while one committee, the LCC, supervised 4,000,000.

(1) H. G. Stead in New Education Feb. 1941

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 224

(3) Times Educational Supplement 11.11.1939

(4) Times Educational Supplement 18.11.1939

(ii) Premises

The policy towards the use of school buildings is traceable to pre-war official expectations, from both military and civil authorities alike. As early as 1936 certain HMIs were circulated by secret memorandum warning them that any future British Expeditionary Force would need to use schools as staging camps en route for the Continent. For the civil authorities, anticipating widespread, intense and continuous bombing, the schools were ideal centres for ARP, First Aid, Casualty Clearing Stations, etc., not only because of the size of the buildings and rooms but because they offered gas, electricity, water, heating, sanitation and playground parking space. Moreover, as the premises in vulnerable areas would be invitingly vacant with the acceptance of the principle of evacuation, once the Office of Works had opened its Central Register of Accommodation schools became especially desirable. There was mounting confusion now on the whole question of availability of premises, what with the various Services building up, the multiplicity of requisitioning authorities and the misinterpretation in some areas of the Register to the extent that some Directors of Education were not even informed of its existence.

The situation was not helped by the decision, announced in the Board's Circular 1467 of April 1939, that shelter protection was not required for schools in evacuation areas because the children would have been moved out. This produced the assumption that these schools would be permanently available for extraneous use, and a spate of requisitioning followed. Unfortunately, it was not only schools in evacuation areas which were coveted. Ever since Munich there had been much concern among reception LEAs; in March 1939 Derbyshire, a largely reception area, protested that eight elementary schools had already been adapted for First Aid and Decontamination and thirty others scheduled for adaptation.⁽¹⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

As a result mainly of the state of affairs in the North Riding, a reception area which found that some of its schools had been earmarked by the military, a letter was sent from the Home Office to the Board of Education on 18 July. It explained that the police had a statutory obligation to find the billets required for the Defence Forces, that some premises had been earmarked as far back as May 1937, and that alternative accommodation was impossible. As an indication of the confusion prevalent at this time, the identical accommodation in Yorkshire was earmarked for 2,000 evacuees and for 1,000 troops.⁽¹⁾

The theory of the Central Register was that the Board should be notified when a school was earmarked, and that no school could be requisitioned before it had been earmarked. But in the last weeks before hostilities, requisitioning, earmarking, provisional earmarking, and precautionary earmarking of schools proliferated to such an extent that local lists became erratic, the Board was not always being notified when its schools were booked, and in some cases schools were actually occupied even before being earmarked. In short, the Register failed to function properly.⁽²⁾

When it became apparent after some weeks of the "phoney war" that there were large numbers of children still in the evacuation areas, that the drift back was significantly swelling their ranks, that the expected aerial bombardments were not materialising, that the closed schools looked like remaining permanently so, and that the requisitioned schools seemed firmly in the grip of their new occupants, then the pressures started building up to re-open the empty schools and reclaim the occupied ones.

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

Increasingly during September the demands and protests arose and it was interesting to note that one of the first districts to produce powerful dissent was not an evacuation area but Middlesex, mainly a neutral zone. This came about because of the "Periphery Plan", a scheme whereby schools in the London fringes were earmarked in case of crippling air attacks; although comparatively few buildings were actually occupied the county was badly affected.⁽¹⁾ Out of 266 elementary schools 40 were taken over completely and 20 partially, and 6 out of 29 secondary schools were wholly occupied. By 6 October, according to the LEA, child discipline and general morale had deteriorated "to an alarming extent," parents were "clamouring for the return of their children to school," and there were serious threats of strikes among local women barrage-balloon makers.⁽²⁾

The position in the evacuation areas was, of course, much worse, in some most depressing; in Manchester 25,000 places in 112 schools were in other hands,⁽³⁾ while in Portsmouth 21 of 33 schools were requisitioned for barracks, First Aid Posts, ARP depots, mortuaries, even for temporary Council offices.⁽⁴⁾ Representations from such places as these soon forced the government to resolve its dilemma - whether to jeopardise the whole evacuation scheme by re-opening evacuated area schools or to deny the increasing thousands any education and school-based social services. On 1 November the decision was announced in Parliament, by the Parliamentary Secretary, Kenneth Lindsay, in the Commons, and by the President, Lord de la Warr in the Lords. Approval was given for the re-opening of schools in evacuation areas, provided they were not in especially vulnerable areas and provided they had

(1) B/Ed. G26R/3 of 6.10.39

(2) Ibid.

(3) Manchester P. 49

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

adequate ARP.

Welcome though this move was, to the authorities in London it served to increase the frustration at being denied access to so many of their schools. By 17 November the October figure of 896 occupied schools⁽¹⁾ had only fallen to 890, which included:

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-------------------|---|----|
| Wardens' Posts | 100 | Public Assistance |) | |
| AFS | 250 | Feeding Centres |) | 85 |
| FAP | 51 | War Office | | 20 |
| Rescue | 51 | Office of Works | | 17 |
| Shelters | 30 | Mortuaries | | 22 |

This left only 40 elementary schools free from occupation.⁽²⁾ The first official instruction on derequisitioning came in Circular 304 from the Ministry of Home Security on 11 November. Even this was distinctly guarded in encouraging Civil Defence services to vacate schools, and allowed for no arbitrator or mediator if an ARP authority failed to comply with an LEA request. This was also indicative of the disadvantages the Board was under in any indepartmental jockeying.

The first time that details of the accommodation situation were published on a national scale came in the Board's Circular 1487 during December 1939.

The figures refer to school premises wholly or partly occupied by other authorities:

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2133/2

| | Military | ARP | Others | Totals |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | wholly partly | wholly partly | wholly partly | |
| Evacuation Areas | 85 83 | 200 973 | 16 81 | 301 1,137 |
| County Areas (Part evacuation, part neutral) | 14 9 | 18 101 | 8 | 32 118 |
| Neutral | 15 7 | 58 342 | 10 4 | 83 353 |
| <u>Summary</u> | | | | |
| All evacuation and neutral areas | 114 99 | 276 1,416 | 26 93 | 416 1,608 |

This occupation represented one in five of the 10,730 recognised schools in the evacuation and neutral areas of England and Wales,⁽¹⁾ a proportion which concealed the special difficulties in danger areas, such as Liverpool where 33 dockside schools were considered too vulnerable to re-open, and Rochester, which could only offer 900 reasonably safe places for 3,500 pupils.⁽²⁾

The last weeks of 1939 and the first of 1940 saw officialdom becoming more and more conscious of growing public concern and increasing pressure in Parliament and the national press. The reluctance of Parliament to desert long-held principles of caution, to risk sabotaging the official evacuation scheme, and to expose concentrations of children to modern air attack was understandable, and could be detected in the slowness in implementing any policy of restoring school premises and

(1) Titmuss op.cit. p. 147

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2128/2

re-opening evacuated schools. In January 1940 the total number of schools in evacuation and neutral areas under some form of occupation was still as high as 2,024.⁽¹⁾ If anything, the problem worsened when it was decided to re-introduce full-time education in evacuation areas on 7 February 1940 (B/Ed Circular 1498/40 and Min. of Home Security Circular 21/40) for the authorities concerned were now duty bound to produce premises for their unschooled children. A week later the Daily Express covering the Southwark bye-election, found there was not a single school in the borough available for meetings, every one being occupied by civil or military departments. William Barkeley in his feature article wrote, "De La Warr and Lindsay are not teaching a word to any child in any classroom in the borough of Southwark all you see is gangs of idle kids all day this evidence of apathy and neglect by the education authorities."⁽²⁾ Two days later, under the headline "ALL PLAY IS NO FUN" the news that 16 LCC schools were re-opening was qualified by details of ARP restrictions which limited one school, for example, to offering only 140 instead of 600 places.⁽³⁾

One little known aspect of the use of school buildings at this time came under the rather morbid name of "coffin schools." For obvious reasons no publicity was given to this practice, and even in the notes of the visit of an NUT deputation to the Board on 4 April 1940⁽⁴⁾ there is no disclosure of the actual number of schools involved. According to these records a coffin school was one "used for the storage of coffins pending its possible use as a mortuary for air raid casualties." Mention was made that some of these schools, for example at Liverpool, had been "relieved of their coffins without any publicity."

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2137

(2) Daily Express 13.2.40

(3) Ibid.

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

NO SCHOOLS



The response of the War Office to the increasing pressure for the restoration of schools seems typical of the apparent leisureliness which the LEAs encountered. On 14 February a list of the schools occupied was sent to the War Office; on 11 March between 20,000 and 30,000 troops were billeted in 100 schools; 15 April was the date given to the Home Commands by the War Office as the date for the release of 94 schools; on 30 April 60 were still occupied; on 7 May, 30 had not been returned; and it was not until 3 June that the number had been reduced to eight, by which time Dunkirk had thrown open the melting pot again.⁽¹⁾

On 28 May, even before the Dunkirk evacuation was completed, the regional First Commissioners received a free hand in the requisition of premises. After Dunkirk, what with the new atmosphere of approaching struggle, the increased numbers of men under arms on British soil, the fresh evacuations from the newly vulnerable coastlines, air raid damage and the dispersals of industry, the Board of Education had to concede many of the claims of government departments. An example was the "Shadow Scheme" under which non-medical buildings were earmarked for use as hospitals.⁽²⁾ As far as military claims were concerned the Board carried out a campaign of resistance to the War Office which was mainly successful⁽³⁾, although a constant irritant was the frequent occupation of schools by military units which would then move on. But even this depended largely upon the varying attitudes of different LEAs - Bradford, for example, gave up a secondary school with no protest, yet Lancashire showed determination in resisting any encroachments.⁽⁴⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 66

(2) B/Ed. G.678/16/ 8.6.40

(3) B/Ed. Sec's. Clerks 2119/25/ 4.7.40

(4) B/Ed. G.678/23

Just as it was the non-arrival of the expected German bombers which prolonged the restoration of school buildings to their proper function, so the eventual beginning of aerial bombardment raised further problems of accommodation. A typical example was Portsmouth where, after the long struggle to re-open schools, its new vulnerability resulted in their re-closure. The story was different this time, however, for within a matter of days, on 9 July, the Daily Herald carried this report: "SCHOOLS RE-OPENED FOR 16,000 16,000 children returned to school yesterday after being shut out for a week Resumption of their education was the result of protests, especially by Labour councillors, against the official decision to close all the city's schools." But with their newly established air bases near the Channel coast, enemy bombers could now reach what had hitherto been regarded as safe areas into which many thousands of evacuees and re-evacuees had poured. Such an area was South Wales which received the first large-scale air attack on Britain, on 10 July 1940, 70 enemy aircraft attacked the docks. Repercussions on the use of educational buildings were not confined to the immediate areas which suffered damage, for Rest Centres were set up in neighbouring areas, usually rural, and schools proved to be ideal havens for large numbers of refugees. This applied to the hinterland of Southampton and Portsmouth where schools taken over in September 1940 were still being used as Rest Centres in the spring of 1941.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, the repair of damaged premises was subject to progressively stricter controls, culminating on 24 March 1941 with an order reducing the building licence minimum to £100.⁽²⁾

No reference to the difficulties of providing premises for education could be complete without mention of the prolonged problems which the LCC had to face in coping with the stubborn presence in London of

(1) B/Ed. G.678/3

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

so many thousand children, the necessity to use schools for non-educational purposes, and the long-term air attacks which affected a total of 1,150 schools.⁽¹⁾ To make things worse, a considerable amount of equipment, books and furniture had been sent to the evacuation areas. The Director estimated that on 26 November 1940 out of the 81,000 children in London 23,500 were in attendance, (incidentally, he accepted a figure of 30,000 who would not go to school).⁽²⁾ In March 1942 about 150,000 of the Council's pre-war elementary places were in use for Civil Defence, military, or other purposes. It was estimated in August 1942 that, with a return rate of 200 a week between 1,000 and 1,500 more classrooms would be needed by the end of the year.⁽³⁾ Even as late as January 1943 eight out of nine LCC schools were still providing some form of accommodation for other services, representing a total of 16,000 school places immobilised.⁽⁴⁾

In the early days of the war special dispensation was granted to Manchester Grammar School yet the Council decided not to apply for the re-opening of any municipal schools" in the interests of evacuation."⁽⁵⁾ But there were other inconsistencies which provided ammunition for those who made educational privilege their target when they were pressing for reconstruction. The trouble was that private schools were not subject to the same restrictions as state schools, which explains the strange situation in Bedford, a reception area. There, on the outbreak of war, the Director of Education was able to give permission to the evacuated Pitman's College to occupy a local Central School and to continue normal

(1) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3. July 1945

(2) D.E.S. Ed/136/665

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(4) London Evacuation Record (L.C.C. 1944)

(5) Manchester p. 39

training for its 94 pupils while all the other local schools remained closed. Pitman's was even allowed to continue and share the premises with LCC evacuated schools which later moved in.⁽¹⁾ In the national press the public could read descriptions of the country mansions taken over by preparatory and public schools in such secluded districts as Ilminster, Crewkerne, Tintagel and Cumberland.⁽²⁾ One story under the heading, "BOYS DIG SCHOOL SHELTERS", told how grammar and private schools were demanding parental cash contributions so that the necessary ARP provision could be made, and how the boys of one grammar school at Alton, where the Council was not providing protection, were digging their own shelters.⁽³⁾ As a result of protests at this injustice, especially from Liverpool, Lord De La Warr, President of the Board, wrote to the Home Secretary on 21 October acquainting him with the complaints of the LEAs that they had no powers either to prevent the re-opening of private schools or to compel them to have air raid protection.⁽⁴⁾

Not for the first time there were those who could not be content to accept this kind of situation. One such was the Vicar of St. Mary's, West Ham, where only 30% of the children had been evacuated - and even those were returning at the rate of 30 to 40 per day, where at least 17,000 were running wild, becoming demoralised and deteriorating in health. Exasperated, but shrewd enough to use the same loophole as the private sector schools, this Vicar opened his church hall for the education of 100 children; within three days he had 500. The Education Committee, having no legal powers to intervene, could only ask him to limit his attendances to 60, and were helpless to intervene when other

(1) B/Ed. 148 B(2) Bedford

(2) Daily Mail 26.9.39

(3) Ibid.

(4) B/Ed. Ed. 136/2133/2

vicars threatened to do likewise if the authorities would not act.⁽¹⁾

In reception areas, overloaded as they were with evacuees, the main problems derived from the task of squeezing a quart into a pint pot when the schools reopened in mid-September 1939, the repercussions of which will be examined later. But although comparatively few of the 2,000 commandeered school buildings were in these safe zones, some disquieting reports prompted the Board to circulate, on 15 December, a questionnaire to ascertain the facts in England and Wales. The replies showed that there was still a total of 108 schools (including 9 secondary), still occupied, wholly or partly, nearly all in the hands of the War Office or ARP.⁽²⁾ In Brighton, for example, four schools were in use by the Army.⁽³⁾ But the most extraordinary case was Derbyshire. In April 1940, 33 of their schools were still denied all or part of their premises and were having to make-do by putting their children into hired buildings under "extremely bad conditions."⁽⁴⁾ But the story did not end there; three years later it was reported that education was being severely handicapped, the "temporary" accommodation being used was grossly overcrowded, in unpartitioned rooms, insanitary, and without playgrounds; schools were split, and one had had no assembly since the outbreak of war. "A visitor found one classroom occupied by one woman and another by one man whilst at the same time two large classes of children were being taught in the swimming bath covered by a wooden roof serving as a floor for two other classes. The condition for the children hearing the teacher were appalling."⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (H.M.I. Report 26.10.39)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2128/2

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 67

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

(5) B/Ed. G8R/89/12.11.43

The task of assessing the overall effects of the evacuation will be tackled later, but it is certain that in many areas the effects of requisitioning were one of the most serious causes of half-time or disturbed instruction. Nor is it irrelevant here to draw attention to the scale of war damage to schools, bearing in mind that it happened largely in evacuation areas where requisitioning was most prevalent and where so many children were still living, despite efforts to persuade their parents to have them evacuated. In 1940, 2,501 schools were hit (656 in London) and in 1941, the peak year, the figure was 4,332 (252 in London.)⁽¹⁾

But one main conclusion from the story of school commandeering is that the status of education had been far too low in the attitudes of the public, administrators, Government, and local authorities. One major lesson is abundantly clear, the vital importance of insisting from the beginning that education is a social service that must always be maintained, even - or especially - in war.

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 64

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION IN RECEPTION AREAS

(i) Settling in

When the extra thousands of children arrived in the reception areas, and with schools in evacuation areas virtually non-existent, the strain placed on the host authorities to fulfil their obligations was enormous and immediate. Three words which came into the educationalists' vocabulary were "fragmentation," "identity," and "merging" for they embodied the basic problem which faced them. The three ways in which newcomers could be dealt with were by absorbing them into local schools, by keeping the respective schools separate and entire, or by sharing premises. All three methods were adopted, sometimes in combination. For example, not only did Oxford County Council absorb 2,100 children and their teachers into Oxfordshire schools, but they also coped with 2,400 evacuees on a Box and Cox system.⁽¹⁾ From the sparse statistics available, variations in policy are illustrated by the treatment of evacuated children in Worcester and Ely:⁽²⁾

| | <u>% Worcester</u> | <u>% Ely</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Absorbed full-time | 29 | 6 |
| Kept separate in halls, etc. | 29 | 3 |
| Same premises, double-shift | 20 | 73 |

The avowed intention of the Board in its definitive Circular on the eve of the war had been that "the local school and the visiting school will each retain its own individuality."⁽³⁾ But since the prime object of the operation was to move as many children as quickly as possible from danger zones nothing like enough thought was given to the

(1) Oxford C. C. op.cit. p. 6

(2) Padley op.cit. p. 116

(3) Schooling in an Emergency B/Ed. Circular 1474 (29.8.39)

educational future of the evacuees; so, although the LEAs and teachers were also bent on rejecting merging, the realities of wartime life in the country brought about an almost immediate re-consideration.

The fragmentation of evacuated schools and the isolation of so many groups caused HMIs to point out to the Board of Education the preferability of merging in villages where evacuee numbers were small, parties were mixed, and double-shifts impracticable. The Board's reply was that the preservation of identity was preferable - if practicable - but there was "no doctrinaire objection to merger," providing all those concerned were convinced of its necessity.⁽¹⁾ One month later, (20 October) the Board's position was still that identity should be preserved, but they accepted that, in some areas, only large-scale redistribution and rebilleting would ensure this; therefore, where numbers, age-ranges, premises and isolation made it desirable, "commonsense, educational efficiency and economy point to the merging of visiting and local children."⁽²⁾

From all over England HMIs were sending in reports of how difficult it was to reconcile education with fragmentation. There was, for example, one group of 30 children in a remote village near Ringwood with no means of transport to school.⁽³⁾ Some of the schools evacuated from West Ham became so mixed up in transit that they finished up in jumbled, isolated groups, irrespective of age or school.⁽⁴⁾ One Northants Senior Boys Department received six separate groups, constituted as follows:

| | | | |
|---------------|--|---|----|
| Group A | 97 children with 1 Headteacher and 11 Assistants | | |
| B | 14 | - | - |
| C | 57 | 1 | 4 |
| D | 20 | 1 | 2 |
| E | 21 | 1 | 3 |
| F | 48 | - | - |
| <u>Totals</u> | 267 | 4 | 20 |

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245 (26.9.39)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12 (H.M.I. Report Sept. 39)

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (H.M.I. Report 23.10.39)

The visiting Headteachers refused to merge, gave the HMI a round robin, and in the end the LEA had to impose complete merging, sending home all surplus Heads and assistants.⁽¹⁾

It was claimed by the opponents of merging that it could adversely affect the learning habits of the children, and from Cumberland came a report which specifically linked backwardness with the fact that not a single evacuated junior school had retained its identity.⁽²⁾ Headteachers and leaders of parties arriving in Somerset were, almost without exception, opposed to merging and invariably cited their LEA's instruction; but the local HMI pointed out that this resulted in many small, all-age groups, as many as three in one building, with a consequent rationing of time, wastage of teachers and a lowering of educational standards.⁽³⁾

The plight of evacuated re-organised elementary senior departments merits particular attention as their difficulties reflected the contrasting stages in educational development of the different types of areas. It must be remembered that, by the end of 1938, 64% of school children were in re-organised ("Hadowised") schools, and that the ^{English} ~~British~~ educational system was "in a state of ragged development."⁽⁴⁾ Evacuees came mainly from urban areas with the new school system and went into reception areas which were small, mainly rural, administered by Part III Authorities, and with schools which were usually voluntary and all-age. Having a higher proportion of evacuees than did older children in non-reorganised elementary schools, pupils of senior or central schools were particularly vulnerable to educational disruption. Sometimes these schools found themselves in areas whose LEAs had neither experience nor interest in selective central schools, sometimes in areas where there was a definite reluctance to encourage any form of advanced elementary

(1) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 4.12.41)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(3) Ibid.

(4) Padley op.cit. p. 118

education which was not available to local children.

The story of wartime life in Bedford was typical of such areas; its Hadow re-organisation collapsed with the outbreak of hostilities, revived, then collapsed with Dunkirk; many seniors were in village schools under impossible conditions for senior work, facilities were worsening, specialist teachers became fewer, evacuees of all sorts and sizes had to be absorbed and the education of older children gave rise to considerable uneasiness.⁽¹⁾ The LCC recorded that they had senior pupils in areas like Tunbridge Wells where there were no senior schools available,⁽²⁾ and that "only in a few areas is it possible to organise on the basis of separate departments for Infants, Juniors and Seniors."⁽³⁾

Staffs from urban central schools often found it difficult, if not impossible, to cope with specialised senior work, especially handicraft, domestic science and science,⁽⁴⁾ in the setting of an all-age village school. Even a prosaic item like equipment, when it was for the wrong kind of evacuated pupil in Monmouthshire, could become "a chief difficulty" in the path of normal education.⁽⁵⁾ Less than a week after the evacuation, R. C. K. Ensor was incensed at the temerity of a BBC commentator who had referred to evacuees going to be "better educated;" "It was more a case," claimed Ensor, "of London children being deprived of all the splendid equipment of their LCC schools."⁽⁶⁾

This disparity was accepted by the Board's President, Lord De La Warr, in December 1939 when he received a deputation from the Standing

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.1940)

(2) B/Ed. 249 B(2) (H.M.I. Report 20.9.1939)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Chief Insp. Report. 17.10.1941)

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

(5) B/Ed. File 359 B(2) (H.M.I. Report)

(6) Spectator 8.9.1939

Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations. He admitted "the lower standard of education in some rural areas compared to urban areas."⁽¹⁾ The direct link between the older style organisation and the Dual System was confirmed by many evacuated parties. (In July 1939 out of a total of 797 "Black List" schools, 572 were non-provided⁽²⁾ and in 1942 over a half of all the schools in England and Wales were denominational - nearly 9,000 Church of England and over 1,200 Roman Catholic).⁽³⁾ One especially revealing report about war damage to schools told how many Managers of C. of E. schools had no money to carry out repairs to their rapidly deteriorating buildings; when the Board could give no assurance of help it was the LCC that offered to advance the money.⁽⁴⁾ A rather intriguing and exceptional case was the evacuated C. of E. school from Salford to a Central school at Rawenstall. Although an exception to the general pattern, it demonstrated the disadvantages under which the Church Schools so often worked, for the Rawenstall school was furnished with such luxurious refinements as an Infants playground, special nursery accommodation, cloakrooms and indoor toilets, much to the delight of the Church school which was "rejoicing in these amenities for they have nothing of the kind in their own buildings at Salford."⁽⁵⁾

Although most secondary schools settled down by 1940 into something like a tolerable academic existence, the German bombers were no respecters of educational boundaries and some of the secondary schools from bombed areas had great difficulty in keeping cohesive form. Among those affected in this way was Bootle School; when the Town Clerk closed

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) Times Educational Supplement 15 July 1939

(3) B/Ed. 2152 (2) 1A (Letter from R. A. Butler to Mrs. Churchill 19.12.1942)

(4) B/Ed. G. 25 W.D. (London War Damage)

(5) B/Ed. 233 B(2)

all schools at the end of 1940 because of enemy action, this one was evacuated to Southport. There, by May 1941, it was so affected by comings and goings that it was a conglomerate of 233 boys and girls from ten different schools, not only from Bootle but from Crosby, Liverpool, and overflows from local departments.⁽¹⁾

The pros and cons of merging divided educational opinion until well into 1942, and the controversy was never really resolved. This was probably because the situations could vary so much, depending on such factors as percentages evacuated, premises and billets available, the esprit-de-corps of the school, the variation in educational standards, the attitudes of the lost LEAs, and even the luck of the draw of the trains. Some schools kept their identities and academic standards while others floundered immediately on arrival. These were the factors which produced such a divergence among the informed opinion of the time: one view claimed that it was merging which was mainly responsible for such weaknesses in the evacuation aftermath as lowering of standards, loss of identity, and the returning home of headmasters.⁽²⁾ The other view, also from the Inspectorate, was that "the evils of the original evacuation are in most due to the original acquiescence to the maintenance of a spurious identity which has persisted owing to the resistance of evacuated Headteachers and party leaders, who, understandably, have not wanted to lose their commands, supported by their officials"⁽³⁾

Although for the most part, the story of schools in reception areas was largely one of settling down in often extremely difficult circumstances to peaceful co-existence between locals and visitors, contemporary reports show that there were many areas where difficulties

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (G-WD File 13.5.41)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Chief Insp. Report 17.10.41)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

produced more than mere irritation and were not generally known about beyond those immediately concerned.

In some districts the widely acclaimed amity between local and evacuated teachers simply did not obtain. Reasons put forward for this included resentment at the presence as "helpers" of wives of visiting teachers; the great disparity of pupil-teacher ratios with the evacuees far the better-off; the fact that, while locals did a normal day's work, evacuees would work only a half-day with the rest of the day free, no organised games and no homework.⁽¹⁾ This alienation did not exist only at staffroom level for there were even LCC Inspectors, sent to Leicester and Northants who soon became "independent and uncooperative" - according to the HMI.⁽²⁾ There was also the country MP who wrote to the Parliamentary Secretary what the Board officials considered an "abusive" letter in which he embodied extremes of emotional value judgements: "The standard of education in the country appears to be at least as high as that of London, if not higher, and some of the books used are above London children's heads! This, of course, will never be admitted by the London teachers, or even the Inspectors of the London schools, who wish to continue the myth that country children are backwards and stupid."⁽³⁾ If such opinions came from an MP it is understandable how resentment and antagonism could breed in those reception areas where the normal standards of tact and tolerance were not reached.

In Cornwall, with 30,000 native children, the problem was not merely that by June 1940 the county had to absorb 25,000 official evacuees, it meant that very few pre-war schools could persist as "units" and that they became "all-age," with little distinction between infant,

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2133/2

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (H.M.I. Report 4.12.41)

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246 (18.10.39)

junior and secondary pupils - local and evacuees alike.⁽¹⁾ But to make things even thornier, Cornwall was already operating the 15+ school leaving age (nationally shelved on 3 September 1939), and made itself unpopular with the LCC, Ministry of Health and, especially, the parents concerned, by refusing free travel vouchers back to evacuation areas before the pupil was 15.⁽²⁾

The lumping together of all ages was far from being restricted to Cornwall; from Bedford, for instance, came a complaint about the "sad effect" on junior education caused by the return of seniors to village schools, swamping accommodation and causing overcrowding and classroom tedium.⁽³⁾ In the autumn of 1940, one rural area of Somerset received 1,136 evacuees (with 90 teachers!) of all ages, with the result that one village had to take in five separate departments under seven Heads, and totalling 27 seniors, 149 juniors, and 117 infants, all sharing one building on a three-shift basis.⁽⁴⁾

The shift system, which had been in widespread operation since the first days of the war, was reviewed by the Board in October 1939 when some schools were being hard put to give what they thought was an adequate education in the hours available. It was decided that, subject to distances travelled by pupils, their ages, the provision of meals and the numbers of daylight hours, HMIs should be authorised to allow shifts up to four hours duration.⁽⁵⁾ Fortunately, this limit was rarely used for there were complaints that where infant classes worked a $3\frac{1}{2}$ hour shift, their tiredness showed it was too much for little ones to sustain.⁽⁶⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(4) Ibid.

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 22/205 (Memo. to H.M.I.'s (E); No. 411 of 17.10.39)

(6) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

A cause of constant concern to the Board was the way in which the sizes of classes fluctuated as a result of movements, sometimes predictable but often unpredictable, of both children and teachers. The initial evacuation had, with complete staffs, depleted pupil numbers and so many unexpected private evacuees, produced many inconsistencies. Sheffield sent only 5,000 out of 61,623 children, but with 533 teachers.⁽¹⁾ Newcastle sent away 5,000 children with 350 teachers, but they were so scattered that in some villages there were as few as 8 or 9 children to a teacher.⁽²⁾ As the evacuated teachers could not be directed by reception LEAs, and some evacuation LEAs refused to allow their teachers to be used except for their own children, situations arose such as at Northampton. There, with 32 local children in each class, yet playing host to 98 different LEAs, some without any teachers, ratios ranged from 16:1 (from East Ham) to 94:1 (from Leyton), even to 319:1 (from Middlesex); and yet, as late as June 1941 the situation was still such that Ilford was reported as countermanding the direction of one of their teachers by Northampton - and he was redundant! Northampton protested to the Board, but in vain, for they were adamant on the principle.⁽³⁾

Relations between hosts and guests became exacerbated in many villages where the overcrowded local classes could see small groups of visitors in the village hall, and for a long time the results of this stubborn clinging to identity could be seen in little towns like Alnwick in Northumberland where in March 1940 there were two local classes of 50 plus, one evacuated class of 10 (from Wallsend) and one of 5 (from Byker). Derbyshire took in groups ranging from 18:1 from Lowestoft to 161:1 from London, and, try as the local Authority did to use a staff-pooling system, it took a long, laborious process to allow redundant Lowestoft

(1) B/Ed. P/s 108 B (1)

(2) B/Ed. P/s 94 B (1)

(3) B/Ed. P/s 28 B (1)

teachers to take other children.⁽¹⁾ The tale was the same from all over the country; London school groups in Brecon (15:1), Mountain Ash (70:1), and Leicester (160:1); Liverpool evacuated groups of 24:1, and Lowestoft groups of 14:1, 16:1, and 27:3.⁽²⁾

There must have been many a meeting like the one of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Rural District Council on 28 January 1940, where the Councillors were bewildered, frustrated and indignant at what they called the "absurd" situation, 45 Portsmouth children with 14 teachers having the use of two rooms for afternoons only - and no blame attached to the teachers who only wanted to teach. Incidentally, the only yardstick available locally for comparison was the group of Southampton evacuees, 95 children with 5 teachers.⁽³⁾

The position changed somewhat after Spring 1940 as some evacuation authorities, in an effort to cope with the task of schooling the growing numbers at home, rationed teachers for reception areas. This system, with fragmentation and small groups, resulted in what happened in Gloucestershire, which had many schools with between 30 and 60 evacuees from 10 Authorities, none of whom deemed their own groups large enough to justify a teacher; as a result class-sizes contrasted as follows, not only in Gloucestershire but in neighbouring Worcester and Bath;⁽⁴⁾

| | <u>Gloucester</u> | <u>Worcester</u> | <u>Bath</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <u>Locals</u> | 25:1 | 27:1 | 30:1 |
| <u>Evacuees</u> | 53:1 | 43:1 | 57:1 |

When reports were called for from HMIs in December 1941 (Memo to HMIs No. 43 of 20.12.41) figures emerged like these for Luton reception area in September 1941:

(1) B/Ed. P/s 29 B (1)

(2) B/Ed. P/s 208 B (1) / 57

(3) Southern Daily Echo 29.1.40

(4) B/Ed. P/s 14 B (1); P/s 47 B (1); P/s 53 B (1)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Senior Departments</u> | 61 classes of 40 - 50 |
| | 7 over 50 |
| <u>Junior + Infants</u> | 71 of 50 - 54 |
| | 9 55 - 60 |

The opinion of the LCC Inspectorate was: "One of the main factors preventing a return to normal standards is the increasing size of classes." In Lincoln and Rutland "the increase in size of classes has imposed limitations on methods of teaching," and in Bristol, "constant re-organisation due to evacuation and returns therefrom, and the large classes have discouraged enterprise and encouraged conventional type of work."

At Worcester "a dimming of the spirit of progress and development" was attributed to largening classes; from Nottinghamshire and Oxfordshire it was reported that "a lower level of attainment was already apparent, caused by 'large classes composed of children of varying ability and often wide age ranges.'" Hertfordshire had similar troubles, while Morecambe and Blackpool were suffering from a growing number of 50-plus classes. It was significant that in Cumberland and Westmoreland, where there had been early merging of locals and evacuees, smaller classes and happier conditions resulted.⁽¹⁾

Of the other minor irritants which plagued the schools away from their home bases, the supply of text books and equipment for evacuated children was all too often a very real source of trouble. As one HMI wrote - as late as December 1940; "All evacuating Authorities have lagged in the sending of supplies."⁽²⁾ In many areas it was only thanks to the generosity and unselfishness of the host Heads that some semblance of serious instruction could be given.

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 8

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(ii) Secondary Education

As might be expected where there was a higher degree of motivation, the secondary schools had a better record of evacuation, that is, in percentages of those who actually travelled with, and remained loyal to, their schools. The figures available for LCC secondary schools reflect this reluctance to return en masse to London until some real stability was assured.⁽¹⁾

| <u>Autumn Term</u> | <u>Numbers in Reception Areas</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1939 | 21,499 |
| 1940 | 15,126 |
| 1941 | 15,727 |
| 1942 | 13,707 |
| 1943 | 8,394 |
| 1944 | 7,697 |
| Summer 1945 | 5,354 |

(Pre-war total = 33,500)

They were also commended for their remarkably good attendances in the reception areas. As for the missing 12,000 after the outbreak of war, many of them were among the private evacuees who swelled the numbers in the reception area schools, some were put into private schools in safe areas, while about half of them stayed behind in London, some for financial reasons and some, it was learned, who were in the hop fields at evacuation time and whose parents thought, when grants failed to arrive, that their schooldays were over.⁽²⁾

The story of constancy among secondary pupils was the same over most of the country; it was certainly shown in the North Riding in December 1940 where 3,966 local and evacuated secondary children were receiving full-time education (only 251 were on half-time or more) with

(1) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.1945

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246 26.10.39

an average attendance of 95%.⁽¹⁾ To make a 1941 survey of educational facilities and billeting arrangements of secondary schools in reception areas, the Incorporated Association of Headmasters dealt with 108 schools. Their findings were that, apart from limitations in science and practical subjects, facilities were good and, in 90% of cases, shared equally; also, 66% of the reception schools covered revealed virtually no effect upon the teaching.⁽²⁾

Perhaps the extreme example of wartime secondary education at its most unscathed was at Tadcaster, in rural West Yorkshire, fourteen miles from Leeds. The local Grammar School for a very brief spell housed a Leeds school before it went back home, leaving Tadcaster remote, placid and prospering on its breweries and farms. An intriguing concomitant to this isolation is described in the rest of this report; there were local complaints about school building restrictions, cramped accommodation, worsening discipline with Dad away and Mum working, the call-up of the History master and the way work was suffering from the distractions of the local Youth Organisations and Cadet Corps (there were no such groups in the school). Most telling of all was a Vith Former's reaction to a plea for aid for refugees: "My parents say that the people of Europe have only themselves to blame."⁽³⁾

Rather different were the tales which lay behind the parliamentary answer given by the President of the Board in December 1941. He had been asked for a statement on the help given by Public Schools to Secondary Schools. This he was able to do with plenty of specific examples such as Rossall, Marlborough, Winchester, Charterhouse and Repton. The Headmistress of the Clapham County Grammar School for Girls sent a report

(1) North Riding Education Committee Report for 1940

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249 (I.A.H.M. Survey of 14.6.1941)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

to the LCC putting on record the great kindness her school had been shown when they were absorbed, three quarters in Windsor and one quarter in Eton College. One complete College House was given over to 60 Clapham girls who were given all facilities by the staff and their families. Schoolwork, incidentally, prospered steadily, especially with the senior girls.⁽¹⁾

"Serious apprehensions appear to be entertained in certain quarters that the education being given in evacuated schools now in reception areas is inadequate and inefficient."⁽²⁾ So ran a Memorandum (No. 653) which asked HMIs to report by 6 August 1940 on "black spots" - that is, evacuated secondary schools where the Inspector advocated re-evacuation. Things do not seem to have been anything like as bad as the Memo suggests, for, as will be examined later, secondary education did not suffer as much as the elementary sector. However, signs of increasing imperfections in the secondary system were already becoming apparent; this can be seen in the case of St. Saviour's and St. Olave's School in South London, evacuated to Hove, then allowed to re-open at home with "Emergency Classes" in April 1940. "As soon as these classes began it was noticeable that girls who had been to school at Hove, or to other secondary schools, since the previous September, were nearly a year ahead in their work of those who had been doing nothing."⁽³⁾

This disjointed or irregular form of schooling was the most serious kind of handicapping for secondary education, becoming more evident in 1941, especially in successive First Year intakes. One report, on the Greycoat School, Westminster, evacuated to Brighton, noted that new entrants were increasingly less skilled in English and arithmetic and that concentration was difficult because of nervous

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 22/215

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

strain caused partly by homesickness and partly by worry about their families in the blitz. The school magazines of the Mary Dakhelor Girls School from Camberwell tells a pitiable story of initial dispersal among Kent villages, re-evacuation to Llanelly, and a constant battle to keep the school's identity, numbers and academic standards. Reference is made to the cumulative effort of conditions and how the younger girls had much leeway to make up. With another school, "standards of work were good among seniors, but with each year it became more difficult to maintain this as new children were admitted whose earlier schooling had been broken and greatly suffered." Confirmation of this came from the Eltham Hill Girls School who maintained their standards in South Wales at first, but "work suffered much more later on when they received girls who had been seriously disturbed by war conditions."⁽¹⁾

The problem of class numbers in secondary schools in reception areas was one which arose very early in the evacuation. The case which afterwards became the precedent was when the Governors of Abertillery County School asked the Board of Education for permission to exceed the prescribed maximum of 35 per class, (as specified in Article 5 of the Regulations). The request was granted, with the proviso that the HMI must approve and standards must not be threatened.⁽²⁾ The Board was now reconciled to abandoning the campaign they had waged since 1929, and as overcrowding increased, especially in areas popular with private evacuees, many classes exceeded 35 and neared 40, until the Board was impelled to issue a Memo to Inspectors giving 40 as the new official maximum, justifying the division by pointing to the need to accept suitably qualified evacuees.⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid.

(2) B/Ed. W/S 381/B (1)

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 22/227

Classes of 40 were rare at first, but over the next years gradually increased until some areas, like Leicester, had many; here again, unofficial evacuees were the main reason, but when the HMI asked on educational grounds for some re-billeting to ease the situation the Board refused, except in "cast-iron" cases, admitting, "we are turning a blind eye to the numbers."⁽¹⁾

Overcrowding was, of course, tied up with the shortage of secondary premises available. Although the matching-up of visiting and local schools was, by and large, successfully achieved, there were some difficult cases, notably where three schools shared the same building. The new County School at Welwyn Garden City accommodated two evacuated schools,⁽²⁾ and one Northampton school took in two Willesden schools.⁽³⁾

The cumulative effort of reading a selection of school magazines for those days is to make one marvel at the industry and persistence of the staff and pupils to maintain secondary standards. One school took the Higher Schools Certificate exams in a Welsh chapel four days after arriving in their new premises; another had to take the exam in an air raid shelter; many had to move more than once. Walthamstow Girls High School had to use a YMCA, learning German in the skittle alley, English in the table tennis room, maths and French simultaneously in the billiards room and classics in the Gentlemen's toilet; but "all work was done, all exams passed, as usual" Yet another magazine recorded that "One most distressing feature in the life of the school continued to be the frequent staff changes."⁽⁴⁾

Finally, as was to be expected when large numbers of secondary

(1) B/Ed. S 729/34

(2) B/Ed. G. 17E Part 6 1477

(3) B/Ed. G. 28 E. Part 1

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

schools evacuated from Part II Authorities to Part III Authority areas, many of them suffered by finding a complete lack of facilities to continue their normal work. It was an ironic paradox that the very success of secondary evacuation, the proportions of pupils transported being much higher than those of elementary schools, ranging from 60% to 70%, compounded their problems in this respect, many finding themselves in areas with little or no secondary provision. This became such a serious handicap that by 31 October 1939 the "Joint Four" sent a deputation to the President of the Board to express their strong concern over the need to redistribute secondary schools to where they could carry on their proper work.⁽¹⁾ Typical of these schools was the Southwark Boys Grammar School, evacuated to Uckfield in East Sussex and then forced to re-evacuate to Torquay.⁽²⁾ The South London girls evacuated to Hove were especially unfortunate, for not only were there no Grammar facilities but they had no premises for classwork; at first, the teachers gathered clusters of girls, teaching them on the beach and in golf bunkers; eventually they settled down in a hut on the Downs, a Church Hall, a school laboratory and a Greyhound Racing Stadium.⁽³⁾

So the tale continued; two LCC secondary schools were still not doing any work at all after seven weeks of war,⁽⁴⁾ and, to give some idea of the scale of the problem, 87 London selective central schools were having to do the best they could despite being irretrievably fragmented and scattered over hundreds of villages.⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2157/7

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/184

(5) B/Ed. 2107/7

(iii) Adapting to the situation

An interesting aspect of education in reception areas was the way teachers reacted in their methods to the new situations which faced them. In two respects, both of which reflected a failure to adapt, these reactions were not entirely popular with the Inspectorate. Firstly, a lack of proper furniture, books and equipment severely handicapped those evacuated teachers who, through failure of vision, adaptability or enterprise, attempted to carry on, under unsuitable conditions, the same type of curriculum and methods as back in their peacetime classrooms. Secondly, some teachers, especially local ones, showed an over-reliance on a hard spell of 3-R's to whip evacuees up to standard.

But in some ways the new circumstances were advantageous both to local and visiting schools. The Heads, staffs and HMI in Cornwall all agreed on the complementary contributions made by both types of schools, the local children being stimulated by the degree of oral participation and artistic expression of London schools as well as by the presence of the LCC specialist teachers, and the LCC children being introduced to local studies and rural science. In Cumberland and Westmorland it was acknowledged that the presence of evacuated teachers had turned out to be a boon; Keswick demonstrated in a most effective way the practical application of co-operation when the local Domestic Science Organiser combined the local and visiting senior girls and staffs into three groups working for the community, doing laundry, mending, and cooking 90 school meals every day.⁽¹⁾

The Board did all it could to encourage the widening of interests in the schoolchildren. It poured out the Schools in Wartime series of publications already referred to, a high proportion of which dealt specifically with extra-mural activities, urging schools, especially

(1) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/245

those on double-shift, to use the world outside the school as an extension of the classroom. In fact, when the subject was raised quite early in the war of ensuring attendance at informal shift activities, the official ruling was that it was already being done and could be made obligatory.⁽¹⁾

In certain reception areas the local schools reaped special benefits from the evacuation. In Cornwall the teaching of infants had been hitherto the chief weakness of an authority with so many rural schools, but thanks to the presence of trained Infant teachers with their more modern outlook the Cornish infants were given a more profitable start in life and Cornish teachers given valuable examples and advice.⁽²⁾ From Luton came a report recording the schools where a new spirit of learning, not teaching, had resulted from the evacuation - especially in the broadening of teacher-outlook (by branching out into the Arts, film-making, etc.), and in a widening of creative thought in junior schools, demonstrated by a progressive awareness in citizenship and popular culture.

For all their losses at being away from home and their own premises, the evacuated schools profited in many different ways, and not merely by having the beaches for games or the countryside for rambling. Self-reliance was developed by looking after their gardens and livestock, by repairing their own footwear and by mending their own clothes.⁽³⁾ Most evacuated schools seized this unique opportunity for new approaches in geography, social studies and local history, based on the school and moving outwards. For many children this was their first experience of the inside of a library or a museum. One document summarised the advantages of being evacuated as:

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(3) Ibid.

1. Smaller classes (thanks to the drift and the stay-at-home)
2. Closer pupil-teacher links (the evacuated teachers assuming a more pastoral role.)
3. More individual work
4. Environmental studies
5. Initiative and self-reliance
6. Practical experience (in gardening, decorating, etc.)
7. Better home life.⁽¹⁾

One very gratifying impression of many reception areas is the degree of contentment to which these new experiences must have contributed. This was evidenced in, for example, the figures at Poole for evacuee school-leavers; one third stayed on at school, one third went back home, and one third took up local employment.⁽²⁾ Word came from Devon, and in some cases where there were more evacuees than locals, that "LEAs have maintained a very satisfactory state of educational administration and educational efficiency" with interrupted schooling being recovered amid "happy integration."⁽³⁾ Elsewhere, tribute was paid to the way in which evacuee morale was maintained by teachers, the visiting children often indistinguishable from the locals; this they did by involving the children in the war effort, ensuring their physical well-being, welding them into the local community, and providing full-time education for all.⁽⁴⁾ Seemingly unsurmountable problems could be, and were, overcome, and in their place was created "a genuinely integrated, happy, educational community," even in an area where an extremely cosmopolitan LCC population outnumbered the locals.⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Chief Insp. Report 17.10.41)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

So the reports continued to arrive of the benefits being reaped in reception areas. In South Devon: "A number of evacuated schools have secured better scholarship and certificate results than in peacetime."⁽¹⁾ In Staffordshire the village children profited from the narrower age-ranges and wider aesthetic experiences which resulted from the arrival of evacuated teachers. From the North West came a similar story,⁽²⁾ and from Salford to Rawenstall went children with no previous classroom literature; within weeks the great majority were members of the local library, and enjoying the pleasures of reading into the dark winter evenings.⁽³⁾

(iv) Attendance

The following figures were issued for children attending school in reception areas on 2 February 1940:⁽⁴⁾

| <u>Public Elementary Schools:</u> | <u>Residents</u> | | <u>Evacuees</u> | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Full time | 1,731,555 | (93.6%) | 311,264 | (90.2%) |
| Half time | 109,478 | (5.9%) | 33,400 | (9.7%) |
| Less than half | 5,213 | (0.3%) | 190 | (0.1%) |
| Nil | <u>1,980</u> | (0.1%) | <u>18</u> | - |
| | 1,848,226 | | 344,872 | |

| <u>Secondary Schools:</u> | <u>Residents</u> | | <u>Evacuees</u> | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Full time | 172,223 | (90.3%) | 48,111 | (78.8%) |
| Half time | 18,501 | (9.7%) | 12,923 | (21.2%) |
| Less than half | - | | - | |
| Nil | <u>-</u> | | <u>-</u> | |
| | 190,724 | | 61,034 | |

Although it is tempting to speculate on the implications of some of these figures, the important point to stress is that "full-time" was a rather uncertain term as it could, for example, include being on a Box and Cox

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (H.M.I. Report 3.3.42)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(3) B/Ed. File 233 B (2)

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (File 26)

basis for half a day in school, with the other half day on some extra-mural activity, usually recreational. In fact, as the Teachers' World pointed out, one shift in itself officially constituted full time education.⁽¹⁾ Behind these totals lie such extremes as Surrey, which received a total of evacuees equivalent to 93% of its own school population,⁽²⁾ and the North Riding, which was very little disturbed, had no double shifts, and where the attendance record varied little between pre-war and wartime years.⁽³⁾

The complicating problem of unofficial evacuees has already been referred to, but a half-way variation quite often met with was the "Official but un-attached," who posed a very real problem to local schools, especially in places like Weymouth, which received 700 of them.⁽⁴⁾

(v) Deterioration

In January 1940 a Chief Inspector was able to write of the reception areas, "I have no doubt that the good educational effects of the evacuation outweigh the bad."⁽⁵⁾ This was still in the comparatively euphoric period of the "phoney war" in safe zones. But eleven weeks later the Board sent out a memorandum to HMIs expressing concern about the recent returns on children in reception areas still not being taught; in the Memo the suggested text of letters to be sent by HMIs to LEAs included, "It is noted that a substantial number of children were at the date of the return (early February) receiving less than full-time education." 21 out of the 48 Authorities received this letter, from the Home Counties to Cumberland, and from Gloucester to Northumberland.⁽⁶⁾

(1) Teacher's World 5.3.41

(2) School Medical Service in Wartime B/Ed. C.M.O. May 1942

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (Insp. Report 10.12.40)

(4) B/Ed. 252 B (2) Weymouth 21.9.49

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(6) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206 (Memo to H.M.I.s (E) No. 428 29.3.40)

By mid-December 1940, on the subject of infant education, the Inspector from Bedford reported, "the least said the better." 30 schools were on half-time instruction with no "off-time" activity, classrooms were ARP shelters, and there never was anything else but "double-desk 3 R's"⁽¹⁾

On the self-same day, this domination by the "3 R Drill" method was linked, in Somerset, with the wastage of specialist teachers; domestic science and woodwork teachers had almost disappeared, art, literature and religious knowledge were being curtailed or omitted. Simultaneously, reports came in from West Yorkshire about the considerable reduction of handicraft and from Cumberland about the diminution of PT. Besides the effect of this whittling down of precious staff, there was also criticism that children in reception areas were being educationally deprived because some teachers were failing to sustain their efforts. Others were blamed for a tendency to allow emergency problems and makeshift solutions to become permanent and for a failure to produce timetables, schemes of work and record books. From elsewhere came more criticism of the slackness of teachers who may have been quite satisfactory at home, with normal facilities, but who, with insufficient resources to occupy and interest their pupils, and faced with haphazard collections of all-age strangers, were driven to let things slide, and acquiesced in the reading of comics as a preferable alternative to pandemonium.⁽²⁾

Generally, the local children seem to have been less affected educationally than the evacuees, but worrying situations did exist, as, for example, in Berkshire, when agricultural educational centres were taken over for the Land Girls - "the height of folly" it was said, to deprive boys who had qualified from being able to take up their chosen careers.⁽³⁾ In the North Riding, when arrangements were being made for

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(2) Ibid.

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

the "11+" scholarship examination, allowances had to be made for 767 out of 5,000 candidates who had had interrupted education.⁽¹⁾ The report on Bridgewater ran, "..... the general level of attainment is sometimes below average due to the usual adverse circumstances of shortage of books, inadequate furniture, constant dribble of fresh evacuees, many of whom have had long periods out of school."⁽²⁾ An especially interesting account is of Peterborough Borough in December 1940, a reception area where work had carried on almost normally, where no special difficulties had been encountered, and where, after the first impact and the drift back, all evacuees had been evenly assimilated; the "A" children, particularly those from good homes, were virtually normal, while the "B" children, "especially those whose parents show undue alarm during night warnings were noticeably retarded."

As for the evacuees themselves, those original ones who survived the drift and settled happily over a long period of time did not suffer much deprivation; it was the subsequent ones, notably those who were evacuated several times, whose standards were found to be lower than the locals, and who, incidentally, brought most difficulties for the teachers to cope with. Another area reported that these children showed "both deterioration in attainment and behaviour due to long periods out of school."

In one West Country region a criticism was that for most evacuated LCC schools the educational side was merely "a rehash of what we did in London," but with shorter time and less adequate resources, hence much of the failure to achieve real educational advantage from the change of surroundings. The local Inspector complained particularly about the amount and quality of written work, the general training, tidiness,

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

noise level and slovenly behaviour. Worst off were those senior evacuees, who had accompanied their younger brothers and sisters, and who now found themselves in junior schools.⁽¹⁾

When the question of closing village schools was raised at the end of the war, Brigadier Rayner, MP, asked, "Is (the Minister) aware that LCC evacuees during the war proved to be about a year behind their village contemporaries?"⁽²⁾ There was no answer given then, but the HMI for Cornwall commented as early as December 1940 on the higher attainment standards of the local children, pointing out that the vast majority would have been evacuated after June 1940, and therefore those whose education would have been affected for ten months, in addition to which a higher percentage of them would have been under-privileged.⁽³⁾

Try as they might, and some of their efforts were quite heroic, the teachers and administrators were in a constant state of struggle with those circumstances in reception areas which made keeping up educational standards so hard. The Manchester Schoolmasters told how impossible it was to keep to their curriculum when school identity was fragmented; they instanced two large Manchester schools split up over 15 village schools.⁽⁴⁾ The reasons given in Cumberland and Westmoreland for the general lowering of standards among senior evacuees were dispersal, unstreaming, lack of specialisation, and loss of equipment.⁽⁵⁾ But possibly the best personification of all these evacuees and their problems was the little eight-year-old girl billeted on Dr. C. M. Joad in a West Country village which had 80 evacuees in its school. When she told Joad that she did knitting every day, sometimes all day, he queried

(1) Ibid.

(2) Hansard 1.8.46 *Commons*, Vol. 426. Col. 1221

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(5) Ibid.

this with the Head, who confirmed the girl's story. "If the girl can already read, well, it's quite possible she's left to knit most of the time." But he also added that she was in a class of 40, aged 7 to 14, from 15 separate schools (13 from London, one from Hastings, and one from Eastbourne.), constantly to-ing and fro-ing, and that almost without exception the London children had done no work for months, some had never been to school since July 1939, and some had forgotten how to read. Little wonder that a girl who could read was left to her knitting while others were brought up to basic literacy.⁽¹⁾

A disruptive feature of life in some reception areas - which is often overlooked through associating "reception" with "safety" - was enemy bombing. Although some of these areas were re-zoned this did not alter the fact that the educational position deteriorated. Two of the worst-affected places were Portland, which had eight major raids and 50 warnings in August 1940, and Kent, a "mixed" area which had 205 incidents in August and September, 20 schools seriously damaged and 30,000 square feet of glass smashed. As a result of this situation discretionary powers were given to LEAs in reception and neutral areas as to whether they should close their schools - in line with the new government policy of trying to maintain "normality" as reflected in keeping the children in the classroom.⁽²⁾

(1) New Statesman December 1940

(2) B/Ed. G 632/1223 and J 403/209 (i)

CHAPTER 4EDUCATION IN EVACUATION AND NEUTRAL AREAS(i) The Dilemma

The drift back home was one of the crucial factors affecting conditions in evacuation areas, and so it will help to recapitulate on the numbers of children in their home (evacuation) areas. On 1 January 1940 the official figures given for children in these areas and receiving no education were:⁽¹⁾

Elementary - 417,511
Secondary - 12,481

Titmuss estimated that by 8 January, of the 1,473,000 originally evacuated, 900,000 had returned home.⁽²⁾

As a result of this large-scale withdrawal to home, "By January 1940, evacuation in Scotland and over a great part of the Midlands and North of England was no longer a big administrative and social problem."⁽³⁾ Unfortunately, the corollary of this was that the position in major evacuation areas had been deteriorating steadily since the previous September.

Reference has already been made to the way in which the shortage of premises contributed towards this deterioration, but this was only one way in which the pressures were building up to force the government into providing schooling. Incidentally, the sequel to the action of the Vicar of St. Mary's, West Ham, and his makeshift school was that the LEA recalled one Head and eight teachers from Devon, converted a rifle-range

(1) Hansard 1.1.1940 *Commons*. Vol. 356 Col. 1242.

(2) Titmuss *Op.cit.* p. 171

(3) *Ibid.* p. 174

under the church into a shelter, and then operated a 3-shift system.⁽¹⁾ It would be difficult adequately to summarise the representations which ranged from the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords to "Live Letters" in the Daily Mirror, but certain ones call for special attention. Visualise, for example, the impact on Lord De La Warr of a deputation which included Professor Tawney, Lester Smith, and Harold Clay.⁽²⁾ The Chairman of Coventry Education Committee was driven in futile desperation to write a letter to the Manchester Guardian.⁽³⁾ The heated meeting of the Manchester Education Committee was reported in some detail, complete with their views linking school closures with illegal juvenile employment, the urgent need to provide School Medical Services, milk and meals, the growth of juvenile delinquency, and including their declaration that "it is desirable that compulsory school attendance should be restored as soon as possible."⁽⁴⁾

Between January and March 1940 a host of written representations was pouring into the Board demanding full-time education in evacuation areas. The senders included the National Association of Head Teachers, the Assistant Masters' Association, the Parliamentary Committee of Co-operative Congress, the New Educational Fellowship, the TUC, the National Federation of Professional Workers and the National Union of Women Teachers.⁽⁵⁾ A high-level Conference was set up on 26 January between the National Council of Labour (representing the TUC, Labour Party, and Parliamentary Labour Party) and the Home Secretary, Minister of Health, President of the Board of Education and the Permanent Under

(1) Daily Mail 12.10.1939

(2) Highway March 1940

(3) Manchester Guardian 15.1.1940

(4) Ibid. 16.1.1940

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 10 247 (January 1940)

Secretary for Scotland.⁽¹⁾ To all these protesting organisations, despite Circulars, like B/Ed. 1483 of 11.11.1939, which apparently gave increasing hope of an improvement, progress seemed painfully slow.

The National Association of Head Teachers issued a statement that "..... Parents, teachers and the general public are becoming increasingly perturbed at the evident harm being inflicted upon the rising generation by the lack of systematic education."⁽²⁾ While accepting the difficulties in some areas, they asked, surely part-time education at least should be obligatory? Margaret Bondfield wrote the strongly-worded letter as Chairman of the Women's Group on Problems arising from the Evacuation which, in association with the National Council of Social Service, spoke for 26 major, non-racial, non-sectarian and, largely, non-political organisations.⁽³⁾

Even the eventual appearance of the momentous Circular of 6 February 1940 restoring compulsory senior education was far from satisfactory; it used the words "as soon as sufficient accommodation was available," merely hinted at 1 April as a starting day for those over 8, and referred to full or part-time education. So there can be no surprise that over two months later, on 20 April, at a meeting in Manchester organised by the WEA and NUT and attended by delegates from 50 organisations a resolution was sent to the Prime Minister and the President of the Board on behalf of "working-class organisations, parents and teachers" It declared, "(the meeting) deplores the effects of prolonged closing of schools in evacuation and neutral areas (and) urges the Board of Education to ensure the restoration of full educational provision for children of all years."⁽⁴⁾ Also in April, in a

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/7

(2) Manchester Guardian 2.2.1940

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2133/2

(4) Manchester Guardian 22.4.1940

feature article in the Daily Express, William Barkley reported on a Northern slum school of 1,100 children, most of whom had returned home after the first two weeks of September 1939 and had no schooling until after the Christmas holidays; even then, because of the part occupation of their school, they only received one hour per day instruction. "So we shall end victorious but ignorant," he wrote, "with our enemies defeated but educated."⁽¹⁾

One of the most powerful and well-documented attacks came in December 1940 from ^{Dr.}~~Professor~~ Joad in the New Statesman. Basing his argument on the 90,000 unschooled LCC children after an autumn of air raids he disputed the Board's national estimate of 98% receiving some education. He claimed that there had been no LCC attendance prosecutions since the summer because all the School Attendance Officers had been seconded to evacuation or billeting schemes; moreover, the children at school were attending the nearest school to their homes, irrespective of its type or age-range.⁽²⁾

The apparent foot-dragging by the Board on the subject of re-opening schools and imposing full-time schooling in evacuation areas undoubtedly and adversely affected the education of many thousands of children, but, to be fair, it must be considered in relation to the home front strategy already decided on, and to the wartime background against which any deviations had to be made.

As early as 25 September, before the drift had gathered momentum the Board quite clearly was conscious of the growing problem when it circularised the LEAs: "It would clearly be intolerable that a substantial proportion of the school population should continue indefinitely to be deprived of education and its allied services, and should suffer the demoralisation which must inevitably follow the removal of school discipline."

(1) Daily Express 9.4.1940

(2) New Statesman December 1940

and control."⁽¹⁾

What was an extremely difficult question for the government to decide became increasingly so; they were apprehensive of encouraging the drift back to become a deluge, unwilling to accept the responsibility for assemblies of children before adequate air raid precautions were provided, handicapped by so many school premises being in the hands of wartime agencies, and always conscious that the unexpected opening of hostilities could (and, as it turned out, did) involve the re-zoning of the three types of areas. All this, to a large extent, explains the conditions, empowerings and delays which so aroused the press, profession and public. To the Board fell the direct quandary - how to reconcile its responsibility to educate with the need to provide shelter protection for their charges? This conflict became even more embarrassing with the re-opening of schools in the private sector, for local papers were carrying announcements to this effect within two weeks of the outbreak of war; should they be closed, or should LEA schools be opened, and thus endanger the evacuation scheme?

The dilemma was especially acute with the secondary schools, and when the decision was finally taken the memorandum to Inspectors posed two questions peculiar to the secondary sector. If the choice had to be made between re-opening all evacuated secondary schools and half-filling them (a wasteful proposition), or re-opening half the schools and filling them (which would entail losing identities and having syllabus troubles) the Board recommended the latter, mainly because of economy and to utilise available staffing. The second issue was the balance between the reception and evacuation sections of a split school. One Headmistress, for example, was quoted as wanting to keep with her, away from home, three science specialists for her Science VIth. of five girls. The Board, while accepting the range of such situation, suggested as a

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/21332

limit a ratio of 1:15. The two provisos made were that that evacuees must not be encouraged back, but that if they did they must be educated.⁽¹⁾

During the first months after the evacuation, that West Ham Vicar was by no means alone in his efforts, for the presence of so many thousands of educationally deprived children gave rise to one of the most remarkable and spontaneous demonstrations of public involvement in education this country has ever seen. This was the "Home Service," or "Parlour Teaching," or "Home Tuition," pioneered provincially, then given the seal of official blessing in the Board's Circular 1479 of 29 September 1939. The first, best administered, supported and documented scheme was the "Home Teaching Service" of Sheffield where, for various reasons, evacuation was unsuccessful so that the city found itself with an exceptionally high proportion of spare children. Their Education Officer wrote, "..... it was patently evident that the closure of schools constituted not only a most serious interruption in the educational life of the pupils, but was likely to have a most deleterious effect on general morale."⁽²⁾ To compensate for the schools denied to them, the many teachers remaining were quickly mobilised into visiting the children's homes, starting on 9 September,⁽³⁾ and organising a system of peripatetic visits, whereby each teacher met his charges in small groups in parlours. Before long there were 5,372 groups in 4,000 rooms belonging to 3,500 householders who were so enthusiastic that the Sheffield Council eventually had to insist on supplying coal for heating.⁽⁴⁾ The HMI report of 24 October stated, "It is clear that the scheme has done a great deal to keep up the morale of the children and prevent the physical, mental and moral deterioration that has been

(1) Sheffield Education Committee Survey, 1939-1947 (City Council, 1948)

(2) Ibid.

(3) B/Ed. P/s 108 B (1) Part 2

(4) Daily Herald 2.11.1939

evident where children have had to run the streets for long periods without any supervision."⁽¹⁾

In London there were only 300 teachers left to start the LCC "Home Tuition" scheme in the last week of September. They went out into the streets and markets, wearing arm-bands and collecting children, and walking the streets appealing for rooms.⁽²⁾ By the end of the year, with more children and teachers back, there were 2,000 parents sustaining in 2,660 house groups 100,000 children (over 50% of those then in London)⁽³⁾ The normal - and exhausting - procedure was for the teacher to take a group for one hour per day, issue and collect stints then press on to the next house. The maximum group size was six at first, later raised to twelve, and finally to twenty. So highly organised did some of the groups become that they were used for the distribution of 20,000 bottles of milk per day.

By the time Circular 1483 (giving the conditions of re-opening) was issued on 11 November 1939, several variations of Home Tuition had developed, but another "ad hoc" scheme that was introduced in late October and early November was school-based, the "tutorial" method from which Home Tuition could be operated. The Manchester Authority recalled teachers from reception areas and started its scheme on 23 October in 124 schools. They attracted an enrolment of about 10,000 senior children with an average attendance of over 80% to an hourly timetable which limited the number of children on the premises at any one time to twenty. Enrolments reached 13,590 by the end of the second week, handicraft and domestic science were introduced, recreational activities

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/252

(2) Daily Herald 26.10.1939

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

started, and 524 teachers were involved.⁽¹⁾ Southampton decided to provide limited shelter at selected schools; from the original four schools chosen the first one, St. John's, was opened in November to serve six areas, 30 children in each, aged from 7 upwards, one teacher per group, one hour per day for refresher lessons and homework issue.⁽²⁾ Demand for instruction caused the Education Committee in January 1940 to use other premises, two local halls; five more were hired in February, and after another three weeks they were voting 5/- per week to private householders who allowed their houses to be used as venues for group work.⁽³⁾

It is as well to remember that these expedients were nothing more than emergency stop-gaps. The demand which Southampton tried to cope with was not peculiar, for in some areas children were arriving in such numbers that many were being turned away, some put into rough-and-ready groups of 5 to 14 years old, some queuing up for an hour's play class, and other going round from school to school, hall to hall, looking for classes.⁽⁴⁾

A month after Circular 1483 a Board Questionnaire (15 December 1939) elicited the following figures for London.⁽⁵⁾

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Schoolchildren in London | - | 171,000 |
| - on half-time schooling | - | 2,000 + |
| - on Home Service | - | 100,000 + |
| - No schooling | - | 69,000 |
| - Schools open (all 11+) | - | 15 |
| - Due to open next week | - | 40 |
| - Total expected open in a few weeks | | 225 |

(1) Evacuation (Manchester City Council November 1939) p. 37

(2) Southern Daily Echo 30.11.39

(3) Southampton Education Committee Minutes

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2128/2

With the continuing drift and the extra numbers coming home for Christmas, these figures became more unmanageable and it was not long before the government was forced to bow to the realities and re-introduce compulsory education on 7 February 1940. In Circular 1496 the Board pointed out that "from the social and medical standpoint, the fact cannot be ignored that large numbers of children have not had the benefit of education and the attendant medical services for over five months." This long, hard-hitting document, covered ARP and requisitioning premises and urged the re-establishment of education as "imperative."

The press reaction of the next day was widespread and predictably favourable, considering they had been hammering away for compulsion. Probably the most representative view was the Guardian's: "It is some reward for all the agitation that has been carried on in the last four months that the Government should now make public admission of the demoralisation into which the educational system has fallen."⁽¹⁾

Rather disappointingly, the re-introduction of compulsory education did not fulfil all expectations, for, in spite of the whole-hearted struggle by the LEAs, the 1,300,000 elementary school children being educated by May 1940 were only defined as "attached to" schools, while 125,000 were not having any schooling at all.⁽²⁾ Their own HMIs, writing later about the period January - September 1940, stated that "during this period education was at a low ebb," what with poor attendance, shortage of equipment, and continual staff and pupil changes. In London, by Easter 1940, 393 "emergency" schools were open for the older children, admitting the over-8's later, and the over-5's in June; but although 600 schools were open in July for 150,000, only a quarter of the children were having full-time education, and attendance was not enforced until the end of the year.⁽³⁾

(1) Manchester Guardian 8.2.1940

(2) Times Educational Supplement 18.5.1940

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. H.M.I.s' Report July '44)



AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

—by Illingworth

(The Government have decided that nearly half a million school children after their five months of war freedom must go back to school.)

(ii) Air Raids

After Dunkirk and the subsequent re-alignment of forces on either side of the Channel, the concurrence of enemy air raids and the presence of many thousands of children in the target areas threw into confusion what had already been restored of a stable educational system, leading to further evacuation and deprivation. The pattern of enemy activity developed as follows:

- to the end of August 1940. - sporadic raids, mostly on London.
- 7 September - 3 November. - 57 nights of unceasing London blitz.
- 19 - 23 November. - Birmingham.
- November - December. - switch to Bristol, Southampton, Liverpool, then to Plymouth, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow.
- 29 December. - climax; City of London fire raids.
- January - February 1941. - Cardiff, Portsmouth, Swansea.
- March - April 1941. - Portsmouth, Manchester, Merseyside, the Clyde, Midlands, Essex, London.
- April 1941. - Coventry, Portsmouth, London.
- May 1941. - Derby, Nottingham, London.⁽¹⁾

In considering the effects of evacuation on the educational and social services, it is useful to remember that during the first evacuation in September 1939 1.5 millions were moved over three days, while in the second, 1.25 million were moved over a period of 12 months from September 1940, including a large but incalculable number of "multiple" evacuees. In the third and final "flying bomb" evacuation of summer 1944, over two months, 1.0 million were involved, the vast majority being mothers with children.⁽²⁾

(1) Churchill W.
The Second World War Vols. II + III (Cassel 1949 + 1950) passim.

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 355 + Appendix p. 564

Once it became clear that the war had really come to London the evacuation began again, but instead of the steady, controlled "trickle" which had been hoped for, the numbers fluctuated according to the extent of the bombing, a quiet night diminishing the numbers enormously, and a bad spell shooting the numbers up to 10,000 per week. As far as LCC officials could ascertain, the main reason for the reluctance to evacuate was that the children would not go without Mum, and Mum could not leave because the poor had no friends in the country and were unwilling to trust themselves to blind evacuation without the sure knowledge of a billet awaiting them.⁽¹⁾

This time, the authorities were determined to keep as much contact as possible with children in evacuation areas, commensurate with their safety. To this end, Circular 1514 of 4 September instructed that whereas the rule to close evacuated schools was confirmed those around the fringe of danger zones would be allowed to remain open provided they had full air raid protection. The LCC issued its own Circular on 26 September 1940 ("School work under air raid conditions."); it dealt with such practical problems as shrapnel, feeding, and contacting parents, and it stated that, where there were unevacuated children playing in the streets because their schools were bombed, "Heads should not hesitate to use their staff to collect such stragglers and fetch them into the school premises." Unhappily, reports which were coming into the Board before the end of September suggested that good intentions were not enough; one Inspector wrote that "shelters are usually such that school work cannot be carried on in many (schools)" and referred to one particular day (13 September) when, during a four-hour alert, only one pupil was present in two Finsbury schools. He concluded that many schools had ceased to exist as schools. Another Inspector found it depressing to note the difference between LCC and extra-Metropolitan schools during

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (B/Ed. G 25WD)

alerts; in his visits to 17 suburban schools he found useful work going on in 14 of them - in the majority the work in the shelter simply carried on where it had left off with the siren. On the contrary, in LCC schools he never saw children usefully occupied; they were "usually lying around looking bored, with their teachers equally at a loss for occupation."⁽¹⁾

The authorities must have been disappointed that out of 90,065 evacuated from London between 7 October and 20 October only 51,000 were official evacuees; only 19,000 of these were children and only 3,000 of these went under the official Plan IV (16,000 went with their mothers). With the 881 who returned, the total number of children left in London was 123,000, less than at any time since 3 September 1939, and for whom only 374 schools were available, 564 being either out of action or taken over. The Authority made no attempt to enforce compulsion and actual attendances totalled 20,573, most of whom, having spent their nights in their shelters, were tired, dirty, noisy, restless, and easily distracted. A survey of elementary education showed that the time spent in the shelters out of the wartime week of 20 hours was:

1st week - 7 hours 6 minutes
2nd week - 6 hours 45 minutes
3rd week - 3 hours 57 minutes

The LCC calculated that, compared with the peacetime 25 hours, the elementary sector was working at only 8% efficiency, and, as far as London was concerned, was in collapse.⁽²⁾

When the blitz spread from London in November other Authorities experienced the same difficulty in persuading families to use the official evacuation scheme for their children, even after nights of heavy bombing. By 13 December these figures reflected their lack of success:⁽³⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50 (B/Ed. File Secs. Clerks. 2107/10)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

Birmingham + Coventry:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Officially evacuated - | 3,333 |
| Privately evacuated - | 10,124 |
| At school - | 5,927 |
| Absent - | 1,786 |
| Unaccounted for - | <u>3,004</u> |

24,174

From Southampton, which suffered perhaps more severely than any area of comparable size in England, with the possible exception of Coventry, only 1,000 out of 12,000 on roll in November 1940 took advantage of "Plan 4" after heavy raids. Before the bombing 5,000 of the 12,000 were on full-time, the rest half-time, with attendance ranging between 57% and 81%; afterwards it was reduced by a half, except in parts of the old town which suffered most and where few children were left. Many of the schools for the 11,000 children remaining in Southampton were destroyed and life was made even more difficult for the LEA by the destruction of the Education Office, the Evacuation Office, and all the records.⁽¹⁾

It was during November that the physical and mental plight of children in evacuation areas attracted attention, with contradictory conclusions. In one detailed study of child re-action to air raids an HMI found they normally slept through anything, relished excitement and were protected by their lack of experience from understanding the tragedy around them. The tired and listless children nearly all came from homes where they experienced pampering, worry and anxiety, and, he concluded, "there is no doubt that children feel safe in school and that the quiet atmosphere and steady occupation of the classroom is the best antidote to war-strain. Anxiety soon vanishes in the sane atmosphere of the school."⁽²⁾ On the other hand, the five LCC School Medical Officers who produced a report, Nervous Strain on Children, agreed, to varying extents, that the condition of these children was worsening; one of them

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50 (B/Ed. File 9 G 110WD/11)

(2) D.E.S. File Ed. 136/2133/2

wrote, "There is a marked deterioration in the general condition of the children, particularly the younger ones up to 10. They look pale and debilitated and are listless and tired This is due to lack of sleep and discomfort in the shelters, irregular and probably unsuitable meals, and, above all, the absence of a background of security and the outlets for their growing energies provided in their normal school life."⁽¹⁾

By the turn of the year, the unpredictability of the town dweller and the vagaries of official statistics must have been quite bewildering to officialdom. In mid-December 1940, 436,000 (84%) of the London children had quit since the previous August, leaving 80,000 schoolchildren and 38,000 under-fives in Town⁽²⁾ and at one period every single school in five London boroughs and the city were closed. Yet incredibly enough evacuees were still drifting back; in Stepney, for example, a much-bombed district, 200 children returned in one week during one of the worst attacks on the East End. It was impossible to keep track of the constant flow back and forth and not uncommon to find in a London school children who had been evacuated six, seven or eight times.⁽³⁾ To make things even more unsettled, some schools were particularly prone to enemy attack, one secondary school having the unenviable record of being bombed out on seven separate occasions.⁽⁴⁾

With the coming of Spring 1941, several areas subject to repeated bombing raids and still containing many thousands of children became the object of governmental concern. A special Cabinet Meeting was held on 28 April to consider the emergency services for such places as Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth and Merseyside. When it was later revealed that the nightly exodus from Liverpool was between 40,000 and 45,000 and

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(4) British Schools in Wartime 1944 (p. 15) B/Ed. 1944

20,000 to 25,000 from Plymouth, the Board had to agree to the use of peripheral schools as rest centres, but expressed serious worry at the effect on schooling if this sequestration were to be without time limits.⁽¹⁾

When a survey was carried out of ports and resorts in the South East it was found that every single teacher had been withdrawn to reception areas to help with the problems posed by a large influx of unofficial evacuees. The number of children now left on their own were:⁽²⁾

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|---|---|
| Margate | 750 children | = | 22% of children on register, March 1941 |
| Ramsgate | 684 | = | 17% |
| Dover | 1,100 | = | 20% |
| Deal | 350 | = | 12% |
| Folkstone | 550 | = | 12% |

Some areas, not originally scheduled as evacuation areas, or only partly evacuable, had been subject to widespread air attack and were being left by large numbers of private evacuees whose numbers it was impossible to check now that schools were closed. In Plymouth, out of a pre-war school population of 28,000 there were only 7,000 official evacuated, and while it was apparent that many families had fled under their own steam, there was only a total of 2,000 known private evacuees.⁽³⁾

Although the mass raids subsided, the next year or so still saw many air raids which were of considerably more than nuisance value to the educational authorities concerned. Especially disruptive were the Baedeker Raids on hitherto "safe" areas, some of which were already hosts to evacuated pupils; these figures for Exeter, before and after its heavy raid of 5 May 1942 are typical:⁽⁴⁾

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Local children | before; 7,031 | after; 2,723 |
| Official evacuees | 1,778 | 119 |
| Unofficial evacuees | <u>345</u> | <u>59</u> |
| | 9,154 | 2,901 |

(1) D.E.S. File Ed. 136/206/2

(2) B/Ed. File E 491 (3) 4

(3) B/Ed. File 101 WD/10

(4) B/Ed. File Ev'n. G 70 E (Exeter)



VICTIMS OF THE BOMBERS AT SOUTHAMPTON : Children waiting to be evacuated after the destruction of their homes. Thousands were rendered homeless as a result of this concentrated attack



CLOTHES FROM AMERICA : The Mayor of a bombed area helps a little tot to try on new clothes sent by American sympathisers for children whose homes had been destroyed

(all the official evacuees were re-evacuated to North Devon)

No coverage of this period would be complete without mention of the unique situation behind the prolonged deprivation of schooling suffered by Dover. Once the enemy had established their giant guns across the Channel Dover was denied any warning of bombardment, the first shell landing on the town being the signal for the sirens. From May to November 1940 between 600 and 700 children were still in the town and receiving no education while up to 25 shells per day were falling.⁽¹⁾ When a letter was received from the Board in September 1941 suggesting there was no reason why the schools, shut since June 1940, should not re-open, Dover Council retorted bluntly that Board Officials might come and live in Dover for a few weeks, "then they might take a different view."⁽²⁾ (The writer's own experience confirms that even after some schools were re-opened this sad situation of insidious and constant interruption continued into 1944.)

All in all, for a combination of reasons attendance figures in blitzed areas were very bad. Many children were untraceable, many parents were afraid of raids on schools; some kept their children at home to help with the housework, especially as the number of working mothers increased; School Attendance Officers were fewer, in some areas non-existent; LEAs were often unwilling to prosecute; transport to school was difficult, and, in any case, school hours were short, and classes makeshift and composite.

(iii) Secondary Schools

The pattern of secondary education in evacuation areas was not as depressing as that in the elementary sector, mainly because a higher proportion of secondary pupils moved out of their home areas, either

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50 (H.M.I. Report 6.11.40)

(2) Education 19.9.1941

with their schools or as private evacuees, leaving behind comparatively small numbers to be catered for. This is best illustrated from this LCC table:⁽¹⁾

LCC Secondary Schools = pupils on roll

| <u>Term (Autumn)</u> | <u>No. in London</u> | <u>Totals in all areas (pre-war 33,500)</u> |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1939 | - | 21,499 |
| 1940 | 901 | 16,027 |
| 1941 | 1,478 | 17,205 |
| 1942 | 9,584 | 22,891 |
| 1943 | 17,675 | 26,069 |
| 1944 | 16,784 | 24,481 |
| 1945 (Summer) | 21,425 | 26,779 |

Valiant efforts were made to safeguard deprived secondary pupils, like the 100 School Certificate boys of Barnsley Grammar School who were quickly organised on a weekly postal-stint basis.⁽²⁾ Many other schools had the problem of operating on split sites, part at home and part evacuated, only practicable if the staffs were willing to commute, which they were at, for example, four Birmingham schools (King Edward Grammar School for Girls, St. Phillips Grammar School, St. Paul's High School, and Handsworth Grammar School.)⁽³⁾

At the end of December 1939, although no secondary schools were open in London, of 50,000 pupils remaining in other centres 53.8% were having full-time education and 24% part-time; the remaining 22% were in Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Middlesborough, Nottingham, West Ham, Gateshead and Portsmouth.⁽⁴⁾ After the re-introduction of compulsory education in February 1940 secondary schools improvised with whatever premises were available. Birmingham, thanks to a standardised 4-stream secondary system, simply merged two schools into one. London with

(1) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.45

(2) Daily Mail 16.9.1939)

(3) B/Ed. G 55E Part III

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2128/2

between 7,000 and 8,000, adopted a policy of filling available buildings impartially and indiscriminately; in April they had 12 Emergency secondary schools, six on each side of the Thames, and by June, practically all of these were giving full-time education.⁽¹⁾

(iv) Adapting to the situation

In view of the conditions prevailing in evacuation areas, it could not have been an easy matter for the teachers to conduct their lessons, and from reports available it appears that they generally resorted to formalised methods in order to contain their unenviable situation, although aspirations to better things were not forgotten. In considering the senior schools of Cheshire in 1940, an HMI claimed to be speaking for all his colleagues when he wrote, "..... as the year went on an increasing number of Head Teachers realised that here was a golden opportunity for experiment." Whenever innovations were tried the ensuing success often astonished the Heads themselves and in several cases remarks were heard like "I shall never go back to traditional methods now." He concluded his report by claiming that "any lingering fears have been decisively routed."⁽²⁾ Another official survey of the same period noted that when experiments were made using both the 3-Rs and less traditional curricula it was found that, especially with infants, the 3-Rs brought an initial improvement but that boredom then set in, expression suffered and outlooks became "more babyish." It concluded that these experiments "confirm the general belief that the broader curriculum of today is more beneficial."⁽³⁾ As further evidence of the teachers' awareness of the stultifying effects of the 3-Rs and wartime monotony it was disclosed that in one area subject to heavy bombing two Saturday conferences for local teachers, which were devoted to methods of teaching singing,

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 22/215

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(3) Schools Under Fire B/Ed. Jan. '41

resulted in attendances of over 200.⁽¹⁾

But when it came down to day-to-day classroom routine, indications from different parts of the country at the end of 1940 were that formalism won the day. Even the report quoted above from Cheshire admitted that the over-riding weakness was "timidity" which resulted in "throwing overboard the Infants and Nursery School Report of 1933 and plunging into formal work in the Fives Year." From Bradford it was learnt that the lost time in 1939 - 1940 caused a narrowing of the curriculum into more formal work at the expense of wider aspects such as oral work, drama, art, etc.: this was at all stages, infant, junior and secondary, and, moreover, the Inspector found that a growing deficiency of material was causing a re-appearance of slates! Junior schools in Birkenhead showed "a greater tendency than ever to spoonfeed and overdirect the children rather than to provide them with opportunities for discovering." In Birmingham senior schools was a definite narrowing of aims and drop in standards, while over the whole spread of their schools the "elaborate facade of 'modern' methods" had virtually collapsed with a consequent dropping of projects and a relapse to the rigid 3-R methods. Even where there was news of more oral work (in Romford) this was only because of teaching conditions in school shelters.⁽²⁾

(v) Attendance

Now that some of the factors have been dealt with which contributed to make schooling in evacuation areas so difficult, their results can be considered with a deeper understanding. The Southampton Education Committee reported after the evacuation that of their elementary children 12,000 had left, but 11,000 had stayed; by December 1939 the drift home had increased the total in the town to 18,000, none of whom, according to the Committee, had had any schooling since the previous July; this

(1) Schools in Wartime B/Ed. Jan. '41

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

was the scale of the problem facing the Home Education Scheme.⁽¹⁾ A petition from 9,262 Leeds Citizens claimed that four fifths of the Leeds parents had not supported the evacuation, and that at the end of October 1939 there were 60,000 children still receiving no education at all.⁽²⁾ On 1 November 975,000 elementary children were in evacuation areas, 42.5% of them having half-time or less education, 225,000 under the Home Service system, and 329,000 with no education. The proportions for secondary schools were better: 53.8% having full-time, 24% part-time, and 22% with no schooling. By 15 December 472,000 evacuees - 63% of the original total, compared to 78% in November - were still in reception areas, while 1,150,000 were now in evacuation areas; of these 171,000 were in London, made up of 100,000 on Home Service, 2,000 in school, and 69,000 with no education.⁽³⁾

The figures for evacuation areas - excluding London - for the middle of December showed a total of 975,000; 42.5% attending elementary schools. Of these:

14.1% were full-time
16.6% half-time
11.8% on shorter time - e.g. Bootle (one session, alternate days.)
East Ham, Grimsby, Barking; 3 x 1½
42.5% hour shifts per week.

In 8 areas; no schools open, only Home Service available.

- Gateshead, Liverpool, Gosport, Hartlepool,
- Rochester, Walsall, Wimbledon.

Croydon - not even Home Service available. (4)

The official figures for New Year's Day 1940⁽⁵⁾ showed that out of a total of 1,493,967 elementary children in evacuation areas 708,637

(1) Southampton Education Committee Minutes Jan. 1941

(2) Hansard 1.11.1939 Commons. Vol. 352. Col. 817.

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

(4) D.E.S. File Ed. 136/2128/2

(5) D.E.S. File Ed. 136/2135

were at school (half of them full time); of the remainder 367,819 came under Home Service schemes while 417,511 were having no instruction. In contrast to this, out of the 92,419 secondary pupils no fewer than 79,051 were at school (64,077 full-time). Of the rest 877 were in Home Service groups and 12,481 were without schooling.

From Portsmouth it had been reported at the end of October 1939 that only $\frac{12}{33}$ schools were available (but closed) so that 21,000 children were "running wild" in the streets. By February these figures were improved, but disturbing features persisted:

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--------|
| <u>Elementary</u> | Half-time education available for | 11,100 |
| | but, unfilled places | 3,500 |
| | Total with no schooling | 14,000 |
| | Under-8's - only private lessons from clergy or retired teachers | |
| <u>Secondary</u> | No education since July 1939 | |
| | 70 boys - still awaiting evacuation to Brocklehurst | |
| | - refused elementary places in Portsmouth (1) | |

By mid-April the numbers of elementary children in evacuation areas had built up to 1,250,000, of whom 50% were on full-time attendance and 30% half-time.⁽²⁾ But behind these figures were tales of anxiety such as came out of Leeds, when 50 mothers took their children to school, as ordered with the re-introduction of compulsory education, only to find that inadequate ARP provision limited the admissions to the one solitary child who was over 8; they were told at the Education Office that places would be available by mid-summer.

When the second evacuation started after Dunkirk, despite all the preparation, persuasion, registers and publicity the reluctance to leave home was even greater than feared; in London from 32,000 homes visited only 539 promises to register resulted. The subsequent attendance figures shown below are typical (none exceeded 60% of those on

(1) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/246

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

register.)⁽¹⁾

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|------------|-----|
| Willesden | 59% | Dagenham | 48% |
| Ilford | 59% | Wanstead | 47% |
| Wimbledon | 58% | Chingford | 42% |
| Leyton | 57% | Thurrock | 41% |
| Bexley | 54% | East Ham | 40% |
| Erith | 50% | West Ham | 32% |
| | | Hornchurch | 31% |

The unpredictability of parents is underlined by the range of response from these other areas which give some idea of the national scale of the problem facing evacuation LEAs:⁽²⁾

June 1940; percentages who stayed behind:

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| <u>Essex</u> - Clacton | 15% | Frinton | 80% |
| <u>Kent</u> - Rochester | 63% | Dover | 30% |
| Chatham | 61% | Margate | 20% |
| Gillingham | 60% | Ramsgate | 14% |
| Sandwich | 46% | Deal | 11% |
| Sheerness | 36% | Folkstone | 10% |
| Broadstairs | 35% | | |

The result of this was that at the end of the year there was a total of 1,038,000 children in evacuation areas, comprising:

944,000 at school (81.7% full time.)
 13,000 Home Service
 82,000 no instruction⁽³⁾

At the beginning of 1941, of the pre-war 28,000 on register in Portsmouth there were 9,858 still remaining, out of whom only 1,984 (nearly all over-7's) were having full-time teaching; the HMI "suspected that many of the older children were, and had been for some time, in employment." The attendance figures for the same time in Manchester were not very encouraging; of the children in the city,⁽⁴⁾

(1) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/247

(2) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/248

(3) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/249

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

| | |
|-------|------------------------------|
| 31.6% | had less than 75% attendance |
| 16.3% | 60% |
| 9.9% | 25% |
| 1.9% | 0% |

This was attributed to lack of parental control, truancy, an increase in scabies and impetigo, shortage of attendance officers, a cumbersome legal procedure, and father coming home on leave.

Of the pre-war 450,000 child population for which the LCC was responsible, it was hoped to evacuate 80%. The following breakdown of totals of children in London raises all kinds of conjectures, but it does demonstrate the fluctuations which must have tried the patience of the administrators during those first years of the war.

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Nov. 1939 | - 70,000 | June 1942 | - 235,000 |
| 31 Dec. 1939 | - 192,000 | Dec. 1943 | - 243,000 |
| May 1940 | - 240,000 | Feb. 1944 | - 245,000 |
| July 1940 | - 181,000 | June 1944 | - 237,000 |
| Dec. 1940 | - 80,000 | Oct. 1944 | - 136,000 |
| June 1941 | - 105,000 | Dec. 1944 | - 173,000 |
| Dec. 1941 | - 150,000 | March 1945 | - 192,000 |
| June 1942 | - 203,000 | May 1945 | - 213,000 |
| Dec. 1942 | - 222,000 | | |

Behind these bold totals are other stories which tell how sorely the London education system suffered. The LCC's network of 87 "para-secondary" central schools served 30,000 children in 1939; once they left in the first evacuation as 87 parties totalling 14,500 children this network collapsed for the duration, its highest peak of restoration being 47 schools with 11,000 pupils, just before the flying bomb raids of June 1944⁽¹⁾ Where they are available the numbers of children in London on half-time education throw an interesting light on the figures above; for example, the peak figure for half-timers came in May 1940 with 152,000 out of the 240,000 at home; two months later, of the 152,500 at school on 31 July, 126,000 were on half-time.⁽²⁾

(1) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.1945

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

Although the bombing of London had reached its climax with the City blaze of 29 December 1940, for the first half of 1941 most schools were in a state of constant upheaval, work being hampered by the instability of rolls, evacuees going out and "drifters" coming back, and staff changes; there were schools with 1,000 on roll whose attendance figures, hovering between 300 and 400, showed daily changes in composition. This was the time of the "hardened" evacuees who came on and off the roll four, five, six or seven times, even eight or nine times. In the period 10 May to 21 June, 6,250 pupils were officially evacuated, yet there was an overall increase on rolls by 5,600.⁽¹⁾

Reference has already been made to the reluctance of the LEAs in 1940 to enforce attendance, but towards the end of 1940 the absentee situation was so bad that it was decided to tolerate it no longer, in spite of the attitudes of parents, shortage of attendance officers, and difficulties in locating the children. The following figures reflect this determination.⁽²⁾

Attendance Offences against the Education Act.

| | | |
|------|---|--------|
| 1939 | - | 3,375 |
| 1940 | - | 5,690 |
| 1941 | - | 13,357 |
| 1942 | - | 17,800 |
| 1943 | - | 18,778 |

Average figures 1935 - 1939 - 5,552
1940 - 1944 - 15,478

It had proved extremely difficult to make inroads into the thousands of truants because many areas could not produce the requisite accommodation and ARP provision for compulsory attendance. A good example of an Authority which determined to enforce compulsion as soon as shelter was available was Essex; Thurrock made 30 prosecutions as soon as shelters were ready in summer 1940; all were successful, and attendance figures

(1) B/Ed. File E 491 (3)/1

(2) Min. of Ed. Internal Memo. 23.6.47

immediately improved,⁽¹⁾ rising from 37% in September 1940 to 46% in October, 71% in November, and 78% in December.

Nevertheless, the authorities in heavily populated areas were still having an uphill struggle with their truants; those in London found anonymity in employment with tradesmen, aimlessly roaming the streets, and sleeping in shelters every night. Manchester's attendance figures for thirty years had rarely dropped below 83% in winter and 87% in summer, yet in June 1940 they were 81.2% and in January 1941, 63.35%;⁽²⁾ prosecutions, fewer than 180 per year pre-war, rose to 966 in 1942.

The problem was even more intractable in the "Special Defence" coastal areas of the East and South East, for the ban on re-opening schools was not lifted in East Anglia until November 1940 and in East Sussex until December. Well into 1941, however, schools in Kent and from Yarmouth to Southend still had not re-opened, and by the time they did there was the bizarre situation of the troglodyte truants of Ramsgate and Dover.⁽³⁾ These were some of the many hundreds of local people who spent their lives in the caves and tunnels of the chalk cliffs, complete with bunks, toilets, and ventilation systems - an ideal retreat from attendance officers.

(vi) Deterioration

The children who came to the schools which were opened in evacuation areas in November 1939 were nearly all elementary pupils. The Headmaster who ran one of these schools used as a "Report Centre" said that the deterioration in the academic knowledge and ability of many of the children was "not only marked, but appalling,"⁽⁴⁾ and the teachers

(1) D.E.S. File Ed. 10/249

(2) Manchester Guardian 16.3.1943

(3) B/Ed. File E 491 (3) 4

(4) Southern Daily Echo 30.11.1939

who manned them claimed that their pupils had "forgotten everything they ever knew Report Centres are not enough."⁽¹⁾

From about this time onwards what had always been a cause of worry to the profession was affecting the public at large, a point which was made in the Journal of Education: "It is doubtful whether there ever was a time at which parents were made to realise how much the school means to them and their children."⁽²⁾ "A HEADACHE FOR THE TEACHER" ran the headline of a Daily Mail feature article in February; it told how the newly-opened "Emergency Schools" in London lumped Secondary, Central, and Senior pupils into the same class and how, with no compulsory home-work and on half-time it was the brainy pupils that suffered.⁽³⁾

By the eve of the Battle of Britain the new zoning and to-ing and fro-ing had produced a state of disorganisation which brought attacks on the Board from within Parliament (8 August 1940) and from the national press, especially on the situation in London, which "reflected no credit on the Minister or his Department."⁽⁴⁾ 200,000 LCC children were in reception areas, 146,000 had returned home (19,000 since June), holidays were suspended, and 588 out of 950 schools were open (286 full-time, 302 half-time). The figures the LCC managed to produce in such a month of fluctuations as August 1940 showed that only 26,000 were on full-time schooling, 127,000 were on half-time, and 33,000 were not having any at all. On the East Coast many had had no education since July 1939; in Sunderland 20,000 out of 25,000 were having no education; all the schools in Newcastle were shut to the 23,000 children at home. Then came the Blitz which affected any partial recovery there may have been.⁽⁵⁾

(1) Ibid. 8.12.1939

(2) Journal of Education January 1940 p. 8

(3) Daily Mail 27.2.1940

(4) News Chronicle 10.8.1940

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 50

In mid-December 1940 there were still about 100,000 elementary children in England with no instruction at all, (48,000 of them in London, the rest mainly in Liverpool, Plymouth, East and West Ham and the coastal strip from East Anglia to Sussex); their distribution was:⁽¹⁾

| | | |
|------------|---|--------|
| Reception | - | 16,209 |
| Neutral | - | 1,723 |
| Evacuation | - | 82,178 |

Furthermore, an NUT delegation reminded the President of the Board of a fallacy in the Board's figures, namely, that being registered for a school did not necessarily constitute receiving education.⁽²⁾

And yet six months before this, in January 1941, a Board of Education publication, after making the admission that while "the standard of work among the more intelligent children has suffered very little many backward children have fallen further and further behind, a fact which greatly enhances the teachers' difficulties," went on to make the sanguine claim that the work of the schools, carrying on under unprecedented difficulties, "suffered singularly little."⁽³⁾ This view was clearly not shared by the Education Officer of the LCC himself who confessed in April 1941 he was "quite baffled" by the constant movement to and from London, and, like his colleagues, admitted, "I am struck by the falling off in standards of attainment which is everywhere apparent."⁽⁴⁾ The Chief Inspector of the LCC stated in 1943 that it had been no secret that the war had made a casualty of London's education and that although some of the lost ground of the earlier years had been recovered "the average retardation was probably between six and twelve months."⁽⁵⁾

(1) B/Ed. 2107/10

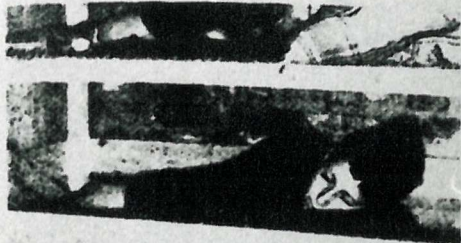
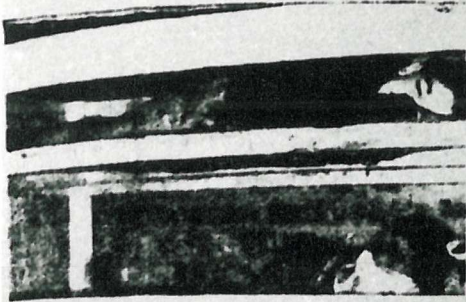
(2) Teachers' World 25.6.1941

(3) Schools under Fire B/Ed. Jan. 1941

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107 (1)

(5) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.43

They Sleep in Safety Beneath London's Streets

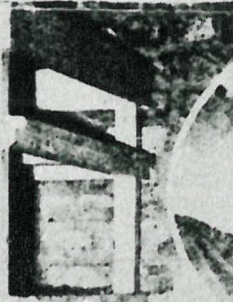


Here is one family, and its dog, which has adapted itself comfortably to a shelter measuring only 7 ft. by 5 ft. in South-East London. There are electric light, radio, and home comforts generally.

Photo: John L. Green

These people are settling down for a good night's rest in a Tube shelter. A mother prepares her little boy for sleep, while another child is seen already in bed, in a cot made from an orange box.

Photo: John L. Green

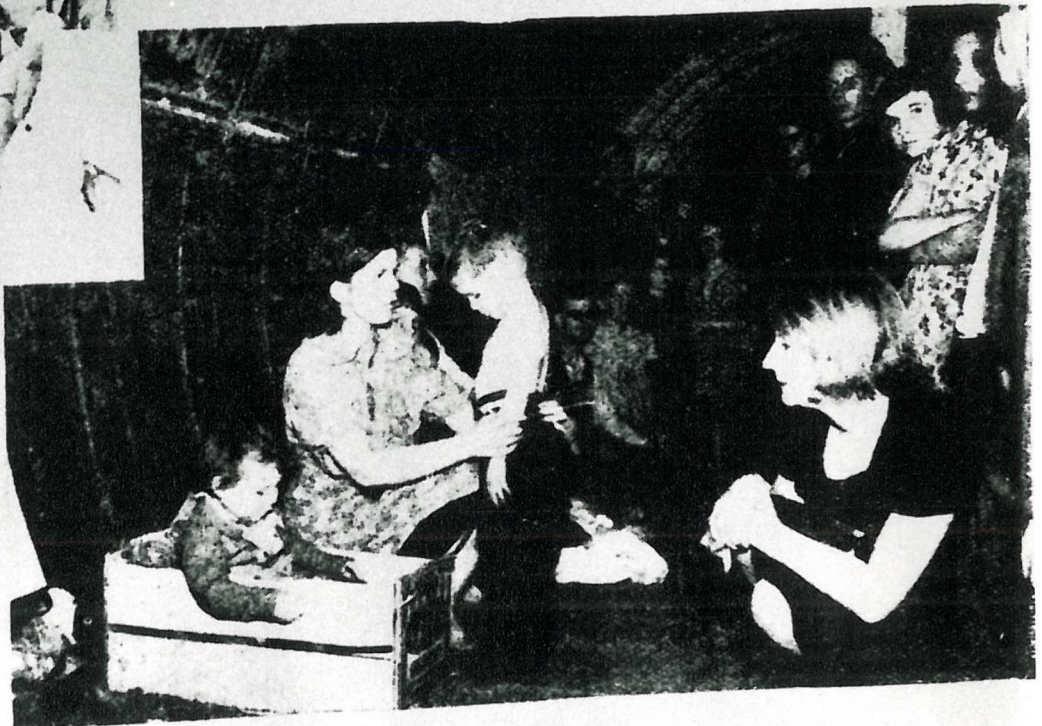


This underground shelter in North London of the type standardized by the Government, with a four-tier chicken-coop bunk, makes comfortable accommodation for children. The little boy and his dog, oval appear to enjoy their strange surroundings below ground.



This photograph was taken in the shelter of a block of flats in South-West London. The Warden, patrolling the district, checks the number of people in the shelter.

Photo: John L. Green



Looking back over the years 1939 - 1944, the LCC Inspectors commented on the disrupted schooling, lack of stability, frequent reorganisations within schools, the impossibility of long-term planning of instruction, and concluded that it all made "a somewhat depressing picture;" in fact, "Many of the children will never recover the ground they lost during the period of instability."⁽¹⁾

As the period of strain lengthened on schools in evacuation areas, many teachers and administrators were becoming concerned at the contributory effect that large classes were having on the children. On the two occasions when HMIs were asked to give an assessment on the effects of the war on the elementary schools in their areas. (Memos. 433 of 14.11.40 and 43 of 20.12.41), there was a considerable degree of agreement that crowded classrooms coincided with educational deterioration. The Birmingham Senior Schools, with a ratio of 45:1 compared to 35 - 40:1 prewar, could not "maintain the kind of activity which had come to distinguish them before the war." Junior and Infants were 50:1, but the Authority was "now finding it impossible to maintain these standards, and ratios may have to increase to 55:1 (Junior and Infant) and 50:1 (Senior)."⁽²⁾

Certain areas suffered particularly because they could not compete in the market for young teachers fresh from college who were not attracted to the classrooms of lower-class industrial areas. In a somewhat desperate attempt to close the gap which was ever-widening, especially in unfavoured towns like Birmingham and Sheffield, which had 154 classes of over 50 in September 1941⁽³⁾ the Board in 1942 introduced a quota system, allocating probationary teachers to difficult areas. Unfortunately, this produced a vicious circle, with young teachers

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 8

(3) B/Ed. P/S 108 B (1)

moving on after the first year. Badly hit areas included Liverpool (with 600 classes of 50 plus in October 1943),⁽¹⁾ and Birmingham (which had 30 resignations a month in 1943.)⁽²⁾

During 1940 and 1941 news was coming in from different parts of England of the sad effects the war was having on nursery and junior education. In Birkenhead the older infants, especially the B and C grades, were nearly a year behind by December 1940, also in their social training and health education. In Leeds the infants suffered more than juniors or seniors because most had lost their nursery classes. The London infants' schools, one of the "best features of pre-war London elementary school education," were finding it a serious problem to survive.⁽³⁾

The same story was being told of the junior schools, like those of Bradford, where "..... the loss of time has certainly reduced the standard of attainment in Junior children." For example, some 7-year-olds did not even know their letters. Birkenhead found that large numbers of juniors were backward even on entry.⁽⁴⁾ As for London, by May 1941, "there were in practically every school large numbers of juniors between 9 and 11 who were seriously retarded in such fundamental subjects as reading, writing and arithmetic." Many had never recovered from the initial interruption of September 1939, many had remained in London without schooling, others had returned from "unfortunate educational evacuation experience," and there had been the constant curse of complicated class groupings.⁽⁵⁾ By December 1940 the Leeds infant schools had shown themselves to be less adaptable than the juniors or

(1) B/Ed. P/s 91 B (1) / 78

(2) B/Ed. P/s 55 B (1)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(4) Ibid.

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

seniors because of an over-reliance on the 3-R's, to reclaim lost time; the "B" child was seriously handicapped, being 6 months retarded; all in all, the slowness of the junior schools had proved "a real weakness, and some had allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the backwardness of the children."

The senior schools in Leeds had suffered serious curtailment of curricula; they no longer had handicraft or attendance at domestic science centres; physical training was badly affected by the loss of 71 young men to the Army.⁽¹⁾ It was the same in London: "Senior Schools have usually abandoned specialist teaching and most teachers have become GP's, as in the old days."⁽²⁾ Standards dropped in all subjects in Birkenhead schools, especially the "B" and "C" forms.⁽³⁾ The London central schools were being hard put to survive, several being closed or amalgamated; the Chief Inspector warned that "a diminution of the effective work formerly done in the Council's selective central schools would be a serious loss to the educational service."⁽⁴⁾ Finally, from Birmingham in July 1941 came this expression of fear for the future of senior school education: "It may be necessary to win the war that the rising generation in the schools should be sacrificed as completely - though not so bloodily - as their elders on the battlefield."⁽⁵⁾

(vii) Neutral Areas

Neutral areas present some difficulties to the student of any aspects of school life in the early wartime years which require statistical accuracy. For one thing, areas were liable to re-zoning according to changes in the war situation; this happened after Dunkirk, for

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(2) Schools under Fire

(3) B/Ed. Sec. 239 (HMI Report 12.12.40)

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Report 17.10.41)

(5) B/Ed. File P/s 55 B (1)

military reasons, and, at various times from 1940 onwards, as accommodation became needed for war workers, certain neutral areas became reception areas. It also happened in July 1944 when flying bombs made obsolete some of the existing zonings around "Bomb Alley." Secondly, there could, by definition, be no official evacuation into neutral areas, so any figures on population changes are round figures, making it well nigh impossible to find how many of them were children of school age. Matters became even more complicated when one considers that county boroughs included both neutral and evacuation areas, and any available figures refer to the latter. Titmuss, for all his access to official figures, could only point out, for example, that while some neutral areas round London had lost more than 84,000 people by 29 September 1939, some others had gained 69,000. Similarly, in dealing with private evacuation, he could only suggest that, if it could be assessed, the movement from evacuation zones to all neutral areas would be considerable.⁽¹⁾

The educational trends in neutral areas were, to a much lesser extent, the same as those in evacuation areas. The authorities there had nothing like the same dislocations and strains, but similar deteriorations were evidenced. These attendance figures⁽²⁾ for 1 January 1940 will be seen as negligible when compared with the evacuation area figures already quoted:

| <u>Neutral areas</u> | <u>Elementary</u> | <u>Secondary</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| At school - full-time | 808,143 | 90,733 |
| - part-time | <u>212,541</u> | <u>8,189</u> |
| - Total | 1,020,684 | 98,922 |
| Home Service | 24,562 | NIL |
| No instruction | 24,699 | 332 |

By 14 December 1940, out of the 99,563 elementary children in England not having any instruction, only 1,723, or 0.2% were in neutral areas.⁽³⁾

(1) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 546-7

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2135

(3) B/Ed. 2107/10

Similarly, as far as class sizes were concerned, the position in neutral areas was fairly stable, the main problems being the replacement of called-up teachers and a certain amount of unofficial evacuation. Places like Chesterfield, Blackburn, Durham County and West Yorkshire maintained a steady ratio not rising above 30:1.⁽¹⁾ Not quite so fortunate but still in an enviable position compared with some reception and evacuation areas were Darlington (34.5:1) and Barnsley (34:1)

Two districts reported something like normality; one was Stockton-on-Tees, not affected by the evacuation, and whose standards remained quite level.⁽²⁾ The other was the Bury-Bolton-Chorley area which, by mid-December 1940, was experiencing "Surprising normality," despite various setbacks such as closures, shiftwork, loss of sleep and interruptions, but no really serious dislocation except for senior boys. Yet even here it was confessed that there was a noticeable tendency to restlessness and excitability, and that the standard of work was lower than in normal times.

Specialisation in Senior schools was also suffering - in the neutral areas of Durham it had "broken down seriously", in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley there was also a tendency to cut down on aesthetic activities. The shedding of progressive methods and reversion to the 3-Rs which was a feature of the other zones also developed in neutral areas like Eccles, Bury and Bolton, stemming from a feeling of over-pressure and an anxiety to make up for lost time. A variation of the same story came from Brighton, (re-zoned after Dunkirk), a tale of "reversion to formal teaching and abandonment, almost with relief, by many teachers, of free activities. Projects and centres of interest were rarely seen."⁽³⁾

(1) B/Ed. P/s 163 B (1)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

(3) Ibid.

One sad and little publicised group of educational casualties were those children who had attended evacuated schools but resided in neutral zones and could not, therefore, go with their schools. The main objection lay in the 300 secondary pupils who were affected and who, if allowed to leave with their classmates, would apparently be having preferential treatment in education and safety; the elementary children would involve far greater numbers. When one of these cases was found, as at Southend, it was stopped. This issue became a ball tossed between the Board and the Ministry of Health, with the Ministry refusing to budge, especially as the whole question of demarcation lines would be raised. The wrangle dragged on well into 1941 without being satisfactorily resolved, and involved schools from Acton, Southend, Bexhill and Newcastle; the only exceptions made were a few children from a remote area near Rye in Sussex, where their excessive isolation, lack of transport and educational deprivation made their situation intolerable.⁽¹⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24 (M. o. Health 99043/204/34)

CHAPTER 5THE TEACHERS AND THEIR TASKS(i) The Inspectorate

Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the actual teaching staffs of the schools some reference should be made to the position of the Board of Education's staff and Inspectorate, reflecting as they did the treatment and experiences of the educational service as a whole. What is not generally realised is that the Inspectorate, which was to face the additional work caused by the evacuation, had already been shouldering increasing work, notably from implementing the Hadow Report, with decreasing numbers. A Board of Education return for 1934 showed the following figures for the Public Elementary School Inspectorate:

| | |
|------------|------------|
| 1912 - 226 | Inspectors |
| 1933 - 206 | |
| 1934 - 208 | |

The figure for September 1939 was 193. For secondary schools the numbers were even more revealing: ⁽¹⁾

| | | | | |
|------|-------|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 1914 | 1,054 | schools | 28 | Inspectors |
| 1934 | 1,601 | schools (51.8% increase) | 31 | Inspectors (10.7% increase) |
| 1939 | 1,812 | schools | 35 | Inspectors |

From the outbreak of war the number of staff at the Board fell drastically. The total of 2,224 for 1 April 1939 had dropped to 1,455 by 1 April 1940; 81 had gone into the forces (including 14 HMIs) and most of the rest (708) had been seconded to other departments. ⁽²⁾ The Board contributed to its own diminution when it subscribed to the reduction of its establishment of HMIs on the grounds that their work-load should fall now that there were no new building plans, no "Hadowisation,"

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51 p. 309

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51 p. 382

no full inspections and no short courses. So on 24 November 1939 from a full establishment of 323, there were only 263 Inspectors on the active strength, the other 60 being either in the Forces or on loan.⁽¹⁾

Any study of the Board's wartime Memoranda to its Inspectors leaves the impression both of an endless demand for urgent data on the progress of the evacuation and the current state of the educational service and of an endless accumulation of extra chores. This began on 15 September 1939 with Memo (S) 633 which urged immediate study of the results of the evacuation and the circumstances under which the schools were operating, to cover fragmentation, transport, hours, staffing, equipment, etc. A strong warning was issued in October (Memo (S) 634, 17.10.1939) on the possible consequences of wartime limitations both on the role of the Inspectors themselves and on the financial restrictions "which will be more ruthless than anything we have yet known, and proposals may be put forward here and there which by a lowering of standards will tend to obliterate the distinction between secondary and other forms of education." The Inspectors were advised how they could help to minimise any such dislocations. In November (Memo (S) 639) it was suggested that a limited, modified and tactful form of "inspecting" could be resumed, and, as part of the cross-fertilisation policy across the country which the Board fostered, Inspectors were asked to submit their own suggestions and proposals for easing the situation. The kind of impairment to the system that the Board was made alive to was in the supply of books: "It has been represented to the Board that there has been a great decrease in sales of text-books in State-aided schools since the outbreak of war and that this points to the conclusion that schools are not adequately equipped with books." This particular memorandum called for an investigation into any curtailment or shortages which could be affecting the quality of work in the schools. When National Savings came into vogue,

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/654

the Inspectors were loaded with a liaison function which needed eight sheets of typescript explanation and detailed instructions.⁽¹⁾ They were also made responsible for implementing the policy to utilise schools in the "Best Use of Food in Wartime."⁽²⁾ They even had to organise fruit gathering and preserving.⁽³⁾

These worthy ladies and gentlemen must have derived some comfort when they read a document produced later in the war by one of the Board's senior officials in which he called them the "disinterested friends of all the world," invaluable to LEAs, schools and teachers. An HMI, he wrote, was "a guide and friend who preached a philosophy which, if it could not lead to ataraxia, at any rate did produce a relative peace."⁽⁴⁾ This definition would be heartily endorsed by anyone who could read the countless example of intervention, mediation and assistance, invariably marked by tact and kindness. The informal contacts they had during and after the evacuation with thousands of teachers must have been of great value in producing a new relationship and understanding, so different from what had obtained over the previous half-century.

(ii) Ratios

The following re-assuring analysis of pupil-teacher ratios was issued to HMIs in mid-1943:⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 22/205

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206

(3) Ibid.

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 Shaping Educational Policy 12

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 38 Memo of 13.5.43

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> | <u>TEACHERS</u> | <u>Average Child-Teacher ratio</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| March '38 | 5,035,276 | 166,349 | 30.27 |
| '39 | 4,941,785 | 164,434 | 30.5 |
| '40 | (NOT KNOWN) | 161,708 | (NOT KNOWN) |
| December '40 | 4,609,557 | (NOT KNOWN) | (NOT KNOWN) |
| March '41 | 4,595,014 | 152,135 | 30.2 |
| '42 | 4,600,864 | 151,296 | 30.4 |
| December '42 | 4,602,559 | 151,651 | 30.3 |

But it must have considerably bemused the Inspectors, all of whom would have experienced since September 1939 many cases arising from staffing disparities. Such a table would never stand up to close analysis, not only because the vital figures between March '39 and March '41 are missing, but because what wartime figures there are conceal inconsistencies in the type of education received, full- or part-time, as well as in the actual numbers of pupils in attendance (as opposed to "on register") and teachers teaching (as opposed to "employed.") The number of teachers for March 1941, for example, includes 9,705 in HM Forces, but still on the payroll, and 2,784 on loan to Civil Defence, etc..⁽¹⁾ In Portsmouth, an evacuation area, at that time of heavy bombing many schools were not in use, and the ratio was 43:1; this excluded 5,300 children receiving no education at all and included 3,715 children on full-time but 6,528 on a part-time basis. 42 teachers were on secondment for non-teaching duties and none could be recalled from reception areas where their 296 teachers were already on a 40+:1 ratio.⁽²⁾

The task of stabilising the ratio in the first years of the war, plagued with the vagaries of evacuations, non-evacuations and re-evacuations, proved virtually insoluble. By December 1939 there were 39,182 evacuated teachers to 472,137 evacuated children, a ratio of 12:1, and yet individual school ratios varied from 52:1 to 92.7:1.⁽³⁾ In Spring

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 424/120

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69 B/Ed. Survey of P.E.S. 1.4.41

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 M.o.Health Memo of 5.6.40

1941 the range was: ⁽¹⁾

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| Wallasey | 17:1 |
| West Ham | 23:1 |
| Rochester | 73:1 |
| Bexhill | 96:1 |
| Hastings | 260:1 |

Later, in July 1941, the LCC scattered over 70 Reception LEAs, recorded these variations: ⁽²⁾

| | |
|-------|---------------------------|
| 16:1 | Brecon, Banbury, Penzance |
| 25:1 | Pontypridd, Northampton |
| 66:1 | Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdeen |
| 70:1 | Mountain Ash |
| 160:1 | Leicester |

The LCC was particularly vulnerable to criticism from citizens who witnessed these extremes. Complaints came from East Anglia in early October 1939 of a Bethnal Green School with 25 children, three teachers and two paid helpers, and from a village in Norfolk where three masters took turns over five half-days a week to teach 30 boys. All the LCC could do was to admit the facts and point out that, whereas all teachers had volunteered for the evacuation, only 50% of parents had used the scheme. ⁽³⁾ The Council lost no time when official permission was given for re-opening evacuated schools and on the next day, 2 November 1939, notified the Board that they would be needing 2,000 evacuated teachers back in London. ⁽⁴⁾ Little did they know that in July of the following year they would be needing a further 2,000 teachers as escorts for the new evacuation scheme, ⁽⁵⁾ that in autumn 1940 they would be allocating 2,200 teachers to Rest Centres and the Londoners' Meals Services, ⁽⁶⁾ and that hundreds would go to other emergency services, leaving only 1,961

(1) B/Ed. E 424/120

(2) B/Ed. E 25 B (1)/205

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(5) B/Ed. P/s 25 B (1)/192

(6) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.45



actually teaching out of the 4,893 on salary in the area.⁽¹⁾

Yet throughout this period the Board was issuing a series of Memos to the Inspectorate reminding them, albeit in guarded terms, that economies should be made wherever possible. In November 1939, having made references to the postponement of Raising the School-leaving Age, to closures, and to an excess of teachers, the Memo continued, "The Board would deprecate the dismissal of teachers merely because they are redundant, but reasonable economies" should be made, new appointments scrutinised, and natural wastages taken into account.⁽²⁾ Four months later, the drift back and re-openings in evacuation areas brought the suggestion that LEAs of evacuation areas should recall teachers from reception areas and merge any pupil residues with lost reception schools.⁽³⁾ Six weeks later, on 17 April 1940, economies were urged in the staffing of elementary schools in all areas, on the grounds of wartime financial stringencies and the fact that staffing represented 60% of the total expenditure in elementary education.⁽⁴⁾ But the situation became more confused than ever over the next ten months, for, from a position of serious shortage of staff in London in August 1940 and a need to transfer redundant teachers from reception areas, the blitzes of late 1940 produced further official and unofficial evacuation. This meant that by February 1941 there was another serious shortage, this time in certain reception areas. The Inspectorate now had to encourage transfers of teachers from one reception area to another.⁽⁵⁾

With the raising of the call-up age on 1 August 1940 from 25 to 30 those areas which were having staffing troubles because of evacuation

(1) B/Ed. PS/25 (B)/196

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 22/205 Memo to Inspectors 416 (13.11.39)

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206 Memo to Inspectors (E) 427 (6.3.40)

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206 Memo to Inspectors (E) 429 (17.4.40)

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 22/207

found life even harder. The loss of this particular age group, containing many of the liveliest and most promising young teachers, also brought an increase in disciplinary difficulties and must have had an effect on the quality of instruction. Birmingham's experiences in this respect were typical, for, stricken as it was by a chronic shortage of teachers, when re-evacuation became necessary it was the children who suffered. For example, one junior mixed school with 600 on roll and 10 teachers was scheduled for evacuation. When the move came all the staff took the 350 who turned up, leaving none with the 250 children remaining behind.⁽¹⁾ Secondary schools, affected by the calling up of specialists, suffered from maldistribution of staffs and overcrowding, the pre-war limit of 30:1 rising as high as 41:1 by December 1940.⁽²⁾ Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire⁽³⁾ High Wycombe and Andover all experienced this, one HMI reporting a maths class of 70.⁽⁴⁾

Perhaps the worst hit on staffing ratios were those reception areas which had large numbers of unofficial evacuees, many small groups from fragmented evacuated schools, and were used by various evacuating authorities. Although some evacuating LEAs had laid down ratios for their own groups, varying from 20:1 to 40:1, there were reception schools which had as many as 60 evacuees in small groups from 10 authorities - none with teachers, as well as numbers of private evacuees.⁽⁵⁾ The administrative problem of who supplied the extra teachers was never really solved, for as late as April 1941 Gloucester complained at having to absorb large numbers of teacherless pupils from East Sussex.⁽⁶⁾ The counties most affected were in the West Country, but the Home Counties

(1) B/Ed. G 671/1278

(2) B/Ed. WS/381 B (1)

(3) B/Ed. E 424/120 (i)

(4) B/Ed. S729

(5) B/Ed. 25 B (1)/196-203

(6) Ibid.

and Midlands had their share, especially Northamptonshire, which was used by no fewer than 90 different evacuating authorities.⁽¹⁾

When the reserved age was raised again in April 1941 from 30 to 35 the situation had become more stable, with evacuations limited to the "trickle" system. Nevertheless, the effect on the teaching force was serious; Gloucester estimated a loss by the end of the year of 114 of its 342 male teachers, 500 men had gone from London by autumn 1941, and it was now that married women and retired teachers were being mobilised in earnest to maintain the ratio. Even so, coping was especially difficult in Northumberland⁽²⁾ and Surrey.⁽³⁾ By February 1942 48% of all Sheffield schoolmasters were on war service,⁽⁴⁾ and by 1943 the 'Training Colleges' output was meeting only 50% of the quota.

(iii) Criticism of teachers

Before dealing with the repercussions of the evacuation on the teachers, some reference must be made to the criticisms which were levelled at the teachers themselves. With very few exceptions, such as the attitude of the North Riding Education Committee who decided that "on educational grounds" Conscientious Objectors should be given leave of absence without pay for the duration⁽⁵⁾, practically all the disapproval came from people in reception areas and was levelled at evacuated staffs. Probably the most comprehensive complaint came from a knighted MP as early as 18 October 1939; according to him they were bad-mannered, patronising, poor disciplinarians, some being neither patriotic nor reasonable; even their visiting Mayor (of a West Ham borough) was

(1) B/Ed. PS/28 B (1)

(2) B/Ed. File P/S 29 B (1)

(3) B/Ed. File P/S 40 B (1)

(4) B/Ed. File P/S 108 B (1)

(5) North Riding Education Committee Report for 1940

offensive and condescending.⁽¹⁾ Most of the other criticisms were on the grounds that too many evacuated teachers had too little to do, and too much time to do it in. There was the JP from Hertfordshire who wrote to the Board about three teachers billeted on him; two of them had only 7 children to teach and even that was limited to one session daily. The MP for High Wycombe tried to pin the Board down to issuing a Circular explaining to teachers that "their duties are not confined to giving some three hours instruction per day."⁽²⁾ To this and several similar criticisms the Board replied that whereas a teacher had no legal obligation to occupy himself extra-murally with the evacuees, there was a moral obligation to do so. Moreover, they added such complaints were far from being widespread, for there was conclusive evidence that most teachers had, since 1 September 1939, pulled their weight, and more.⁽³⁾

(iv) The work load

That defence from the Board was made in early October 1939; any teachers who had been carried as passengers until then were soon to find themselves facing rude reality, and the "conclusive evidence" already in the Board's files was only a fraction of that which was going to amass over the next years. Typical of subsequent HMI reports on the multifarious jobs which became the teacher's lot was this Appendix listing matters dealt with, in addition to teaching, by an LCC Head in one normal day:⁽⁴⁾

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Clothes Coupons | Infectious illnesses |
| Milk | Poppies |
| Time-table re-arrangement | Dental Cards |
| Jewish roll-list | Meals |
| Red Cross | ARP |
| Accident | Letters |
| Gardening | Gas Masks |

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(3) B/Ed. G 671/616 (of 6.10.39) and Sec. Clerks 2107/9

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (H.M.I. Report 3.12.40)

Another LCC Inspector's area report claimed that "98% of the school parties have contributed their quotas to the war effort;" his 18-point list included salvage, knitting, writing-up ration books and identity cards, canteen washing-up, and sand-bag filling.⁽¹⁾ The Headmaster of Mill End Senior Boys School, High Wycombe, produced his own catalogue of staff duties:⁽²⁾

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Canteen - cash + banking a/c's. | Returns (heavy) - LEA |
| Milk - money - returns - bottles | - B/Ed'n |
| Leavers - reports - testimonials | Scholarships - locals |
| Evacuation - many returns | - evacuees |
| Stock - of every type | Visual Aids - radio, films |
| Bus tickets - claims, issues | Correspondence |
| Accounts - phones, etc. | Gas + Electric readings |
| National Savings | Emergency Feeding - checks |
| Time-table - constant adjustments | Fire-watching - organising |
| Medical - inspections, cards, spectacles | Campaigns - Spitfire |
| Dental - forms, appointments | Salvage |
| Salaries - paying out | Diphtheria |
| Registers | Collections - Poppies |
| Library | Red Cross |
| Entertaining evacuees | Clothing coupons |

From West Sussex the Director of Education showed how his teachers were organising concerts, jumble sales, carol singing, chicken and rabbit "companies", knitting, whist drives, and collections of money, books and clothing for poor evacuees.⁽³⁾ The vast quantities of salvage spilled over the playgrounds and had to be sorted into aluminium, rags, bottles, bones, lead and wool. Teacher-cobblers were commonplace, but honourable mention must go to the Devon Headmaster who, because town shoes were no good for country lanes and his evacuated guests had no handicraft facilities, taught himself cobbling from text-books and then taught the boys.⁽⁴⁾

The pressures on schools and teachers to play their patriotic part in the war effort, especially between Dunkirk and Pearl Harbour, came

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Chief Insp. Report 17.10.41)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (Report of 8.10.40)

(4) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

from all directions, not least from the Board itself. Apart from the administrative Memoranda covering such items as "cooperative Preservation of Garden Fruit", "Fighting Crop Fires", "Collection of Scrap", and "Collection of Medicinal Plants",⁽¹⁾ a regular series of Pamphlets, "Schools in Wartime", came into the schools to inform, guide and assist the teachers. It is entirely appropriate here to reproduce the titles of the first 29 of these, spanning from September 1939 to April 1942, for they indicate how many extra-curricular jobs were being officially wished onto the teachers' shoulders:

- No. 1. "Schools and Food Production" (especially evacuees in reception areas)
- No. 2. "Precautions anti-epidemic" (mixing reception + evacuee children)
- No. 3. "Canteen needs for schoolchildren" (to help foster-mothers)
- No. 4. "Use of Museums" (local studies for evacuees)
- No. 5. "Harvest in the Woodlands" (acorns, etc., for evacuee leisure)
- No. 6. "Use of School Broadcasting" (especially as a basis for evacuee homework)
- No. 7. "Needle Subjects" (especially evacuee repairs)
- No. 8. "Winter in the Garden" (continuation of No. 1.)
- No. 9. "Use of Ordnance Survey Maps" (aimed at evacuees)
- No. 10. "Supplies for the Woodwork Room"
- No. 11. "Physical Education for Reception and Evacuation areas"
- No. 12. "Community singing"
- No. 13. "Poultry Keeping"
- No. 14. "Spring Work in the Garden"
- No. 15. "Food - how the teachers can help the Nation"
- No. 16. "Nature study out-of-doors" (especially the evacuees first rural spring)
- No. 17. "Waste, the salvage drive"
- No. 18. "France and ourselves"

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (Administrative Memos. 309, 310, 384, 390)

- No. 19. "Food" (especially DS teachers)
- No. 20. "Technical Schools and war effort production"
- No. 21. "Summer Preparation for winter food"
- No. 22. "Use of School Broadcasts" (especially for evacuees)
- No. 23. "PE" (mainly because PE men called up)
- No. 24. "Stock-keeping"
- No. 25. "Collection of leaves and roots" (for drugs)
- No. 26. "Teaching of history of USA"
- No. 27. "The wild fruit crop"
- No. 28. "USA History"
- No. 29. "Rabbit Keeping"

What would have happened if the Board of Education had not been actively anxious about preventing the exploitation of pupils and teachers in the name of the "war effort" is anyone's guess. As it was, the following random selection from HMI reports shows that war production was not confined to the factories, nor were foremen only found on the factory floor. In South Devon the output of schools included camouflage nets, splints, bed-rests, leg-rests and invalid tables.⁽¹⁾ Twelve schools in the Slough area produced 6,630 gross of earplugs for a local firm, while in Cambridge Borough a girls' school and a boys' school were making components for Pye's.⁽²⁾

"Dig for Victory" became a very real motto for any school with a few square feet of garden, and production figures reflected the efforts which must have been needed. One evacuated school cleared two acres, one for a market garden and one for chicken, ducks, pigs, goats and bees, providing enough raw material for 90 meals per day; a boy from the Bermondsey slums bragged about his Brussel "sprarts" over which he toiled so long, early and late, that he turned them into a successful economic

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(2) Ibid.

proposition.⁽¹⁾ Teachers took their pupils collecting herbs, acorns, chestnuts and wild fruit, as well as on organised working-parties to farms, helping with the harvest, peas, beet, potatoes, onions, weeding and muck-spreading. With some pride the Birmingham Post told how local schools evacuated in Staffordshire had produced: 3 tons of turnips, 62 tons of potatoes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of carrots, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons of onions and 3 tons of parsnips.⁽²⁾ Weeding, hedging, ditching, cutting peasticks and bean-sticks the catalogue is endless, as are the columns of proud production figures. Behind them all were the thousands of sweating boys and girls with, always beside them, their teachers.

(v) Out-of-school roles

"The Inspectors consider that it ought to be placed on record the amount of time and energy which teachers are giving various services out of school, e.g. Social Services"⁽³⁾ So ran the HMI's report from the Black Country at the end of 1941 on the subject of the teachers' burdens. Five weeks later it was disclosed that there were 1,951 Birmingham teachers evacuated (included 1,370 women) out of whom 1,564 were occupied out of school as follows:⁽⁴⁾

695 - National Defence Services
 557 - Red Cross; St. Johns; WVS
 167 - Billeting
 145 - other branches

Behind these two reports stretches a long tale of the involvement of the nation's teachers with the trials of the community, starting with the preparations for, and execution of, the evacuation itself. Canvas-sing, accommodation, assembling, escorting, sorting, feeding, billeting; these all occupied the first days while the schools settled in, re-grouped

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(2) Birmingham Post 27.1.41

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(4) Birmingham Post 27.1.41

and smoothed out their billeting problems. This entailed tramping and cycling to contact their flocks, fetching and carrying, cajoling and coaxing, bullying and browbeating, comforting and organising. In reception areas this essentially pastoral role was seen by the evacuated teachers as forming a link between child and home, as making very real the traditional legal concept of the teacher as "in loco parentis." To this end they relieved the burdens on the local hostesses by occupying the leisure time of the children; they liaised with the local Sunday schools, in Worthing they brought over 1,000 evacuees into the local Sunday schools;⁽¹⁾ they inspected footwear and supervised the writing of letters home; they gave up much of their week-ends and holidays arranging social activities like parties, concerts, picnics, drawing groups and story-reading circles.⁽²⁾

Local teachers in reception areas were no less generous with their time, as Inspectors found when they attempted a survey on the involvement of staffs with the public services. The report from Shropshire referred to two urban schools in Wellington where every teacher was occupied extra-murally, quite commonly in multiple functions. The best example was a junior school Head who worked with the YMCA, Boys' Club and Army Cadets, ran three canteens (using 200 voluntary helpers), belonged to the ARP, was Secretary of the local Allotments Association and served no less than 7 war and social Committees, "He is clearly a tired man today," concluded the HMI.⁽³⁾

In evacuation areas the teachers' functions increased as the drift built up and the totals grew of unschooled children in the cities. No sooner had the lot of these youngsters been eased by the re-opening of the schools than Dunkirk was followed by re-evacuation, by the Battle of

(1) L.C.C. Inspector's Report 17.4.40

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(3) Ibid.

Britain, then by the blitz - a year-long, always changing series of situations during which one constant factor was the ever-presence of the teacher. Representative of their attitudes throughout this time was the action of the Deptford teachers when their schools closed during the blitz; they re-constituted themselves into "The Deptford Juvenile Social Service" and did invaluable work. They even published their own regular Bulletin. The one for 30 November 1940 contained details of services they provided, including milk distribution, liaison between children and Evening Institute, canvassing stubborn families into evacuating their children, forming ten "Home Clubs" for knitting and rug-making, offering and Advice Bureau, finding jobs for school-leavers and distributing toys from the USA.⁽¹⁾

As for organisations such as the Auxiliary Services, it was the rule rather than the exception to find every teacher in a school engaged in one or more such activities. In one county no less than 84% were thus engaged; such organisations were the Home Guard, Observer Corps, ARP, Gas Identification, Special Constabulary, St. John's, Civil Nursing Reserve, and WVS.⁽²⁾ In Berkshire, for example, several Heads were Chief Wardens as an accepted part of their role, and at least four Heads were doing night duty on RAF Observation Posts.

When the night bombing started in 1940 those teachers who had been recalled to cope with unschooled children in evacuation areas found that, as if the roles already mentioned were not enough, there was yet another to undertake. Their schools, more often than not, became Rest Centres, refuges for the neighbourhood, which needed organising and manning. One Head found 1,000 homeless folk in his school and had to set about the tending, dispersing, feeding, toileting and bedding;⁽³⁾ morning after

(1) Ibid.

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(3) Ibid.

morning started with providing scores of breakfasts, and night after night saw teachers starting night duties. In Manchester this was the lot of the majority of teachers; in Sheffield, after a nine-hour blitz (12 - 13 December 1940) 1,500 teachers were on duty at their posts where they improvised cooking, sorted and fitted clothing, kept children occupied, comforted the old, fixed up billeting and cleared the mess ready for the next night.⁽¹⁾ The Board acknowledged the facts of blitz life by agreeing to the release of 1,500 LCC teachers on secondment to Rest Centres and Meals Service.⁽²⁾

Again and again reports came in of the devotion and zeal of the teachers; in some cases spilling over from evacuation areas to neighbouring safe zones; this was the case near Plymouth, Freetle, and at Southampton where a nightly trek moved out to nearby schools whose teachers - under extremely trying conditions - did everything from evening nappy-changing to morning swilling-out toilets and washing fouled classroom floors. One Headmistress collapsed after 72 hours on her feet.⁽³⁾

Behind these accounts there must have been countless stories of individual altruism, but, as the writer has found, most of them will never be told publicly because of what seems to be a deep-rooted professional reticence. For the most part, students of this piece of history will have to be content with reading, for example, that not a single Cornish teacher - an unprecedented fact - reported sick during the critical third quarter of 1940,⁽⁴⁾ or that evacuated teachers voluntarily returned from Devon to help their colleagues in London at the height of the blitz, when all traffic was in the other direction.⁽⁵⁾ And there must have been

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(2) B/Ed. P/s 24 B (1)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (L.C.C. Insp. Report 15.1.41)

many like the Headmistress in Dorset who overcame red tape by financing and providing her own school shelter,⁽¹⁾ and the Headmistress of the Manchester Lancastrian School for Cripples who, when beyond retirement age, held her school together against great odds and established it successfully in a country house, "a remarkable story of success," her HMI called it.⁽²⁾

It needs to be borne in mind that these burdens were being placed on a profession which was steadily losing many of its members and were being shouldered by the ladies, the older members, and those returned from retirement or from running their homes. In addition to military service, (In December 1940, 191 out of Sheffield's 635 men teachers were in HM Forces),⁽³⁾ LEAs were being encouraged to transfer handicraft teachers to war production,⁽⁴⁾ and science teachers were being released at Government request to train the RAF.⁽⁵⁾

This was the profession which undoubtedly exerted a steadying influence on their local communities, showing a splendid example of courage, endurance and self-sacrifice in caring for the needs of victims of unfortunate circumstances. One of their Inspectors wrote, "The picture is one of an infinity of services by individual teachers, men and women, not content with duty rendered in school hours - onerous though this has become in many instances."⁽⁶⁾ A little more down-to-earth were the words of the Teacher Representative on the Dorset County Education Committee: "Teachers were becoming Honorary Clerks to the Treasury, Honorary Assistants to the Milk Purveyors, Housemaids, Cooks, and Bottle

(1) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 12.7.40)

(2) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 12.1.41)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(4) B/Ed. Admin. Memo. 223, 11.6.40

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (H.M.I. Report 12.1.41)

(6) Ibid.

washers."⁽¹⁾

(vi) The Strain

From this catalogue of tasks and roles imposed on, or assumed by, the profession the corresponding tale of stress and strain can come as no surprise. It started as early as September 1939 when evacuated Birmingham teachers were described as working 7 days a week and in need of some time off.⁽²⁾ As the numbers of children in the school-less evacuated areas grew, and as teachers were drawn into the emergency scheme of teaching groups in their homes (the "Home Service"), what was at first a small-scale improvisation became an increasing load for an increasing number. By December 1939 they were finding in Liverpool that the foot-slogging, the preparation, the marking, the monotony of covering the same ground several times a day, all these were becoming cumulatively fatiguing,⁽³⁾ while teachers in London were making contact with as many as 150 to 200 children each.⁽⁴⁾

In mid-1940 a memorandum was sent round HMIs which revealed not only how the strain was telling, but how conscious of it the officials were at the Board. The bare purpose of the memorandum was to suspend again the resumed inspections, but it goes further than being a mere instruction by the concern it shows for "the great nervous strain under which so many people are suffering at the moment." Evidence was cited of the way the Inspectorate were welcome in schools because of their help and encouragement; the writer of the document defended "keeping Heads and their staffs in good spirits" as a legitimate form of "inspection." This moving little document concludes "..... I am clear

(1) Dorset Chronicle + Swanage Times 29.1.42

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/252

(4) London Evacuation Record (L.C.C. 1944)

that there are few more useful things that anybody could be doing at the present moment. I realise, too, that the work of cheering and encouraging the despondent is one which puts a considerable strain on any visitor."⁽¹⁾

Indeed, the pressures grew even heavier and the teacher's private life so diminished that in November 1940 Inspectors were asked to report on the situation in their areas.⁽²⁾ Their returns confirmed expectations, with references to "permanent overtime,"⁽³⁾ and to teachers as "tired people" with "severe trials to their patience and forbearance."⁽⁴⁾ Domestic science teachers were having a particularly bad time of it because of their involvement with the Ministry's "Wartime Cookery" campaign. In Staffordshire they were running public classes in 40 schools, with a total attendance of over 2,000.⁽⁵⁾ For teachers in schools of South East London the working day began between 4 and 5 a.m. with preparing breakfast for their bombed-out residents.⁽⁶⁾ From Middlesex came the observation - by then quite common - that extraneous duties "were so exacting (of several nights at a time) that their job as teachers was suffering."⁽⁷⁾

Towards mid-1941 a letter was received at the Board from the Association of Headmistresses making strong representation about the pressures on staff, especially of evacuated schools where the daily supervision of the children during the holidays was so telling that the brief closing of school premises for cleaning and maintenance became a major problem.⁽⁸⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 22/215 (Memo. to Inspectors S. No. 651 of 24.6.40)

(2) B/Ed. Memo. 433 of 14.11.40

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

(4) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(5) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 13.12.40)

(6) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14 (H.M.I. Report 11.1.41)

(7) Ibid. (H.M.I. Report 13.1.41)

(8) D.E.S. Ed. 10/249

One would have thought that by now the Board would have been able to take some kind of ameliorative action, but it was not until December 1941 that the authority was given which allowed the purse-strings to be loosened:

"The incidence of these extraneous duties is naturally uneven, but there is evidence that in some cases they have reached a volume which seriously interfered with the teacher's primary duty of teaching.

"Where this is the case, the Authority would do well to consider the employment of voluntary or paid assistance, and any reasonable expenditure incurred will rank for grant at the rate appropriate to the service."⁽¹⁾

(vii) Summary

The first two years of the war, difficult though they were for the teachers, enabled them, probably more than any other section of the population, to demonstrate their essential quality and potential. If the pupil-teacher relationship was ever on trial it was then, and this verdict on Birmingham children in Leamington Spa seems a fair one: "The children's absolute trust in their own teachers and teachers strange to them is remarkable; it is, of course, the main factor in successful evacuation."⁽²⁾ There were, it cannot be denied, some abrasive situations, like, for example, the gross overcrowding of Liskeard schools⁽³⁾ and the lamentable lack of charity at Oxford, where the only resting place available nightly to hundred of evacuees was between the seats of a local cinema.⁽⁴⁾ But considering the thousands of teachers thrown together from contrasting backgrounds and academic traditions, as the Board itself commented, "One of the most striking discoveries made by highly qualified evacuated teachers from town schools, particularly

(1) B/Ed. Admin. Memo. 336 to L.E.A.'s 8.12.41

(2) B/Ed. 237 B (2) R. Leam. Spa.

(3) B/Ed. G 25E

(4) Picture Post 14 December 1940

London, was that the work of the country children under those unqualified teachers so often compared favourably with their own."⁽¹⁾ As to the impression made on the general public, the profession's contribution and example to the nation's efforts could not be too highly praised, and there grew up "such a wide appreciation of the capabilities of the teacher beyond his normal professional work"⁽²⁾ that Chuter Ede (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board) drew attention to his increased status and stature in the public eye.⁽³⁾

This, together with the hard experience they amassed, was to stand them in good stead when it came to having a voice in the subsequent formation of national policy on educational reform.

(1) B/Ed. 2152 (3) 56 May 1943

(2) Brighton. Post-war Education (Brighton Headteachers' Association 1942) p. 4

(3) Schoolmaster 5.6.41

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS

(i) "The Two Worlds"

On the outbreak of war, Scarborough, a rather sedate watering-place received evacuees from Hull. Within two hours an emergency cleansing centre had to be opened to deal with children whose condition was such that householders would not take them in.⁽¹⁾ Within days their local paper was carrying an editorial that made a full-scale attack on Hull as the main evacuating authority, and complained "..... there is no excuse for sending to Scarborough a few demented people, large numbers of mental defectives, children suffering from infectious diseases, and very many women and children in a very filthy bodily condition"⁽²⁾ This situation reflected the pattern over a large part of the country, and the aim of this section is to inquire into the reasons behind what has now become a historical truism, that the public conscience was aroused by the evacuation, revealing as it did "a number of festering social sores."⁽³⁾

Concerned at the reports in the north west, Lord Derby in late 1939 instigated a survey of 15 reception and 7 evacuation areas in the Palatinate of Lancaster. The intention of his questionnaire, a very comprehensive and searching document, was to ascertain how the evacuation scheme had been working, and when the answers came in, which they all did, thanks, no doubt, to his eminence, they were compiled and communicated to the Board on 12 February 1940. Certain of the findings were almost unanimous, notably those which established that the majority of evacuees (mainly from Manchester and other Lancashire towns) were

(1) Scarborough Mercury 15 September 1939

(2) Ibid. 8 September 1939

(3) Lindsay G. Report on W. Hartlepool Evacuation

extremely necessitous, poorly clad and shod, that they received little help from their evacuating Authorities, and that re-billeting had taken place on a large scale, mainly on grounds of domestic or religious incompatibility.⁽¹⁾ There was almost complete agreement among the reception authorities that by the time of the completing of questionnaires, "the evacuees who are remaining here are immeasurably superior both in physique and health than when they were at home."

What Lord Derby described as "necessitous" was given blunter epithets by others; Marjorie Cruickshank was impelled to write, "Evacuation in particular revealed conditions of squalor and ignorance which few had dreamt existed, for the filth, malnutrition and indiscipline of many of the ^{young} evacuees came as a shameful reminder that ^{even} in the twentieth century Disraeli's 'two nations' still persisted."⁽²⁾ Her opinion certainly reflected the opinion of many churchmen of the time; for example, Prebendary Boggis told Convocation of "the terrible revelation to people in Devonshire" of the atheism and amorality of some evacuated children.⁽³⁾ To a present-day sociologist it appears that "urban working-class sub-culture emerged from ^{its} physical and social isolation of the poorer parts of the large cities to clash with the ^{different values and standards of the small town} ~~small town middle-class standards~~ ^{widdle class.}"⁽⁴⁾ By February 1940 it appeared that this view was so commonly held that the Ministry of Information was anxious to publish compensatory stories, so the Board was asked to produce fortnightly reports; these, in turn, were requested from HMIs, "human" angles of the evacuation, like settling down, social adjustment, and "spirit and attitudes."⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/10

(2) M. Cruickshank Church and State in English Education (Macmillan 1963) p. 137

(3) Convocation of Canterbury Chronicles of Convocation (S.P.C.K. 1941) p. 128

(4) G. Bernbaum Social Change and the Schools (Routledge 1967) p. 103

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 22/206

In compiling a picture of the conditions of evacuated children and the family background they exemplify, although the temptation is great to be swayed by the many articles and letters in the newspapers of those days, there is plenty of other material available to help explain "the acute discomfort of experiencing, in some cases, a profound difference between the outlook and habits of the native population and those of the evacuees."⁽¹⁾ This was the situation in certain parts of Merionethshire, like Bala, a minute market town acting as host to 222 Birkenhead Junior schoolchildren. That report came as early as one week after the outbreak of war; six weeks later the Regional Commissioner, Lord Portal, wrote to Lord De La Warr about the "disgraceful affair" of the Merseyside invasion of North Wales. The condition of the children and the behaviour of the mothers, he wrote, had completely dissipated the proverbial hospitality and goodwill of Welsh people.⁽²⁾

This bracketing of anti-social behaviour with home life became so commonplace that when, in December 1939, the Times Educational Supplement drew attention to the expression, "These Horrible Children", it defined them as those "who are not only dirty in person but who lack the most elementary ideas of behaviour agreeable to family life."⁽³⁾ In her contribution about Norfolk in Evacuation Survey Lady Sanderson listed, as examples of lack of social training, dirty domestic habits, poor diets (perpetual fish and chips, tinned salmon, etc.), inability to use cutlery, to eat at the table, or to adapt to a 7 o'clock bedtime after staying up until after 10 in towns; she called the official assumption that such children ever had a change of clothing a "ludicrous ignorance of working-class life."⁽⁴⁾ Among the case studies that he recorded, Body described the child who slept under the bed and the ones to whom

(1) B/Ed. 358 B (2) WE

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(3) T.E.S. 9 December 1939

(4) Sanderson p. 226 North Norfolk in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940)

pyjamas and washing came as a novelty.⁽¹⁾ The comprehensive and intensive Women's Institute Survey gave many detailed examples of lack of house-training and of children who had been actually sewn into their clothing.⁽²⁾ In the Economist: "It was said of the children that they were completely lacking in any form of self-control, that they lied, swore and pilfered, that they were verminous, that they wetted and soiled their beds and even their clothes."⁽³⁾

The section of evacuees which brought most opprobrium on themselves were the mothers with young children, despite the fact that most of them returned home in the very early days; "It was said of the mothers that they were indescribably dirty and had not even the most elementary idea of managing their homes and families."⁽⁴⁾ To the HMI who had to report on the state of Liverpool evacuees in Cardiganshire, Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire the mothers were the real trial; he had heard from many sources of those who fled home when offered a bath - one arrived in Welshpool with a 10-month infant, put the baby to bed in her billet, went out, and was not heard of till a week later. At Llanfyllin a priest was so fed up with the mothers under his care that he told the billeting officer, "Clear them off home, and have nothing more to do with them."⁽⁵⁾ One Manchester mother was rebilleted no fewer than six times,⁽⁶⁾ and only two days after the outbreak of the war the Inspector's Report from Wrexham recorded mothers who were already leaving their children to go out to pubs - and that black eyes were beginning to appear!⁽⁷⁾

(1) Body Children in Flight (U.L.P. 1940) pp. 45-49

(2) W.I. Town Children through Country Eyes (N.F.W.I. 1940) passim.

(3) Economist 1 May 1943

(4) Ibid.

(5) B/Ed. 352 (B) 2 WE

(6) Manchester op.cit. p. 19

(7) B/Ed. 355 B (2) WE

An official County Council Report said that many toddlers were dirty, verminous, out of control, very destructive, and, of their mothers, "many refused to do any work," some being "unwilling to clean their own children, and showed appalling ignorance of social and public health conduct"(1) R. C. K. Ensor wrote of "the lowest grade of slum women - slatternly, malodorous tatter-de-melions trailing children to match" into the homes of "prosperous artisans, with neat, clean homes and habits of refinement."(2) Titmuss raises the interesting speculation that nearly all these mothers had spent some formative years between 1914 and 1918, at a time of extensive juvenile labour and few medical inspections, of ill-health and parental deprivation, and about whom the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education asked in 1914, "what will be the condition of these children in 10 or 20 years?"(3)

Speculation about the original cause of their problems would have brought little consolation to the many country people who were shocked that such atrocious conditions could exist which were normal and acceptable for their evacuees. So traumatic was the revelation that in many cases, "housewives would accept imprisonment rather than re-open their homes to evacuees."(4) Or, as Le Gros Clark put it; "The miseries of life in a modern industrial city were here and there revealed in all their crudity to the startled countryside, and the shock was almost unbearable."(5) There were many "I-told-you-so's" in those days, but far many more had had no experience of "the other world" nor had they been particularly affected by any disclosures in the media. The Editor of The Schoolmaster had little time for either of these sections of the community: "The main burden of blame rests, of course, upon a community

(1) Oxford C. C. op.cit. p. 13

(2) Spectator 8 September 1939

(3) Titmuss op.cit. pp 131-135

(4) Teachers World 24.1.40

(5) Le Gros Clark p. 4 Evacuation, Failure or Reform (Fabian Society 1940)

which tolerates such appalling conditions of child upbringing as these reports reveal. One result of the war so far has been to force these conditions upon the attention of people who were entirely unaware of them; though it puzzles me how people can have been unaware of these conditions when they have been described in the Press with sickening reiteration ever since I can remember."⁽¹⁾

When under-privileged evacuees arrived at their destinations the first cause for revulsion was usually at the sheer dirt they brought with them, even when they came from within eyeshot distance, such as from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. School nurses worked heroically attacking the dirty conditions of West Hartlepool children; some had been marked as "Fit for Evacuation" but were sent back home later in the first week as being filthy.⁽²⁾ The WWS County Organiser for Lincoln wrote a personal, forthright letter to Lord De La Warr: "In my area, children have come from Leeds, Grimsby and Hull, the dirt and vermin being in that order! Universally, householders have been shocked at the disgraceful and disgusting conditions in which a certain portion of the population lives."⁽³⁾

The comparatively sedate tenor of life in provincial Britain was particularly affronted at the lack of social graces displayed by their urban visitors. A typical report came from Haslingdean, a little Lancashire market-town, that the locals were horrified at the manners of Salford children; for Haslingdean folk a mealtime was a family occasion; for Salford children it was a time to seize a piece of bread and jam and run into the street; a knife and fork came as a novelty to those accustomed to using their fingers for fish and chips from a newspaper.⁽⁴⁾ Some evacuees never used toilet paper, some deliberately

(1) The Schoolmaster 16 October 1939

(2) Lindsay op.cit. p. 8

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 50/212

(4) B/Ed. 190 B (2)

fouled curtains and furniture, some used room corners for defaecation; Titmuss records the memorable quotation from the report of the Medical Officer of Kircudbrightshire: "You dirty thing, messing the lady's carpet. Go and do it in the corner," said by an evacuated mother.⁽¹⁾ In their own environment after long spells without school, East End children posed extra problems. Fresh from her success with unruly shelter groups, Mrs. Paneth was asked to set up a Play Centre at the "Branch Street" she named her book after.⁽²⁾ There she found the children "incredibly misbehaved," and her book is one long indictment of the home circumstances which produced such vulgarity, ungratefulness, meanness, brutishness, aggression, dishonesty, malice, lewdness and spitefulness.⁽³⁾

Unlike the press photographs which usually showed evacuees as neat, well-clad youngsters, those from deprived homes were far too commonly conspicuous by their shabby turn-out. A formidable bulk of material evidence was built up, starting within hours after the evacuation and including such statistics as the 15% of Newcastle children who were deficient in footwear and the 21% with insufficient clothing; 25% of Manchester children were in plimsolls, and so great a proportion from Liverpool that it was nicknamed "the plimsoll city."⁽⁴⁾

It was to the credit of the Councils of both London and Manchester that they admitted afterwards having miscalculated the condition of many of the children for whom they were responsible. In London the "relatively small number of necessitous cases" turned out to be large;⁽⁵⁾ in Manchester there was "an unexpectedly large number of "necessitous children."⁽⁶⁾ Most poor families had obeyed the pre-evacuation

(1) Titmuss op.cit. p. 122

(2) Paneth Branch Street (Allen + Unwin 1944) p. 9

(3) Ibid. p. 41 and 83

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 115

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 29

(6) Manchester op.cit. p. 23

instructions and patched and washed their children in the "best", which so often was their "only." Many of them only had what they stood up in, often only the hand-me-downs of others, to the dismay of their foster parents who more often than not set to, sewing, stitching and darning, even replacing them from the family supply or buying new ones. In Denbighshire most of the evacuees were poorly clad and shod, with no change of underclothing, or no underclothing at all, and no night clothes, in direct contrast to 250 secondary school girl newcomers, all neat, clean and fairly well-clothed.⁽¹⁾ An additional handicap to the "townies" was their lack of appreciation of country wear-and-tear and conditions, of the inadequacy of rubber footwear for tramp/ing lanes; the two miles to school in Kendal seemed much more to South Shields children than it did to the Westmorland locals.⁽²⁾ When sixteen young Liverpudlians found themselves 2½ miles from their school in North Wales with poor footwear and no transport available, they simply made no effort to get there.⁽³⁾ The "Sunday best" tradition marked one of the gaps between the "two worlds," one that was often bridged by generosity, like that of the Vicar of Llandogo, who collected £15 to provide for 35 needy little visitors.⁽⁴⁾ But in some areas, next to social differences the provision of clothing and footwear led to more disturbance and acrimony between parents and foster-parents than anything else. Claims arrived at one Education Office from reception areas claiming £15 to £20 spent on fitting out poor children. One statistically minded housewife whose three children were evacuated into the country drew up an expense sheet covering clothing, footwear, medical costs, pocket money - etc., but excluding billeting; each child cost her £1 per month.⁽⁵⁾

(1) B/Ed. 355 B (2)

(2) B/Ed. 200 B (2)

(3) B/Ed. 355 B (2)

(4) B/Ed. 359 B (2)

(5) Lindsay op.cit. p. 22

But the providentially glorious weather of the early autumn could not last, and, with winter approaching, a rather heel-dragging government was compelled to make a gesture, rather a miserly one, £15,000 for needy cases,⁽¹⁾ £5,000 of which went to the LCC.⁽²⁾ Fortunately, the sympathy and involvement of the general public seems to have been commensurate with its generosity, for contributions came in from individuals and organisations far in excess of those from the Government. In Manchester alone the Lord Mayor's Joint Committee, learning they had as many as 5,000 cases of need, had paid out £1,700 by the end of October "in anticipation of donations."⁽³⁾

When one considers that there were thousands of these children whose families either resisted evacuation or brought their children home in the drift back, it is worth a brief reflection on what became their normal existence during the blitzes of 1940-1941. The Ministry of Health admitted on 19 December 1940, at the height of the most ferocious bombing, that there were still 80,000 schoolchildren and 38,000 under-5's in London.⁽⁴⁾ Many of them took over the family shelter spaces at 10 a.m. and for months spent 20 hours a day under cover.⁽⁵⁾ A glimpse at the City of Westminster during those months gives some idea of what blitzed children endured; from September 1940 to May 1941 there were 1,621 bomb incidents, 1,047 High Explosives, 786 killed and 1,338 seriously injured;⁽⁶⁾ two schools and one children's hospital were hit in October 1940, one single bomb in Sussex Street sent 200 people into Rest Centres (which were two schools kept vacant for the purpose);⁽⁷⁾

(1) M.O.H. Circular 1907 7 November 1939

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 29

(3) Manchester op.cit. p. 25

(4) Hansard 19 December 1940

(5) T.E.S. 23 November 1940

(6) Sansom Westminster at War (Faber 1947) p. 92

(7) Ibid. p. 29

the peak number of homeless reached 1,800 in January 1941,⁽¹⁾ and the peak number of shelter dwellers in, for example, Piccadilly Underground station reached 5,000.⁽²⁾

Although much speculation and research was devoted to explaining why so many of these families preferred their home streets to the safety of reception areas - whether in the easy days of the "phoney" war or the perilous nights of the blitz - the one factor usually overlooked stemmed from the social deprivation being considered here. Whether it was through sensitivity, shame, humiliation, resentment at the better conditions of others, or fear that their children would develop a taste for a standard of living far above their own, many working-class families preferred the familiarity of their own social setting. When an HMI reported on the scattered groups of Salford evacuees, he took as typical one set of eleven boys, ten of whom were for the first time in houses with bathroom and hot and cold water.⁽³⁾ Another Inspector at Keighley quoted the valedictory remark of an evacuated Bradford mother as she left for home: "Would you be comfortable if your feet sank into the carpet?"⁽⁴⁾ Three further complications relevant here were identified in the study on the West Hartlepool evacuation: the economics of working-class life became more difficult when the mother was moved away from her regular tallyman, especially with the need for extra expenditure on clothing and footwear for her evacuated children; many mothers, for whom child-raising had been her main concern, had no cultural nor intellectual interests to fill the gap left by their absent children and wished them back; similarly, many mothers who had left their slumland homes found impossible the necessary social adjustment against a background of social incompat-

(1) Ibid. p. 141

(2) Ibid. p. 51

(3) B/Ed. 233 B (2)

(4) B/Ed. 199 B (2)

ibility, winter nights, and "phoney" war.⁽¹⁾

The correlation between social and educational deprivation did not escape the attention of observers in those days. Harold Laski - always alive to political implications - suggested as a solution boarding schools for children from vulnerable areas; "At present," he claimed, "those who need education most are getting the least of it; they are losing that discipline of mind and character which is of first-rate civic importance; and many of them, unless we act rapidly, will never recover from the loss of these war years grim nights in the London tubes. That is not an experience in which the children of the comfortable classes are asked to share."⁽²⁾ Probably the most telling comment came from the Chief Inspector who produced a memorandum reviewing Inspectorate Reports; "Indeed - if there is one lesson from evacuation that has begun to emerge, it is that formal education based upon bad home conditions is largely a waste of effort and money, because the children from bad homes cannot attune their minds to it or begin to realise its purpose or possibilities."⁽³⁾

These were the "little monsters" who so horrified the sedate reception areas, the "little ruffians" from the slums who ran wild in the streets of the large evacuated cities; they were also the East Enders whose homes were verminous, who suffered from malnutrition, whose adult models were coarse parents that they knew were looked down on, often being prosecuted, being cheated, or doing the cheating; they were the ones whose schools were overcrowded, where they were bored, and punished when they absented themselves; during the nights their sleep was intermittent, interrupted by raids and refugees in the shelters and disturbed by parents in the home - where they were also exposed to sex; they were

(1) Lindsay op.cit. p. 3

(2) Laski in Programme for Victory (Routledge 1941) p. 27

(3) D.E.S. File Ed. 136/665

growing up aggressive, dishonest and anti-social.⁽¹⁾

It would be wrong to assume there was only one side to the coin. Without doubt a certain number of evacuees returned home because of the impact on them of rural slums. They had had no idea of the existence, let alone the significance, of the 1939 statistics⁽²⁾ which showed that there were 3,432 parishes in England and Wales without piped water, 5,186 without sewage systems, and that for 32% of rural houses no water was within easy access. The Liberal Party was hopeful: "After generations of indifference and neglect, a wholesome concern for a prosperous, populous and contented countryside has become increasingly manifest."⁽³⁾

But it cannot be denied that the bulk of the troublesome situations in reception areas came as a result of the opposition of social and cultural patterns, of "proper" and "strange" customs in conflict, usually with the countryfolk as the aggrieved partners.⁽⁴⁾ An extreme example of the inability to resolve this situation happened at Oxted, Surrey, when the Rector, at the instigation of his parishioners, barred all "officially evacuated" children from his church school.⁽⁵⁾ This type of incompatibility is reflected in the Cambridge Evacuation Survey, that expertly composed document, which urged the use of hostels to counteract deterioration and for rehabilitating small groups of disturbed children.⁽⁶⁾ Our Towns, another admirable survey, stressed the need for Nursery Schools to tend and teach the tots, whose condition gave the greatest cause for concern.⁽⁷⁾

(1) Paneth op.cit. p. 121-122

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 177

(3) Liberals Memorandum on Rural Education (Liberal National Council 1943) p. 3

(4) Stead K. G. The Education of a Community (U.L.P. 1942) p. 22

(5) Daily Herald 7.12.1939

(6) Isaacs Cambridge Evacuation Survey (Methuen 1941) p. 6

(7) Our Towns (O.U.P. 1943) p. 105

(ii) Damage in the Streets

The unschooled children in evacuated towns represented a social problem which caused great heart-searching and which persisted with increasing intensity over that period of the war during which the Green Book was being prepared. As early as 21 October there was no shirking the issue by the Roman Catholic School Managers' Association in their statement - nor the Times Educational Supplement in endorsing it; "the moral and physical harm caused by the present circumstances far outweighs the problematical danger."⁽¹⁾ A week later, the President of the Board himself was one of the first to use the expression when he said, "we cannot afford, as a nation, to let three-quarters of a million non-evacuated children grow up as little barbarians."⁽²⁾ They were rejected, neglected, dirty and denied education, they haunted amusement arcades, cinemas, bomb-damaged ruins, they fouled and despoiled air-raid shelters, they roamed the streets (being the only age group to suffer increased road deaths between 1940 - 1943), and they skylarked round the emergency water tanks (756 were drowned in them between 1940 - 1943).⁽³⁾ Their numbers were enormous, 7,500 of them in Liverpool in December 1940,⁽⁴⁾ and 92,000 in London in January 1941.⁽⁵⁾; in all, "some 400,000 of them, entirely without schooling, reverted to the barbarism of the street."⁽⁶⁾

On the fourth day after war was declared this Question was already being asked in the House: "Does the Board realise how serious the position is in many parts of London with many children running about the streets with nothing to do at a time like this?"⁽⁷⁾ If the suggestion

(1) T.E.S. 21.10.1939

(2) Teachers World 28.10.1939

(3) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 322 et seq.

(4) T.E.S. 12.12.1940

(5) Titmuss op.cit. p. 405

(6) Spencer Notes on Current Educational Problems (Year Book of Education 1940) p. 16

(7) Hansard 7.9.1939

of social deterioration seems rather premature it must be remembered that there had been no school since the end of the summer term. Yet this was only the first of a whole series of critical comments from all quarters over the next years.

To review the host of press reports and comments about the worsening plight of these children would be a formidable piece of research in itself, appearing as they did in all types of papers. One of the first reports in the Daily Mail on 27 September, drew attention to the growing discontent of parents in evacuation areas at the persistent mischief-making of their children; the Manchester Guardian also used its columns to examine the correlation of educational and social deterioration, quoting "abundant evidence" in support.⁽¹⁾ Like so many of the other large-circulation provincial dailies, the Southampton Daily Echo was always ready to give coverage to such items as the protest formation of the local Parents' Association, printed under the headline "17,000 Running Wild."⁽²⁾ At the comparatively parochial level of local weeklies, the affronted Chichester Observer reported "Swearing and Smoking" (of, respectively, a little girl in a Chichester street and a 10-year old boy in a nearby village).⁽³⁾

There was also a constant succession of representations and complaints from the professional organisations, locally as well as nationally. Representative of these are a letter to the Board from Bradford NUT branch expounding the size and gravity of the situation,⁽⁴⁾ and an Editorial in The Schoolmaster about the children who were "running risks of physical injury and moral and intellectual damage in the streets of large cities during hours when they should be under educational influences essential for their moral, intellectual and physical develop-

(1) Manchester Guardian 29.12.1939

(2) Southern Daily Echo 8 December 1939

(3) Chichester Observer 9 September 1939

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

ment."⁽¹⁾

Among the correspondence which arrived at the Board from private individuals was a letter from Ritchie Calder describing the chaos which arose from a false air raid alarm in West Ham; mothers were hysterically hunting their children in the neighbourhood streets, but so far afield had they roamed that some were found to have been twelve miles away; with three closed schools only minutes away, why, he asked, could not even the playgrounds be opened for those loose-end youngsters?⁽²⁾ On the other hand, there were letters from large assemblies, like the 3,000 who packed a meeting of Lewisham Labour Party and passed a motion condemning "..... the enormous number of children, 'unevacuated' and returned from evacuation schemes, now roaming the streets in the danger zones, in an undisciplined and uneducated state"⁽³⁾

As we have already seen, the Board was usually au fait with prevailing situations, thanks in no small degree to the flow of information from its Inspectorate. From West Yorkshire came disturbing reports about the effects on older girls when soldiers were billeted in the area; at the same time, in Durham it was estimated that 15% to 20% of pupils were anti-School, anti-social, slovenly and increasingly playing truant.⁽⁴⁾ In February 1941 there were still 14,000 out of 28,000 running the Portsmouth streets;⁽⁵⁾ a month later, Plymouth was reported as having a long history of absenteeism, malingering, parental unconcern, magisterial indifference and children street-playing.⁽⁶⁾ As for London, an internal memorandum of November 1940 reported 100,000 as running loose, less than

(1) Schoolmaster 8.2.1940

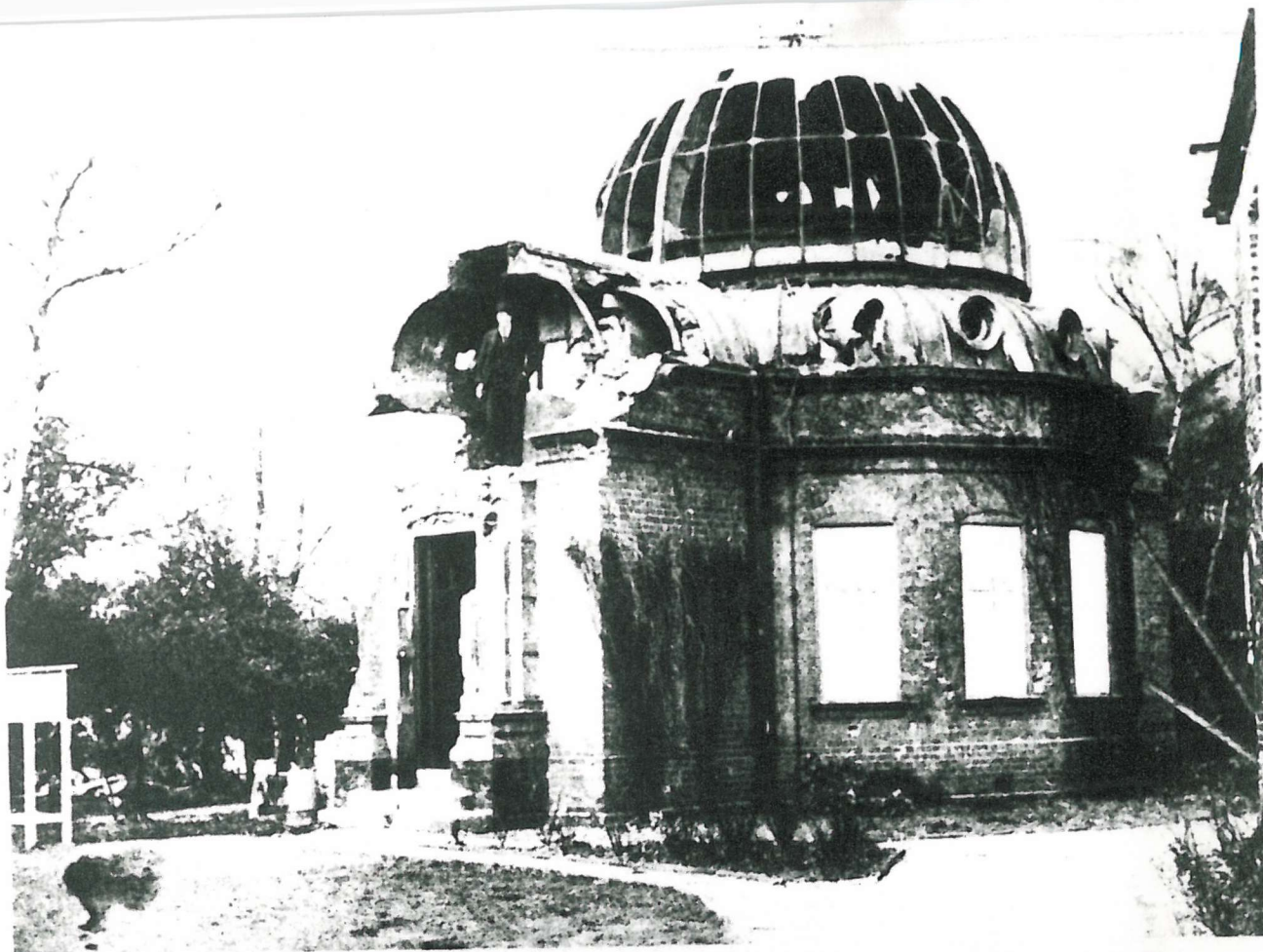
(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(3) Ibid.

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 10 December 1940)

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(6) B/Ed. Attendance P/s 100A



AIR-RAID DAMAGE TO GREENWICH OBSERVATORY : During recent raids on London, the world-famous Observatory at Greenwich has suffered from bombs. Here is the Altazimuth Building, which was damaged by a high-explosive bomb which struck where the man is standing. The telescope inside was blown off its stand ; and the Transit Circle was smashed, but all the delicate parts and lenses can be reassembled



"IT'S AN ILL WIND . . ." : Children in a bombed district in the London area are now allowed to collect the smaller pieces of wood and splinters from damaged houses and shops. Vehicles of every sort—including toy motors and perambulators—are used by the eager collectors as they gather their harvest. Here the "pram squad" are seen leaving the scene of operations after a good afternoon's work

20% of the children being at school, and "the system of elementary education in London is in a state not far off collapse."⁽¹⁾ In January 1941 the Board published Schools under Fire, a review of the effects of six months of air raids on schoolchildren; although most medical opinion commented upon the resilience and adaptability of the children, the value of the school was stressed for morale and as a means of normalising those who had been away from its influence.⁽²⁾

Later we read, "This problem of civilising children, many of whom had had to be forced into school after 15 months of non-attendance, was one of the most difficult tasks with which the schools had to grapple during the rest of the year 1941."⁽³⁾

So, as these first weeks, then months and years of the war went by, the plight of many thousands of children attracted more concern, especially those elementary pupils in evacuated areas; the bulk of men teachers called up were from these schools, and the consequent reshuffling often mixed up juniors and seniors. Furthermore, many boys, now that their fathers were in the forces, lacked male discipline in both the home and school. If anything, their sisters fared worse, and it was found later, in 1945, that many of the young girls in need of care and protection - and in one London borough there were five to six times the pre-war figure - were products of earlier wartime disturbance, such as unfortunate experience under evacuation or long periods without schooling.⁽⁴⁾ With our after-knowledge of Dunkirk, re-zoning, re-evacuation and the blitzes, we can find something ironically prophetic in Lord De La Warr's comments in the House of Lords' debate on the re-opening of the evacuation area schools on 7 February 1940: "..... further lead

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/665

(2) Schools under Fire (B/Ed. January 1941)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (H.M.I. Report 1944)

(4) Ferguson + Fitzgerald Studies in the Social Services (H.M.S.O. 1954) pp. 97-98

is needed from the Government if the children in the towns are to be saved from further demoralisation. Out of nearly 1½ million children who are now in these areas, some 400,000 are receiving no schooling or care at all."⁽¹⁾ (Some idea of the degree of urgency which affected this decision to re-open, this choice between the uncertain risk of bombing and the certain risk of deterioration, can be gained by considering the two modifications to the hitherto sacrosanct ARP regulations for schools: that a school could re-open if (a) shelter work would finish in 3 to 4 weeks, or (b) if the necessary accommodation were available in nearby shelters or houses.)

(iii) Rehabilitation

It would be totally misleading to suggest that everyone sat back and allowed such a helpless section of the nation's population to suffer by default; on the contrary, there was aroused an unprecedented degree of interest, sympathy and activity from the community and parliament alike. And it was not only for the children of the big city streets, because, as Kenneth Lindsay was informed in a letter from the Chairman of the Conservative Party (27.9.1939), there was "a great deal of local dissatisfaction" in both reception and evacuation areas at the lack of provision for unfortunate children.⁽²⁾

The National Playing Fields Association, in the policy statement issued with its wartime plan on 1 November 1939, claimed it had received "large numbers of requests" for help, and quoted Conway, where there were 2,400 Merseyside evacuees with no facilities at all. Some of the immediate measures to be taken were grants to rent fields, asphaltting and apparatus for playgrounds, and the provision of sports kit and equipment.⁽³⁾ One of the most swift, comprehensive and efficient pieces of

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2128/2

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

co-operation was between the cinema industry and the Board. From the time of the first contact (made, incidentally by G. A. N. Lowndes, then at the Ministry of Health) developments were quick, being resolved in a basic national procedure agreed between the Board and the Associated British, Gaumont British, Odeon and County Cinemas organisations with the British Films Institute and the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association joining in. On 13 December 1939 a letter was received from Mr. R. Ford (the Odeon executive who was the liaison man) reporting on the numerous requests received from evacuated schools and on the complete and successful collaboration involved.⁽¹⁾ As a result of a letter from Lord De La Warr to the Director of Talks, BBC, Mr. Middleton, the "Radio Gardener" and one of the nation's microphone favourites, used his weekly programme on 12 November 1939 to urge parents, foster-parents and teachers to encourage children to "interest themselves in living things to find a sweetening influence and to understand the purpose of the countryside."⁽²⁾ As an ultimate resort, when things were at their worst, with many children exposed to continuing street life and continuous air raids, the approach was made by the Board to the Palace for the King to visit a bombed area where schools were still functioning. The letter pointed out that there had been "little public recognition of the steadying influence of the schools in such areas, but there is no doubt that the cheerfulness, good discipline and self-control of the children and teachers alike have really contributed substantially to the upkeep of morale."⁽³⁾

Another means invoked to ease the lot of the street children of evacuated cities was the Play Centre. The need for these had been foreseen back in February 1939, "primarily to gather up those children who,

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/184 (B.B.C. Text)

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2089 (Letter of 27.11.1942)

but for the Centre, would be running about the streets after the close of school, and to give them a place where they can play, the means of playing, and a training in playing."⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately, those Centres which had opened by the outbreak of war (all but nine of them were in London and Birmingham - 50 in London) were closed; even with the drift back only a few were re-opened, and then only for the under-5's. The Board's awareness of the seriousness of the position was shown by Circular 1479 of 29 September 1939 in which LEAs were given suggestions for the purposeful occupation of children without actually opening schools; these consisted mainly of teacher-controlled games and recreational activities. Eventually the months of pressure were rewarded, the Air Raid Precautions obstacles overcome, and in London, for example, the original 50 were built up to 92 by December 1941.⁽²⁾ (By this time, of course, there was the additional complication that many of the mothers of city children were needed for war work.)

The Board, the LEAs, the teachers, all knew the old adage about "idle hands doing the devil's work." Many evacuated schools introduced their children to the satisfaction of working on the land, like the Manchester Central Boys' School "bad boy" who became contented with hens and pigs and started his own poultry business.⁽³⁾ One of the most convincing and touching testaments to the therapeutic powers of the rural life is "The Tollemache Gazette" an evacuated school's magazine in Flintshire; coming through the series of articles on expeditions, rambles, farm experience, Hallowe'en parties and Harvest Festivals is the involvement, excitement and discovery of the fulness of country life and contentment.⁽⁴⁾ In Lancaster there were eight Salford schools who organised

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/279 (Memo. 6 Feb. 1939)

(2) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3.7.1945

(3) B/Ed. 169 B (2)

(4) B/Ed. 356 B (2) WE

their own football league complete with committee and constitution; by the end of October they had played four matches each, fully reported in both local and home-town press.⁽¹⁾

The LCC, concerned at the numbers of evacuated children on part-time schooling, encouraged their staffs to strive for cultural compensation for their charges and there were impressive records of success in this field. 77 LCC departments in Reading were organised into an enormous and complex programme covering talks, lectures, films, music and dancing, and entailing close liaison with local schools, University and Museum. Music was nurtured in Ely (where an East End Jewish school performance of "The Pirates of Penzance" was produced by the Dean and Organist of the Cathedral), in Hastings (where LCC schools were heavily involved in local festivals), and in Oxford and Cambridge (thanks to College concerts and Carols at Kings). The list of drama activities is formidable, including a 60-school festival in Norfolk and Suffolk, numerous Nativities, "She Stoops to Conquer" in Cornwall, "Twelfth Night" in Wiltshire, and "Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure" in Somerset.⁽²⁾ One of the most comprehensively organised artistic programmes was in Cornwall, culminating in an annual festival of music, drama and art in Truro, with Handel's "Messiah" in the Cathedral as a typical highspot.⁽³⁾

There was no question of the Church needing to be enlisted in the campaign to halt any further deterioration in the morale and morals of young people. We have already seen examples of the many ministers who endeavoured to help rootless youngsters in evacuated areas. If anything, even more clergy were involved in reception areas, partly because so many of the host schools were voluntary, but mainly as an expression of Christian Charity. Many thousands of youngsters must have had their

(1) B/Ed. 204 B (2)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (Inspector's Report 17.4.1940)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

first contact with the Church when away from their homes. "Some of them show by their behaviour that they have seldom or never been in a place of worship before." So wrote their HMI about the evacuees in Rawenstall; yet Church and Sunday School became at once a regular part of their life.⁽¹⁾ Granted, there were situations which showed an excess of zeal, like the churchgoers of a predominantly Methodist town in Cheshire who would insist on taking their charges, irrespective of denomination, to chapel,⁽²⁾ but more typical was Welshpool, where English Methodists and Congregationalists willingly gave up their vestries to Liverpool RCs, even for Religious Instruction.⁽³⁾

Of all the influences in rehabilitating unfortunate evacuees, undoubtedly the most powerful, widespread and constant was the sheer humankindness given by those many thousands of families who took them in. This is impossible to validate statistically, but the volume of reports substantiating it cannot be ignored. For example, between 5 September and 31 October 1939 there were no fewer than twenty HMI reports on Merseyside schools in Flintshire, every one of which contained tributes from headteachers to their hosts, with mention of improved health, appearance and turn-out of their children, and most of which referred to the provision of clothes and footwear by the foster-parents.⁽⁴⁾

But comments on the visible signs of change among the evacuees did not come only from Flintshire; they came from all over the country. Of the Deptford children at Tunbridge Wells; "..... many of the girls are desperately poor, but a tremendous improvement is noted in the general appearance of the children, who have had good care given them by the

(1) B/Ed. 233 B (2) (H.M.I. Report 15.9.1939)

(2) B/Ed. 169 B (2) (H.M.I. Report 19.9.1939)

(3) B/Ed. 352 B (2) (H.M.I. Report 3.11.1939)

(4) B/Ed. 356 B (2) (H.M.I. Reports 5.9. to 31.10.1939)

foster-mothers, many having garments provided, too."⁽¹⁾ After two weeks in Clitheroe, the rapid change in appearance, health and clothing of the 736 Manchester children impressed their Inspector;⁽²⁾ an evacuated headmistress in Lancaster was reported as saying that "her children were never so well-clothed and fed as they have been since they came to Lancaster";⁽³⁾ of a Bradford headmaster in Keighley: "..... he hardly recognises his children; they are already so much brighter, cleaner and better dressed than at home."⁽⁴⁾ Liverpool teachers in Aberystwyth noted the "wonderful change in the appearance as well as in the manners of the children,"⁽⁵⁾ and it is worth noting that when the Inspector chatted with children on the promenade he found that none wanted to go home, neither did the Birmingham children in the Inspector's report from Monmouthshire.⁽⁶⁾

Together with these improvements in appearance went the kind of rise in morale which impressed the Inspector for Merseysiders in Ystuntuen and Ponterwyd. As well as being happy, hardy and rosy-cheeked they had become both jealous and proud of what they came to call "our farms," and he wrote, "I have rarely seen such a happier lot as those on the slopes of Plynlimon."⁽⁷⁾ On 12 October 1939 a Manchester headmaster, on seeing again those of his pupils evacuated to Macclesfield, was astonished at the change; one little slum girl, now well-dressed, was "walking like a queen"; some of his boys were happy to stay on because of the dinners they were given - one of them said, "I get a Sunday dinner every day"; his backward children were more alert, and showed "remarkable

(1) B/Ed. 249 B (2) (H.M.I. Report 28.9.1939)

(2) B/Ed. 166 B (2) (H.M.I. Reports 15 + 19.9.1939)

(3) B/Ed. 204 B (2) (H.M.I. Report 29.9.1939)

(4) B/Ed. 199 B (2)

(5) B/Ed. 352 B (2)

(6) B/Ed. 359 B (2)

(7) B/Ed. 352 B (2)

progress."⁽¹⁾ Another Inspector wrote that the Salford children, who had been "dirty and unkempt difficult to talk to and appeared to have no interest in their work" were now, in their reception areas, "clean and neat, and talk freely and naturally."⁽²⁾

One surviving tangible piece of evidence of the way in which a school community could be so happily absorbed into a country village can still be seen at the parish church in Pulborough, Sussex. It is a plaque donated by the Central Girls' School of Peckham to commemorate the three years they spent in Pulborough, and read, "In appreciation of the kindness shown by the people of Pulborough." But, unfortunately, there were many individual instances where such an integration was difficult, if not impossible.

(iv) Segregation

Before the outbreak of war, an urgency for dealing with problem children was already slowly developing; this was the Child Guidance Clinic system, and the problems of wartime children under difficulties and of "difficult" children in wartime cannot be adequately covered without some reference to the Clinics. The Child Guidance Services came to an abrupt halt in all evacuation areas with the war. Qualified staff were soon lost to expanding psychiatric services in HM Forces, many Clinic premises were requisitioned, voluntary workers and experts alike were dispersed. One trained psychiatric social worker was told she would be more useful at a telephone exchange.⁽³⁾ On the other hand, as the evacuation revealed and induced an unexpectedly high number of "behaviour problems" the need for a skilled Child Guidance Service was now greater than ever.

(1) B/Ed. 210 B (2)

(2) B/Ed. 233 B (2)

(3) Macadam The Social Servant in the Making (Allen + Unwin 1945) p. 28

Reception proved to be a greater problem than anticipated, although, in the Ministry of Health memorandum MW. 4. of 1 May 1939 and the Board's Circular 1469 of 19 May 1939, a procedure had been laid down whereby assistance was available from the Mental Health Emergency Committee. Sometimes it turned out to be the strain on normal children, sometimes previously unexpected maladjustments surfaced, as exemplified by enuresis, sleepwalking, pilfering, deliberately dirty and anti-social habits, but mostly it was the outward signs of emotional disturbance and unfortunate home backgrounds. So, by the end of September 1939 the problem could be clearly seen, falling into two main groups: the larger one was containable, consisting of children upset by separation and mal-billeting. This is where the effects were being felt of having such a demonstrably delicate and skilled piece of social work handled by miscellaneous volunteers and arbitrarily appointed officials. The smaller group were those whose intractable behavioural troubles had probably been known in their homes, and also those who, in some cases, had already been attending a Clinic in their home towns.

Volunteer workers were the first to act, for in September the Mental Health Emergency Committee circularised Directors of Education, Billeting Officers, and School Medical Officers, offering their help in sorting out billeting difficulties. Although their services were not widely used, valuable work was done, especially in organising and running hastily set up hostels. On 29 September a letter went to the LCC from the Director of the "Parents' Institute of Psychology for Normal Children" (under the auspices of the Parents' Association): "We are receiving great numbers of letters from mothers in the receiving areas, asking for advice and complaining of the difficulties they have in dealing with nervous and unmanageable children who have been billeted on them."⁽¹⁾ Their offer to set up a Clinic was not accepted by the LCC.

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/273

In evacuation areas, where the Clinics were closed on the outbreak of war, many of the children under treatment had stayed at home and many more, probably proportionately more than normal children, drifted back. Some work was still being done by hospital clinics, some by voluntary efforts.

September's experiences left their mark, and thenceforth a constant stream of memoranda, correspondence, interviews and meetings were recorded at the Board about children with special problems, especially the maladjusted ones who needed psychiatric care, and involving people like Sir Percy¹ Sharp (of the AEC), Drs. Bowlby and Miller (of the Child Guidance Department) and leading figures from the Ministry of Health. What emerges is that anti-social children were becoming a serious problem, and that some of the existing voluntary Homes for Maladjusted Children were in dire financial straits.⁽¹⁾ Action was pitifully slow in coming; by 28 October the Times Educational Supplement ran a strong leader on the persisting emotional disturbances which resulted from the evacuation and urged the involvement of educational psychologists.

By mid-December 1939 the subject of "difficult" evacuees had absorbed considerable time not only in the upper reaches of the Board, but in high-level conferences between the Board and the Ministry of Health. A study of their deliberations establishes three main factors; the role now being played by trained social workers, the reliance placed upon them by officialdom, and the complete acceptability of the Mental Health Emergency Committee as an agency for easing the problem and its workers as "respectable" officers. The experience of evacuation, the unsavoury publicity and the considerable administrative inconveniences which so often followed combined with the successes in the field of social workers and the repeated and increased reliance placed upon them by the Civil Service until, by the turn of the year, child guidance,

(1) Ibid.

educational psychologists, training schemes for child welfare workers were all seen as part of the educational service.

The provision of Clinics and Hostels had by now become inextricably linked, for it had been proved by experience that the ultimate sanction against excessively difficult children was segregation. The Treasury eventually yielded to pressure to cater for more hostel accommodation, details being given in Ministry of Health memorandum Ev. 8. of 15 February 1940. It was the hope and intention of the Ministry that children should not be kept in hostels longer than was necessary but re-united with their original parties, and that the hostels should not become "dumps" for problem children but centres for groups with special educational or social needs, with high standards of premises, staffing and organisation. With the second evacuations and the new military situation these aspirations were reiterated and the official attitude to hostels was embodied in the Board's Circular 150 8 and the Ministry's Memo. Ev. 9. of 13 May 1940.

However, hostels in some areas accumulated unwanted children of every type as a convenient answer to any billeting problems, and in October, after Dunkirk, the first of the blitzes and the resultant evacuations, it was still possible for the following to appear in a professional journal; "At present, owing to the mushroom growth of the majority of the hostels, no systematic attempt is made at classification. Practically all of them contain a mixed group of children - for example, for minor physical ailments, for delinquency, for enuresis, for mental defect, or for some deep-seated psychological disturbance needing prolonged treatment."⁽¹⁾ This was to some extent inevitable for four main reasons. Rural and small urban areas had neither experience nor skilled personnel. Legal difficulties prevented LEAs from taking on this task (although

(1) "Emergency Hostels for Difficult Children." (Mental Health Oct. 1940)

this could be circumvented by County Councils running hostels under their Civil Defence powers, under Ministry of Health memorandum Ev. 8.) Little use was made in some areas of skilled workers - either in billeting or hostel-running. In fact, some Regional Medical Officers of the Ministry of Health did not consider special staffs necessary - "unless difficult children 'ipso facto' have to be regarded as subjects for psychiatrists, there is no need even for resident Medical Health workers. At least one region has told us that the number of difficult children in Hostels who require psychological and psychiatric treatment is almost negligible."⁽¹⁾ Finally, selection was often purely arbitrary, a mere complaint by a householder to a Medical Officer or a Billeting Officer being enough.

For the next three years at the Board the story was one of continual consultation and representation from individuals and from organisations such as the Working Women's Organisations, Mental Health Emergency Committee, Central Association for Mental Welfare, London School of Economics, Caldecott Community, Child Guidance Council, Home Office and Ministry of Health.⁽²⁾ The following report, dated October 1941, shows that progress was encouraging, for by then, for example, the LCC had 68 hostels in one county alone, mainly for medical and social cases; the quality of these hostels can best be judged from the Chief Inspector's comments on a typical one: "The three teachers who staffed it had already dealt with nearly 600 children, and had never faltered to make the hostel a valuable adjunct to the solution of problems arising from the evacuation." He praised their "great devotion, limitless sacrifice of their private lives, and their patience and courage."⁽³⁾

Amid all the considerations of problem children the selection and

(1) Ministry of Health M 481/55/5 April 1941

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/274

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (L.C.C. Chief Insp. Report 17.10.1941)

ascertainment of young people for special treatment was a day-to-day chore for some-one. "In some areas," wrote an HMAI, "the Billeting Officer himself, or his local representative, has done this work himself, of re-adjusting the children The way in which children have been shifted from billet to billet is horrifying to anyone with a knowledge of children's needs for security in a stable and affectionate environment." Some of the examples given confirm how justified were the worries being increasingly felt by Local Authorities and Whitehall. One boy was sent to a hostel for "fits"; he was admitted and observed, but none materialised; eventually it was found that he had been having treatment for "feet." Another was put into an enuretic ward for "dirty habits"; it transpired that he had spit on the ground in the presence of the daughter of the local squire, and had been reported for "dirty habits."⁽¹⁾

Recognition of the need for proper selectivity by trained social workers was one of the features of a far-seeing memorandum (Ministry of Health R.O.A.55) issued on 29.9.41. It also stressed that hostels should only be used as a last resort, that qualified Child Guidance should be provided, staff being appointed by the Local Authorities or lent by the Mental Health Emergency Committee, and that accommodation and supervision should be adequate; the memorandum made a special point of giving great credit to the social workers for the foster-parents, selecting for hostels, and supervising hostel treatment.

At about this time the suggestion was being mooted that every Local Authority should set up a Child Guidance Clinic, and it was this which prompted a note of caution in a top-level internal Memo at the Board of Education. It pointed out that as these Clinics were a recent development of the School Medical Service, the Board was not justified in

(1) B/Ed. M 481/86 (H.M.I. Report July 1941)

encouraging this step without first contacting the Treasury because "this would be tantamount to starting a virtually new social service." But a draft letter of about the same date from the same source puts quite clearly the Board's appreciation of the Child Guidance Service's contribution: "Moreover, Evacuation has drawn much attention to the need of Child Guidance, and Local Authorities in Reception Areas are making provision to meet the needs of evacuated children."⁽¹⁾

In summer, 1943, the Provisional National Council for Mental Health was formed, combining the Central Association for Mental Welfare, the National Council for Mental Hygiene, and the Child Guidance Council. In his letter to the Times Educational Supplement (9 June 1943) Cyril Burt's words span nearly four years of war: "The special conditions of war in this country, and most of all perhaps the evacuation of school-children, have brought home to parents, teachers, social workers and administrative authorities generally, the pressing need for expert study and assistance on problems of child psychology."

By 1943 the Clinics had recovered their lost ground and were firmly re-instated as a direct result of the evacuation, having been used largely for evacuees or for children from evacuation areas. What was virtually the routine for establishing new clinics was given in the Monthly Bulletin of the Ministry of Health and the Emergency Public Health Laboratory Research (October 1943). (The figures for clinics to date were:

| | | | |
|--------------|----|----|-----|
| August 1939 | .. | .. | 43 |
| October 1939 | .. | .. | 18 |
| 1942 | .. | .. | 62 |
| 1943 | .. | .. | 68) |

In July 1943 the number of hostels in which psychiatric treatment was available totalled 225, catering for 3,400 children.⁽²⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/274

(2) Min. of Ed. M481/172 (14.2.1945)

Another type of hostel for which a need emerged, but on educational rather than emotional grounds, was for children in reception areas who did not have conditions suitable for doing their homework. The Board's Circular 1508 of May 1940 empowered local authorities to provide boarding premises, usually large houses. There were eventually 92 of these, but the numbers actually in use dwindled as they became redundant because of the drift back, so that by the end of 1943 66 were still operating, (44 for boys, 20 for girls, and 2 mixed) catering for an average of 40 pupils each.⁽¹⁾

(v) Beyond the "3-R's."

As the war months passed by it was becoming clear to those who studied social deprivation that there was a growing consciousness that the responsibility of the school should go beyond the "3-Rs". A good illustration of this was in the attitudes to the provision of footwear, a topic which came to the public's attention with the evacuation, but which had already been occupying the official mind for some time. In 1937 the LEAs pointed out to the Board the inconsistency of the existing situation whereby they were empowered to provide meals for the needy, and yet Circular 1450, which delegated the supply of footwear through Public Assistance Committees and Unemployment Assistance Boards, had failed, some PACs being niggardly and the practices of UABs severely criticized. The LEAs maintained that School Attendance Officers were best equipped to decide need, that voluntary funds were often unavailable when needed, that children should not be in direct contact with the PACs, that LEA administration was quicker, and that the Scottish system was working well, where Education Authorities had the necessary powers. To this, the President of the Board, Lord Stanhope, replied that legislation, which could not possibly be passed before the winter, would be

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 138/9

required, and in any case, there was a fundamental difference between food, which was dispensed and consumed on the school premises, and footwear; if footwear, why not clothing? or even housing? The Scottish success, he claimed, was debatable, and he also maintained that it was "undesirable to diminish more than was necessary the sense of responsibility among parents for the welfare of their own children."

In May 1938, when Irene Ward, MP, proposed a Private Members Bill and asked for the Board's support using the meals-milk analogy, the Board opposed the Bill on three grounds; firstly because it was established policy; secondly, because the meals-milk analogy was unsound as footwear and clothing would not be used and kept only at school, but would be usable after the school-leaving age; thirdly, since footwear was clearly a form of poor relief it was more appropriately distributed through the PAC and UAB than by the LEAs and Board. He also drew attention to the ill-fated attempts of similar Bills in 1928 and 1930.

During the course of 1938 an LEA inquiry reached a three-fold conclusion: the existing liaison between LEAs and the PACs and UABs was poor; it was only the voluntary agencies that were preventing a serious situation; and footwear of necessitous children was the concern of the LEAs. For the rest of 1938 and into 1939 questions in the House were repeatedly cropping up, like the one by Mr. Tomlinson, complaining that the Lancashire UAB was refusing 70% of applications for footwear.

With the evacuation and the inadequacies it revealed, the concern that LEAs had always felt for their own children was stirred even more, and Circular 1907 of November 1939 only served to build up resentment because it placed the weight of responsibility squarely on the parents, then secondly on the UABs and PACs. In January 1940, Grimsby LEA passed a resolution that "..... in view of the insuperable difficulties experienced in meeting the needs of evacuated children" provision of footwear should be made through the evacuation scheme and subject to

a 100% Government grant. Mansfield LEA resolved in March 1940 that "in view of the long-standing necessity brought particularly to light by the Evacuation Schemes for steps to be taken to provide clothing and footwear LEAs should be empowered to supply clothing and footwear to such children." These were only two of a continual stream of resolutions, nearly all of which started with the same preamble: ".....that in view of the insuperable difficulties experienced in meeting the needs of evacuated children as regards clothing and footwear", and all of them asked for the 100% grant. These resolutions built up from November 1939 through to March 1940 with an interesting change of emphasis coming in about late February with "HM Government be urged to make provision to empower LEAs to supply clothing and footwear to such children." As a piece of lobbying by correspondence the campaign was a most massive and impressive exercise, with the pressure increasing on the Board from LEAs and MPs, and with Mr. Ramsbotham, the President, presenting a front for a Board establishment which was striving to maintain the existing policy of parental responsibility, yet at the same time consulting with the Treasury on feasibility, purchase tax, coupons, etc. Almost the last entry in this particular story is the account of an interview between the last President of the Board, R. A. Butler, and the AEC spokesman, Sir Percival Sharp. In the course of their discussion a possible compromise emerged whereby the Board, through LEAs, could replace the UAB as the distribution agency, but it was the relevant section of Butler's impending legislation which was the ultimate reason for *laissez faire*.⁽¹⁾

One thing stands out clearly from these considerations, that the public, Inspectorate, and officialdom acknowledged from early days in the war that an unexpectedly large number of children were underprivileged and capable of anti-social behaviour; an LCC wartime report

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/212

stated, "..... the experience of evacuation has - in advance of the Beveridge Report - brought home to social workers, and indeed to the nation at large, how real and formidable are the giants of Want, Ignorance and Squalor, and how sadly they are hindering, in town and country alike, the well-being of the rising generation."⁽¹⁾ As a direct result of the evacuation it became apparent that many "difficult" children had not been hitherto considered so because they had only been nuisances to their teachers, their private lives not having come under the public eye until they were billeted elsewhere than home or existed for long spells with not even the civilising influence of school. Others, proving unexpectedly sensitive to new circumstances and environment, revealed potentially serious degrees of insecurity or emotional anxieties. In fact, the whole conception of what constituted "maladjustment" was widened. Here, just as in the provision of footwear and meals, could be seen the extension of the education service into social welfare.

(1) Story of Evacuation (L.C.C. 1943)

CHAPTER 7

THE HEALTH OF THE SCHOOLCHILD

(i) The School Medical Service

The state of the school medical service at the time of the evacuation is a matter of some interest, concerned as it was with that section of the community whose ~~personal condition and welfare~~ ^{education was} brought within the jurisdiction of the central government some seventy years previously with the 1870 Act. To appreciate the revelations of the evacuation about the nation's children in 1939 it is necessary to trace briefly how and why the service developed. Considering the plight of the poor in the nineteenth century, the examples of private philanthropy and pressure from within parliament, the initial involvement of the medical profession with the state educational service was disappointingly slow. The first school medical officer (for London) was appointed in 1890, but it took the irrefutable evidence of the ill-health and malnutrition of recruits for the Boer War to inject some urgency into the thinking of the establishment. Once the Medical Department was set up at the Board of Education in 1907 and inspections were instituted, a sorry picture emerged of defective sight, chronic ear troubles, decayed teeth, diseased tonsils, malnutrition and infestations. In 1909 the Chief Medical Officer reported that only 60% of country girls and 50% of town girls could be considered to have clean heads. Over the next thirty years the service gradually expanded, the great milestone being the 1921 Act which went beyond the LEA empowerment of the 1907 Act, and made medical inspection of elementary and secondary school children ^{in maintained schools} obligatory. An indication of the way the service had grown from 1910 to 1938 is shown by the increase in school medical officers from 995 to 1,518, in school nurses from 436 to 3,313, and in clinics from 30 to 2,318. In 1938 there were 1,677,008 routine inspections, 1,563,917 special

inspections, 2,182,157 repeat inspections and over 2,000,000 treatments given. In the early days of the service as many as 700 to 970 in every 1,000 children examined in a poor quarter were dirty to a varying degree, but in 1938 only 445,000 out of 14,500,000 (3%) were, officially, classed as such.

Nevertheless, in pre-war days, despite its huge achievements, the service was criticized on four main fronts: that it needed extending to the under-fives and over-fourteens; that there were deficiencies in standards of dental and orthopaedic treatment; that it was laggardly in its child guidance provision, and that its statistics, especially on malnutrition and infestation, were of doubtful validity. The Board of Education showed its awareness of this last criticism in 1936 when it complained to the Liverpool authority about its arrangements for ascertaining verminous children.

Before the war the general assumption was that, if war did break out, the school medical service would be pre-occupied with the casualty service and absorbed into Civil Defence, and that speed in achieving this amalgamation would be essential. This made hollow the contemporaneous re-assurances that "schoolchildren are subject to regular medical inspections, that there is no greater danger of dirt or infection from these children than from any other representative group in the country, and that the best possible arrangements will be made for their medical supervision."⁽¹⁾

As it turned out, medical treatment in reception areas varied from the skimped, rushed and completely ignored, to what happened at Horsham, where the local MO established an emergency isolation hospital, and at Haywards Heath, where every distribution centre had its own MO and where two emergency evacuation hostels were improvised in 24 hours for

(1) Board of Education Circular 1469, May 1939

children found unfit for billeting.⁽¹⁾ Within a week of the evacuation the euphoric atmosphere engendered by the peaceful success of the operation evaporated with mounting reports of infestation, incontinence and indiscipline. Lest the schools medical service should be discredited, it must be mentioned that the evacuation came at the end of the holidays, the incidence of diseases like pediculosis (the domestic louse) was masked by the varying standards of inspection, and reception areas had been misled about the need for preparation. Furthermore, with their medical and dental services largely transferred to the Hospital Emergency Service and Civil Defence,⁽²⁾ LEAs were expected to take the evacuation in their stride. To Dent it was miraculous that there was not wholesale cessation of the services,⁽³⁾ but, fortunately, already on 12 September 1939 the Ministry of Health was urging, for reception areas, "the resumption of school life with its arrangements for medical inspections."⁽⁴⁾

Disappointingly few evacuating authorities sent medical staff with their children to reception areas, so that there were many situations like that at Caernarvon, which had to receive 7,000 Merseyside evacuees with not a single qualified member of the home-town service to assist. Despite the drift back home, the strain on local doctors and nurses became so intolerable that by the end of September Manchester, for example, sent reinforcements to the reception areas. Birmingham did the same at the beginning of October. Early in the same month the Ministry of Health was in a position to issue formal instructions for inspections and treatments to be resumed in reception areas.⁽⁵⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 33

(2) Leff The School Health Service (Lewis 1939) p. 93

(3) Dent H. C. Education in Transition (Routledge 1944) p. 70

(4) Israel G. Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 101

(5) M. o. Health Circular 1582, 2 October 1939

Meanwhile, in the evacuation areas, where so many children were on the loose and so many medical staff were serving elsewhere, (in Liverpool, for example, the entire school medical service was seconded to Civil Defence),⁽¹⁾ it was only very gradually that the situation was returning to anything resembling normality. The Board of Education had already been alerted to these problems, as shown by Circular 1479 of 29 September 1939 which contained suggestions as to how LEAs could cope; it concluded: "Schools and school clinics may therefore be opened for the purpose of providing Medical Inspection and treatment for small groups of children." Circular 1489 of 23 November 1939 reflected the worsening situation with a switch of emphasis from suggesting to urging, and by the time the next circular, The School Health Services in Wartime, came out on 14 December 1939, reference was being made to "the complete or partial discontinuance of the School Health Service during the past four months," and it was hoped that thirty years' work would not lapse with the war. Nevertheless, at East Ham in February 1940 there were still no arrangements for de-lousing infested children, the school medical staff was still missing, and the clinics were still occupied by Civil Defence. In Derby, too, 2,000 children beyond the reach of their teachers were being denied routine medical inspections.⁽²⁾ The big problem, until the re-introduction of compulsory attendance, was how to make any contact with the children, and out of the 1,150,000 in evacuation zones on 1 February 1940, 400,000 had little or no health supervision.⁽³⁾

During the early months of 1940 the lessons learnt from the first evacuation were being implemented under "Plan 4";⁽⁴⁾ the evacuation authorities were made responsible for the inspection of their evacuees

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/252

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 32 (B/Ed'n. Medical Inspector's Report, 22 February 1942)

(3) Israel op.cit. p. 97

(4) M. o. Health Circular 1965 and 1979, and Memo. Ev. 8 of 15 February 1940

and exclusions where necessary. The arrangements ready in London were sound, based on a three-fold classification system ("fit", "conditionally fit," and "totally unfit"), but staffing was still the greatest drawback, only 23 full-time officials being available to man the 400 assembly points which needed 500 doctors and 500 nurses.⁽¹⁾ As spring, 1940, drew on and the possibility of a second evacuation remained, many children were still not at school, nor registered for movement, and doubts were growing about the estimate of 5% as needing hostel accommodation in reception areas. At the end of April Liverpool's estimate of its registered evacuees as unbilleteable was 15%, which took no account of those who had not thought of registering. And never far from the minds of those in authority was the quandary posed by exclusion: what if innocent children were killed because they happened to come from dirty homes which unfitted them for moving into clean ones? Largest of the problem areas was, of course, London, where in late spring only 32,000 were registered, for compulsory education was not yet a reality; a depleted nursing staff - 259 remaining out of 442 - was expected to inspect children at the rate of 400 per hour; and the insoluble scourge of re-infestation in dirty homes so often made a mockery of whatever inspection and treatment was given. That is why, in order to compensate for these shortcomings at the evacuation end, the Ministry of Health issued orders, on 16 May and 21 May 1940, that all children should be examined on arrival, and a three-category label system be followed, suitable for ordinary billeting, or for hostels, or for needing special consideration.

When the second evacuation developed from the east and south-east anti-invasion coasts in May 1940, from the original evacuation areas again in June and July, from London under bombing after September, and from the provincial blitzed centres later, the main problems were the locating, inspecting and treating of non-registered children in evacuation areas, while still giving priority to Civil Defence. The surprising

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 33

thing is that, in spite of all their problems, the school medical staffs were gradually restoring a kind of normality in evacuation areas. A major exception was, however, Liverpool; there, although the 11,000 children registered for evacuation were being regularly checked, uncleanness persisted, 70 schools (with their ancillary medical services) were still closed, and some parents were uncooperative - even to the extent of keeping their children away from school to avoid inspection. Both the Board and the Ministry were so awake to the possibility of a repetition of the September 1939 troubles that they came to a special agreement to have full-time compulsory education at those Liverpool schools with shelter provision and short sessions at schools without shelters so that the maximum number of children could be inspected.⁽¹⁾

It can now be seen how praiseworthy were the exertions of the London school medical service up to mid-summer 1940 for it had inspection control of all the 138,000 registered children, a warning procedure was ready, labels prepared, and special accommodation waiting. By 31 December 1940, in the face of huge difficulties of climactic air raids, staff shortages, school closures and to-ing-and-fro-ing of evacuees, routine inspections were re-introduced. Confirmation of victory in this particular battle was to come with the last evacuation of the war in 1944 when an LCC official reported, "In general, children, and indeed mothers, turning up at the stations seem to be better clad and cleaner than they were in the historic evacuation of 1939."⁽²⁾ This was borne out at Sheffield where, out of 3,412 accompanied and 834 unaccompanied children, only 26 heads were found with lice and 182 with nits.⁽³⁾

Such, in outline, were the wartime fortunes of the school medical service, and it is noteworthy that in the middle of 1941 the Board of

(1) B/Ed. M 407/68 (9) and E 91 A/22

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

(3) B/Ed. M 25 D/394, 11 July 1944

Education was contemplating calling a series of consultative meetings of School Medical Officers at its temporary base in Bournemouth in order to consider the situation and ways of consolidating and improving the service. In the formal application to the Treasury for sanction to convene those meetings the Board saw fit to make the acknowledgement that "the need for such consultation has been enhanced by the effects of the evacuation and war conditions generally."⁽¹⁾

Criticisms of the school medical services fell into two general categories. Firstly were those which attributed to them a share in responsibility for the standards of cleanliness and hygiene among the working class, now revealed to be so unexpectedly low; the Liverpool Survey felt that "much could be done to correct this attitude through the strengthening of the school medical service."⁽²⁾ Secondly, the whole system of producing statistics and estimates had already come under fire before the war and the unexpected degree of infestation and malnutrition drew still more attention to official inconsistencies. The new classification of nutrition in 1935 replaced the ambiguous "malnutrition" by a more clinical assessment scale. Nevertheless, even this improvement was held by many to be too subjective, with some quite unacceptable variations.⁽³⁾ Disparities between the figures of evacuation and reception areas were so great that the Board felt compelled to question the realism of 72 LEAs in reporting no cases of undernourishment, and described the Liverpool returns as showing "an optimism which is frankly incredible."⁽⁴⁾

One quite definite result from all this was a greatly increased appreciation of the school as an agency for observing, supervising and

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/192

(2) Liverpool University Our Wartime Guests (1940) p. 38

(3) Leff op.cit. p. 87

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 131

improving the physical and social well-being of its children. Without their regular attendance all this would come to nothing; this was the theme of a Spectator article which represented a considerable body of opinion at that time, and which concluded "In September, evacuation underlined the invaluable role of the School Medical Service."⁽¹⁾ In the same year Gertrude Israel also emphasised the revelatory nature of those early days of the war when she claimed that "hardly any of the defects and diseases within the scope of the school medical service have been caused by the evacuation."⁽²⁾ Adequate and reliable data on what was disclosed during and after those three days in September is simply not available, mainly because the period in question was so short before the drift took effect and the staffing dislocations prevented the collecting of information. Only much later, when some degree of stability was reached, was it possible to attempt some kind of scientific study, like the Susan Isaacs survey in 1941 of nervous disorders or the Ministry of Health Anthropometrical Investigations into camp schools (referred to below).⁽³⁾

(ii) "Dirty, diseased or ill-mannered children."

The Board of Education had always been aware of the interdependence between a child's domestic background and the school health services. This was spelt out by the Chief Medical Officer in his 1932 Report: "The School Medical Service is a receiver of damaged goods and spends most of its times and energies in patching them up. What is now required is an intensification of social effort directed to the care of the infant in arms and the toddler before school age." Seven years later it was clear that there were still plenty of damaged goods which needed patching up, particularly from great centres of population. One study

(1) Spectator 27 January 1940

(2) Israel op.cit. p. 99

(3) Isaacs (passim.)

of the main problems between evacuees and hosts produced the following distribution.⁽¹⁾

| | |
|--|-----|
| Dirty, diseased or ill-mannered children | 27% |
| Strain of having strangers in house | 20% |
| Class incompatibility | 17% |
| Money difficulties | 15% |
| Domestic difficulties | 12% |
| Leisure, educational, religious difficulties | 9% |

The HMI report on 2,000 evacuated Manchester children complained, "Too many of the children have lice and some are incontinent."⁽²⁾ In writing about the Birmingham children the School Medical Officer for Monmouthshire reported that "a large proportion of the evacuated children were in good physical condition, but a considerable number were not clean and ill-clothed; many of them were verminous and not as well nourished as the average for Monmouthshire."⁽³⁾ Even worse was the condition of Liverpool children; "Evacuees came from the toughest of a tough city, and their notions of hygiene were primitive. They came from Liverpool." So wrote an observer in West Kirkby, Cheshire.⁽⁴⁾ From Cardiganshire, which received 2,300 Liverpool children, came word: "Many Aberystwyth parents are reluctant to use the same schools Anyone witnessing the arrival of the mothers of these children and their subsequent behaviour would sympathise with the attitude of the Aberystwyth parents From all accounts they are a dirty, shiftless lot." Some Aberystwyth folk even burnt the clothes of their foster children and bought new ones for them.⁽⁵⁾ So bad was the condition of some of the Liverpool evacuees in Anglesey that "the enthusiasm and sympathy of the Anglesey people turned into bitter resentment against the Liverpool Authority," and the evacuees were excluded from local schools until passed by the school

(1) Mass Observation - War Begins at Home (Chatto + Windus 1940) p. 305

(2) B/Ed. 169 B (2) Congleton (Report of 9 September 1939)

(3) B/Ed. 359 B (2) WE Monmouthshire (H.M.I. Report 10.9.39)

(4) Mass Observation op.cit. p. 306

(5) B/Ed. 352 B (2) WE Cardiganshire

medical officer.⁽¹⁾ From all over the country came the constant refrain about verminous London mothers,⁽²⁾ and during the course of the survey of the "Branch Street" London children still at home it was found that of 400 over-3's most were, in 1941-42, classed as Grade 3 (unsatisfactory) on the nutritional scale; this was attributed not to poverty but to the failure of the mothers to feed their children regularly, properly, and sitting down to the table.⁽³⁾ When the Bradford children left home it was even reported that, "In some schools the low standard of cleanliness in many of the children first evacuated gave a shock to their teachers."⁽⁴⁾ When Mr. Buchanan, MP for Gorbals, thundered his resentment at accusations of infested Glasgow children as a "villainous and slanderous statement,"⁽⁵⁾ there can be no denying his fierce local and national loyalty, but one wonders if, like many others, he had not been placing overmuch reliance on the Ministry's figures and estimates.

(iii) Infestation, Scabies and Enuresis

As far as the general public was concerned the effects of bad domestic conditions were manifested in the vermin that the dirty little bodies carried from filthy slum homes out into rural Britain. This, at least, was the overall picture presented by the press and passed around by word of mouth, and this aspect of the evacuation, unfortunately, focused attention on the schools and attracted condemnation of the school medical service.

Since many of these accounts were embellished and sensationalised - especially where some excuse was wanted to avoid taking in evacuees - it is necessary to deal in factual and reliable reports, as opposed to the

(1) B/Ed. 350 B (2) WE Anglesey

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/189

(3) Paneth op.cit. pp. 36-37

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13 (H.M.I. Report 12.12.40)

(5) Hansard w/e 15 September 1939 *Commons*, Vol. 351 Col. 817.

anthology of "atrocity stories" method,⁽¹⁾ of what actually happened and how responsible people re-acted. For example, 18 girls evacuated to Llanelly had to be put in a hostel for cleansing,⁽²⁾ while at Windsor the local HMI saw in operation a cleansing station set up in an old work-house for verminous Stepney children.⁽³⁾ The Hereford Rural Council notified the Birmingham authority that "no schoolchildren can be received into the district without a certificate from the Birmingham MOH that the child is clean, free from disease or vermin, and examined not more than two days before arrival."⁽⁴⁾ Of 30 boys who arrived in the Norfolk village of Heachem, 13 were found to have scabies and 2 impetigo at the medical inspection a week later.⁽⁵⁾

The recipients of Liverpool children had special cause to be resentful, for they had been assured that the children would arrive "clean, under medical supervision, and free from infectious diseases."⁽⁶⁾ On 7 September 1939 the Director of Education for Anglesey wrote direct to the Secretary of the Welsh Department about the 3,000 to 4,000 Liverpoolian evacuees he had received: "Very many of these are insufficiently clad and/or verminous, and quite a few are suffering from impetigo or scabies, or infectious running of the ears," He asked if his Authority could incur expenditure on clothing, medical supplies, treatment, etc. for the visitors, "many of whom are in a deplorable state of negligence, and some of whom are already housed in the Authority's Public Assistance Institution." He also circularised all his Headteachers on the procedure for inspection and cleansing.⁽⁷⁾ Simultaneously, the HMI for Bridgⁿeworth

(1) Mass Observation op.cit. pp. 306 et seq.

(2) B/Ed. 353 B (2) WE Caernarvonshire (H.M.I. Report 11 September 1939)

(3) B/Ed. 224 B (2) New Windsor

(4) Birmingham Post 21 September 1939

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(6) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

(7) B/Ed. 350 B (2) WE

was expressing surprise and disgust at the condition of the Liverpool children, pointing out that countryfolk had no idea of slum life with its vermin-ridden children, expressing grave fear that impetigo might spread, and complaining about spoilt beds, filthy clothes that had to be destroyed, and the wilful damage committed by the children.⁽¹⁾

Criticisms like these and especially those in parliamentary debate provoked a joint statement of defence by the Liverpool Director of Education and Medical Officer of Health on 17 September. This was a six-point case: the recent experience of Warsaw made speed of dispersal the priority; the lateness of the government's instruction at the end of August did not give enough time for effective medical inspection; the immediate mobilisation of medical staff for Civil Defence; the Ministry of Health Circular of May 1939 which put the responsibility firmly on the reception area at the de-training point; the sheer force of numbers which made inevitable the billeting of their town children in rural areas; lastly, transport authorities had always refused to guarantee party unity and, on the day, groups were separated. The conclusion reached by these two Liverpool chiefs was that the evacuation, on the whole, was "a considerable success."⁽²⁾

As for those children who remained at home, they "rapidly reverted to verminous and dirty conditions" with the school medical service either non-existent or helpless to cope.⁽³⁾ By 21 November the seriousness of the situation merited top-level ministerial consultation between Education and Health on how to clean up children in evacuation centres, the Health Minister being particularly concerned at those in London, where the only education was for over-11s - and that for half-time. Among the measures considered was the use of First Aid Posts and

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 12 (H.M.I. Report September 1939)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (H.M.I. Report 23.10.39)

Decontamination Centres for cleansing stations, and the President of the Board was even willing to accept the cutting of the half-time schooling to include real "physical education," with milk, medical inspections, cleanliness checks and physical activities.⁽¹⁾ Three weeks later, Circular 1490 from the Board referred to past experiences of dirty evacuees in reception areas, and disclosed that the Ministry of Home Security would welcome the use of ARP cleansing stations for cleansing school-children. Another approach to the reception area problems was put forward to the President of the Board of Education by an influential ^{W.E.A.} deputation in January 1940; not only did it point out that medical facilities were generally inferior in reception areas, with clinics sometimes miles away, but delegates claimed that the scabies and impetigo outbreaks of October-November 1939 were due to the poor hygiene facilities in overcrowded village schools, and it was there that measures could be taken to avoid a repetition of the situation in September 1939.⁽²⁾

But it was still in the evacuation cities that the constant source of infestation and re-infestation had to be faced. After over seven months of war, this battle was far from over. Nowhere was this more evident than in Liverpool, for on 18 April 1940, a conference was held there of the LEA, the School Medical Officers, and representatives from the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health, the brief for the meeting being to anticipate the next evacuation. When the representative of the Board of Education reported a week later, he revealed that only 5,000 children had been registered, and that, although these should be clean (15% would present difficulty, half from enuresis, half from behaviour), for the great majority who were not registered, if another mass evacuation were necessary, "there can be no guarantee that they will show any better state as regards cleanliness than that found during the evacuation of last September."⁽³⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/207

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/10

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 50/206

When the post-Dunkirk evacuations were afoot, and with 11,000 now registered for movement, Liverpool's Senior Medical Officer confessed to being "pessimistic," and apparently with good cause, for, with some 70 schools still closed in the poor quarters and no compulsory education, he was finding parents "very uncooperative," even to the extent of keeping registered children away from school indefinitely if they were served with cleanliness notices.⁽¹⁾ Two schools due for evacuation to North Wales were 18% verminous and one school, closed since before the 1939 summer holidays, had over 30% of its children infected.⁽²⁾ Although some other areas did improve, as far as the poorer districts were concerned this aspect of a depressing social problem persisted with, for example, a rise in the pediculosis incidence from 20% to 29% over 1940, and this despite employing 20 extra nurses.

Various explanations were put forward for this trend: working mothers and wartime strains, air raids, bed-sharing, shelter life, and not undressing. But, and this appears to be symptomatic of Liverpool's pre-war problems, the recurrent complaint from the authorities about the working-class children who were not evacuated was that, even between regular monthly inspections, there still existed "the continual reinfection in the home."⁽³⁾

Other provincial centres were facing up to the same problem, and typical of the revised attitudes and requirements of local authorities were those of Southampton in May 1940; cleanliness inspections started on 13 May of children registered for evacuation; 14,000 were dealt with in the first week, and the 222 who had to be treated at clinics as a result were also ordered to have monthly re-inspections; exclusion was laid down as the penalty for nit cases and the Committee added, "It is

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/206

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

(3) B/Ed. M 444/17 (Report of 15.4.1941)

to be hoped these severe measures will improve the general cleanliness of registered children."⁽¹⁾ In what became possibly the worst-hit residential area in the country, Bootle, conditions were ghastly; only 4,000 out of 17,000 houses were undamaged, out of 9,000 children only 2,000 remained and 24% of these were verminous; it was a most creditable decision of the authority to keep a self-imposed schedule of having each school visited by its medical staff eight times a year.⁽²⁾

For a period notable for much graphic exaggeration and in the absence of any really comprehensive survey, it is interesting to note, for example, the similarity of these estimates of London evacuee infestation; 8% to 35%, according to the Borough, by Titmuss;⁽³⁾ 4% to 45% by the Federation of Women's Institutes;⁽⁴⁾ and 4% to 45% by Leff.⁽⁵⁾ The official total of unclean heads received in Wrexham was 46 out of 405 boys and 138 out of 385 girls.⁽⁶⁾ The average infestation of Merseysiders in Wales, Cheshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire was 22% to 50% and the total average for Scotland 30%.⁽⁷⁾ A letter to The Spectator from a medical officer gave 33% to his area.⁽⁸⁾

The commonest form of infection was pediculosis. It had not been generally appreciated, although published year after year in official records, that about 10% of elementary schoolchildren were "found unclean". Nor was it realised that the unevenness of distribution was to become so significant with the evacuation, for in every large city certain areas,

(1) Southampton Education Committee Minutes, 1 July 1940

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 32 (S.M.S. Report 18 July 1940)

(3) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 125-6

(4) Ibid.

(5) Leff op.cit. p. 93

(6) Times Educational Supplement 14 October 1939

(7) Titmuss op.cit. pp 125-6

(8) Spectator 13 October 1939

the oldest, poorest and most overcrowded, usually had the highest incidence, and these were the ones which were almost invariably included in the evacuated zones. That is why one observer was able to comment in 1940: "County Medical Officers have been expressing themselves as surprised at the number of cases of uncleanness they were called upon to handle over the first few weeks; and it is a fact that the recent annual reports of the evacuation areas would have led us to expect a far smaller percentage of such cases."⁽¹⁾ In an extreme specific example of the concentration of infested children in urban areas, 103 cases among 4,000 evacuated children in the same reception town were traced back to the same slum block.⁽²⁾ From elsewhere came supporting evidence; 32.49% of LCC children in West Suffolk and 31% of Liverpool children in Shrewsbury were infected; incidence in the metropolitan boroughs ranged from 4% to 45%;⁽³⁾ Bexhill, which had a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ % pre-war proportion, received 650 evacuees of whom 156 (23%) were lousy. The London evacuees in East Suffolk were 23% infected and those evacuated to Shropshire showed 22.6%.⁽⁴⁾ A common complaint from the authorities was that the main, and almost insuperable, obstacle to eliminating the lice problem centred on the homes of the poor. Although the powers existed to do something about this, procedure was cumbersome, magistrates often uncooperative, and parents resentful. From the Medical Officer of East Suffolk came one of the most scathing and bitter attacks, in which he blamed parents from the lowest social class: they were sometimes feeble-minded, the mothers overburdened, unable to cope and ineducable; adults and toddlers remained verminous, a constant source of re-infestation for schoolchildren; it was useless to prosecute and, he claimed, compulsory cleansing was essential.⁽⁵⁾ Other factors which, it was claimed, contributed to the

(1) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 125-6

(2) Ritchie Calder op.cit. p. 148

(3) Annual Report of C.M.O. to B/Ed. 1939

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 50/189

(5) B/Ed. M444/60, 17 June 1940

discrepancy between official expectation and actual incidence were the intervention of the school holidays - thus extending the period of possible infection, the actual evacuation journey itself - during which so many children were in such close contact, and, of course, the suspect nature of past statistics on which official prognostications were based. As a final horrifying impression of those days, one need only visualise the Medical Officer of Wigtown buying up all the hair-clippers in the town and then conducting a mass, compulsory head-shaving of his Glasgow evacuees.⁽¹⁾

The attitude of one authority calls for special consideration, the "exclusion and prosecution" policy of Hampshire County. Hampshire's claims to be probably the cleanest county derived from the simple assumption that one nit constituted a "verminous condition" which merited automatic exclusion and which was immediately used as grounds for prosecution for non-attendance. The roots of this policy went as far back as 1909 when the authority's Medical Officer, finding himself faced with 20% infestation, contested the decision of the local Bench in favour of the parents of an excluded child; eventually, on 17 May 1912, the King's Bench remitted the case back for conviction, and henceforth the policy was rigidly enforced. The sequel came some 27 years later when the coastal boroughs of Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth, autonomous educational areas, were evacuated into the area of Hampshire County Education Committee, and a "howl of rage" at the condition of the evacuees went up from those same Hampshire mothers who had been the children cleansed when the exclusion policy started. At the end of March 1941 the Hampshire Medical Officer was still sticking to his guns, to the extent of excluding 50% of incoming transfers as verminous.⁽²⁾

The picture as far as scabies was concerned was rather different, for this disease, although it became a wartime problem, had been acknow-

(1) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 125-6

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/189

ledged as on the increase before the war. In 1938 it had doubled in Dudley, Yorkshire, risen by 90% in Heston and Isleworth, Middlesex, and by 50% in Coventry, and re-infestation of schoolchildren was already a problem.⁽¹⁾ No comparable statistics to pediculosis are available so we do not know the full extent of its prevalence as revealed by the evacuation, except that "on the whole, the incidence reported from reception areas was less than had been anticipated."⁽²⁾ There were, however, areas like Westmoreland, which complained about the extent of scabies among the children from Newcastle and South Shields, the majority of whose fathers were unskilled labourers,⁽³⁾ and Brighton, where public baths and a nursery school were taken over for cleaning scabies cases.⁽⁴⁾ But it would seem that the greater threat was to those children who remained in, or returned to, those evacuation areas with the highest concentration of poor folk in old dwellings. This could well apply to some reception area towns, for it was Leicester, one of these latter, which was labelled as "typical of the whole country" with these scabies figures: 950 cases in 1918, practically none in 1926, 400 in 1938, 3,000 in 1942, and 1,500 in 1945. Suggested contributory causes to these figures included shelter life, overcrowding, women on war work, even shortages in soap, brushes, towels and laundries. The near-epidemic proportions in some places produced the Scabies Order of November 1941 (under the Defence of the Realms Act), and the Minister of Health, when he made the Order, admitted that he was "satisfied that scabies (was) so prevalent as to prejudice the efficient prosecution of the war."⁽⁵⁾ An interesting reversal of transfer was found at Blackpool where some Manchester evacuees were put

(1) "The Health of the School Child" Report of C.M.O. to the B/Ed'n. 1938

(2) Glover p. 13 Evacuation, some epidemiological observations (Royal Soc. of Medicine 1940) p. 13

(3) Westmoreland Survey of Evacuation in Westmoreland (W.C.C. 1943) p. 24

(4) Annual Report for 1939 of C.M.O. to B/Ed'n.

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 33

into beds which had the unchanged sheets as used the previous week by the last of the peacetime industrial holidaymakers; the evacuees contracted scabies, drifted back home, and caused a marked increase in the incidence of the disease in Manchester.⁽¹⁾ This reversed infestation was by no means confined to Blackpool, and when the story of the LCC evacuation came to be written it referred to many complaints about dirty and verminous houses in reception areas.⁽²⁾

No matter what form the infestation took nor where it was disclosed, the inescapable and over-riding impression is of the inconsistency between the degree of what was expected and of how much actually materialised. The most significant research in this field was conducted by Mellanby. Like others, he was well aware of the official pre-war figures, such as those given to critics of the London evacuation by the LCCs Senior Medical Officer, that in 1938 96.5% of girls had clean heads and only 86 out of 128,000 had bodily infestation.⁽³⁾ But he also knew that discrepancies long existed between figures for routine inspections and those for nurses' inspections, for example, in Farnworth in 1931 routine inspections showed 4.7% of all children as having dirty heads, while nurses' inspections revealed 14%, with the comparative figures for girls being 9.2% and 22.5%.⁽⁴⁾ One obvious explanation given for this was that some parents of dirty children would keep them at home on the day of a notified inspection. Mellanby's interest was stirred in November 1939 when he analysed the findings of admission registers at Sheffield Hospital and put them beside the school medical service's figures for 1938, with these results:

(1) Annual Report for 1939 of C.M.O. to B/Ed'n.

(2) "The Story of Evacuation" (L.C.C. 1943) Ch. XIV: 2 (a)

(3) The Schoolmaster 30 November 1939

(4) Annual Report of C.M.O. to B/Edn. 1931

Hospital admissions

| | <u>No.'s inspected</u> | <u>% verminous</u> | <u>% nits only</u> | <u>% live lice</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Boys | 1,080 | 16.1 | 7.5 | 8.6 |
| Girls | 1,114 | 35.3 | 14.5 | 21.0 |
| <u>S.M.S. 1938</u> | | <u>% clean heads</u> | | |
| Boys | | 98.72 | 1.17 | 0.10 |
| Girls | | 85.31 | 14.54 | 0.15 |

He extended his study to cover 60,000 hospital admissions in 10 industrial cities, which included all English cities of over 400,000, as well as four rural southern counties, and made his report in June 1940. The percentages he gave for lice-infected children in industrial areas were as follows: ⁽¹⁾

| | <u>Under 1</u> | <u>1-2</u> | <u>2-3</u> | <u>3-4</u> | <u>4-5</u> | <u>5-6</u> | <u>6-7</u> | <u>7-8</u> | <u>8-9</u> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| <u>Boys</u> | 36 | 45 | 42 | 40 | 35 | 34 | 30 | 31 | 30 |
| <u>Girls</u> | 39 | 49 | 52 | 50 | 51 | 47 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| | <u>9-10</u> | <u>10-11</u> | <u>11-12</u> | <u>12-13</u> | <u>13-14</u> | <u>14-15</u> | <u>15-16</u> | <u>16-17</u> | |
| <u>Boys</u> | 26 | 24 | 29 | 21 | 19 | 15 | 7 | 7 | |
| <u>Girls</u> | 52 | 51 | 50 | 45 | 40 | 36 | 26 | 18 | |

These percentages, when compared with an over-all 5% in rural areas, he found alarmingly high and showing a great disparity with the official School Medical Service statistics. From his studies, covering pre- and post-war figures, pre- and post-evacuation, he pointed out that there was a high degree of correlation between the hospital figures and those actually found among evacuees, that Roman Catholics had the highest rate of infection, that girls' long hair was an ideal breeding ground, and that the reluctance of older girls to comb out "perms" and "sets" caused the problem to persist into the mid-teens; moreover, he pricked the "seasonal bubble," whereby the long summer holiday was used as a contributory reason for the infestation rate of September 1939, by proving that the figures for July and August were the lowest. He recommended

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/196

that official inspections should be more thorough, that the legal position of the Authority needed clarifying and strengthening, and that, considering so many girls over nine were infected, education was the only real answer.

The dominating epic in the subsequent back-stage debate and controversy about whether or not to publish the reports was centred on qualms as to the wisdom of giving wide publicity to the complete report with, possibly, serious repercussions over the school medical service, bad feeling in the country, and a gratuitous propaganda gift to Lord Haw-Haw. Eventually, after a meeting between the President of the Board and the Minister of Health on 19 December 1940 the decision was taken against publishing; instead, an abstract was circularised to LEAs. (Joint Circular MoH 2306 and B/Ed. 1544 of 17 March 1941.) These Circulars admitted that the Mellanby Report showed "a state of affairs that is a disgrace to a civilised country," and that, even allowing for the unrepresentativeness of hospital admission figures, a real infestation incidence of three times the official 10% seemed probable.

The effect of Mellanby's work must have struck deep because the President of the Board of Education even contemplated an independent review of the school medical service; he was probably dissuaded from such a course by a long Minute produced for him by his Chief Medical Officer. The gist of this Minute was that the home, not the school, was to blame, constituting as it did a "constant reservoir" of verminous slum women re-infesting their children. As for the evacuation, wartime exigencies must take priority, for example, Liverpool was perfectly aware of its cleansing shortcomings, but ARP came first, and the LCC had already decided it could not hold scabies-infected children back in danger areas because of public opinion. The Chief Medical Officer, rejected the idea of an inquiry because of the war situation and civilian morale, because the school medical service was working well but with no

jurisdiction over pre-school or post-school youngsters, and because it was basically the homes and slums which were to blame.⁽¹⁾

Many reception authorities were prepared for some degree of infestation but, in the words of the Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education in his Annual Report for 1939, "few, however, foresaw the extent of the problem which would be caused by enuresis." This was the social repercussion of the evacuation which, because of its very nature, was the easiest to exaggerate and misunderstand, and which probably attracted most publicity. Even The Lancet admitted: "Somewhat unexpectedly enuresis has proved to be one of the major menaces to the comfortable disposition of evacuated urban children."⁽²⁾

Enuresis is not synonymous with bed-wetting, but means "failure to control urination," a subtlety of distinction which explains why it is classed as a psychoneurotic symptom, a mental protest caused by insecurity, anxiety, or emotional disturbances such as separation. The writer recalls that, during his army service he was billeted in a private home together with a soldier who was a victim of enuresis on his first night in England after escaping from Dunkirk. In his case - and he was a mature, trained soldier - the cause of emotional disturbance was understandable to a sympathetic Mancunian housewife. However, the medical profession appears to have been so unprepared for trouble on such a scale that in September 1939, there was widespread misunderstanding on a personal and national scale over the weakness of little children.

Although John Bowlby was able to estimate in mid-1940 that three quarters of the cases were children not normally bed-wetters but affected by anxiety at being evacuated,⁽³⁾ it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to overcome the widely held belief that bed-wetting was yet

(1) Ibid.

(2) The Lancet 7 October 1939 p. 794

(3) Bowlby J. in Evacuation Survey (Routledge 1940) p. 188

another stigma associated with bad social training. When Katherine Wolf came to make her survey of available statistics she was at pains to stress that it loomed particularly large in the public mind because of its very overtness and because it was so widely discussed, nevertheless, the figures were impressive. They varied downwards from Gill's 80% of all evacuated children; even Susan Isaacs found the proportion of cases at the Cambridge Child Guidance Clinic to be 48%.⁽¹⁾ The high degree of success in rapid curing was given as between 70% and 80% by Cyril Burt, who emphasised the part which kindness and sympathy played in such cures.⁽²⁾

There was nothing fresh about enuresis among children away from home, as boarding schools well knew from their experience of new boys, and yet, in the evacuation, there were children of all ages, mostly never away from home before, and many from tightly-knit homes, whose day had started with family separation and finished in a strange district, with a strange house and strange people. That is why it was essentially an initial problem which "in the first few weeks of evacuation was carefully hushed up, and then given undue and unnecessary publicity."⁽³⁾ Unhappily, it was some time before the Board of Education took direct action to ease the problem. One instance which is noteworthy for its rarity was when the Secretary of Education for Northampton asked for authority to pay 5/- extra per week to a householder to keep on a bed-wetter; approval was granted by the Board, but kept quiet because this case was "not one we should wish to broadcast in a circular."⁽⁴⁾ Only when refinements were being made to subsequent evacuation plans in 1940 did the Board offer help to reception authorities in such matters as

(1) Wolf K. p. 395 Evacuation, a study of Literature Vol. I
(Imago 1945)

(2) Burt C. pp.72-73

(3) Lindsay op.cit. p. 11

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 50/273

provision of rubber overlays and domestic hygiene.⁽¹⁾ The sad result of all this was that bed-wetting became associated with lice and crime as products of the slums.

(iv) Benefits

One positive improvement which emerged in 1940 was in the procedures for classifying children involved in subsequent evacuations. A letter from the Board's Chief Medical Officer to all School Medical Officers on 16 May 1940 laid down a stricter and more comprehensive system of inspection and a labelling system based on the one evolved by the LCC. This used three symbols, "+" to indicate that a child had been medically inspected, "o" for those recommended for hostel accommodation, and "□" for those who should have special consideration; the second category was for impetigo, scabies and vermin, and the third for nits, enuresis, those who had been in contact with infectious diseases, and for certain other conditions.⁽²⁾ The success of this scheme was attested by eyewitness accounts from accompanying doctors who commented on the smooth, efficient, and almost faultless and foolproof arrangements they saw at places as far afield as Rhondda and Exeter. The initial inspection of one group of 300 London children revealed one case of scabies, five of nits, and eight of enuresis, all of whom were promptly and properly dealt with in Wales; similarly, at Exeter, they ^{doctors} found two Medical Officers, four General Practitioners and four nurses waiting to handle the newcomers. A sample coverage of 1172 children evacuated over a period of two days yielded a total of 41 cases for treatment (35 for hostels, 3 for hospitals, and 3 of scabies.) This kind of report was echoed elsewhere, a heartening reward for an overworked and understaffed school medical service, and a token of its determination to wipe the slate clean from September

(1) Enclosure to B/Ed. Circular 1987 of 26 March 1943

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

1939.⁽¹⁾

As we have seen, there was much to bewail about the condition of children from the less wholesome areas in the big cities, whether they were at home or in reception areas, but what cannot be ignored is the spate of evidence as to the beneficial effects that evacuation had on those thousands of children who were lucky enough to be removed for any length of time from the large centres of population. There is no intention here to take into account the innumerable press pictures and journalistic clichés of evacuees happily roaming the fields or playing on the beaches, for there are plenty of objective and professional comments on record. One HMI made regular reports on Lancashire children sent into the country; after two weeks he wrote of "a definite improvement in health and cleanliness apparent"; after six weeks, thanks to better food - one boy had never had an egg before - the children were almost unrecognisable, one little girl's face having become so chubby that she needed a larger gas-mask; a little later he made a close study of the children from a Salford C of E Junior Mixed and Infant school in their new surroundings and attempted to analyse the factors "responsible for the remarkable change in the children's health." He put them down as better school amenities, better food, long quiet nights, more regular home routine, and the bracing climate.⁽²⁾ In mid-November similar testimony was given in Parliament to the improvement in these children; they were bigger, heavier, stronger, better fed, slept longer and were more alert.⁽³⁾

In the official Manchester Report on the evacuation, one of the authority's women inspectors was quite definite about the children she had visited and who came from congested areas of Manchester: "Statistics

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/206

(2) B/Ed. 233 B (2) Rawenstall

(3) Hansard 16 November 1939

will show increases in weight due to better food, and probably in particular to a greater supply of milk and fruit in the diet"(1) 3,400 Essex children were evacuated into Norfolk and the Chairman of Essex Education Committee stated in November 1939 that they were all happy and healthy, and many were gaining in weight, one boy having put on 16 pounds.(2) The official record, in dealing with the "entirely beneficial" physical effects on West Hartlepool evacuees, commented, "teachers, Medical Officers, Billeting Officers, foster parents and parents themselves are almost unanimous in their appreciation of the value of country life on the children's health and physique." Rather sadly, it adds that there was a general consensus that after children returned home improvement was not maintained in physique, cleanliness or clothing.(3)

It was inevitable that such a consensus should be reflected in the files of the Board of Education, and from November 1939 onwards deep interest was noted from doctors, teachers, inspectors, sociologists, the London School of Economics, as well as from dignitaries like Sir Will Spens who suggested that when peace came arrangements should be made for city children to have a few weeks each year in the country. Serious attention was given to attempting to validate figures from reception areas, but problems - virtually insuperable ones - arose, for example, how far did evacuees represent a true cross-section of child population, how many of the healthiest children stayed at home, and how could comparable figures be produced from evacuation areas? Although a comparable study was made by the Board of Education of LCC children at home and those evacuated, using the LCC 1938 figures, it was quite inconclusive.(4)

(1) Manchester p. 22

(2) The Schoolmaster 30 November 1939

(3) Lindsay op.cit. p. 15

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 50/211

CHAPTER 8THE WELFARE OF THE SCHOOL CHILD(i) Meals and Milk

Just before the war, 160,000, or 4% of elementary schoolchildren were provided with school meals, 110,000 of them being free. More significantly, in relation to the evacuation, most of the meals were in evacuation areas, 80% of all free meals being taken in the towns, and 80% of paid meals in the country.⁽¹⁾ In London, out of 420,000 on roll only 10,000 had school dinners, 6,000 of them being free.⁽²⁾ Unfortunately, the Committee on Evacuation's Report in 1938 had made no recommendations authorising advance payments for any extended meals service.

The result was that when evacuation came no provision was made in reception, mainly country, areas, which in turn led to improvisation. The position was further complicated because responsibility for communal feeding fell between two authorities, the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health. Not until November was the Board given the duty to make provision, by which time the school meals and milk services had almost ended.⁽³⁾ Virtually all educational services were at a standstill in evacuation areas and school canteens were unknown in very many parts of rural reception areas.

Once the Board was given the go-ahead in November 1939 it acted quickly; Circular 1484 of 21 November was issued, offering 100% payment for capital outlay on the provision of meals. But, apart from the Home Counties, response was not good, most reception LEAs were like Cambridge

(1) Leff op.cit. pp. 86 + 96

(2) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3 July 1945

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 50/230

which claimed there was little demand; among the better reactions was that of Suffolk, whose canteens rapidly increased from 26 to 43, providing 6,000 meals a day and where it was noted: "the regret of many children that copious supplies of fish and chips were not available at all times has not prevented them from increasing in weight and improving in health."⁽¹⁾ This poor response from most areas must have been a cause for some concern to the inspectorate, for they had also been instructed⁽²⁾ to treat the establishment of communal meals centres in reception districts as a matter of urgency and with "the least possible delay." They had been asked to instigate action where they thought it necessary, liaise with LEAs and the domestic science inspector, get quotations, visit premises, liaise with voluntary organisations and were even delegated the power of approval for schemes. Yet, by June 1940, only 29 authorities responded positively while 100 said there was no need for the service.⁽³⁾

Predictably, it was the children who suffered, the number of meals taken being lower than it had been for fifty years. In reception zones the foster mothers had the added problem of coping with the effects of the double-shift system, many being forced to keep two separate meal times for their own children and the evacuees, and often a third for the husband.⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, where meals were available the householders - more often than not of the working class - were unwilling to spend out 1/8d. of the weekly 8/6d. billeting allowance. For evacuation areas figures are difficult to come by, but we know they had at least 750,000 children at the end of October,⁽⁵⁾ and yet, in November, only 15,020

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

(2) B/Ed. Memo. to Inspectors E. No. 418. 21 Nov. 1939.

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/662

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(5) Teachers World 28 Oct. 1939

were receiving free meals.⁽¹⁾ Insignificant though this figure may seem, often it represented steady progress against restrictive odds and growing numbers to contend with. This kind of modest achievement was shown at Southampton, the following numbers being for children fed there, the ones in brackets being for the equivalent dates of 1938: 7 October 1939, 236 (756); 14 October, 237 (756); 21 October, 251 (757); 28 October, 259 (785); 4 November, 261 (770).⁽²⁾ By spring 1940 the main obstacles were still basically the same; most of the original feeding centres were in evacuation areas where ARP provision was slow in coming and evacuees were still returning home; many reception areas were experiencing congestion in shared premises, for there were still 400,000 evacuees across the country in March 1940, a total which rather makes insignificant the claim that new canteens in reception areas were catering for 14,000 evacuees and 8,000 local children.⁽³⁾

The turning point in the fortunes of the school medical and meals service came after Dunkirk, in June 1940. Until then the main considerations had been to ease malnourishment and soften the lot of the foster families, but now the new Lord Privy Seal (Mr. Attlee) prompted the Food Policy Committee of Churchill's reconstituted Cabinet to prepare and sponsor a bold expansion in school meals. Leading up to this, the growing thinking about the socialising value of the service had been reflected in the memoranda and briefings within the Board itself, showing how the sudden, large-scale withdrawal of the system confirmed this view; "a useful addition to the corporate life of a school," the corporate meal afforded "opportunities for inculcating good manners, comradeship and service to the school community." Furthermore, as communal feeding was not regarded by the people who sent their children to the country's

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2137

(2) Southampton Education Committee Minutes 4 Dec. 1939

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

elementary schools as "a normal English social practice," what was needed was a large, persuasive propaganda campaign. In his accompanying letter with the Board's memorandum to Mr. Attlee, the President of the Board, Mr. Ramsbotham, deplored the narrow basis of the service for elementary schools and, "provided the parents can be induced to co-operate," urged its expansion, adding, "I am convinced that if communal feeding for schoolchildren in their schools could become firmly established and popularised it would be an important educational advance." In his reply Attlee felt that LEAs should be offered 100% grants on overheads and that "they must make provision for a large extension of meals." Attlee's memorandum to the Food Policy Committee, headed, incidentally, "The provision of cheap food for the poorer classes," pressed for a big extension of the meals service, pointing out advantages such as their nutritional value, the economical benefit of communal feeding, their educational and social contribution, the relief afforded to foster-parents in reception areas, and their potential value for future evacuations. When Mr. Ramsbotham came to send his own memorandum to this Committee it would appear that his advisers had induced him to be more cautious than he had been the previous week in his letter to Attlee, for now he was writing that in the majority of reception areas "there is no demand for communal feeding, the householders would rather provide the meals themselves than have a deduction made from the billeting allowance." After going into some details about such things as costings, premises, Means Test, and cut-price meals, he decided that, apart from urging the LEAs to provide for special needs such as evacuees and cases of need, a universal system of communal feeding in schools would be ineffective and outside the function of the LEA.⁽¹⁾ For the rest of June and through July there followed a constant succession of consultations, meetings, memoranda, minutes and circulars all concerned with the need for communal feeding and with the school as an integral part, working mothers still coming

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/215

lower in importance behind the post-Dunkirk national spirit of urgency and considerations of the first evacuation in view of the imminence of more.

The connection between evacuation and school meals became more apparent with Ministry of Health Circular SS8 of 2 July 1940, Evacuation of Civil Population/Special Scheme/Communal Feeding. This urged "the provision of communal meals, not only on the arrival of refugees, but after they have been billeted." A Board of Education Circular late in July announced a Treasury sanction to raise the meal service grant, widened the scope and quality of meals, and doubled the provision in twelve months.⁽¹⁾ After the Battle of Britain an Administrative Memorandum (No. 25 of 24 September 1940) spelt out the Board's continuing pre-occupation: "The Board attaches great importance to the development of the provision of meals and milk for schoolchildren"; this was confirmed when, two days later, the Principal Assistant Secretary retired, his ten years experience in this field caused him to be immediately re-employed as part-time consultant on the provision of meals and milk to those areas which had not been able to implement the Board's proposals.⁽²⁾

As it turned out, the changing military situation, with the serious dislocations of subsequent air raids and evacuations, supplied the impetus which was to transform the service in scope and importance to the nation until it was to become a valuable aspect of national communal wartime feeding. The Board of Education Circular 1528 of 18 October 1940 stated: "Both the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health are anxious that the fullest possible use should be made of existing facilities" One particular paragraph showed how intent the Board was on easing the lot of reception householders, for it made the unprecedented suggestion that evacuated mothers with under-fives could

(1) B/Ed. Circular 1520 25 July 1940

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/215

use the school canteen at gross prices. The next step was to enlist and involve the inspectorate in this drive to expand the services. This was done, firstly, by calling for situation reports;⁽¹⁾ secondly, with a memorandum on the role of the inspectors and on the whole system of what now became known as "the school canteen." This laid down that "in view of the great importance which the Board attach to the provision of school meals, it is felt that Inspectors should be still more closely associated with this work than in the past."⁽²⁾ Thirdly, a simultaneous document gave District Inspectors the responsibility of ensuring the development of the school meals service, which was now brought as much within their purview as the other educational services.⁽³⁾

The growth of the service was not all it should have been, for by May 1941 about 25% of LEAs were providing no solid meals, paid or free, only 30% were providing meals on payment, while one Welsh county supplied neither meals nor milk. The kind of disclosure which disturbed and stimulated those in authority came from Huddersfield where, over 1940, it was found that children weighed less than for many years, only 5% had free meals, 50% had milk, and 1% had free milk.⁽⁴⁾ But nevertheless, even allowing for these gloomy features, 1941 saw all the effort beginning to bear fruit, with the introduction of more and more new canteens, as these figures illustrate:⁽⁵⁾

(1) B/Ed. Memo. to Inspectors 433 14 November 1940

(2) B/Ed. Memo. to Inspectors E No. 436 27 December 1940

(3) B/Ed. Administrative Memorandum 267 27 December 1940

(4) Leff op.cit. p. 97

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 136/662

| <u>Date</u> | <u>No. of new Canteens</u> | <u>Meal capacity</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>No. of new Canteens</u> | <u>Meal capacity</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1941 Jan. | 38 | 3,467 | July | 151 | 22,869 |
| Feb. | 65 | 6,112 | Aug. | 194 | 27,721 |
| Mar. | 100 | 11,005 | Sept. | 94 | 12,654 |
| April | 141 | 16,134 | Oct. | (120) | (promises to be a record) |
| May | 203 | 24,674 | | | |
| June | 150 | 22,961 | | | |

These figures should be put into perspective with pre-war totals: in 1933-1939, 177,000 elementary children were fed free, with 60,000 paying; in May 1941, out of a total of $4\frac{1}{2}$ million elementary and $\frac{1}{2}$ million secondary children, 300,000 were having meals, including 50,000 free and 32,000 evacuees.⁽¹⁾ A better idea of how the service developed as the country became involved in total war can be seen from these percentages of elementary children in England and Wales receiving school meals.⁽²⁾

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| <u>June 1940:</u> | 2.4% | <u>Dec. 1941</u> | 8.1% |
| <u>Feb. 1941:</u> | 3.9% | <u>Feb. 1942</u> | 10.3% |
| <u>May 1941:</u> | 4.6% | <u>May 1942</u> | 11.5% |
| <u>Oct. 1941:</u> | 6.2% | <u>Oct. 1942</u> | 16.6% |

After the war, Essex LEA produced a document⁽³⁾ which is interesting because it shows how an area with a chequered record of re-zoning started with, varied from, and reverted to the national picture:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>No. of Canteens</u> | <u>No. receiving meals</u> | <u>£</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Mar. 1939 | 50 | 3,680 | 3.5 |
| Mar. 1940 | 80 | 5,890 | 7.0 |
| Mar. 1941 | 100 | 7,363 | 8.3 |
| Mar. 1942 | 145 | 13,894 | 14.1 |

Finally, an overall picture of the service can be gained from these totals of daily dinners supplied in England and Wales: 143,000 in 1935, 160,000 in 1939, 130,000 in 1940, and 1,650,000 in 1945.⁽⁴⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2082

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/230

(3) Dinner at School Essex Ed. Comm. Dec. 1945

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 509

The dislocation of the school milk service caused by the evacuation was aggravated by the requisitioning of lorries, the rationing of petrol and the shortage of bottles, so that in October 1939 consumption had fallen by 40%, the equivalent of 1,000,000 children's portions. By the following March only half the ground had been made up, mainly because of the closures in evacuation areas.⁽¹⁾ The disparity of consumption in the three types of areas is shown by these figures for the numbers of children receiving milk in November 1939: 17,799 in evacuation areas, 61,918 in neutral areas, and 230,395 in reception areas.⁽²⁾ Even more explicit are these LCC figures:⁽³⁾

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Milks</u> | <u>Free Milks</u> | <u>Nos. on roll</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1939 | 263,186 | 41,596 | 420,000 |
| Oct. '41 | 83,743 | 2,387 | 133,000 |
| Oct. '42 | 136,065 | 5,755 | 221,600 |
| Feb. '44 | 151,821 | 8,018 | 248,400 |

This table serves to impress two points; firstly, the distinctive history of wartime London, and, secondly, the contrast with the national figure, for by July 1940 the country's pre-war level of consumption was restored, and by 1945 73% of all primary and secondary schoolchildren were taking milk.⁽⁴⁾

(ii) Nursery provision

The 1918 Act empowered LEAs to provide nursery schools but progress over the next twenty years was slow, the 19 schools in 1919 increasing to only 118 in 1938; in the same period day nurseries actually declined in number from 174 to 104.⁽⁵⁾ At the Board of Education the spirit was willing but difficulties were great, not only those contingent to the

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2137

(3) L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3 July 1945

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 510

(5) Ferguson + Fitzgerald op.cit. p. 178

national economy but the self-imposed ones. For example, Circular 1444 of 6 January 1936 giving details about the provision of nursery schools, clearly showed the Board's anxiety about the under-fives, and wanted LEAs to survey the needs of their areas, but at the same time it urged them to watch the expenditure and remember the value and economy in having nursery classes in infant departments of elementary schools. Existing regulations for nursery schools were very stringent, involving the submission of plans to architectural and medical branches, site inspection, and strict standards on floor space, light, ventilation, toilets, diet, kitchens, etc. Out of 1,750,000 children under five in England and Wales in 1938, only 180,000 were attending public-sponsored nurseries or schools; 90% of those were in elementary school classes, only half of them in proper nursery classes. The Board's policy was to encourage nursery classes (which needed no special regulations), but nursery schools were to be provided only for children whose physical condition and surroundings necessitated continuous medical care and feeding. Generally, the nursery service in the pre-war days of 1939 was uneven, unco-ordinated, with gaps and inconsistencies, and piecemeal in growth. Of the 119 recognised nursery schools at the outbreak of war 61 were LEA-provided and 58 were maintained by voluntary organisations with a further 50 proposed schemes; 59 of the schools were in evacuation areas (37 voluntary and 22 LEA), and of the 56 evacuated on the outbreak of war 38 were from London (25 voluntary and 13 LEA).⁽¹⁾

When the war started, nursery classes in elementary schools were abandoned in evacuation areas, the children either being evacuated or staying with their families, while in neutral and reception areas they were closed for days, months, or even longer, depending largely on availability of accommodation. The first new provision of wartime was made in reception areas and was mainly of an improvised nature to cope

(1) D.F.S. Weitzmann Box 44

with the difficulties of householders having to put up with evacuated mothers with under-fives all day under their feet. When the drift back of such evacuees started almost immediately, officialdom had to do something to stem the flow to what were considered centres of imminent danger. A typical situation was that at Todmorden in Yorkshire where 20 under-fives from evacuated Bradford schools were excluded from local classes.⁽¹⁾ It must not be forgotten that the total numbers concerned were considerable; there were 260,000 under-fives evacuated with their mothers, 40,000 with elder siblings and 5,000 in nursery schools or day nursery units; out of this 305,000 only 150,000 were left in reception areas in November 1939.⁽²⁾ The joint committee of the Ministry of Health and Board of Education, set up in the previous month to deal with this, suggested that LEAs should start nursery centres where needed, and inspectors were circularised to find out, as a matter of urgency, where the most pressing needs existed.⁽³⁾ Their replies were analysed as follows, to show the number of places where sufficient evacuees, aged from two to five, were grouped within a small enough area to merit a nursery centre.⁽⁴⁾

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| 20 - 25 children | .. | .. | .. | .. | 95 places |
| 50 - 100 children | .. | .. | .. | .. | 64 places |
| 100 - 500 children | .. | .. | .. | .. | 47 places |
| 500+ children | .. | .. | .. | .. | 8 places |

The joint committee put the case to the Treasury that these suggested centres were "essentially a wartime measure rendered necessary by evacuation." The Treasury, however, was worried by the cost, estimated at £100,000 p.a. for 10,000 children, "lest the problems of evacuation may lead to the establishment of nursery centres on a much larger scale than we should ever have been prepared to approve in peace-time."⁽⁵⁾

(1) B/Ed. 247 B (2)

(2) B/Ed. M 440/17

(3) B/Ed. Memorandum to Inspectors E 410 of 12 October 1939

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 44

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69

This quibbling and shilly-shallying went on for over two months, during which time more children returned home and criticism grew at the lack of provision.

Not until January 1940 did the Treasury relent, by which time most of the children affected had gone back home, so the resultant Circulars⁽¹⁾ enabling the formation of nursery centres for groups of from 10 to 20 were too late, "shutting the stable door after the evacuated horse," as one HMI put it, none had been opened by December 1939, while the demand and numbers were greatest. The growth of a network of these centres was slow; some had qualified teachers, some did not, and it soon became evident that with the expansion of different kinds of nursery provision, there was a totally insufficient supply of trained teachers. In the face of opposition from the National Union of Women Teachers, the Nursery Schools Association had accepted the situation of trained superintendents over a small group of centres. But soon a training scheme was established, organised by LEAs and with 100% grant, for Junior Helpers, aged 16 to 18, Senior Nursery Assistants, over 18, and supplementary staff who could take charge. Incidentally, this emphasis on nurses, as opposed to teachers, now in short supply, appealed to the Board of Education and produced an adult:child ratio of 1:3 or 4 in nursery centres, compared to the 1:10 in nursery schools.⁽²⁾

There was no real demand in early 1940 for women war-workers - unemployment was 645,000 in June 1940 - nor for places in nurseries for their children, so in reception areas the only provision was for evacuees, not for local children, and official policy in March 1940, as laid down by the Ministry of Health to LEAs, was that vacancies arising in nursery establishments should be reserved for those children who for domestic

(1) B/Ed. Circular 1495 and M.o.H. Circular 1936 of 9 January 1940

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 44

reasons should be moved out of danger areas.⁽¹⁾ As for evacuation areas, any educational provision was certainly not for those under school age at a time when the lower age limit was usually about eleven. One of the first identifiable occasions of the beginning of the metamorphosis of nursery provision from evacuees to children of working mothers came from Preston at a meeting on 27 June 1940 between the HMI, the LEA, and the Medical Officer; entry was limited to children whose mothers worked at Royal Ordnance Factories, with the intimation that it would probably be extended to mothers in other factories with government contracts.⁽²⁾ When in Sheffield, an evacuation area, in the following month applications were invited from women requiring facilities for children aged three to five, there was an immediate response of 1,100 replies. The eventual result of this was twelve nursery units in April 1941, precursors of the later "Wartime Nurseries." A date to note in tracing this change in attitudes to the function of nurseries is 18 October 1940, for on the same day came a circular from the Ministry of Health⁽³⁾ urging local authorities to provide for children of working mothers and a circular from the Board of Education urging the implementation of Circular 1495 of January 1940 "so as to ensure that they (the under-fives) are not left in the hands of the mothers or house-holders in daytime."⁽⁴⁾

With the second evacuations after Dunkirk and the steady "trickle" from the blitzes it was frequently commented that the under-fives were suffering most. Some of them were cut off from the schools they attended in nursery classes, and many of them were excluded from reception schools, cramped in their billets and denied social contact with other tots. It was remarked by many HMIs in their reports during November and December 1940 what a great loss it was to the infants who had been deprived of

(1) Ibid.

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 43

(3) M.o.H. Circular 2178 of 18 October 1940

(4) B/Ed. Circular 1528 of 18 October 1940

any pre-school experience, being more childish, more careless, and with less pride in work and materials.

Rather sadly for such children, the long delays in preparing schemes for nursery centres and in getting Treasury approval meant that by December 1940 only 15 had been approved. So it came as no surprise to the inspectorate when the air raids were becoming so intense in December 1940 and more and more mothers were being evacuated that a memorandum⁽¹⁾ came from the Board urging the starting of nursery centres as quickly as possible wherever there was a minimum of 20 children aged from two to five. HMIs were asked to accelerate the establishment of centres by every means in their power, including giving preliminary approval so that LEAs could go ahead pending the formal approval of the Board. This was done, and by February 1941 37 nursery centres were approved, 10 were under consideration, 20 to 30 being established, and a Parliamentary Answer for the Board on 1 May 1941 disclosed that 94 schemes had been approved for about 2,700 children.⁽²⁾ At last nursery provision was, after a bad start, beginning to fulfil its purpose, the little ones between two and five were staying longer in reception areas and life was more tolerable for householders with tiny evacuees. There can be little doubt that, late though they were in coming, the nursery centres did ease billeting frictions. One evacuated mother said, "the lady in my billet doesn't go on at him like she used to. You see, he's less troublesome now when he's indoors."⁽³⁾ This remark must have been gratifying to those in the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health who urged that the new centres should be used to give social and hygiene training to the little ones.

During 1941 the Shakespeare Committee issued two reports; the

(1) B/Ed. Memorandum 453 of 19 December 1940

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 44

(3) Times Educational Supplement 8 March 1941

first on 2 January referred to evacuated mothers in reception areas, and introduced a new element of expediency by showing the potential value of centres, adding, "Where the mother is relieved of the care of her child during the day she can often find employment in the district. There is little doubt that regular work will do more than anything else to help her settle down in her new life." The Committee's report in March anticipated the increased provision of mid-1941 by recommending the extended use of nursery and play centres.

Mid-1941 saw the point at which evacuation and the demands of war met in the story of Wartime Nursery provision. It came on 13 May with the joint circulars 2388 from the Ministry of Health and 1553 from the Board of Education. These stated that the "disturbance of normal family life (has become) more widespread as the range of evacuation and the employment of women has increased." It was now decided that "Wartime Nurseries" should be provided both for evacuees and for children of war workers. The significance of this and other innovations of that time was not only in the change of nomenclature from "nursery centres" to "wartime nurseries," but was evident in the abandonment of discrimination between evacuation, reception, and neutral areas and between the different backgrounds of the children; in the investing of the Ministry of Health with the major responsibility for the physical welfare of little children in such premises; in the removal of restriction on opening hours so that all nursery provision should be available outside normal school hours and up to 12 or 15 hours per day; in placing the full cost of maintenance directly on the Exchequer; in including provision for meals, resting and bathing, and in fixing responsibility on the local authority for "Maternity and Child Welfare."⁽¹⁾ In December 1941 the scheme was extended by using nursery classes in elementary schools, throwing them open to children of two and over and lengthening

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 22/207 (Memo. to Insp. E. 440 of 5.6.41)

the hours beyond normal school times. When inspectors were circularised in February 1942 they were reminded that the general principle now was "to serve the urgent need of industry for women workers."⁽¹⁾

The rest of the story of the wartime nursery provision relates closely to the demand for women-power, and can be summarised as follows:⁽²⁾

| | | | | | |
|----------|------|-------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------|
| November | 1941 | 403 | wartime nurseries for | 13,167 | children |
| January | 1942 | 626 | " | 20,823 | |
| February | 1943 | 1,200 | " | 51,000 | |
| June | 1944 | 1,560 | " | 61,316 | (the peak year) |

In addition to these, by February 1943 110,000 under-fives were attending elementary school classes and 32,000 were in play centres.⁽³⁾

Laudable though this progress undoubtedly was, the position as regards permanent provision in state schools was nothing like as comforting. This is illustrated by the answers to parliamentary questions shortly after the war:

Question: How many Welsh authorities do not provide nursery school accommodation?

Answer: 12

Question: What is the total number of nursery school places in Wales?

Answer: 680⁽⁴⁾

Question: How many children were there in nursery schools and nursery classes in 1938, and how many today?

Answer: In 1938, 5,666 in nursery schools and 166,000 in classes.
In 1946, 6,868 in nursery schools and 164,421 in classes.⁽⁵⁾

Moreover, prior to the 1944 Act, the siting of nursery schools was limited to localities with bad social and economic conditions and many

(1) B/Ed. Memorandum to Insp. N.S. 58 Feb. 1942

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 44

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 6

(4) Hansard 6 December 1945 *Commons Vol. 416 Col. 2514*

(5) Hansard 22 October 1946 *Commons Vol. 427 Col. 355*

applications were refused because the proposed schools were not in poverty-stricken areas. Another slightly disquieting aspect of the way things were going could be discerned in the reasons given by the Parliamentary Secretary for the urgency of allocating nursery places: they were an alternative to the double-shift system and the unsupervised children it produced; they would improve the morale of local factory workers; they would prevent unrest at the thought of children being deprived of early schooling; and they would encourage mothers to take war jobs. Bearing in mind the post-war development in nursery education, it is interesting to note that these places were looked on as primarily for depositing little boys and girls as opposed to educating them.⁽¹⁾

One branch of nursery provision which merits separate consideration here is the residential nursery school. Experience at the time of Munich, 1938, had shown that it was essential to move nursery schools as residential units, and not by putting the tots into ordinary homes with attendance at day schools. In the meantime houses had been earmarked, especially by the LCC, who, as it turned out, provided 134 out of the 150 evacuated nursery parties which totalled some 4,600 children out of the 7,400 originally on roll. They were placed mainly in large country houses (like Glyndebourne), but it took the rest of 1939 to sort out their problems; they seemed to have a kind of "stateless" status in rural areas, most of which had no experience of such establishments. They were often cramped, under-staffed and with poor hygiene and sanitary facilities; and they survived largely through the dedicated labour of officials, volunteers and, most of all, their matrons and staffs. Unlike other kinds of evacuees who eased the strain by drifting back, it soon became apparent that here was a section of the community which was proving an increasing worry in the numbers of "social casualty" children who came, not necessarily from destitute families, but from where, for

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 10

example, the father was in the BEF and the mother ill. The identification of such problem cases was becoming more and more common through the newly-formed Citizen's Advice Bureau. As these children came mainly under Public Assistance Officers or voluntary organisations like Dr. Barnardo's, the Waifs and Strays and the WVS, and not under the Ministry of Health, they precipitated the problem for that Ministry of how to finance this new form of social agency without using the Evacuation Account.

The first step was to call a conference of all the bodies concerned in December 1939, and to appoint the WVS - who had already handled between 300 and 400 children - as the clearing house. Next, in March 1940, the Under-Fives Panel was set up to formalise resident nursery procedures for the Metropolitan area; its mandate was to deal with evacuation applications, decide the priority list, place the children, and, not least, to unravel the criteria they had to enforce by identifying those "who could not for some strong reason be taken away from an evacuation area accompanied by an adult member of their family."

From March to July 1940, the Panel had 4,000 applications and placed 1,700 in evacuation areas. Behind these figures are the disruptions which followed Dunkirk, with the steadily mounting tide of social distress which suddenly accelerated by a leap from 358 applications in April to 777 in May and 1,644 in June. When the autumn air raids came the pressure persisted, with 2,614 applications in September and October and with the LCC's discovery in November that they had 2,000 mothers unable to leave with their under-fives.⁽¹⁾

All this time, the brunt of the burden had been taken by the voluntary organisations to the extent that members of the WVS themselves were giving up their own country houses for residential nurseries. Yet still the Ministry of Health had not resolved the dilemma of how to

(1) Ferguson + Fitzgerald op.cit. p. 223

finance the scheme. Fortunately, the solution was presented by the American Red Cross who sent £25,000 to the WVS to be used for nurseries containing evacuees, and it was no problem then to set up the Wartime Nursery Grants Committee with representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Board of Education, the Nursery Schools Association and the WVS, to dispense this and subsequent donations from the USA and Dominions. The system which was evolved was for the children to go to "receiving centres" in London for a day or two, where they could be prepared for their new country homes. These were, without exception, gracious buildings, comfortable, always with a doctor responsible and a resident, qualified staff, as well as WVS volunteers, and impeccably healthy and sanitary; observers always commented on the effectiveness of the social training given to the children.

The story became one of expansion; for example, the Save the Children Fund established 26 residential nurseries with US money.⁽¹⁾ Some 50% of the 9,000 applications were placed in evacuation areas until demand slackened with an easing of air raids until there was an 80% acceptance rate of applications in mid-June 1942. What needs to be mentioned is that in mid-1941 there started a change of emphasis in policy from what had been a part of the general civil defence evacuation scheme to a social service only vaguely connected with ARP, from evacuation to welfare, with a broadening of terms of eligibility both geographically - to include reception and neutral areas - and in social terms. This is best shown from a table of types of application to the London Panel of the Under-Fives Committee.⁽²⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 43

(2) Ferguson + Fitzgerald op.cit. p. 230

| <u>September</u> | <u>Air Raids</u> | <u>Parents in hospital</u> | <u>Health</u> | <u>Work</u> | <u>Other reasons</u> |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1940 | 47% | 21% | 12% | 15% | 7% |
| 1941 | 28 | 20 | 13 | 35 | 4 |
| 1942 | 6 | 25 | 14 | 51 | 4 |
| 1943 | 0 | 39 | 13 | 43 | 5 |

An interesting feature of this aspect of evacuation is the way in which it underlined how the whole service was dominated by demand from London. By December 1942 five-sixths of the 13,000 available cots were used by London children, and out of the total of 415 residential nurseries only 70 were used by the rest of England.⁽¹⁾

The history of residential nurseries in the war typifies the pioneering part so often played in British social development by voluntary organisations and presents a microcosm of the issues involved between voluntary organisations and the state, for procedures, policies and practices were established before the state came in as finances petered with the diversion of US money after Pearl Harbour.

In conclusion, two other impressions persist after a survey of early wartime nursery provision, both of them significant for post-war developments. The first comes from a 1942 report on 156 nursery classes, schools, wartime nurseries, and residential nursery parties, which concludes: "The Nursery Centre for two to fives established under the evacuation scheme has demonstrated that the small group of children from two to five, in a simple, homelike environment for approximately seven hours, i.e. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., offers the best provision."⁽²⁾ The other is from a Board of Education Report for 1939 and shows some of the current thinking behind the Board's policies: "..... intelligence is relatively plastic, and the limits set by innate constitution are quite wide. Favourable social and educational conditions might bring about a considerable increase in intelligence level. It is highly probable,

(1) Ibid. p. 231

(2) Nursery Provision in Wartime B/Education December 1942

though not yet definitely proven, that a modern nursery school education from two (or earlier) to five years constitutes a favourable environment for many children."⁽¹⁾

(iii) Camp Schools

The idea of school camps was not new; before the war twenty LEA camps existed, half of them for use as holiday camps for the more poor, undernourished and weakly children, the other half for normal school-children who were given the opportunity of working in a rural environment. Stays in both these types of camp were for a maximum of two weeks, and they were closed for the winter months.⁽²⁾ About these camps the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education wrote, "The experience of camps and mansions has convinced many whose previous experience was only of day schools that residential schools for these children have great advantages."⁽³⁾ What was new about the wartime camps was that they were intended as state schools without limitations to short periods, boarding schools in the real sense of the word with education given the year round.

Following the Camps Act of 1939 the National Camp Corporation Ltd. was set up before the war with £1,200,000 of government money to build 50 of the projected 100 camps, each to house 300 persons. The intention was that they should fulfil a dual function, as normal LEA schools and as wartime centres for evacuees. A good example of the procedure followed can be found at Wedges Farm, near Horsham in Sussex. It was bought for £2,000 in August 1939 and a camp built there with over 300 beds.⁽⁴⁾ Other camps, like Wedges, were offered to the LEAs, and, in a memorandum which sang the praises of the camps' appointments, inspectors were asked

(1) Annual Report for 1939 by Chief Medical Officer, B/Education.

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(3) Annual Report of C.M.O. for B/Ed. for 1939

(4) B/Ed. 4023/9

to nominate suitable, single-sex, fragmented, evacuated secondary, senior or selective central schools which would most benefit by being united on a single site.⁽¹⁾ In the case of Wedges Farm it was taken over by Wilson's Grammar School, an aided LCC school, on 24 April 1940, and occupied in the September term with 235 boys from 8 to 19, 16 staff and 2 resident matrons; "a successful grammar school camp, cheerfully and efficiently conducted," it cost £30,000 to build. The first of these camps to be occupied, on 19 February 1940, was at Kennylands, near Reading, by Beal Modern School from Ilford.⁽²⁾

Eventually, by autumn 1940, thirty of the camps were in use, all in rural areas with between 20 and 40 acres, run by a Head Teacher and an administrative Camp Manager, for children over 11, costing 18/- per week each which was recoverable from the Ministry of Health by LEAs, and with all the necessary amenities, domestic, social, medical and educational. They housed 26 elementary and 2 secondary schools, one was for orphanages and one for a school for physically defective children. Reports from the inspectorate were unanimous in their praise. A typical report was of a boys' secondary school; they settled in admirably, were engrossed in extra-mural activities, gaining in physique and mental alertness, carrying on their normal curriculum with well-maintained standards and surprisingly good examination results; all in all, an experiment that "may certainly be considered a success." A selective central school for girls with a commercial bias kept up its general standard of work, was enriched by the rural environment, provided more club activities, offered far more opportunities for personal responsibility, was well integrated with the local community and its girls were greatly improved in health and mental alertness. Of a senior elementary school for boys from an industrial area it was reported that the staff was keener, the

(1) B/Ed. Memorandum to Inspectors E. 417 of 20 November 1939

(2) Daily Express 20 February 1940

normal school syllabus was followed, there were plenty of extra indoor and outdoor activities, they had built their own swimming pool, and the boys' health was improving. The report concluded, "..... school life conducted in such conditions and in such environment can play an invaluable part in the physical, educational and social development of the children."⁽¹⁾

Relevant to the later discussions on the post-war possibilities of the camp school system is the contrast between the two West Sussex camps. The one at Wedges Farm has already been mentioned as Wilson's Grammar School, from Camberwell, ^{which} ~~and~~ was gathered together after a year in scattered billets round Ashford, Kent. It gradually rose in numbers to 330 and can be taken as a model of its kind, with its own preparatory school department and pre-university sixth form. A widened curriculum and higher standards of work took their exam results back to their pre-war level in the summer of 1941, after one academic year in residence, and earned praise on the BBC as better than most public schools.⁽²⁾

In the same area was the other West Sussex camp at Coopers' Farm, near Horsham, taken over by Leyton LEA in Essex for the Tom Hood central mixed school from Ongar. 104 boys, 87 girls, six men and six women moved in on 3 April 1940, the numbers rising to 243 later in the year. This school was very different in social background, corporate spirit and academic standards. Moreover, as its numbers gradually fell, its LEA started using it for "awkward" Essex children, enuresis persisted, and the camp was the subject of voluminous correspondence between the LEA, the Board of Education, and the Ministry of Health. Finally, in October 1943, a special visit by an HMI confirmed that it was "a troublesome camp" which gave "an impression of moribundity." The report criticised

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

(2) B/Ed. 4023 G

the LEAs' conduct for the type of pupil and the frequency of staff changes, and found the camp was not popular with parents because it was not a good one, and so a vicious circle was produced. The reasons for all this, the HMI suggested, were three-fold: the LEA was not boarding-school minded; the school had lost its original identity and objectives, and had become all-age, used by Essex medical officers for "special cases." The third reason was quite simply summarised as "the social standards of the families" from which the children came.⁽¹⁾

In spite of the praise and the complimentary publicity they received, the camps never increased in number. This was because domestic staffing would have become incredibly difficult, men and material were increasingly diverted to factories, aerodromes and army camps, especially when the Americans began pouring in, and the capital cost would have been prohibitive, £100,000,000 for buildings alone.⁽²⁾ Finally, there was the staunchly held view of many officials, doctors, sociologists and psychologists that home life was best for children, domestic billets rather than an institutionalised environment.

Of all the people who saw in this aspect of evacuation possibilities beyond a wartime expediency, none was a more idealistic and whole-hearted advocate of these camps than Ernest Bevin. As Minister of Labour he made a personal appeal to R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education, in September 1941, hoping for the post-war continuation of the camp schools, and offered, as a means of introducing a residential element into state schools, the use of redundant Ministry of Labour camps, with accommodation for 270,000 people. When Butler suggested that the British working class' apparent disapproval of sending their children away to school might hinder such an undertaking, Bevin replied that many

(1) B/Ed. 4022 G

(2) Hansard 2 November 1939. *Commons. Vol. 352 Col. 2179*

things thought impossible in pre-war days would not be considered so after the war, and that evacuation had altered many old ways of thought. As it turned out, Bevin's proposals proved impracticable and lacked support, mainly because subsequent investigations of the figures showed that they were suspect, much of the accommodation being unsuitable for permanent occupation by schoolchildren.⁽¹⁾

In view of the repeated references by inspectors to the apparent improvements in physique that they detected in pupils at camp schools, attention should be drawn to an intriguing by-product of all the study which was made of the camps. This originated in a series of Anthropometric Investigations carried out by the Ministry of Health into the comparative growth rates for 1939-1940 and for 1940-1941 of children in camp schools and their counterparts in evacuation and neutral areas. The results were "a little disconcerting" to the Senior Medical Officer of the Board, and "bewildering" to the Managing Director of the National Camp Corporation, who wrote, "..... the inference of the inquiry would appear to be that it is better for a child to stay in East London, sleeping irregular hours in ill-ventilated shelters and eating fish and chips than to have fresh air conditions in one of our camps, with regular hours of sleep and plenty of well-prepared wholesome food." The figures for 1941-1942 were even more surprising; they were studied and analysed at the highest level in the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education. Explanations were made and discounted, and all those consulted fell back on their own private - but unsubstantiatable - theories. Butler, for example, suggested, "Children are human and they run about too much; they don't put on weight; school discipline always has this effect." Even the figures provided on 6 October 1944 of the growth and weight rates for children in evacuation and neutral areas did nothing to dispel the mystery behind what must have been one of the most

(1) B/Ed. Secretary's Clerks File 2152 (4)

inexplicable phenomena of the war. To be fair, it must be pointed out that Dr. Glover, Senior Medical Officer to the Board, did give a warning in January 1940 about the potential problems of producing acceptable figures, samples and comparative groups for such a study.⁽¹⁾ But it is quite possible that the very inconclusiveness of the findings of the investigations could have had some effect on the thinking of those who came to consider the post-war potential of those evacuation camps.

(iv) Youth Service

Although certain steps were taken as a result of the growth in juvenile delinquency during the 1914-1918 war, developments over the intervening years were far from impressive, and what stood in 1939 was a framework of voluntary youth organisations with the National Council of Social Service at their centre and with finances from the King George V Jubilee Trust. On 3 September 1939 youth activities were drastically reduced, especially in evacuation areas where large numbers of young people were denied access to their premises. That is why, on 16 September a letter went out from the Board of Education to all LEAs allowing the use of clubs and technical institutions - with limitations on numbers, hours and premises as demanded by Civil Defence requirements. Some of these restrictions were, however, very inhibiting, like at Southampton, which lost all of the 48 school premises hitherto used for youth work.⁽²⁾ In central London no youth organisation was able to operate within $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of Leicester Square; this particular restriction was lifted on 21 October and others were eased on 3 November.⁽³⁾

On 6 September and 13 September 1939 two meetings were set up under the chairmanship of Earl De La Warr, the President of the Board of Education. Representatives came from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Scottish Education Department, the Home Office and the Board

(1) D.E.S. Vol. 50/211

(2) Southern Daily Echo 23 September 1939

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

of Education. They were charged with considering questions relating to social services which had arisen, or might be expected to arise, out of the conditions created by the government's evacuation scheme, and their meetings greatly influenced subsequent developments. On 3 October the President of the Board announced in the House of Lords that a Department for Juvenile Welfare would be established together with a National Youth Committee and others to operate on a local level. This was immediately followed by a spate of activity, masses of memoranda, working papers and documents from contributory organisations, all of which produced reams of suggestions and plans for everything from weekly subscription rates to physical education and the training of youth leaders.

"..... considerably less than half of these boys and girls (between 14 and 20) belong to any organisation. War emphasises this defect in our social services; today the blackout, the strain of war and the disorganisation of family life have created conditions which constitute a menace to youth." These words come from Circular 1486 of 27 November 1939, The Service of Youth, which embodied the President's announcement and of which the Archbishop of Canterbury was to say, "I think it is not an exaggeration to say that it marks an epoch in the history of education in this country. It invited local education authorities throughout the country as soon as possible to co-operate with the voluntary organisations to set up everywhere local youth committees."⁽¹⁾ By 7 February 1940 the President of the Board was able to tell a Lords' debate that the three main problems had been overcome: more premises were available, more leaders had come forward, thanks to the appeal instigated by the King⁽²⁾ and more money was being granted; already 76 out of 146 LEAs had co-operated in setting up local youth committees. By May 1940 the setting up of local administrative machinery was accelerating, despite some uneven response; 124 of the LEAs had now either instituted, or were on the point

(1) Hansard 7 February 1940 Lords. Vol. 115. Col. 509.

(2) Letter from King George to Prime Minister The Times 28 November 1939

of instituting, committees and a further 13 had it under consideration. The framework under which an expanding youth service could develop was being fashioned during those months, and would help to sustain, the government hoped, new facilities for the training and leisure of young people and a new approach in general to their social problems. In June 1940, by which time 200 committees were operating,⁽¹⁾ came the other of the Circulars that formed the two pillars round which was built the youth service for young people from 14 to 20. The Challenge of Youth⁽²⁾ offered guidance to committees on how to function and expand.

The after-care of young people leaving school became a source of increasing concern during those first months of the war, for the establishment of such organisations as the Army Cadets, Sea Cadets, Girls Training Corps and Youth Service Corps absorbed only a small proportion of the boys and, particularly, the girls. That is why the Board issued a special circular explaining the specific functions of the different authorities such as the Ministry of Labour, the Juvenile Advisory Committee, and the Juvenile Employment Committee.⁽³⁾ The subsequent story of official acceptance of responsibility for young people and of the development of the service can be traced back to Earl De La Warr's original announcement on 3 October 1939, that the government was determined to tackle such a grave deficiency in the social system, and that what in peacetime "was merely a tragic wastage, in wartime became a festering sore."⁽⁴⁾

(v) Juvenile Employment

To avoid undue repetition, it needs to be stressed at the outset that the misuse of schoolchildren as a source of labour, although largely

(1) Journal of Education June 1940 p. 268

(2) B/Ed. Circular 1516 June 1941

(3) B/Ed. Circular 1552 13 May 1941

(4) Hansard 3 October 1939 *Lords. Vol. 114 Col. 1245*

an agricultural matter, was not confined to native rural pupils. It affected many evacuees - usually without authority from the natural parents - and many who returned to, or remained in, evacuated areas.

Most of the troubles which arose stemmed partly from growing demands for labour and partly from the way in which formal responsibility was divided among the Home Office (under the Children's and Young Persons' Act of 1933), the local authority (who had considerable discretion through bye-laws), the Board of Education (on which was the onus for ensuring school attendance), and the LEA (to whom the application of this was delegated). The 1933 Children's Act specified a minimum age of 12, permitted hours, and conditions of labour; but the minimum ages varied enormously across the 67 County Authorities. For example, seven applied it as 13+, three authorities used 14+, eleven used 10+, while three had no minimum age at all; similar variations existed for the number of hours that could be worked per day, from two to no-limit.⁽¹⁾

This was no new problem, and wartime experience was to represent the culmination of a long history of interrupted education, not only among country children but in population centres like the Black Country and London, whose children represented useful reservoirs of cheap labour for fruit and hop picking. Another conveniently vague and euphemistic term was "light employment," used by some authorities to include, and by some to exclude, fruit and potato picking. In addition to this, regulations and bye-laws on the use of medical certificates, provision of clothing and footwear, and keeping of records were easily evaded - as was enforcement of school attendance, for absence (for which the maximum fine was £1) was rarely punished. Attitudes also varied on the part of unions and individuals on such subjects as the potential threat to organised labour and standards of work, and the damage that exploitation could wreak on a child. One thing that parents

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 69



Schoolboys helping to load turnips for a farmer near Worsley, Lancashire.



The larger type of Anderson shelter built along the whole length of a street in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

felt strongly about, especially with the raising of the school-leaving age due in September 1939, was the keeping of sturdy boys in the classroom until the statutory leaving time, an aspect that was often winked at by LEAs and magistrates, for prosecutions were rare and magistrates, often farmers or land-owners, were lenient.

The outbreak of war raised the issue immediately, for the territorials were called up, an ambitious programme of agricultural expansion was announced, the harvest was imminent, and many London children were engaged on the annual family hop-picking holiday. Some authorities, like the LCC, were helpless to locate their missing pupils, while some gave way readily, like Ely, which announced that its children could stay away to help harvesting, Huntingdon, which gave "potato holidays", and Norfolk and West Suffolk.⁽¹⁾ All these gave concern to HMIs, particularly the attitude of Ely which raised a storm among MPs, the National Union of Agricultural Workers, educational and child welfare circles, and the Times Educational Supplement.⁽²⁾ The Board of Education remained steadfastly opposed to this misuse of schoolchildren, so the 1939 harvest was gathered in largely without school help. After this, the Home Office issued a clarifying statement laying down four hours as a maximum working day during holiday time and stressing the need for vigilance against exploitation.⁽³⁾

With spring 1940 the pressures increased again; firstly an appeal came from the Ministry of Agriculture for the organised assistance of schoolchildren, preferably in working parties and harvest camps of older boys.⁽⁴⁾ But matters came to a head in Hereford in June. The manpower

(1) B/Edn. E 12A/36

(2) Times Educational Supplement 7 + 14 October 1939

(3) Home Office Letter 804, 755/2, 7 February 1940

(4) Min. of Ag. Circular Letter MPB/5701; Serial No. 173; 22 April 1940

situation was so serious there that the LEA was inundated with requests to release older children, and decided to go ahead in defiance of the law, releasing boys over 12 and girls over 13 until the end of September for a maximum of six hours per day with the consent of the parent or, in the case of evacuees, the house-holder. Hereford had plenty of support, not least from Birmingham, many of whose children were in Hereford: "If the splendid disobedience of Hereford Education Committee compels a more imaginative approach to an urgent problem, it will have been amply justified."⁽¹⁾ "The most astounding flouting of the law I have ever seen," it was called by Sir Maurice Holmes, Secretary to the Board of Education. He went on to say it was "so outrageous that we cannot, I think, possibly pass the matter over "sub silentio" without being privy to gross fraud on the parents of evacuated children. Parents permit their children to be evacuated in the knowledge that they will receive in reception areas the best education circumstances permit. One can imagine their feelings on learning that their children are receiving no education at all, but instead are working on the land."⁽²⁾ High-level backing came from the Home Policy Committee, which authorised the Board to apply the sanction of grant-deduction of £5,000, the equivalent of a 3d to 4d rate. This brought Hereford into line and they withdrew the offending instruction.

Other authorities, like Leicestershire,⁽³⁾ attempted other methods and the pressures on the Board were immediately resumed, led by the Minister of Agriculture, who requested that 14-year-olds be allowed to leave on their fourteenth birthday and that rural school terms be adjusted to coincide with "periods of seasonal pressure." On the first the Board was quite adamant, pointing out that it would constitute a breach of Section 138 of the 1921 Education Act, but on the second it indicated

(1) Birmingham Post 10 June 1940

(2) B/Edn. PS. 16A/34 (Minute of 14.6.40)

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 50/175

that this re-shuffling of dates was already being done.⁽¹⁾ The Board compromised under the mounting pressure by "urging" LEAs to adjust their holidays where necessary, and its next step was to suggest that secondary parties of over-14s could be released during lesson time "under proper supervision," a compromise which roused strong opposition from the Workers' Educational Association, the Trades Unions Congress and the agricultural workers' union. In the following months the situation deteriorated with the increase of acreage, reduction of labour, and demands for food production. Farmers in West Suffolk pushed to, and beyond, the limits of the law in keeping children in the potato fields into December 1940, and an HMI wrote, "As for the Soke of Peterborough, it grants exemptions wholesale under its hoary bye-laws of 1904."⁽²⁾ More and more arguments were pressed on the Board of Education by the Ministry of Agriculture; they anticipated an enormous increase of acreage in 1941, an accommodation famine, a further wastage of available labour to the forces and munitions, and little chance of a continuation of the good weather. The position was put in its baldest terms by the Minister of Agriculture himself at a meeting of the Home Policy Committee in February 1941 when he said, "I am afraid the question really boils down to 'The Three R's' or potatoes."⁽³⁾

Inevitably the pressures on the Board became irresistible the critical point being the potato harvest of 1941. So far the juggling of the school holidays had sufficed, but now they were all used up, immediate help was needed in the fields and the release of schoolchildren was the only hope. The ingenious - but legal - device employed by the Board to meet requirements was to empower LEAs to declare schools "open only to children under 12" because the law demanded attendance "when the school is open for instruction of children of a similar age."⁽⁴⁾ This

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2148/1

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(3) B/Ed. Secretary's Clerks' File 2148 (H.P.C. 41 (15) 1 Feb. 1941)

(4) B/Ed. Memo. to Inspectors NS No. 24 (E) 28 October 1941

tiptoeing the tightrope of expediency continued when the move was embodied, with careful safeguarding, in new Defence Regulations⁽¹⁾ that also empowered LEAs and HMIs to grant exemptions for older children. The final touch was added when the Ministry of Agriculture drew up a new comprehensive insurance scheme, giving the benefits of the Compensation Act to every injured child.⁽²⁾

There had been abuses of child labour for many years but the spotlight of extra-parochial interest did not really come until the war. Whether it was because of the pressures on the food-producing industry or because of a sense of responsibility for evacuees in the country, there emerged, especially from Eastern England, stories of Dickensian ill-treatment and exploitation which went back in tradition to the Water Babies and Lord Shaftesbury. Probably the worst of these abuses was the "gangmaster" system, operating in Fenland and other parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire, and dating back to Napoleonic days. These "gangers" were licensed to recruit and bring in labour at a set price per acre; they were under no supervision and flourished after exemptions were allowed from school attendance. They loaded up to 50 adults and children into an open lorry; they put them to work from dawn to dusk; they used children from 7 to 14; they provided no private sanitation, no proper feeding or washing facilities, and no insurance; they worked children in the early dew-frost, lifting beet and picking sprouts, and until dark lifting potatoes and picking peas. Such children were also employed in weeding, dung-spreading, lettuce-pulling, oat-stooking, thistle-pulling, onion thinning, flax-pulling and carrot lifting.⁽³⁾ Despite the efforts of HMIs, by the end of 1942 in the Kesteven and Holland districts "the forecast of an effective school-leaving age of

(1) Regulations 29 + 30 of Part XII of the Defence (Ag. + Fish) Regulations 1939 S.R.O. 1942 No. 802 of 30 April 1942

(2) Embodied in B/Ed. Circular 1622 6 June 1943

(3) B/Ed. S 632/1053 (21)

twelve had become a fact." As for the effect on the children, their absences persisted for up to 10 weeks at a time,⁽¹⁾ their morale dropped, they became corrupted by the high wages they could earn, bargaining for 8/- a week and 12/- to 15/- for an evening's work,⁽²⁾ they were exposed to mixed gangs low in character and filthy in language, and they were abandoning any training they had received in personal hygiene. When they were in school their interest was dissipated and their discipline disappeared; school was now a hindrance to earning money. Some of them were even known to take a half-day off "from work" to attend school to be measured for supplementary clothing coupons.⁽³⁾ It is not surprising that classroom standards in those areas were adversely and materially affected. Evidence given on 28 July 1943 before the Committee on Wage-earning Children confirmed these stories and was at last committed to paper for responsible consideration.

Blame for this kind of situation did not end with the self-interest of the "gangers" or the cupidity of parents and children and farmers. It rested on communities where the Benchers showed an indifference which made it cheaper to employ a child illegally at 1/- per fine for truancy than to ride a bicycle at night without a light.⁽⁴⁾ It also produced people like the farmer who admitted he had become a Manager to ensure school would be closed when he needed child labour.⁽⁵⁾

However, there was one bright spot in this picture, the Harvest Camps, started in 1940, a great success, supervised by school staff and normally for the older pupils, aged 16 and over. They were meticulously organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Board of Education and the

(1) B/Ed. P/S 22A/22

(2) B/Ed. P/S 22A/38 and P/S 12A/52

(3) B/Ed. P/S 12A/58

(4) B/Ed. P/S 22A/22

(5) B/Ed. P/S 23A/37

National Farmers' Union, increased greatly in scope from 8,000 boys in 250 camps and were of inestimable value to the war effort. The totals given here are for boys and/or girls:⁽¹⁾

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Camps</u> | <u>Campers</u> |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1940 | 250 | 8,000 |
| 1941 | 335 | 12,000 |
| 1942 | 654 | 31,000 |
| 1943 | 1,036 | 66,380 |
| 1944 | 997 | 67,240 |

In evacuation areas the position did not, at first glance, stand comparison with agricultural reception areas, but the presence of growing numbers of children with no schools to attend offered a ready source of labour to urban employers who were often quick to exploit the situation where school attendance officers could not function -- and in some areas did not exist. When a big meeting was held in Manchester to press for the re-introduction of compulsory education, the final resolution recorded how "deeply concerned" were the delegates of the fifty contributory organisations at the increase of child labour.⁽²⁾ As the months went by with war production increasing and the forces expanding it was not only the traditional "on-the-side" jobs (papers, milk, errand boys, helping with shops and barrows etc.) which attracted youngsters, and for which exemptions were being readily granted in places like Plymouth, Sheffield, Leyton, Heston and Isleworth.⁽³⁾ Reports came in of requests from evacuation areas that exemptions be granted for older children approaching their school leaving. In Stoke they were wanted in the potteries in Nottingham by the "Midland Joint Industrial Council of Hosiery Bleachers, Scourers, Dyers and Finishers." These requests were staunchly opposed by the Board of Education, as indeed were all similar cases by all government departments when it was possible to invoke existing laws.

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 16

(2) Manchester Guardian 22 April 1940

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2148/1

Perhaps it is a measure of the awareness and frustration of the authorities at the widespread but unimpeded flaunting of the law that made them so intractable when their case was unimpeachable. Such a case was the seasonal employment of children in pantomimes, applications for which were unyieldingly refused by the LCC on the grounds that a bomb could be defined as "prejudicial to (a child's) physical development," despite the uncontrolled presence of children in the audience. More than this, they even refused licences for a troupe of London children to be taken to Brighton, a place to which thousands of children had been evacuated for safety. (This licence was eventually granted by the Board, but only after consultation at the highest level.) A similar case later on is interesting because it demonstrates how great could be the pressures to compromise, even on the President of the Board himself. This was over a 13-year old Belgian boy who was wanted for playing a 9-year old in Lillian Hellman's play, "Watch on the Rhine." During the protracted consultation, stress was laid on the literary quality and the propaganda value of the play, on the problems facing the boy's refugee father bringing up five children, and the risk, as seen by Equity, of professional unemployment. In the end a complicated compromise was reached which compelled the management to have the boy out of London before black-out.⁽¹⁾

Once the schools were open and compulsory full-time education imposed it not only became that much easier in urban evacuated areas to keep a check on children's activities, but schools could be fairly sure of the backing of the courts. So, from the "rampant" abuse of the system in the early months of the war which Birmingham experienced,⁽²⁾ a more controlled situation followed, punctuated by the regulated use of older children for tasks of national importance, such as the

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 11/257

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

Christmas post⁽¹⁾ and issuing ration books.⁽²⁾

Figures for the number of children involved in employment contrary to laws and bye-laws are virtually impossible to produce. The only relevant ones located were the official returns for holiday and Sunday work. The numbers involved in seasonal work in 1944 were 61,000 (13,600 in 1937) and in Sunday work in 1944, 3,000 (100 in 1937).⁽³⁾ But behind these figures were others, obscured by such factors as school merging and composite registers, unofficial evacuees, clandestine employment at week-ends and after-school jobs, high truancy rates and, in many cases, appalling attendance figures. Here are some typical ones for a tiny 24-pupil Westeven village school where the weekly attendance figures were closely related to getting in the harvest from September to November 1942.⁽⁴⁾

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----|----------|--------|------|----------|
| Week 1 | 4.7 | children | Week 7 | 9.0 | children |
| 2 | 5.5 | | 8 | 20.0 | |
| 3 | 6.5 | | 9 | 23.4 | |
| 4 | 5.0 | | 10 | 20.1 | |
| 5 | 4.3 | | 11 | 21.5 | |
| 6 | 5.0 | | | | |

Typical weekly attendance figures for a neighbouring school of 146 were 39, 62, and 33. In Ely, for October 1940, there were 2,416 absentees out of 11,493.⁽⁵⁾ The number of "exemptions" permitted to leave on their fourteenth birthday made a mockery of the word; for example, they constituted 82 out of 100 in Skegness, 130 out of 180 in Gainsborough, 367 out of 400 in Scunthorpe, with similar proportions in Plymouth, Torquay, Leicester, Hertfordshire and the East Riding.⁽⁶⁾

(1) B/Ed. Administrative Memorandum 418. 1 October 1942

(2) B/Ed. Administrative Memorandum 382. 6 May 1942

(3) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 418 419

(4) B/Ed. P/s 23A/37 (H.M.I. report 1 February 1943)

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 16

(6) B/Ed. P/s 24A/56

(vi) Delinquency

Various reasons have been put forward for wartime delinquency, some of them reminiscent of the causes identified in World War I. They included a shortage of men teachers, Box and Cox schooling, cinemas, relaxation of home discipline, juvenile employment, occupation of premises, and "punitive repression."⁽¹⁾ Bagot's conclusions were drawn from his studies of juvenile delinquency in World War II as well as from World War I, and the most important difference, he deduced, was that, in the 1939 war, "large numbers of children have been without effective school discipline for many months and have thus missed what to very many is the only beneficial influence in their childhood."⁽²⁾ When Carr-Saunders and his colleagues - one of them was ^{H.} Mannheim - were drawing up their conclusions after an investigation into immediate pre-war delinquency, they were interrupted by the outbreak of hostilities and took account of the first part of the war in their findings. Among other things, they concluded that all boys are liable to kick over the traces and succumb, if the opportunity and situation arise, irrespective of such factors as environment and breeding; they added, "This sort of delinquency seems likely to increase in periods of disturbance, such as during evacuation for example, and to decline when the life of the community is tranquil."⁽³⁾ This idea was put forward later by Watson: "Evacuation brought many evils in its train. Tiny children were parted from their mothers; older children, secure themselves from bombing, were tortured with anxiety for their parents' safety, or with misery in the belief that they had been sent away because they were not loved and not wanted Delinquency increased. What else could one expect?"⁽⁴⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 11/114

(2) Bagot J. "Juvenile Delinquency" (Cape 1941) p. 90

(3) Carr Saunders A. R. Young Offenders (C.U.P. 1942) p. 152

(4) Watson J. A. The Child and the Magistrate (Cape 1950) p. 32

The "Dead End Kids" of West Ham as described by Ritchie Calder,⁽¹⁾ the "running wild" which became a journalistic cliché - it was used as a leader heading in The Times,⁽²⁾ these became associated mainly with urban areas where the children had less access to schools and more temptation to petty crime. Basil Henriques sat for 8½ hours one day in his East End Juvenile Court early in the war, and all the cases that passed before him were "by-products of the evacuation; one of the most disquieting features was that the black-out, the closing of the schools, and the limitation of attendance at juvenile clubs, was producing serious moral delinquency among adolescent girls."⁽³⁾ By May 1941, in answer to a parliamentary question, Kenneth Lindsay was referring to the "dislocation of family life and normal education" in connection with "the alarming growth of juvenile delinquency among children of school age."⁽⁴⁾ Although the Child Guidance Council claimed that the increase was part of a ten year trend, Katherine Wolf's investigation led her to conclude, "it would still seem plausible to infer that evacuation does have some negative influence on the moral behaviour of children."⁽⁵⁾ There can be no denying the statistics available, which show a 28% increase of offenders under 14 in 1939, a 62% increase from January to April 1940, and a 33% increase for May to August 1940.⁽⁶⁾ In Glasgow the figures for juvenile convictions were twice as high in 1940 as over the 1936-1938 period.⁽⁷⁾ The 1941 figures for the whole of Scotland showed an increase of 3,500 cases of juvenile delinquency (22%). Generally speaking, 1941 saw the crest of the wartime delinquency rate, as indicated by this abstract:⁽⁸⁾ (See also Appendix 3)

(1) Daily Herald 25 October 1939

(2) The Times 25 October 1939

(3) Ritchie Calder op.cit. pp. 154-155

(4) Schoolmaster 8 May 1941

(5) Wolf K. A. Evacuation, in Psychoanalytic Study of Child (Imago 1945) p. 396

(6) B/Wd. Circular 1554 June 1941

(7) Titmuss op.cit. p. 148

(8) Memo. to Inspectors 13 May 1943

Offences (Children under 15) brought before Juvenile Courts

| | <u>Nos.</u> | <u>% increase on 1938-1939</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Sept. 1938 to Aug. 1939 | 16,208 | - |
| " 1939 " 1940 | 22,905 | 41 |
| " 1940 " 1941 | 25,604 | 53 |
| " 1941 " 1942 | 21,723 | 34 |

There appears to be a certain degree of inconsistency between those figures and these for the LCC, which represent the total number of cases dealt with, covering Care or Protection, Larceny, Beyond Control, etc., and under the Education Act.⁽¹⁾

| <u>Year ending 31 March</u> | <u>Total Cases</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1939 | 4,491 |
| 1940 | 4,609 |
| 1941 | 4,625 |
| 1942 | 5,460 |
| 1943 | 5,417 |
| 1944 | 5,398 |

It must be remembered that large numbers of children were out of London at the beginning of the war and that prosecutions to enforce compulsory attendance came later. Yet there were still plenty of offenders in the streets, as borne out not only by Basil Henriques' court experience but by press reports like this: "Extra police patrols are on duty in North London, at Islington, Holloway and Finsbury Park, because of the activities of gangs of schoolboy bandits Schoolgirls are believed to act as look-outs for the boys."⁽²⁾ That was late in 1939; in early 1940 a Times leader, commenting on a deputation from the WEA to the President of the Board of Education, referred to the serious deterioration of discipline in the East End to the habit of some children going to bed at midnight and rising at noon, and to one magistrate's complaint that they were encouraging "a generation of Artful Dodgers."⁽³⁾ Furthermore, every one of the young East-enders concerned in the "Branch Street"

(1) London Evacuation Record L.C.C. 1946

(2) Daily Mail 20 November 1939

(3) The Times 1 February 1940

survey had been up before the juvenile court.⁽¹⁾ The reasons for all this were reduced by the LCC to three basic factors; the evacuation, with its disruptive effect on home and school, the loss of leisure facilities for older boys, and the effect on home discipline of father going into the forces.⁽²⁾

It is noteworthy that delinquency does not appear to have been so serious in rural areas, presumably because of other distractions, closer supervision by foster families and schools, and the process of self-selection which began originally with the division between those who evacuated and those who stayed, and was continued by the drift back to towns. The Barnett House study of Oxford (a reception area), although it quoted a Probation Officer maintaining that from his experience "separation from home weakened the child's sense of responsibility towards an honest life," concluded, "After a full weighing up of the evidence, we cannot in fairness say that the evacuation was a cause of the increase in juvenile delinquency during the war."⁽³⁾ In Westmorland the authority found that claims of a delinquency increase were exaggerated.⁽⁴⁾ The Norfolk authority, in a memorandum to the Board of Education on attendance and associated problems refuted suggestions that the presence of evacuees was a serious factor in delinquency statistics; they pointed out that during 1941-1942 evacuees before juvenile courts represented only 9.3% of the offenders while the evacuee proportion of the total child population was 12%.⁽⁵⁾ Even in Flintshire, with 5,000 Merseysiders, the HMI maintained that the proportion of "potential criminals" was very small, an opinion which he claimed was

(1) Paneth op.cit. p. 19

(2) London Evacuation Record L.C.C. 1946

(3) Barnett House Group. London Children in Wartime Oxford (U.L.P. 1947) p. 46

(4) Westmorland op.cit. p. 21

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

supported by official information and by the Chief Constable himself, who said, "Generally speaking, their behaviour was good, although in one or two districts complaints have been received some were old offenders."⁽¹⁾ It seems reasonable to suppose that the number of these hard cases in reception areas decreased with the drift back, in fact, we learn in a private report to the President of the Board that evacuated trouble-makers were being sent home by the police and billeting officers.⁽²⁾

In urban areas, especially the large centres of population subject to air raids and school closures, the increase in delinquency over the first two years of the war - as well as the ever-present sight of so many ungoverned children in the streets, shelters, bomb sites, cinemas and amusement arcades - produced a consternation which was reflected in some authorities by a form of panic-reaction. This was exemplified by the Nottingham LRA which recommended that "for six months all boys convicted of doing wilful damage should be birched."⁽³⁾ However excessive this may seem today, the acceptability of the need for such measures in those days can be judged by the following figures for the numbers of boys under 14 ordered corporal punishment by magistrates' courts:⁽⁴⁾

| | | | |
|-------|-----|-------|-----|
| 1939: | 58 | 1942: | 314 |
| 1940: | 302 | 1943: | 165 |
| 1941: | 531 | 1944: | 37 |

Nonetheless, the lasting impression of those days is not so much of extreme retributive action as of responsible attitudes and remedial, ameliorative measures, mostly during the peak year of 1941. The LCC put its faith in the restoration of full-time schooling, Youth clubs, social centres and the pre-services corps.⁽⁵⁾ The North Riding tackled the

(1) B/Ed. 356 B (2) WE (H.M.I. Report 18 December 1939)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(3) Schoolmaster 30 January 1941

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 340

(5) London Evacuation Record L.C.C. 1946

problem "resolutely and successfully" by using six special residential hostels, psychiatrists and social workers for children with social problems.⁽¹⁾ When a conference for JPs and others concerned was convened by the Home Office for 3 April 1941, the Board of Education put forward as a contribution the idea that Child Guidance Clinics might be set up by all large LEAs with delinquency problems.⁽²⁾ The Joint Circular of mid-1941 from the Home Office and the Board suggested that the delinquency rate among schoolchildren could "be diminished by a judicious use of their leisure time in the absence of so many of their parents."⁽³⁾ In March 1941, with special reference to Bootle, where there was wholesale looting of evacuated houses and shops by "swarms of locusts" (aged 8 to 12), and to Liverpool, which had three times the national average of delinquency, play centres were seriously advocated to cope with the situation.⁽⁴⁾ But again and again the basic remedy favoured by those in authority was the same: "We have no doubt that the complete restoration of regular, compulsory, full-time school attendance is the biggest single contribution we can make"⁽⁵⁾

The connections between absence from school and truancy, and between truancy and delinquency may seem self-evident, but, in dealing with the early war years, they are difficult to quantify. When a survey was set up in March 1942 to find reasons for poor school attendance, 40 areas were covered, including Durham, Darlington, West Yorkshire, Dewsbury, Batley, Shropshire, Loughborough and Coventry. The main reasons eventually identified were parental indifference, air raids, lack of interest in school, infectious epidemics, farm work, bad weather

(1) Lindsay op.cit. p. 18

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/274

(3) B/Ed. Circular 1554 and H.O. Circular 807624 June 1941

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 50/279

(5) D.E.S. Ed. 11/248 (Internal B/Ed. Memorandum 28 March 1941)

lack of clothing - and truancy.⁽¹⁾ Considering how many of these reasons could be construed as, merge into, or produce truancy, but were not designated as such, it comes as no surprise to learn that Titmuss found there was no serious increase in truancy during the war.⁽²⁾ But in June 1941, a joint circular from the Home Office and the Board of Education stated that "..... an increase in delinquency among schoolchildren could largely be correlated with their truancy."⁽³⁾

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 419

(3) B/Ed. Circular 1554 and Home Office Circular 807624 June 1941

CHAPTER 9WEST SUSSEX: A CASE STUDY OF A RECEPTION AREA(i) The movement

The highly co-ordinated and refined plans of the Ministry of Health to deploy evacuated schools were disrupted by the government's last-minute decision to telescope the four day operation into three.⁽¹⁾ Yet in mid-July 1939, three months after time-tables had been prepared for the movement of evacuated schools, the Director of Education for West Sussex foresaw the possibility of 'ad hoc' improvisation and included the following in his first evacuation circular: "It appears that in the London area the complexity of the problem of transport is so great that school units on arriving at their entraining stations will have to be despatched by the first available train, irrespective of destination. The same difficulties of transport will arise when the children arrive at the railheads in this area an immediate dispersal to a particular district, irrespective of the type of school available. It will not be known, therefore, until after evacuation has taken place what the allocation of the children will be according to sex and age."⁽²⁾ The county was indeed fortunate in having such a far-sighted administrator, as will be borne out below by evidence to show that West Sussex was to be called on to sustain a proportionately heavier load of official evacuees than any other county in the country. Moreover, it managed to provide better educational facilities than most for its visitors.

To ensure that the most suitable lodgings should be allotted, billeting officers were provided with schedules showing the capacities of the various types of schools in the locality; furthermore, liaison

(1) Lowndes G. A. W. The Silent Social Revolution ^{2nd ed.} (O.U.P. 1969)
pp. 200-201

(2) W/S 116/19/2 (Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 1)

officers of the Education Committee were to be at the railhead during the whole of the emergency period. Certain schools were designated as distribution centres, their staffs being expected to help the billeting authority, and each evacuated teacher was to be given details of the local arrangements and was instructed to contact the nearest headteacher to his billet.

The authority, working on the assumption that the pupil population could well be doubled, decided against school premises being used for ARP purposes. As it would probably be necessary to use the double-shift system, out of consideration for their foster-families and to keep up their morale, the evacuees would have to be kept under educational discipline for the rest of the day, even for the week-end. Various suggestions were put forward to this end, such as communal activities, food production, organised games, regional study and expeditions. To minimise friction, headteachers of evacuated schools would be respected as such, but the local headteacher was to have ultimate responsibility for all arrangement on his premises. At the same time a note of caution was sounded over the difficulties of transporting evacuated children to appropriate schools and the warning was given, "..... it may be necessary for children to attend the school nearest regardless of age range."

At the end of August 1939 the tempo of preparations increased at railheads throughout the county area; for example, in the forecourt of Arundel station a marquee was ready for erection and evacuees would pass through it for dispersal, issuing of rations, etc.⁽¹⁾ As the main evacuation authority the LCC had already made arrangements two months previously for four administrative officers to be installed in West Sussex to deal with their own children.⁽²⁾

(1) W/s 11/25

(2) W.S.C.C. Finance Committee Minutes 290 of 30 June 1939

The bulk of official evacuees arrived by train on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the first three days of September. Hitches were few, and evacuees were ferried by bus to their destinations which were often villages some miles away. As in other parts of the country, the trainloads and busloads were liable to be made up of children of varying ages from different types of schools. Apart from the thousands of trainborne children, about 300 pregnant mothers were brought by coach and billeted in the neighbourhood of the three emergency maternity homes at Slindon, Petworth and Rustington. More of a problem were an unspecified number of expectant mothers who also had young children with them; many were found to be in the last stages of pregnancy and it was subsequently established that there were no fewer than 727 in this category.⁽¹⁾ In addition, three LCC special schools arrived, one for physically handicapped and two for deaf children; all of them were quartered, most happily, in the Riviera Lido holiday camp near Bognor Regis.⁽²⁾ Yet another out-of-the-ordinary group to be delivered were some 200 East-enders who had been on their annual hop-picking holiday in Kent and were sent to Bognor Regis later in September. In this particular case there was adequate warning so it was possible to keep them together in a road of furnished holiday accommodation (mainly old railway carriages) which the local Medical Officer requisitioned and where the Londoners settled in very successfully.

Many private evacuees found their way to West Sussex but it is impossible to calculate their exact, or even approximate, numbers, because they were sometimes included in returns for official parties, or were entered on registers as living locally, or because they were part of the two million people who "stole softly away"⁽³⁾ as war

(1) Report of Chief M.O. of B/Ed. 10 October 1939

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/188

(3) Lowndes op.cit. p. 200

approached and became classed as residents. It was, incidentally, the local Director of Education who had drawn the attention of the Board of Education to its omission of any directive about registration procedure in evacuation instructions, so one could expect registration methods in West Sussex to be at least as accurate as anywhere else.⁽¹⁾ In several village schools no mention can be found of the official scheme; yet one of them, for example, West Grinstead, started the war with 26 local children and 5 private evacuees, and by the end of November 1939 had 30 "locals" and 19 private evacuees.⁽²⁾ Similarly, no attempt was made to identify the status of the extra 45 girls who joined the 198 on roll at the Horsham High School for Girls; they were merely referred to as "mostly self-evacuated."⁽³⁾ The coastal resorts also proved predictably popular (one Worthing school alone had 84 private evacuees),⁽⁴⁾ and under the heading "It's an ill wind" a local newspaper editorial was built around the report of a Littlehampton landlady's pleasure at booking two London families for a one year's stay. A further clue to the social class of many of the private evacuees can be found in the news that Charlie Kunz, a "star" of the entertainment world, opened a new country club near Bognor Regis to overcome the newcomers' problem of where to go on an evening.⁽⁵⁾

Although the national trend of evacuees drifting back was true of West Sussex there are indications that it was not so pronounced here as elsewhere. One can understand this being so with groups like pregnant mothers or handicapped children. It was also according to the national pattern that there was little wastage among secondary pupils like the

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(2) W/S E 95A/12/1

(3) W/S E 102A/1/2

(4) E/Ed. 258 B (2)

(5) Bognor Regis Post 21 + 28 September 1939

girls at Horsham. But this apparent reluctance to return home was also noticeable in other kinds of schools, like the Balham children at North Lancing and at the village of Boxgrove where all the original 59 children from Tooting, Croydon and Wimbledon still remained in mid-December; not only that, but many of them had persuaded friends to join them from other reception areas.⁽¹⁾

Subsequent to the first evacuation West Sussex experienced some problems which were common to other reception areas and some which derived from its geographical position. In April 1940, when billeting schedules were being drawn up for the next scheme, the Director learnt that all over the county the system was "in serious danger of breaking down," that the voluntary system had failed. One example given was the village of Singleton, near Chichester, scheduled to take 40 children and where only four householders had responded.⁽²⁾ One is tempted here to wonder if there is any connection between these figures and the concealed numbers of private evacuees occupying previously earmarked rooms at over the official rate of 10/6 for one child or 8/6 each for two or more. After Dunkirk there was not only an influx of evacuees into the rural and western areas of the county through 1940 and 1941 including some from such new danger zones as Portsmouth and Plymouth, but a new evacuation area, the south-east coastal strip stretching as far west as Littlehampton, was designated as the potential invasion zone. The concentration of troops into this zone and its hinterland made the job of billeting officers even more difficult. For example in August 1940 the Fulborough official complained that troops had been billeted on most householders in the villages of Bramber, Beeding and Steyning.⁽³⁾ During this period there came what the Director referred to as "the infiltration into West Sussex of fairly substantial numbers of children from a huge

(1) Schoolmaster 14 December 1939

(2) W/S 11/25

(3) Ibid.

variety of administrative areas."⁽¹⁾

This last reference, taken with the national estimate of 2,000,000 private evacuees just before the war, and the destruction by enemy action of the bulk of wartime records at Chichester, account for the impossibility of producing reliable statistics for the West Sussex area. Furthermore, the authority, expecting an estimated 100,000 evacuees, was already worried well before the war as to how many holidaymakers would stay on in "safe" areas.⁽²⁾

In the event, only about 20,000 evacuees materialised, officially, that is.⁽³⁾ Naturally, the main detraining point was Chichester, the administrative centre, where 2,940 children with 290 teachers and helpers arrived on Friday, 1 September. Of these, 1,380 were distributed by bus to neighbouring villages, the rest being billeted locally. The experience of Chichester on the Saturday illustrated the results of the disappointing turn-out of evacuees, the reduction from four to three days of the movement period, and the consequent re-shuffling of trainloads. Instead of the expected 17,000, including 9,000 mothers with children, only 5,000 came. The first train to arrive should have been full of schoolchildren, but the reception party were confronted by 400 mothers with babies and tots. On the Sunday, the day war broke out, 2,940 were due to arrive but only 1,050 actually detrained.⁽⁴⁾

The effect on the elementary school population of West Sussex over the first four years of war can be seen from these figures:⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) W/S Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 52 3 Jan. 1941
 - (2) W.S.C.C. Emergency Committee Minutes 13 June 1939
 - (3) Sussex Daily News 25 May 1940
 - (4) Portsmouth Evening News 1, 2, + 4 September 1939
 - (5) D.E.S. Ed. 60/553

| | | | |
|----------|------|--------|-----|
| March | 1938 | 20,678 | (1) |
| July | 1941 | 27,723 | |
| December | 1942 | 24,443 | |
| October | 1943 | 23,494 | |

The secondary school population rose by about 2,000 to 4,630⁽²⁾ and, as elsewhere, the wastage by homeward drift was less than among the elementary schools. 1,700 out of the 2,000 were still here in Sussex the following March.⁽³⁾ In Arundel, however, half of the 400 elementary evacuees had returned home,⁽⁴⁾ and the original overall total of 20,000 evacuees was down to 13,000.⁽⁵⁾

Returns from all reception areas in the middle of March 1940 showed some interesting features regarding the comparative situation in West Sussex; the five areas in the country with the highest number of evacuees were as follows:⁽⁶⁾

| <u>LEA</u> | <u>No. of Evacuees</u> | <u>No. not receiving full-time education</u> | <u>Total no. of children in district</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Kent | 13,472 | 20,365 | 57,264 |
| Somerset | 12,772 | 5,690 | 47,472 |
| Herts. | 12,698 | 528 | 43,037 |
| West Sussex | 12,297 | 309 | 33,694 |
| Essex | 11,088 | 5,035 | 42,750 |

The table shows that West Sussex had the highest number of evacuees to its own native population and that it had the best record for full-time schooling. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the schedule was produced in April 1940 of the LEAs which were overloaded with evacuees, four of the locations identified were on the West Sussex coast, two of them, Worthing rural district and Shoreham being 100% over the Ministry

(1) B/Ed. Ed. 443 (A)

(2) W.S.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 8 November 1939

(3) W.S. Report of S.E.O. 18 Mar. 1940

(4) W.S. 11/25

(5) Sussex Daily News 25 May 1940

(6) D.E.S. Ed. 11/280

of Health allocation.⁽¹⁾

As far as can be ascertained, the official overseas evacuations to the Dominions and the USA had little effect on the situation in West Sussex. This does not mean that no-one wanted to go, for over 3,000 applications were made as soon as the scheme was publicised. It was not so much this figure as the required number of escorting staff, 200 at the proposed ratio of 1:15, which prompted the Director to write to the Board of Education at the beginning of July 1941. He pointed out that West Sussex was "one of the largest reception areas in the country" with a considerable evacuee population and a high proportion of small, wide-spread, rural schools manned by overworked teachers.⁽²⁾ No trace can be found of the reply, but the Director's representation was apparently successful for the next local circular a few days later stated that no teachers would be released for escort duties.⁽³⁾ Although some local applicants had the necessary medical inspection⁽⁴⁾ none seems to have been evacuated, and the only mention of anyone from the locality going overseas was among the survivors of the ill-fated "Benares" whose loss brought the official scheme to an abrupt stop. This was a Egnor Regis mother who was privately evacuating herself and her three children to join relatives in Montreal.⁽⁵⁾

(ii) Educational Effects

To anyone looking back after over 30 years to this period with its huge classes and so many all-age schools, the sheer fact of absorbing so many extra thousands of children is astounding. The teaching spaces

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/248

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/244

(3) W/S Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 37 10 July 1940

(4) W/S E 171/12/1

(5) Daily Herald 23 September 1940

available were obviously completely inadequate, so the solution reached in West Sussex was mainly the double-shift system, supplemented by whatever extra premises could be found. It would be no exaggeration to say that most village halls and church halls in the county were utilised, but even that was not enough, and the luck of the draw had some evacuated children in strange and contrasting classrooms. Some found themselves in the clubroom of North Mundham's village pub,⁽¹⁾ some in the Petworth Town Hall, some in Lord Leconfield's stately home,⁽²⁾ some in a cathedral Sub-Deanery Hall,⁽³⁾ some Peckham girls occupied the Ashington Scouts Hall,⁽⁴⁾ while some worked in a Bishop's Palace⁽⁵⁾ and some Roman Catholics found sanctuary in the lady of the manor's reading room at Stoughton.⁽⁶⁾ Nevertheless there were countless stories of gross overcrowding of schoolrooms and of several classes sharing the same room.

The distribution of the main weight of the influx of evacuees was mainly across the many all-age, voluntary, village schools, and the increase in some individual school populations may seem rather frightening. The little 23-strong Slinfold Haven school had 42 evacuees,⁽⁷⁾ Stanstead (40 locals) had 67,⁽⁸⁾ Sutton and Bignor (30 locals) had 66 (13 of them unofficial), rising to 75 after two weeks because more private evacuees turned up.⁽⁹⁾ Pagham school (66 locals) took in 63,⁽¹⁰⁾ Heyshott (47 locals) took 52,⁽¹¹⁾ Nutbourne (16 locals) took

(1) W/S E 141/12/1

(2) W/S E 149 (B) /12/4

(3) W/S E 35F/12/2

(4) W/S E 9/12/2

(5) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(6) W/S E 189/12/2

(7) W/S E 176/12/2

(8) W/S E 189 (a)/12/1

(9) W/S E 191/12/2

(10) W/S E 146/12/2

(11) W/S E 101/12/2

21,⁽¹⁾ Bepton (29 locals) took 73 (private evacuees),⁽²⁾ Stoughton (48 locals) took 32 (12 private ones),⁽³⁾ and Petworth Infants (66 locals) took 65.⁽⁴⁾

Figures for towns are more difficult to obtain, but according to the local HMI, Worthing's local 4,207 children were augmented by 4,958 in September 1939. One junior mixed school of 321 received 336 and a junior mixed and infants' school of 202 received 400; "absurd," commented the Inspector, "saturation point has been reached."⁽⁵⁾ Bognor Regis had 1,133 evacuees in residence on 8 September 1939, and on the same day Southwick had 1,055.⁽⁶⁾

Behind figures like these are stories of fragmentation of evacuated schools which explain to some extent how jealous these schools were of their identity once they had gathered their pupils together into homogeneous groups. The Director of Education commented on this in one of his circulars and on 25 September 1939 wrote a detailed letter to the Board of Education analysing the reason for this, attributing it originally to the way his liaison officers were ignored and over-ridden by the distributing officers.⁽⁷⁾ But even he was not yet aware of the scale of the problem, for there was also the allied and growing complication of private evacuees from various LEAs. West Sussex had, of course, its share of peculiar problems, like the fragmented Jewish school, the technical and domestic science students,⁽⁸⁾ the RC school which lost its

(1) W/S E 155/12/2

(2) W/S E 17/12/1

(3) W/S E 189/12/2

(4) W/S E 149/12/2

(5) B/Ed. 258 B (2)

(6) W/S (Not classified)

(7) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(8) B/Ed. 258 B (2)

teachers and took until 22 February 1940 to re-assemble in Boscombe,⁽¹⁾ or the strange story of the LCC head-teacher at Petworth who gathered a conglomerate group of London children round him, took over a local hall, defied every attempt to dislodge him, and was only defeated when the army moved in after Dunkirk.⁽²⁾ Life was complicated even more for reception schools and the local LMA by the number of contributory schools and LEAs. The range here was enormous; at one end was a Worthing junior school receiving children from 10 South London schools,⁽³⁾ and a tiny village school which took in 35 children from 13 London schools, infant, junior and senior.⁽⁴⁾ At the other end were the amazing figures of 120 schools represented among the evacuees in a Lancing senior school⁽⁵⁾ and 336 children from 127 schools in a Worthing Junior school.⁽⁶⁾ It is impossible to find out how many of those evacuees were single, privately evacuated individuals. A glimpse into the Managers' Minute book of a small school gives, perhaps, an indication of where some of them went to, the way a school register could conceal domestic movements, and how dreadfully difficult it must have been for administrators to keep a check on their populations. This particular book, for Fishbourne village school, near Chichester, shows that in September 1939 the total on roll was 104, made up of 57 local children and 47 evacuees from 14 different schools. In December 1940 the roll totalled 101, but this time it was made up of 82 locals and 19 evacuees. While these cannot be claimed as typical proportions, this school is far from being an isolated example of the increase, for no apparent reason, in the number of "local" children, especially in small communities.⁽⁷⁾

(1) W/S E 189/12/2

(2) W/S E 149 (c)/12/1

(3) B/Ed. 258 P (2)

(4) W/S E 64/12/3

(5) W/S 11/25

(6) B/Ed. 258 P (2)

(7) W/S E 85/1/1

"It must be admitted that this is one of those small village schools which would benefit by the transfer of the 11-plus pupils to a Senior School."⁽¹⁾ This was part of the Diocesan Inspector's pre-war report on one of the many little Church of England village schools. He had no idea when he wrote this how many extra hundred bona fide senior pupils would soon find themselves in these country classrooms. The fate of the luckiest and unluckiest of them was laid down in the LCC circular which told reception LEAs that London central school pupils could be educated in reception secondary schools provided they passed the entrance tests and provided their parents paid the fees, otherwise they had to attend elementary schools.⁽²⁾ Many central and senior school pupils were fortunate enough to be in or near the re-organised schools of larger towns like Lancing, Shoreham, Horsham and Bognor Regis, many managed to keep going in smaller groups, many had to merge into all-age village schools,⁽³⁾ and some, like the ones at Ashington,⁽⁴⁾ were re-billed near a senior school. The local authority appreciated what this could mean to the future of the young people and purchased two second-hand motor coaches and 100 cycles for "conveyance of senior children from country districts."⁽⁵⁾ The cycles (and protective clothing) were distributed to isolated pupils, sixty of them in the outlying villages around Storrington.⁽⁶⁾

Initially, secondary schools fared little better over keeping their identity during the evacuation. The letter ~~from~~ the Director to the Board of Education about this was given serious attention there and used

(1) W/S E 150/12/1

(2) W/S E 11/25

(3) W/S E 21/1/3

(4) W/S E 9/12/2

(5) W.S.C.C. Finance Committee Minutes 16 February 1940

(6) Sussex Daily News 25 May 1940

in subsequent deliberations about how and where to move secondary schools in future evacuations. He showed how educational considerations were over-ruled at railheads, how social considerations were ignored so that secondary girls were put in "houses which were obviously unsuitable," and how, after three weeks, he still had two evacuated secondary schools on the "unemployed list," being too scattered and distant from secondary facilities.⁽¹⁾ But here in West Sussex, as in other parts of the country, secondary schools were more determined and successful in re-grouping and re-gaining something like normality. The 380-strong Streatham girls' school overcame its billeting troubles and soon was working normally in Chichester, apart, that is, from spending half the day in the local girls' high school and the other half in the Bishop's Palace.⁽²⁾ The Henry Thornton secondary school for boys from Clapham was so utterly dispersed, one group of 67 boys and 7 masters being sent to a little village school,⁽³⁾ that it took eight weeks to re-assemble them in Chichester, but "from that time the school maintained an education that equalled peace-time standards, and, later, with smaller classes, probably excelled it." Their re-settling, incidentally, furnished one of the rare examples of the use of compulsory powers for billeting.⁽⁴⁾ An interesting post-script on the secondary situation can be found in a letter from the Director to the Board of Education late in 1941. "Owing to the presence of LCC secondary schools at the two High Schools in Chichester, and the consequent pressure on the accommodation, the West Sussex schools have become full, with the result that the question arises of arranging for the admission of children of the West Sussex parents to London Secondary

(1) D.E.S. Bd. 10/245 (Letter of 26 September 1939)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(3) W/S B 146/12/2

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

Schools for the present ,....."(1)

Although the drift back gradually eased the accommodation problem in the area the changing war situation brought its own complications with the military gradually taking over more premises. This was worrying the Director in March 1940. Pointing out that Bognor Regis, for example, was full to capacity with evacuees and soldiers, he put forward a list of 54 premises he wanted to earmark.⁽²⁾ But once Dunkirk fell the army did not stop at taking over locals halls in use by the schools. Now that this hitherto quiet corner of England found itself in the front line, the following examples are typical of the way West Sussex schools found themselves directly involved in the war. Pagham school house was commandeered by the Beds. and Herts. regiment which also moved two tanks into the playground, took over and padlocked the boys' toilets, and surrounded the school with a barbed-wire entanglement.⁽³⁾ On 15 August 1940, the little village school of Poling, inland from Littlehampton, was taken over by the army. The 45 children (local and evacuee) were transferred into the vicarage, but this only lasted three days until heavy air raids caused a complete closure. Nothing is known until 14 October when the school was occupying two bedrooms of a council cottage, one with a class of ten, the other with seven; the rest of the school had evacuated themselves. It is with some admiration for the teachers that we learn, on the vicar's visit, "work was proceeding quite smoothly and efficiently." What was a heroic little story in its own way ended on 1 November 1940 when the extreme danger of the situation compelled the authorities to close the "school" and send the children to a nearby village school. It should be added that this particular village was quite remote, the only possible military objective being some electricity

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 53/507

(2) W/S 11/25

(3) W/S E 146/12/2

pylons.⁽¹⁾

There were, of course, the occasional non-co-operative teachers, like the LCC teacher who was most unhelpful at Heyshott,⁽²⁾ or the one who refused to take a class at East Dean because it was too isolated,⁽³⁾ but these appear to be the exceptions that prove the rule. For the average teacher life was more than mere classroom instruction; the Director gave a detailed report of teacher involvement with every kind of livestock breeding, from piglets to goats and from bees to Angoras, and with every aspect of farm work from the fields to pest control. In a series of local circulars teachers were being constantly urged to make their personal contributions to ARP, First Aid, herb collecting, Home Guards, wool-gathering, aircraft identification and scrap collecting. That they did this in full measure was evidenced in the reports of the Director and the HMI⁽⁴⁾ that in January 1941 174 men were in the Home Guard, over 200 in First Aid, large numbers in Civil Defence and ARP and very many in other forms of voluntary service.

All these could not, of course, be done within restricted, or even normal, school hours, and in the early days it had been emphasised that the term "recreational" was an unfortunate choice for out-of-classroom activities; it did not mean "makeshift," but keeping the children under normal conditions and discipline.⁽⁵⁾ As the months and years went on it became clear that most teachers were working long and hard, whether at a girls' high school where they were "taxed to the utmost"⁽⁶⁾ or an all-age village school of 29 which received 73 evacuees and whose Headmistress

(1) W/S E 150/12/1

(2) W/S E 101/12/2

(3) W/S E 64/12/3

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 14

(5) W/S Evacuation + ARP Circular 8 27 September 1939

(6) W/S E 102 A/1/2

eventually succumbed to "nervous debility."⁽¹⁾ Even harder pressed were those teachers who found themselves in a residential capacity. The HMI who visited the LCC schools for handicapped girls at a Selsey holiday camp was extremely concerned at what he found; teachers had half an hour free after tea, half an hour for meals, from 7.30 to 10 two evenings out of three and one day off in seven; apart from that they were on permanent 24-hour duty. They complained bitterly about having to pay 12/- per week for their keep, some of them even withholding their payment to the LCC. The HMI agreed with their stand and expressed his fears that some of the elderly staff would collapse under the unrelenting strain.⁽²⁾

Even the school holidays, usually a time for rest and recuperation and more precious under wartime conditions than ever, were not safe, the first to suffer being the evacuated schools whose Christmas holiday in 1939 was cut to one week.⁽³⁾ But when the military situation deteriorated in the summer of 1940, contact between child and school had to be uninterrupted, and parents and foster-parents had to be given some relief, so schools were kept open, for evacuees and locals alike. The routine was the same in most schools, with teachers having a fortnight's holiday in turn, half the children attending every morning and half in the afternoon, for what were called "recreational sessions." The most popular activities were handicrafts, folk-dancing, singing, story telling and games. As one headmistress recorded, "Holiday school was very successful but neither pupils nor teachers can begin the new term with the same freshness"⁽⁴⁾ For summer 1941, it was decided to have two weeks at the end of June then a later summer holiday from 29 August to 5 October. But on return from the fortnight's break the following entry

(1) W/S E 17/12/1

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 50/188

(3) W/S Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 17

(4) W/S E 189/12/2

was made in a school log book: "There will be no more summer holidays. The Board of Education have issued a circular asking teachers to mind and nurse the children during the holiday period."⁽¹⁾

With the staffing situation worsening, mainly because of the call-up, a curious situation developed in West Sussex which was eventually brought to the attention of the Board of Education. The first signs of how desperate the situation was becoming came at the end of 1940 when the Director formally asked the Board to relax its attitude on the appointment of unqualified teachers. The local HMI had already made a report that was extremely sympathetic to the LEA, and he was soon authorised to approve such appointments, providing he was satisfied that the authority had tried and failed to secure a qualified teacher. The particular example used was the village school at Pittleworth, crowded with evacuees, critically short of staff and where the headmaster's wife was trained and willing to take cookery. Under the new dispensation she was appointed. The next development early in 1941 was when the Chairman of the County Council intervened personally by contacting a friend at the Board of Education. He was deeply concerned at the "serious crisis" in staffing elementary schools and furious at the "supplementary" rate of payment offered to unqualified teachers (as opposed to the "uncertificated" rate); "less than the pay of my housemaid," he called it. This intervention prompted the Board to make a study of the situation. What they found was that on 27 May 1941 pupils in West Sussex totalled 27,235 (19,101 locals and 8,134 evacuees) with 1,032 teachers (636 locals and 396 evacuees). This meant that the ratio for local teachers was 1:30, slightly better than the national average of 1:31, and the ratio for evacuees was 1:21, not only far better than the national average but the most favourable in the whole country. The overall ratios of the neighbouring counties were 1:28 for West Sussex and 1:32

(1) W/S E 176/12/2

for Hampshire, compared with 1:26 in West Sussex. The anomaly of this situation led to an investigation as to how an area with so many teachers could be in such a plight. Three main reasons were put forward: the first was the acute school accommodation problem which meant that so many small rooms were in use; secondly, with most of West Sussex composed of rural areas whose church schools had not yet been re-organised on the Hadow model, the evacuating LEAs had been anxious to maintain the selective central and senior school education of as many groups as possible, whatever the size. Thirdly, so many evacuated schools opposed merging. This last reason was quite surprising, considering that the report was made as late as 30 June 1942, but the HMI concerned had no hesitation in naming the Croydon authority as being the chief offender. He complained at "the deplorable inability of certain evacuation managers and Croydon to realise what the situation as regarding staffing is." Although he conceded that some of the voluntary school managers were probably Roman Catholic and that this could well complicate the issue, he asked, if the LCC could co-operate then why could not Croydon?⁽¹⁾

(iii) Social Repercussions

Considering the number of evacuees who were deposited in West Sussex there seems to have been surprisingly little unpleasantness. A few cases of anti-social behaviour were reported in the local press, prompting one editor to comment, "..... some of them (South Londoners) were real terrors and I can only sympathise with the poor receivers who have got to put up with them."⁽²⁾ On the other hand, there were some unsocial natives, like the lady with six servants who appealed (unsuccessfully) to be rid of her visitors.⁽³⁾ Within the schools themselves the

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 60/553

(2) Bognor Regis Post 9 October 1939

(3) Brighton Evening Argus 2 April 1940

occasional, isolated case was reported, like the evacuated mother who burst into a village school and assaulted the headteacher for caning her son for abuse.⁽¹⁾ What appears to be the only HMI report of its kind to come out of West Sussex referred to two unfortunate situations, both in Worthing. One was about the behaviour of 350 children from the Norwood Children's (Residential) Public Assistance Committee School. They were difficult cases under normal circumstances, some being habitual thieves, and in Worthing they produced a wave of pilfering, 18 of them appearing before the local juvenile court. But here in Sussex the trouble did not persist beyond the first month, thanks largely to the effect of the billets they stayed in. The other case concerned the headteacher of a residential Jewish orphanage (an "unbelievably stupid man" according to the HMI) whose children were allotted to a Broadwater Church of England school on a double-shift basis. He tried to squeeze out all the Gentiles who shared with him and even refused to accept any of their private evacuees brought to him as headteacher of the evacuees' shift.⁽²⁾ These instances do not really constitute a catalogue of social problems, and the situation at Bognor Regis confirms this absence of any widespread or persistent outbreak of delinquency. In addition to the hostels for "difficult" children listed in Appendix 4 the Headmaster of the local senior boys school, Mr. F. G. Groves, who was also the Director's liaison officer, recalls that the local billeting officer established yet another hostel for difficult boys in Goodwood House, a private hotel. This means that something like 400 of these problem children stayed in Bognor, yet Mr. Groves, who was also in the Police Reserve, does not recall any particular disruption either in school or town. This may have something to do with the oft-quoted effect on evacuated town children of a rural or seaside environment, and West Sussex had both.

(1) W/S E 101/12/2

(2) E/ED. 258 B (2)

However, this does not take into account the positive efforts made to reduce the risks of mischief-making. The Director of Education identified the problem in one of his early circulars,⁽¹⁾ and gave the lead in counteracting it. The County Library introduced a scheme to provide books for evacuees, both through libraries and schools.⁽²⁾ The Girl Guides started new companies and Brownie packs, seven in Worthing alone, for 250 girls,⁽³⁾ and there were innumerable cases of visiting and local schools combining for social purposes. The range of activities which was undertaken can be appreciated by one report, from one small school near Chichester, of how they occupied the children during a supervised summer holiday. Indoors they had singing competitions, wild-flower arranging, harvest hymns, painting jars, making kettle-holders and aprons, tea parties, sewing, first aid, embroidery and modelling. Out of doors they gathered wild flowers, gardened, planting leeks, cabbages, lettuce etc., they mushroomed, they gathered nuts and blackberries, they went on rambles, they had picnics, they had instruction on poisonous berries, they practised road drill and had sports.⁽⁴⁾

The medical picture in West Sussex was quite favourable when compared with national figures. The evidence seems to indicate not such a high rate of infestation, and what there was seems to have been dealt with promptly and efficiently. Medical staff from the school medical service or general practitioners were at the railheads where unclean children were segregated and dealt with; the method used at one station was to send nit cases to billets where they were cleansed by the district nurse within 24 hours, and to send verminous cases to hospital for a 48-hour cleansing period. At this particular place 20 were segregated

(1) West Sussex Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 8

(2) West Sussex Evacuation + A.R.P. Circular 12

(3) E/Ed. 258 B (2)

(4) W/S E 68/13/2/4

out of 1,728 in one day's operation.⁽¹⁾ Temporary clinics were set up in seven rural districts,⁽²⁾ so that any new cases could be treated. No records have been found to reveal anything like the kind of heavy infestation that attracted so much publicity in other districts. In fact, the Medical Officer of the day, Dr. Michael Ayres, kept his records and showed them to the writer. He recalled receiving complaints of infestation among Petworth evacuees that contradicted official findings. Detailed investigations and inspections were immediately carried out and revealed that the infestation percentages of locals and evacuees were almost identical, at 3.1%. The possibility of re-infestation was confirmed a month after evacuation in a village which was so isolated that school helpers acted as honorary haircutters. Of the seven infected heads that this disclosed, five had arrived clean and the other two had been cleansed on arrival. In the same village, in the following January four scabies cases were discovered.⁽³⁾ There is nothing here, or elsewhere, to indicate to what extent these later cases were caused by re-infestation in the billet, from home visits or visiting relations or in the classroom; or they may even have been later official, or unofficial, evacuees. This pattern was repeated in other villages like West Grinstead,⁽⁴⁾ Pagham,⁽⁵⁾ Nutbourne⁽⁶⁾ and East Dean.⁽⁷⁾

When a cleanliness survey was held in the middle of November 1941 the HMI report for West Sussex revealed some interesting figures. Overall percentages of unclean children were 1939, 2.3%; 1940, 2.4%;

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(2) W/S Medical Officer Report 20 September 1939

(3) W/S E 101/12/2

(4) W/S E 95 A/12/1

(5) W/S E 146/12/2

(6) W/S E 155/12/2

(7) W/S E 64/12/3

1941, 3.1 for local children and 2.4 for evacuees. Scabies showed an increase, but was not as sustained a menace as elsewhere, with 32 cases in 1938, 158 in 1939, 175 in 1940 (86 of them evacuees), and 93 from January to October in 1941 (30 of them evacuees). Impetigo was "considerable," reflecting the national outbreaks: 175 cases in 1938, 692 in 1939 (including 451 evacuees), and 451 in 1940 (227 evacuees).⁽¹⁾ The same report also showed how fortunate West Sussex had been with its school health service, for, apart from one dentist, not a single member had been called up. It was carrying out routine visits in all schools, and operating eight nutrition clinics and nine ordinary clinics. In addition, West Sussex was quite generously treated by the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health and the LCC in its requests for supplementary district nurses, doctors, dentists and dental attendants.⁽²⁾

The question of nutrition had been occupying the Director since well before the war, (one of the older generation of teachers remembers the matter being discussed as far back as 1933) and had ensured that his purpose-built, re-organised schools had integral kitchens and dining halls. But in February 1939 the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education was advised by his officials to make reference to the whole question of under-nourishment on an approaching visit there, and to point out to the LEA that free milk was not enough for serious cases; free meals were necessary. These two apparently contradictory impressions can be reconciled by considering the modes and distribution of schooling in West Sussex where there were comparatively progressive systems in the few towns and large numbers of small church schools across the countryside, all with their own managers and money problems. Later in 1939, the Director made his own approach to the Board to express his unease at nutrition standards in West Sussex and asked for

(1) B/Ed. H 443 A (Report of 16 October 1941)

(2) W.S.C.C. Emergency Executive Comm. Minutes (15 Nov. 1939 and 9 Feb. 1940)

comparative figures for England and Wales. The Board advised him to provide more free meals and free milk, to extend the school meals service, to provide more canteens, and to supply more meals for children with long distances to travel. West Sussex had provided for 575 such children in 1938-1939 while the East Sussex figure was over 2,000. The Director's concern and the Board's influence obviously had their effect, for when the HMI made a visit to wartime Midhurst on 14 September 1939 to see how they were coping with the communal feeding of evacuees he was very favourably impressed. Three centres were already in operation, one for mothers and under-fives in the Youth Centre, one for 160 children in a Women's Institute hut, and one for 100 children in the Priory Stables, Cowdray Park, where they were having an appetising sausage and mash and apple pie at a cost of 4d. per child and 8d. (the cost price) to adults. Whether this was found to be typical or not one cannot say, but it must have been an excellent achievement, almost certainly stemming from the Director's appeal in his first circular that local officials, schools and voluntary organisations should join forces in this way "to materially assist householders."

The subsequent story of school meals in West Sussex is a chequered one of both progress and delay. The official return on 24 January 1940 showed an average daily number of 1,245 meals (131 free) being served to evacuees, usually at 3d. or 4d. except at Bosham where a cup of soup was provided by the WVS for a halfpenny. Meal centres were in an extraordinary variety of places, for as well as the usual village and church halls they included council chambers, a dance hall, an old isolation hospital, a stately home, some almshouses and a vicarage. For 12,000 elementary schoolchildren evacuees (of whom only 26 were receiving free milk) 1,245 does not seem a large total, even though it was claimed that all the local children who had been catered for before the war were also being fed. Furthermore, behind the list of strange dining halls were concealed all the attendant problems of taking children out of school to

eat, as well as a serious shortage of canteen facilities in school buildings. The covering comment of the Clerk of the County Council with this return was, "all existing needs are being met." It was obviously not shared by the Director when he met the H.T. four weeks later, on 22 February. He was extremely worried about nutritional standards and complained that his plans were being hamstrung by the County Council's finance officers. Various reasons suggest themselves for the slowness in implementing a comprehensive policy for school canteens. The evacuee population was dwindling, only 842 daily meals and 58 soups being supplied to them in September 1940; ⁽¹⁾ in many rural areas managers felt that there was no need to supply hardy country children with meals; ⁽²⁾ the administrative and financial nature of the problem did not commend itself to administrators of an area where the school population was spread so thinly; there was consumer resistance, for the tradition of communal meals had not yet become "respectable," and it was not always easy to afford the money from billeting allowance or a farm labourer's pay; finally, the national policy of communal feeding did not develop for some time after the start of the war, and when it did the demands and needs were not the same in areas like West Sussex as they were in industrialised areas.

From a study of school log books of the time the one used here has been selected as typical of the time-lag in making provision in rural areas, although it offers a few more details than usual: ⁽³⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 123/11 42 H

(2) W/S E 59/1/1

(3) W/S E 141/12/1

North Mundham (a village school near Chichester)

- 16.11.1939 - 263 pupils (164 evacuees)
 - 40 willing to pay for meals
 - numbers and requests for stores etc., sent to County Hall.
- 10. 4. 41 - equipment sent
 - hut sent to replace bombed out school
- 1. 8. 41 - inspection of canteen - to recommend alterations
- 12.12. 41 - steamer and utensils arrived
- 13. 1. 42 - canteen supervisor called about electricity
- 16. 1. 42 - pudding basins came
- 6. 5. 42 - canteen in use

In contrast to this was the secondary provision in the urban area of Horsham which, despite an acute accommodation shortage, provided 90 to 90 meals per day in 1938, 140 to 150 at the end of 1939, and 200 in 1942.⁽¹⁾

Canteen provision for all kinds of schools in the county rose substantially in 1941 and an HMI visit on 16 October 1941 showed 51 centres, 20 projected ones, 4,527 children (including 930 evacuees) receiving meals, 2,000 being classed as long distance and 1,000 as under-nourished.⁽²⁾

Canteens began operating in the three Chichester Lancastrian departments on 12 October 1942 and expanded quickly until, in April 1943, "In view of the magnitude of the accounts, the Committee recommended that they should be audited by the Treasurer's Department."⁽³⁾ There-after, and throughout the canteen service, there followed a steady growth in staffing, the number of meals and the financial turn-over. The trend in school milk consumption, although not so well documented, showed a similar rise, the same HMI report showing a 98% provision rate as compared with 54% in February 1939.⁽⁴⁾

If the school meals service received a vital stimulus from wartime demands, it can be claimed that nursery provision in West Sussex owed its very conception to the evacuation. Before the war no nursery schools

(1) W/S E 102/17/1/2

(2) E/Ed. 443 (A)

(3) W/S E/35/19/1

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 123/142 E

existed in the county, but the influx of evacuees included under-fives who came from areas that had provided for them. Some moved into buildings already earmarked, and, as he explained to the writer, the Medical Officer, Dr. Ayres, took over various premises for the newcomers. These were at Midhurst, Crawley, Lancing, Chichester and Bognor Regis. The absorption of the little ones and their staffs into West Sussex is one of the happiest stories of the evacuation. The LCC survey of September 1941 showed the following residential nursery schools still in the county: (1)

| <u>Location</u> | <u>No. of Children</u> | <u>Managing Authority</u> | <u>Pre-war location</u> | <u>Age range</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Steyning | 17 | WEIFS + Strays | S.W.4 | 2 - 5 |
| Lower Beeding | 36 | Voluntary Committee | Battersea | 2 - 5 |
| Petworth House | 44 | " " | S.W.3 | under-5 |
| Bognor Park | 25 | W.S.C.C. | Fulham | " |
| Clapham Rectory | 32 | L.C.C. | S.E.11 | 2 - 5 |
| Rustington | 30 | W.S.C.C. | Paddington | 2 - 5 |

The story of "Denmead" in Bognor Regis demonstrates how a wartime expedient became a peacetime permanency. As Dr. Ayres explained it, the government, from the evacuation fund, started, paid for and proved the value of nursery schools in the county, so that when he said to the committee at the end of the war, "Now we've got the nursery schools established, let's keep them going," his advice was accepted. He was authorised to take over Denmead as soon as its wartime occupants, 40 blind folk, vacated it. Moreover, he opened it for local children with the staff of the original London day nursery school that had come to the town at the beginning of the war and now wished to stay. Denmead is still the local nursery school with the same matron.

The Wartime Nursery scheme also operated in West Sussex and was started, as elsewhere, to help parents and foster-parents of evacuees.

(1) L.C.C. Nursery Schools L.C.C. September 1941

What makes this county different is the way its County Council reacted to the changing role of the centres as evacuees dwindled and war production expanded. It started at the Wartime Nurseries Sub-Committee on 12 June 1942 when allegations were made that not many of the mothers of evacuated children in war-time nurseries were working. As a result of investigations involving 97 mothers it disclosed at the September meeting that only 38 were working. Action followed at the April meeting in 1943 when it was decided to close down the nursery centre at Selsey in spite of a 22-signature petition to keep it going, thus "enabling us to devote our daytime hours to our homes."⁽¹⁾ There cannot have been many places in Britain which actually closed down wartime nurseries as the war effort intensified, but it perhaps reflects the situation and attitudes in a region which featured so many comparatively isolated communities.

At the other end of the school age range the older boys and girls might have been expected, in such an area, to be exploited in the fields, like the children in eastern England. This was not the case, for the School Attendance Officers' records show few such cases, and none at all until October 1941 when three children from Chichester and three from Yapton were reported for potato picking. This could have been because the Education Office was awake to the possibilities and put it plainly in the Director's Circular 20 of 16 February 1940. It might also be attributed to the vigilance and scrupulousness of the village teachers, for it seems from the school log books that very little escaped their attention as to reasons for absence, whether for potato planting, apple picking, beet lifting, or for corn and potato harvesting. As the agricultural labour shortage worsened later in the war any concessions were kept strictly to the increasingly tolerant letter of the law. This is shown by these figures, the only ones of any sort available, for "blue cards," the permits issued for child labour under the new Defence

(1) W/S 6/6/1

Regulation.⁽¹⁾

Cards issued in 1942:

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| Cheshire | 3,000 |
| Gloucestershire | 3,000 |
| Norfolk | 2,358 |
| Herefordshire | 2,311 |
| West Sussex | 1,554 |

One nice little random example of the ever-watchful eye came at the end of the very first week of wartime schooling: "Robert Windebank has been away the whole week helping with the harvest. Some of the men working on their farm have been called up."⁽²⁾ As might be expected, there is no subsequent suggestion that any of the children from this school were exploited in the fields.

This same rural quality of the area was one of the reasons for the siting of new National Camp Corporation schools in the county in 1939. Two places were chosen and as far back as March 1939 the County Council was made aware that long-winded consultation could not be allowed to hold up construction.⁽³⁾ This proved to be the case, for, in spite of a local petition and administrative hitches, work went ahead and both camps were finished in 1940. Wedges Farm and Coopers Farm have both been referred to above (see page 200 et seq.) and it remains here to record what happened to them at the end of the war. There is a certain parallel here to nursery schooling, for both camps were taken over by the West Sussex Authority, Coopers as a recognised special school and Wedges as a residential school for children of West Sussex and Hampshire who would benefit from such an environment.

(1) B/Ed. E 403 (3) 17

(2) W/S E 133/12/1

(3) W.S.C.C. Town + Country Planning Comm. Minutes. 17 March 1939



WEDGES SCHOOL
ITCHINGFIELD
NEAR HORSHAM - - SUSSEX



(iv) The War Front

As a reception area West Sussex was not faced with the educational restrictions of evacuation areas. It was also one of 16 reception areas where no shelter provision proposals had been made before the war.⁽¹⁾ This did not effect the re-opening of schools, which was generally on Monday 11 September. But the fact that the Director issued his circulars under the heading "Evacuation and Air Raid Precautions" shows how conscious he was of his responsibilities towards their children in his county's schools. Fortunately, the "phoney war" allowed for a peaceful spell of schooling, until the war was brought to the doorstep when the Germans occupied the coast of Northern France. Thereafter the area was in the unenviable and paradoxical situation of being largely a reception area with evacuees in its schools but subject to enemy action.

When the raids came they were not confined to the coastal places like Shoreham, Bognor, Pagham and Selsey, but penetrated to Poling, Chichester, and as far inland as the Petworth area. But for every scattered raid there were great numbers of alerts, and these are what caused the greatest total disruption of education. It is rather pathetic to read how the children of Pagham marched and sang to "Sussex by the Sea" during a mock alert of April 1940, and then to follow their fortunes for the next year. "Barbara Holden is being kept away by her mother who will not let her sit in a damp ditch." So wrote the headmistress, and judging by the number of times the children were in and out of ditches and shelters, usually at least once a day, one can sympathise with Mrs. Holden, and the children, and the teachers. But that was not all, for anti-aircraft guns were brought in, and on 7 February 1941: "Loud report of a gun. School shook and wall cracks appeared." It was small wonder

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

that on 12 May 1941 the reason for absences was "lack of sleep."⁽¹⁾ After an autumn which included one period of ten school days with 21 warnings, the winter of 1940-1941 was so consistently interrupted by sirens and sheltering in the adjoining church that it was decided to evacuate. When only 18 children and two teachers were moved (to Doncaster) the school re-opened on 21 March. Within a space of four days there were eleven alerts.⁽²⁾ In Chichester "work was much disturbed by air raid warnings and consequent running to shelters," and not all of the warnings were false alarms, for bombs did fall, the school was damaged and lessons were switched to a church hall.⁽³⁾

One Chichester child was killed in the raid, but far more serious was the direct hit on the boys' school at Petworth which killed 24 children, the Head and one assistant on 29 August 1942. (A poignant reminder of this was the logbook, obviously picked out of the wreckage and unopened until the writer examined it years later, dislodging fragments of earth and glass.)⁽⁴⁾ But more tragic - even though fewer children died - were the events at the holiday camp in Selsey where the LCC had sent a special school of 200 physically defective children. In its own way this became a cause celebre because of the principles and obstacles involved in evacuation policy. The case became closely documented and is put here in its simplest terms. In the early summer of 1940 a searchlight was put in the middle of the camp; protests were made by the Board to the Ministry of Home Security who answered on 25 June, "As regards evacuation policy, there is no proposal at present to make the area concerned an evacuation area, and we know of no reason, therefore, why the children should be moved." By now concern was growing at the

(1) W/S E 146/12/2

(2) W/S E 171/12/1

(3) W/S E 35/11/12/2

(4) W/S E 149 A/12/3

nightly alerts and the siting of guns nearby, and the Board of Education referred it to the Ministry of Health as the evacuating and billeting authority. As a result of the Ministry's representations to the War Office, all Home Commands were circulated with the locality of all such special parties and instructions to keep "legitimate military objectives" away from their vicinities. Meanwhile the LCC was authorised to seek alternative premises for such parties in jeopardy. At the end of July the Education Officer of the LCC on a visit to the camp saw a heavy naval gun being set up a few yards away. More protests were made immediately but still nothing was actually done. Then, on the night of 19/20 August, the night before the Camp Superintendent was going to survey their new location in Cheshire, a single enemy raider dived straight down the searchlight beam, machine-gunned and bombed the camp and killed one cripple boy, one teacher and one secretary. The next day the school was moved to Cheshire.⁽¹⁾

By dint of these fatalities, raids, alerts, fire drills, gas-mask practice and such like the children were confronted by the grimness and reality of war. But they and their teachers, locals and evacuees alike, were also deeply and constantly involved in the war effort. Older pupils dug trenches, erected aircraft and glider obstructions, built coastal defences, were messengers for the LDV (later Home Guard) and WVS, manned telephones, produced local maps and plans, assembled gas-masks and repaired boots, made rifle slings and joined the various Training Corps. Many older girls qualified in first aid, organised fund-raising jumble sales, picnics and fetes, and did cookery demonstrations. A West Sussex school was highly commended by S. P. B. Mais in an early morning food talk on the wireless. So much salvage work was done - clothing, paper, aluminium, rags, bottles, bones, metals, often collected in carts made in woodwork - that the Director described the "variety

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/258

of dumps which have become a common feature of the darker corners of school playgrounds." Knitting sessions were very popular and thousands of mittens, balaclavas, mufflers and socks were produced. Public performances of every kind, from carols to "Saint Joan," were staged to raise money, and great sums poured into National Savings through every school in the county. Every type of gardening, market-gardening, and agricultural work was undertaken. Livestock breeding included chicken, ducks, goats, rabbits, pigs, bees and turkeys. Neighbouring farmers were helped with hedging, ditching, weeding, pea-stick-cutting, caterpillar hunting, oat-stooking, hoeing and singling root crops, dock-pulling and potato lifting. Enormous quantities of herbs and acorns were collected as well as blackberries - several schools picked over 5 hundredweight each - many of them tinned locally. Tomatoes were a favourite product, one junior school at North Lancing, for example, sold over 200 pounds for the Red Cross, and potatoes were produced prodigiously, half a ton a school being quite common. Many school canteens were completely self-supporting in vegetables.

All these efforts were mentioned in the Director's report of 8 October 1940⁽¹⁾ and must have delighted the Chairman of the County War Agricultural Executive Committee. His appeal had been circulated to schools in May 1940 and ended with the words, "See the farmer nearest to you and ask if you can help now. Make full use of the long evenings."⁽²⁾ But more came of this and all the subsequent endeavours then mere statistics in food production. The Director was particularly gratified at how many evacuated schools started their own gardens, and how many evacuees became keen gardeners and came to acquire the outlook of the country child.

(1) W/S PAR/133/25/3

(2) W/S E 116/19/2

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Although many studies have been made of specialised aspects of the evacuation, of particular groups of children, and of certain limited localities, there appears to have been remarkably little work devoted to it in its entirety and with all its ramifications. Apart from the Evacuation Survey (1940) by Padley and Cole and the material in Pitnuss' official Problems of Social Policy (1950), the student must rely on the relevant parts of more general works on educational history. Probably the most useful of these, thanks to his own personal involvement at the Ministry of Health, is in Lowndes' later edition of his Silent Social Revolution (1969). This dearth of material may have been due to the 30-year rule, the writer being one of the first to have access to the Weitzmann collection (see Appendix 1), but it is still surprising that such an important subject has attracted so little serious study. It is more surprising still when one realises, as this study has shown, how great was the impact of the evacuation on the nation as a whole.

There were two main immediate reasons for this. The Ministry of Health completely miscalculated the percentage of the evacuable who would evacuate, and 2 million out of 3½ million decided to stay at home or to go privately. The official mind was unfamiliar with the cohesion of the working-class family and with the power of maternal feelings: Margaret Cole defined the evacuation as "military, middle-class and male." An example of well-meaning bureaucracy at its best is the leaflet, War Emergency, widely distributed at the end of August 1939. This potentially excellent publication was aimed at the densely populated areas, largely working-class; the official details and lists of overnight kit, change of underclothing, etc., which it contained served only to underline

that this sheet of paper was an official instruction for the breaking up of families who probably had no underclothes at all, let alone a clean change. This lack of understanding could well account for some of the thousands who were already registered but never appeared at the assembly points. Moreover, no-one with executive power seems to have anticipated the number of children who would be still on holiday, especially on the hop fields of Kent, or how many thousands were already, or were going to be, privately evacuated, estimated by Titmuss to total 1,808,300.⁽¹⁾

The second basic reason for the confusion that came with the evacuation was the decision to cut the four-day operation to three days, an administrative move that demonstrated the subordination and compliance of the Board of Education and a failure to anticipate the ensuing complications. As the Oxford County Council pointed out, "neither the Board of Education nor the County Council were involved in this scheme; their responsibilities began after the evacuation was complete speaking broadly, no reception scheme was ever made everything had to be improvised."⁽²⁾ The Ministry's mishandling, lack of forethought in compiling statistics, and casual method of fact-gathering produced incredible large-scale "losings" of children.⁽³⁾

The movement of 1½ million evacuees from danger areas and their dispersal to safety zones was without question "a miracle of organisation."⁽⁴⁾ Yet what was a skilful logistical exercise produced confusion in purely human and educational terms. Thus the LCC had the administrative nightmare of dealing with 470 billeting authorities and 73 LEAs,⁽⁵⁾

(1) Titmuss op.cit. p. 546

(2) Oxford C.C. p. 1

(3) Schoolmaster 13 December 1940

(4) Observer 3 September 1939

(5) Ritchie Calder in Evacuation Survey p. 146

and the provision of schooling was so "fantastically inadequate"⁽¹⁾ that technical⁽²⁾ and secondary⁽³⁾ pupils were sometimes to find themselves in areas with no appropriate instruction. This early confusion was bad enough, but added to it were the miscalculation of numbers remaining in evacuated districts, the drift, the huge numbers of private evacuees and the revelation of the plight of some of the poorer children. All of these contributed to the longer term human and educational upsets which will be dealt with below.

Lessons were learned, however, from the mistakes of the 1939 evacuation movement, and the Board of Education's instructions for the second evacuation were a great improvement. Contingency plans were made for secondary and technical schools, special arrangements were included for Roman Catholics, and movement schedules were amazingly comprehensive, including train times for departure and arrival, specified destinations, and the LEAs and numbers of passenger involved.⁽⁴⁾

The movement, or non-movement, of large numbers of children related directly to the different basic problems that arose in the three types of zones into which the country was originally divided. The neutral areas were least affected, except where they were adjacent to evacuation areas, when they suffered from enemy air activity or when they were re-zoned. The reception areas first took the brunt of the arrival of evacuees and then, usually under conditions of over-crowding, had to undergo the seemingly endless process of arrivals and departures, official and unofficial. The evacuation areas had the initial problem of many children, few teachers and no schools, and then the double task of trying to move their children to safety while providing schooling

(1) New Schoolmaster 7 October 1939

(2) Ibid. 14 October 1939

(3) A.M.A. 1940 Year Book p. 35

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

for those who were evacuated, those who would not go, and those who came back home.

The effects of the evacuation on the education service were widespread and, in view of subsequent developments, one of the most important was the way the evacuation revealed and reflected the pre-war situation. Relevant aspects included the exposure of such features as the contracting educational budget, the status of the Board of Education, the administrative problem of Part II and Part III Authorities, the Dual System and Hadow re-organisation. The general impact of evacuation on the actual schooling of children in the early years of the war was manifest in the confused and disorganised provision which caused such great concern. The result of this was felt in a general lowering of standards and a reduction in educational opportunities, despite the efforts of the teachers, who came out of their ordeal with considerable credit, and despite the inspirational advantages that came with a new environment and the need to improvise.

Education's share of the gross national product had fallen from 2.04% in 1933-1934 to 1.90% in 1938-1939.⁽¹⁾ Consequently progressive ideas and reforms had been increasingly inhibited by economy drives and war preparations. The results of this were shown up by the evacuation and added fuel to the arguments of those who raised their voices in protest at the deficiencies in the service.

The lowly status of education was demonstrated by its subordination to the Ministry of Health in the evacuation and by the frequent relegation of schoolchildren below other classes of billetees, such as civil servants, HM Forces, and war workers. Furthermore, they were

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 71

often elbowed aside by the other nine billeting authorities like the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Supply and Ministry of Works. Even these took second place to the Admiralty, War Office and R.A.F. for, since there was no centralised authority, the military always took priority. This happened frequently as far as schools were concerned, sometimes unfeelingly, occasionally brutally. A graphic example of this was the headmaster who very properly refused to hand over his keys to a young subaltern. The officer drew his revolver and threatened to blow in the lock. The headmaster quailed and lost his school.⁽¹⁾ Too often local executive committees contained the same dignitaries as sat on the Education Committee and they asserted their own ideas of priorities, which too commonly demoted education. It is sad to reflect that even towards the end of the war disparaging attitudes were still being shown to the Board. At a conference on the preparation of the Official War History it transpired that Titmuss had already written 67,000 words dealing with the evacuation for his volume; whereupon, in the words of the representative of the Board of Education, "..... I protested rather strongly that evacuation could not be dealt with by Mr. Titmuss only, as he necessarily writes mainly from the Ministry of Health point of view and that the evacuation of schoolchildren was essentially a matter which should have its history written from the standpoint of the Board, having regard to the immense repercussions, not only at the time, on the educational system, but on public opinion which assisted materially the formulation of the present reforms."⁽²⁾

Another feature of the service shown up in all its anachronistic weakness by the evacuation was the out-of-date machinery of the Part II and Part III authorities. This was brought home on the administrative level when education offices found themselves having to correspond and

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 67

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/252

make financial adjustments with their counterparts in so many other offices. At the classroom level it became painfully apparent when thousands of children from Part II Authorities were deprived of a proper education by being evacuated to Part III Authorities. As was pointed out to the Board during consultation on reconstruction, what chance did the Holland Division of Lincolnshire have of making comparable provision to Surrey when their yield per head of population from a penny rate was 1/11d. and Surrey's was 9/10d?⁽¹⁾

The evacuation also confirmed that the Dual System was a great stumbling block to educational reform, and how far the country still was from being able to make a uniform advance. Many an evacuated teacher was staggered when he experienced what Dent called "abominable physical conditions condoned and perpetuated by organised religion."⁽²⁾ He was referring particularly to the 92% of non-provided elementary schools that were at least 40 years old.

The other, and related, weakness in the system exposed by the evacuation was the unevenness of the re-organisation recommended by the Hadow Report. When war broke out 61% of elementary schoolchildren were in re-organised senior units,⁽³⁾ representing possibly the most notable progress in the educational field in the years before the war. The high proportion of unre-organised voluntary schools was in rural districts, many of them in old, poor and decaying buildings, and the consequence of this is best illustrated by the LCC's experience as the main evacuating authority. While it had 79% of its senior children in re-organised schools, the rural areas which largely absorbed its evacuees only had 29.6% of the same age group similarly placed. It is small wonder that many older London children never recovered from this set-back.

(1) B/Ed. 2152 (3) 57 (Memo. of December 1972)

(2) H. C. Dent A New Order in English Education (U.L.P. 1942) p. 23

(3) B/Ed. 2170 (1) (Dept. Memo. to R. A. Butler 11 December 1942)

For a large proportion of the children and their teachers education as they had known it ended with the evacuation. Instead, there were empty or over-crowded schools, and most children either had no education or attended on a part-time basis. The dislocation persisted and was stirring public and professional opinion by the end of 1939. Under the headline "THE SCHOOL MUDDLE" the Daily Mail editorial concluded: "This state of things cannot continue. If the war lasts any length of time the younger generation will emerge only half educated and semi-disciplined."⁽¹⁾ The effect of such publicity was illustrated by Lester Smith (then Director of Education for Manchester) when, on 31 January 1940, he told the President of the Board that letters to D.E.S. had never before shown a public opinion so demanding education.⁽²⁾ A few days later, on 5 February 1940, the NUT published its survey, Education of Children in Wartime, which, they claimed, showed virtually no education in evacuation areas, 50% in reception areas, and 75% in neutral areas. Maintaining that the good publicity given to some schools had produced a wrong impression of the rest, they confessed to being "deeply concerned" about the future of the whole educational system.⁽³⁾ In the Education Year Book of 1940, Dr. Spencer wrote of the evacuation, "every informed person agrees a dreadful muddle which has done wrong" to a very large number of children has resulted." A typical expression of concern at this time was the motion passed at a teachers' conference in April 1940 "at the present breakdown of the educational system."⁽⁴⁾ After fifteen months of war, in November 1940, and referring to the harm being done to the children's education and health, a WEA manifesto made a strong attack on the government, one of many such attacks at that

(1) Daily Mail 17 November 1939

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/10

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

(4) Schoolmaster 4 April 1940

time.⁽¹⁾

The "immense dislocations" to the service experienced throughout this period was exemplified from Newcastle, where the main causes of the decline were summed up as the incessant re-shuffling of pupils, staff and equipment, and poor attendances, rarely above 80%, sometimes down to 60%, the result of parental slackness and the demoralising effect of part-time schooling. Of the schools the HMI wrote, "as a whole, there cannot be said to be any points in which they have shown 'strength' unless it be in the courage and determination of the teachers."⁽²⁾

An attempt was made by the Board of Education in March 1942 to analyse the reasons for the persistence of part-time education. 17 areas of all types were covered and the main influences emerged as: commandeered premises, lack of shelter provision, official evacuation, unofficial evacuations, influx of war workers, the drift back, enemy action, parental reluctance and recurring evacuees.⁽³⁾ A timely and by no means unfamiliar reminder of public concern was given to R. A. Butler in December 1942 during his consultations on educational reconstruction: "Three, four or five years is a short time in a country's history, but it is a very long time in the school life of a child."⁽⁴⁾

A study of the effects of the evacuation and subsequent dislocation upon classroom standards reveals that, while the secondary schools managed to maintain theirs, there was a definite decline in the elementary sector. The revelation of the LCC that "examination results of London schools in reception areas did not show any evidence of a falling-off in

(1) Highway January 1941

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23 (H.M.I. Report, 12 December 1940)

(3) Ibid.

(4) L/Ed. 2152 (3) 57

the standards of work"⁽¹⁾ was confirmed by national figures for the pass rates in the School Certificate and Higher Schools Certificate examinations.⁽²⁾

However, all the evidence available shows that, as far as elementary education was concerned, the Board of Education miscalculated in its pre-war estimate of the degree of likely wartime retardation.⁽³⁾ The report of the Chief Inspector for the L.C. at the end of 1941 showed concern beyond the limits of London itself. Retardation was general and not confined to children who had spent the whole, or an appreciable part, of the war in London, for all children returning from reception areas had not been equally fortunate in their educational opportunities. All subjects had suffered, judged by pre-war standards. Teachers had valiantly done their utmost in reading, writing and arithmetic, even in the days when most teaching took place in shelters. But even they could not possibly influence children who were not in attendance. The chief loss was in reading and written work generally, with the consequence that there were "a great number of junior schoolchildren who could not read."⁽⁴⁾

Three pieces of wartime research established varying amounts of educational deterioration. The "Rochdale Test" consisted of three Arithmetic and two English papers for 1,000 elementary pupils. It measured "a remarkably uniform degree" of deterioration and demonstrated the relation between lack of schooling and fall in attainment, the average mark loss rising from 5.6% when 110 school hours were missed to 20.8% when 330 hours or more were lost.⁽⁵⁾ Under the "Southend Test,"

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 39

(2) H/Ed. Statistical Bulletin No. 33 (February 1941) and D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 38

(3) Schooling in an Emergency Circular 1474 of 29.8.1939

(4) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

(5) Manchester Guardian 29 December 1939

conducted from January 1941 onwards, 2,000 evacuees and 1,000 children who stayed at home were tested. The 1941 conclusions were that evacuees showed good attainment while away, but those who stayed behind showed a retardation in Arithmetic and English of several months. The loss to under-eights was particularly worrying, and for backward pupils, "to a serious degree." These findings were substantiated by those of 1942, specific reference being made to younger juniors, even of average intelligence, in whom the retardation, dating from their period of non-schooling, "produced an educational problem of particular difficulty."⁽¹⁾

The third series of tests was conducted in 1943 by the LCC on 3,000 elementary school children aged 13-14, the results of which were set against 1924 performances. It was found that the average Spelling Attainment in 1943 was only half that of 1924, and that the proportion of 1943 children unable to read fluently was twice as high as in 1924. Attainment in History, Geography and Arithmetic was also appreciably lower, and the Inspectorate felt that the 1943 fall in standards could have been even worse if it could have been compared with 1938.⁽²⁾

Perhaps even more significant because they showed these effects carried forward into adulthood were the educational standards found among Army recruits after the war. Records were kept of 72,000 entrants in 1946-1947 which showed marked discrepancies between scores expected and scores actually gained. These demonstrated an all-round drop and a serious increase in the numbers classed as "educationally backward and retarded." Those were the boys who were in school between 1939 and 1942, and their attainment was compared with the men who were at school between 1925 and 1935 and who enlisted from 1939 onwards.⁽³⁾

(1) Times Educational Supplement 26 June 1943

(2) L.C.C. Chief Inspector's Report to Education Sub-Committee
13 September 1943

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 23

It is appropriate at this point to draw attention to the relevance of retardation to deprivation. The Report on the 1943 LCC Tests included these words: "The worst feature of the results is the disclosure that this age-group contains a considerable residuum of children whose attainment in these subjects, or ability to express themselves intelligently in writing, is extremely low." Titmuss arrived at the conclusion that it was the slow, the backward child who needed more attention, the elementary schoolchild, who suffered most.⁽¹⁾

The evacuation also drew attention to the teaching profession itself, both in demonstrating the high quality of its dedication and stamina and also in focussing attention on the anomalies and unfairnesses under which its members worked. Enough has already been said in this study about the sterling work of the teachers to make any further tribute unnecessary, but the discrepancies within the profession itself need stressing. Before the war the better students were usually drawn towards the areas where the pay was greater. London teachers were paid on Scale IV (the highest), and the more populous provincial areas on Scale III. These were, by and large, the evacuated zones whose teachers were received by the smaller towns and rural areas where the pay was on the lower Scale II. Even allowing for the magnificent work done by country teachers in all-age schools, the fact remains that they were generally less qualified than town teachers; some of them were Training College failures, most came directly from secondary schools, most "supplementary" teachers did not even come from secondary schools and many of them were merely promoted monitresses. 17,425 out of the 70,767 rural teachers were "uncertificated" and 4,281 were "supplementary," according to the Board of Education's Report for 1937-1938. There were more than twice as many uncertificated teachers in the country as

(1) Titmuss op.cit. pp. 407 408

in towns, and more than seven times as many supplementaries.⁽¹⁾ Such disparities became magnified with the evacuation, for many teachers with different qualifications and on different pay scales found themselves doing exactly the same work. This was not helped by the decision that, even if teachers were recruited in evacuation areas to teach London children, they must be paid at the lower rate than their London colleagues.⁽²⁾

Certain fundamental inequalities became immediately apparent with the evacuation itself, for private and overseas movements made even more clear-cut the advantages that privilege and wealth could give. The disruptive effects which the state schools experienced do not seem to have been so marked in the private sector. Within days of the outbreak of war, parents of children sent away with their council school were reading in the local paper that private schools would be opening on the 11th or 12th of September.⁽³⁾ For many larger, more prestigious private schools the adjustment took longer, but was in the grand style:

Penrhos College, Colwyn Bay

The Upper and Middle School buildings have been taken over by the Government; these sections of the school are moving to Chatsworth House, near Bakewell, Derbyshire, by kind permission of the Duke of Devonshire." (4)

Soon, cheap, insanitary, unprotected and inefficient small schools were proliferating and prospering, especially, as the President of the Board of Education himself admitted, in evacuation areas.⁽⁵⁾ At the same time, so many independent schools applied to the Board for Inspections

(1) Liberal National Council, Memo. on Rural Education (May 1943)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/245

(3) Portsmouth Evening News 9 September 1939

(4) Manchester Guardian 20 October 1939

(5) B/Ed. G. 671



THE TWO SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION: A Picture That Sums Up Our Main Problem

Two boys stand top-hatted outside Lord's cricket ground. Three boys stand bare-headed and stare at them. Between the two groups is a barrier—deliberately created by our system of education. Our task is to remove the barrier—to bring the public schools into the general scheme.

that the decision to cancel them for the duration had to be revoked to prevent too large an accumulation. The figures for these wartime inspections rose from 14 in 1939-1940 to 88 in 1942-1943, the ratio of preparatory to secondary schools being about 3:2.⁽¹⁾

The other aspect of educational privilege which almost thrust itself upon the attention of press and politicians was the overseas evacuation. As the Times Educational Supplement put it: "There could be no more potent causes of justifiable disunity and bitterness than evidence that wealth can purchase escape from danger while poverty must stay put."⁽²⁾ Elusive though the actual figures are for private overseas evacuation, and there seems little doubt that there were many thousands, the figure of 250,000 applications in two weeks to the Children's Overseas Reception Board is beyond dispute. The paradox here is that registration figures for the second, post-Dunkirk evacuation scheme were so low. One reason put forward for this lies in the difference between evacuation from possible air attack and evacuation from possible invasion, two prospects which could produce conflicting reactions from the same pair of parents. This suggests that applications came largely from those above the working class and without its stubborn blood ties who decided that, with the fall of France and impending invasion, their children should go to overseas sanctuary. Another suggestion advanced is that many of the preparatory and private schools in former reception areas now found themselves in the new emergency coastal belt. Yet another factor could have been the stringent controls of host governments which excluded many categories, not only on grounds of health, race, colour or creed, but barred the poor, except, that is, under the CORB scheme. There could have been precious few of these, considering that a total of only 2,664 were officially evacuated.

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 24

(2) Times Educational Supplement 20 July 1940

Some writers, like Laski, made political capital out of the figures, but it would be sheer idealism to deny the weaknesses of human nature, the stresses of war or the ties of blood. These would produce imperfections in any scheme, even under totalitarianism, as was shown in the last days of Hitler when, under similar circumstances and for a limited section of the population, privilege and power were used to ensure the survival of loved ones.

A study of documents produced in the Board of Education during 1940 shows there was already a keen awareness of the need to remove existing inequalities if new legislation was to be truly progressive. A useful summary of this came with a draft called "Post-war Social Development and its Effects on Schools," dated 13 January 1941. It stated, "..... a 'total' war of democracy against dictatorship emphasises the essential unity of the nation and common interests of all its members, and the need for making a reality of the democratic system which we profess to be defending must lead to a breaking down of social and economic barriers and privileges". This, it was claimed, should lead to opening secondary schools to all, abolishing fees and priority places on grounds of social status, and multi-lateral post-primary schools for all.⁽¹⁾

The evacuation undoubtedly constituted a dramatic revelation of social deprivation. Dent concluded, "..... the vast majority of English homes are quite incapable of providing anything like a proper environment". and "..... there will still remain the ignorance of parents concerning the upbringing of children, which can only be removed by a lengthy and systematic process of education."⁽²⁾

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2152 A (1)

(2) H. C. Dent 1942 op.cit. p. 48

Similarly, Marjorie Cruickshank believed that at the outbreak of war "..... those who surveyed the domestic scene in a mood of self-examination and criticism were appalled by the glaring injustices which ^{the} war brought to light."⁽¹⁾ And Dr. Weitzmann wrote that "The nation was shocked at these revelations of dirt, disease, shabbiness, poverty and depraved and unsocial habits."⁽²⁾

The evacuation also showed how close had become the link between our schools and the social services, especially in urban areas, for among the principal causes of social problems in the early years of the war were the closure of schools in evacuation areas and the comparative lack of social provision in rural reception areas. This was brought to the attention of the Board of Education in an interesting report on the evacuation schemes in France for 1939 and 1940 published by the British Federation of Social Workers. It posed an interesting comparison; "In France the family is the centre of the social services. In England the school. That is why when our schools broke up our social services were suspended in mid-air and were unable to function because they had no focus, while the French intensified theirs, since the family needs so much additional help." Even more forthright was the conclusion; "The French educational system does not seek to replace the home. The English state educational system has aimed at giving the children a social training as well as, if not in place of, an intellectual, at indeed almost replacing the parents by the teachers, a kind of echo of the English public school system. The evacuation scheme was based largely on this conception. The facile criticism of parents, especially the mother, heard in English educational and social circles, would be unthinkable in France."⁽³⁾ Whether one agrees with this or not, there

(1) M. Cruickshank Church and State in English Education (Macmillan 1963) p. 137

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 51

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

can be no gainsaying the effect of the evacuation in dispersing the family as a unit and making the plight of "latchkey children" especially bad in evacuation areas.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, and it is a pity that no national figures for this could be compiled, many children from unfortunate backgrounds benefited inestimably from the blessings of a stable, loving foster-family. Some of them, often because their parents were not interested in having them home, stayed in their new homes for years, and some took jobs locally when they left school. Some even married and are still evacuated to this day. Among the figures unearthed by Titmuss are those for March 1943, showing that 153 houses in Bognor Regis had had evacuees since September 1939, 33 of them still having the same children, and 81 evacuees in Reigate were still in the same homes.⁽²⁾ But evacuation did not always have such results. Many working-class parents could not bear the thought of their children growing away from them, even when they knew the foster-homes offered more than they ever could. One local newspaper of an evacuation town, Newcastle, printed an article on this aspect and commented that "Children are thoughtless creatures with short memories and many a thoughtless line in a letter has resulted in a recall." One child wrote, "I'm ever so happy here I don't want to come back," and another, "I'm so happy here, I'd like to change my name to Mary ———" (foster family.) Few Newcastle children wanted to go home for that first Christmas of the war because they knew the one they would have would be better than their parents could provide. The article finished by anticipating that on the following Sunday, when a special train would take parents on their first visit to their children, many more Newcastle children would be brought home from Westmorland.⁽³⁾

(1) Ferguson and Fitzgerald op.cit. p. 24

(2) Titmuss op.cit. p. 388

(3) Sunday Sun (Newcastle-on-Tyne 17 December 1939)

The outcome of all this awakening of interest in the plight of deprived children was to revive criticism of pre-war shortcomings and to stimulate demands for more state involvement in the welfare of the children through the schools.

The social conditions and the state of the school medical service revealed by the evacuation led to a re-fashioning and widening of the service. As early as May 1941 the Senior Medical Officer of the Board wrote: "It is no exaggeration to say that in some areas the school medical service is in the melting pot. After the war it will have to be reconstructed For example, it may be desirable to revise the system of medical inspections, to extend the scope of treatment, particularly specialist treatment, to extend the school medical service to under-fives."⁽¹⁾ In the following month the pamphlet, Education After the War, commonly known as the Green Book, put forward for consideration various suggestions about medical provision. It claimed there was an overwhelming need for the school medical service to ensure reasonable standards of treatment among the poorer or more niggardly authorities, and that, as a result of the evacuation, it was found that unacceptable variations existed in defects in teeth, eyes, ears, noses and throats, certain minor ailments, orthopaedic treatment, certain forms of chronic, as distinct from acute illness, supervision of rheumatism and its effects, and treatment of maladjusted children. It went on: "Persuasion is and will always be insufficient, and equality of opportunity as far as the health services in education are concerned can only be secured by requiring LEAs by statute to provide or secure adequate arrangements for the treatment of certain specific defects or illnesses." (Para. 68) Such treatment should be free and obligatory for children and young

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 50/192

persons receiving full-time education in any form of grant-aided school. It also urged rationalisation of the special school provision, less reliance on voluntary provision, an increase on the "gravely inadequate" residential accommodation for mentally deficient children and more attention to the maladjusted or "problem" children.

Most of these suggestions were incorporated, in some cases almost verbatim, into Educational Reconstruction, the White Paper of July 1943. But then came the added complication of fitting the school health service in with the Beveridge Report and the projected National Health Service. However this might come about, two points were stressed in the 1944 White Paper, A National Health Service, namely that the LEA should be charged with the duty of providing inspections, and that all treatment should be free. The LEA would have to continue its general supervision, "together with the important function of using the influence of the school and the teacher and the whole school relationship with the child and parent to encourage the recourse of the child to all desirable medical treatment"⁽¹⁾ This particular sequence of cause and effect started with the evacuation and culminated with the 1944 Act. Among the innovations contained within the Act was the new principle of compulsion for medical inspections with fines for non-compliance. "Ascertainment" hitherto had rested solely in the hands of the Medical Officer for mentally and physically handicapped and epileptic children; now he could only "advise," and the LEA was to decide and could first consult the teachers, educational psychologists and appropriate specialists. The categories of children for special treatment were widened considerably and the "MD" classification was replaced by "Educationally Sub normal." Moreover, the inspection of children from two to five was envisaged and maladjustment was acknowledged as a category requiring special treatment.

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 33

Since those first days of September 1939 great strides had also been made and new attitudes developed over the whole problem of disturbed children. By February 1945 there were 236 hostels giving psychiatric treatment to over 3,500 children, and, as one expert wrote, "The value of these hostels has impressed all observers, and the demand is general that in some form they should be perpetrated after the war."⁽¹⁾ In fact, the Board of Education did, in early 1945, suggest to LEAs that some of the hostels might be suitable for residential accommodation under the new Act, and several were taken over.⁽²⁾ Similarly, 79 child guidance clinics were available in 1945, and it was this kind of treatment that Macadam had in mind when he wrote, "The present war and its repercussions have lifted family case work to a branch of social service in its own right the lessons of evacuation have not fallen on deaf ears."⁽³⁾ Among these lessons was the realisation, especially in reception areas, that a normally stable child could be upset by strange surroundings, that separation from the family could contribute to juvenile delinquency, and that the value of psychiatric treatment had been demonstrated.

Following the evacuation there was, therefore, a growing realisation that the child, the home, the school and the local environment were all factors to be taken into account in shaping a national welfare system. This was evident in the greater understanding and wider conception of maladjustment and educational subnormality. It can also be seen in the demands for the re-opening of schools in the first autumn and winter of the war, and in the developing provision of meals, camp schools and nursery education.

(1) C. P. Blacker Neurosis and the Mental Health Service (O.U.P. 1946)

(2) B/Ed. M 481/172 (14 February 1945)

(3) Macadam The Social Servant in the Making (Allen + Unwin 1945)
p. 89

In the repeated calls for restoration of the schools were two recurrent and complementary themes. The first was admirably summarised by Lester Smith when he led a delegation to the Board of Education on 31 January 1940. He said he had never before realised how much the social services depended on the school and the teachers; he gave as an example how clinic attendance in his own city of Manchester had dropped to 25% since compulsory education had not been enforced.⁽¹⁾ The other theme found words at the same meeting when Dr. J. J. Mallon expressed his anxiety at how London children had deteriorated since they had led an aimless and rootless life in the streets. It had become evident that the discipline of regular school attendance produced a prophylactic effect on anti-social behaviour.⁽²⁾

For many children school changed its character with the development of the meals service; it became more central to their daily lives, took on more of the character of a community, and enabled them to absorb some of the social graces denied to them elsewhere. It is typical that the service grew to meet specific problems, like evacuation, and finally played a part in the new framework of social services that post-war reconstruction demanded. When the Board of Education produced a war-time propaganda publication for America it stressed that: "The meal at school is a safeguard against malnutrition, a relief to the overworked housewife, and for the children a civilising influence and if, as seems probable, mid-day dinner becomes a permanent institution, the school of the future will become more than ever a social centre."⁽³⁾

Although the National Camp Corporation was set up before the war, it became essentially an evacuation organisation. One HMI summed up a commonly held view when he wrote, "School life conducted in such

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2107/10

(2) The Times 1 February 1940

(3) British Secondary Schools in Wartime (B/Ed. January 1944) p. 20

conditions and in such an environment can play an invaluable part in the physical, educational and social development of the children." An official at the Board of Education looked further ahead: "The very satisfactory measure of success already achieved augurs well, and may point the way, when hostilities are over, for further developments on similar lines under peacetime conditions."⁽¹⁾ Ernest Bevin agreed: "We should not lose the benefits which enforced evacuation has brought." When consideration was being given to the post-war use of the camps Chuter Ede and R. A. Butler were thinking of three months as a possible minimum period to be spent in camps, perhaps on a Monday to Friday basis in view of the tenacious hold of family life on elementary schoolchildren.⁽²⁾

The connection between evacuation and the development of wartime nursery provision was primarily one of cause and effect, the depositing of thousands of pre-school age infants in the country and the need to look after them. It was soon realised that the need was not an exclusively wartime phenomenon. When the official in charge of the Child Care Division at the Board of Education set out in a minute his proposals for post-war nursery policy he reached the definite conclusion that day nurseries for children of pre-school age should come under the LEA. He felt that a matron with responsibilities to the health authorities did not provide a suitable training and that the school would be the appropriate agent. His suggestion was adopted and incorporated in the White Paper (Para. 25) and the wording in the 1944 Act was adapted by referring to the LEA provision of nursery schools "or, where inexpedient, nursery classes in other schools."⁽³⁾ It is worthy of note that in R. A. Butler's account of his meeting on 15 April 1943 with Churchill for authority to proceed with the Education Bill, the one aspect that Churchill showed especial interest in was nursery provision. It seems

(1) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22 (Schools in Camp)

(2) B/Ed. Sec. Clerks 2152 (4)

(3) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 43

that Mrs. Churchill had shown him a book⁽¹⁾ about the disgusting habits of certain children and their parents as disclosed by the evacuation, and Churchill declared that more and more little children should go to nursery schools and be communally fed.⁽²⁾

The idea of the intermingling influences of school and society and its importance for future developments found expression in two significant documents produced by the Chief Welfare Officer to the Ministry of Health. The first was in the form of a note to the Board of Education in July 1942 in which she emphasised the vital need for teamwork between the schools and the welfare services. The experience of evacuation and its "disconcerting sequels" had shown how it was the education authorities who became the partners of Welfare in everything from nurseries to juvenile delinquency, maladjustment, hostels, mothers, medical follow-up, and play groups. This was the kind of liaison which would be needed in the remaining days of wartime and in post-war re-organisation. Her second document was a summary of how a complete Welfare Organisation had grown out of the evacuation, what with billeting, visiting, hostels, out-of school activities, social centres and Welfare Committees. She reported that 461 local authorities had set up Welfare Committees or "similar organisations" to deal with "the social problems of evacuated persons." She ended: "The organisation now in existence (for evacuation problems) gives a skeleton service which may be greatly needed On the horizon we see the outlines of some organisation of social service." The more comprehensive the state provision the more the individual must be helped to utilise it. "In other words, education in its widest sense must keep pace with material provisions."⁽³⁾

(1) Our Towns A study of 1939 1942 (Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare. O.U.P. 1943)

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2170/16

(3) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2192

Another interesting sideline on how those in education felt about the school's role in the future came when the President of the Board was required to give his views on family allowances to the War Cabinet prior to the Beveridge Report. He sought the views of the inspectorate, and these, which he endorsed later on, were almost unanimous in that they favoured aid in kind rather than in cash. From evacuation experience they accepted the need for assistance, but they quoted the proven value of meals, milk, clothing, footwear and medical and dental treatment, maintaining that it was "socially desirable" to feed stomachs and clothe backs.⁽¹⁾

The detailed study of West Sussex confirms the findings established from other evidence and shows us how one reception area, faced with great problems and anxieties, responded so admirably to the challenge. The few frictions and rivalries there were could usually be traced to pride in individual schools and to the struggles of evacuated schools to keep together. The abiding impression, however, from personal reminiscences of teachers who were evacuated, and this may account for the number who either opted to stay there and work under the local authority or came back on retirement, is that their stay was happy and harmonious. This is confirmed by written testimonies at the time, like the LCC teacher on her return home who wrote of "the spontaneous acceptance of my services as a co-worker,"⁽²⁾ and the five LCC headteachers who paid tribute to their host staffs and their "never-failing courtesy, kindness, abundant patience and cheerfulness."⁽³⁾

From the many personal contacts made during this investigation the writer found one crucial and recurring factor, the importance of the

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2169 (2)

(2) W/S E 21/19/8

(3) W/S 11/25

individual and his contribution. This was true at all levels, from the classroom teacher and headteachers to the Medical Officer and, probably most of all, the Director of Education. The letters he wrote to the Board of Education were invariably relevant and shrewd, always concerned with the welfare of staffs and pupils of his own and evacuated schools, and treated with respect at the Board. The wartime circulars issued by Evan T. Davies are more than a catalogue of administrative minutiae. They are concerned with harmonious and purposeful co-existence, the welfare of necessitous children,⁽¹⁾ the need for restoring normality with decent facilities for all,⁽²⁾ the good of the child as the main criterion for settling the vexed question of maintaining school identity, the undesirability of using unsuitable emergency premises and the dangers of spurious claims that proper education was being given under the guise of "recreational periods" and the double shift system.⁽³⁾ In the middle of that first severe winter, he urged schools to remain open wherever possible and no matter how few children could attend, for "serious damage is already being done to the education of children by circumstances of war and this must be reduced to a minimum."⁽⁴⁾

If this seems to have become a panegyric of an individual it is because so many people who worked under him have expressed, years afterwards, how much he helped them to carry on in those difficult days. Nowhere was the true quality of the man more clearly shown than in his circular after Dunkirk, concluding with these lines: "..... as an organisation of educational institutions seeking to provide education in Christian principles in a Christian country, religious education and the opening of each school day with a short, but sincere and reverent morning service assumes a position of even greater importance if Peace

(1) W/S Evacuation and A.R.P. Circular 4

(2) W/S Evacuation and A.R.P. Circular 8

(3) W/S Evacuation and A.R.P. Circulars 9 + 17

(4) W/S Evacuation and A.R.P. Circular 20

comes the new generation must be taught to turn to God not only in times of tribulation but for guidance in the ordinary day-to-day conduct of their lives."⁽¹⁾

It should be added that the search for local source material dating back to the early days of the war presents problems. Apart from the weakness of the Ministry of Health in collating relevant statistics, the pace at which trainloads were dispersed and the failure to delegate to anyone the task of recording totals and destinations often left no trace of numbers passing through a station. Many of the records which were made were destroyed by enemy action, as happened at Chichester, and wartime waste-paper drives claimed many more. Furthermore, some of the material was kept by private individuals and has been dwindling with their deaths. In these circumstances it is often impossible to reconstruct both a local story in detail and to make quantitative national assessments.

It is surprising how early in the war discussions of post-war educational reform began and how often they were linked to the evacuation. The Commons debate on 20 September 1939 was the first time that public, responsible admissions were made about the revelations of the evacuation. This prompted immediate comment in the professional press: "Social reform of a radical nature may well be one of the less immediate results of the great exodus."⁽²⁾ So, in the same month as the evacuation, the idea of consequential reconstruction was already being mooted. The first positive step arose as a result of the Commons Debate on 30 November 1939. One contribution came from Sir Charles Edwards, who regretted "the absence of any proposals for the solution on the

(1) W/S Evacuation and A.R.P. Circular 33

(2) Teachers' World 27 September 1939

basis of social justice of the problems which will arise on the return to peace." This stirred up activity in the Board of Education to produce a briefing for the Lord Privy Seal and caused the officials there to organise, albeit briefly, what was almost certainly the first wide look at the whole question of pre-war and post-war educational policy. This they did under five headings; premises and the building programme, staffing, health (including meals and milk), raising the leaving age, and greater opportunity, especially for elementary children.⁽¹⁾ Shortly afterwards, a powerful group under Margaret Bondfield was set up to study problems arising from the evacuation and immediate contact was made with the Secretary of the Board.⁽²⁾ Almost simultaneously Teachers' World was hoping, "..... evacuation may ultimately provide us with results which will yet make 1939 a remarkable year for education."⁽³⁾

About a fortnight later, Sir Robert Wood of the Board of Education completed a draft document that showed how much things were moving among the higher echelons there. It was intended as a basis for discussion on such main themes as the Part III Authorities, the health of the school-child and the three-tier system. He wrote, "There are straws to be found in Cabinet papers and elsewhere which indicate which way the wind is blowing it is clear that the War is moving us more and more in the direction of Labour's ideas and ideals; and the planning for a national 'New Order' will be more towards the Left than may generally be imagined now."⁽⁴⁾

Still in January, the annual conference of the NUS passed a resolution on the 27th that "preparations for post-war education should be

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136/659

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 10/246

(3) Teachers' World 28 December 1939

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2152 A (1)

begun immediately equality of opportunity should be the cardinal aim."⁽¹⁾ When the retiring Chairman of the AMA made his final address at Oxford in January he urged his members to accept the disruption, but "reculer pour mieux sauter," and asked, "Is there not something fascinating about the dynamic forces that evacuation has let loose?" He told them to "come forward boldly with constructive schemes for a truer and a better education for the children of the next generation."⁽²⁾ When the WEA published its statement Educational Policy in Wartime it included the following demands; "The Board of Education should have in readiness a programme of reform, capable of speedy adoption, which will not merely repair the ravages of war on the physical, nervous and mental welfare of the children, but will render our educational system worthy of the new political and social order which the men and women who have devoted themselves to the national effort will demand The President of the Board of Education should set up a small Commission of Inquiry, consisting of educationalists and others, to survey the reaction of evacuation on the educational system and to report to him at the earliest date."⁽³⁾

The NUT Executive's statement of 5 February 1940 on The Education of Children in Wartime mentioned the "greatly quickened public interest now being shown in the educational welfare of the nation,"⁽⁴⁾ and made what must be one of the first published references to the government's post-war reconstruction scheme. Two days later came the important House of Lords debate on the announcement of the restoration of compulsory education and in it the visionary speech by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He said, "Beyond question after the war there will be the

(1) Journal of Education 1940 p. 143

(2) A.M.A. January 1940 p. 7

(3) Highway January 1940

(4) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

widest and most far-reaching changes in the social life of the country. The national system of education must partly be fitted to these inevitable changes and partly influence their character and their course Meanwhile during the war let us hope nothing will be done or left undone which will make it harder to resume the work of full education when the war is over, and the best minds of the country may be undistracted by the war from devoting themselves to thinking out the lines upon which a worthy system of education can be framed." The debate aroused immediate comment like the one in the Spectator: "The crisis which has arisen in the history of the schools, and, indeed, throughout the whole sphere of education, will not have been wholly evil if, having awakened the Government and the public, it has provided an atmosphere favourable to far-seeing reconstructive action."⁽¹⁾

From then onwards there was a mass of contributions to the discussion on educational reconstruction, especially in Parliament during March and April where, after debating nursery education, the expansion of school medical services, youth services, the whole problem of secondary education and privilege and the Cinderella role of the Board of Education, the call was made for an all-party Committee on education. This was accompanied by reports and comments in newspapers and periodicals, a typical one being this editorial in the Manchester Guardian: "It is not sufficient, however, merely to end last September's legacy of dislocation. We ought to be preparing not only to recover the ground lost but to take a step forward. Nor can there be any doubt what the first step should be. The darkest blot on the English education system is its persistent and callous neglect of the special needs of the adolescent."⁽²⁾

(1) Spectator 9 February 1940

(2) Manchester Guardian 8 March 1940

At a meeting in April 1940 between the President of the Board of Education and a delegation from the NUT, "The President said that his object was indeed to prepare for education in peacetime."⁽¹⁾ We now know that at that time those "best minds" the Archbishop had spoken about were already engaged on the groundwork for the Green Book, and in November, Sir Maurice Holmes, Secretary to the Board of Education was making plans for recommendations on post-war policy. He was also preparing for the consultations which were soon to follow with "other persons and bodies (that) have ideas on post-war educational policy."⁽²⁾ The ripeness of the time for such consultation was confirmed by the Home Intelligence report on "Public Feeling on Post-war Reconstruction," which found: "Among 'thinking people of all classes' the need for post-war educational reform is placed second only to the need for preventing unemployment." And the outstanding question on this subject was "Greater Educational Equality."⁽³⁾

When, at the end of 1942, senior officials at the Board produced for R. A. Butler a retrospective survey of the developments leading to the proposed educational legislation, they listed, as the three main factors preceding the Green Book, the Spens Report, demand for equality of opportunity, and the revelations of the evacuation. These latter, they wrote, "which showed up the weaknesses of the products of the public educational system, and the disadvantages under which a considerable proportion of the nation's children spend their early years, have helped to quicken the social conscience."⁽⁴⁾

In case it appears that R. A. Butler's problems were limited to his consultations during the formulation of the 1944 Act, it is only fair to

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 10/247

(2) D.E.S. Ed. 136/2152 A (1)

(3) P.R.O. Prem. 4/88/4

(4) B/Ed. 2170 (1)

point out that all was not plain sailing for him in Whitehall itself. In December 1940, when Churchill ordered a Committee of Ministers to study post-war reconstruction it included Ministers of Agriculture, Works, Transport and Health, but not of Education. Even later still, in September 1941, R. A. Butler had some difficulty with Churchill over the future of educational reconstruction. "I certainly cannot contemplate a new Education Bill," wrote Churchill. "We cannot have party politics in wartime Your main task at present is to get the schools working as well as possible under the difficulties of air attack, evacuation, etc." Butler would not accept this, and pointed out, "Education is a prime factor in reconstruction," adding that when he took over as President consultations were already in progress and interest was considerable among highly-placed members of the government.⁽¹⁾

During the war 222,000 houses were destroyed or damaged beyond repair, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ million were damaged.⁽²⁾ But to the end of 1942, the most destructive years, only 27 evacuated London children were killed, and it was officially estimated that 4,500 lives were saved by the LCC evacuation alone.⁽³⁾ This is the vindication of the original principle of evacuation to preserve life. At the end of March in 1946 only 5,200 unaccompanied children were left in reception areas (3,000 with foster parents, 1,000 in residential nurseries and special schools, the rest in various hostels).⁽⁴⁾

It would have been possible at that time to make a study of those other casualties of the war, the children whose prospects had been

(1) P.R.O. Prem. 4/11/6

(2) Ferguson and Fitzgerald op.cit. p. 7

(3) Story of Evacuation (L.C.C. 1943) CR. XXI para 3

(4) Titmuss op.cit. p. 437

damaged. Unfortunately, this was never done, so it has not been possible to make any kind of compensatory provision, and no-one will ever know how many chances were lost and lives changed for the worse by evacuation. One of the few reported cases was Norma Crabbe, an 11-year old Rochester girl who failed her scholarship exam after four years part time schooling (like 1,500 other local children).⁽¹⁾ The writer knows a man who was one of the two children who won scholarship places from their Buckinghamshire village school and could not have them because the secondary school was overcrowded with evacuees; he is still taking examinations to catch up. There is also the woman who was evacuated from Portsmouth, had no education for a year and could not take the exam; she is a deputy headmistress who has just had to take a full-time course to make good her qualifications. Another woman also lost vital ground at the same time and has only recently qualified as a "mature" teacher. How right that Somerset HMI was on 12 December 1940 when he wrote about such children, "(they) are conscious that a finis has been written to their scholastic ambition."⁽²⁾ It could well be a fruitful piece of research to make a sample study of that age group to try and ascertain the ~~extent~~ effects on careers of interrupted education.

Among the more heartening results of the evacuation was the credit that the schools and teachers in general brought upon themselves. They bore the burden of caring for the minds and bodies of their pupils in a way and under conditions never seen before in the public sector. This was due in no little degree to the pastoral responsibilities assumed by the teachers. Another creditable feature, and a good example of the willingness of the profession to accept a challenge, was the great achievement of the Home Tuition system. Then again, it is not too unrealistic to conjecture that the evacuation and its aftermath

(1) News Chronicle 27 November 1943

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 13

contributed to making the inspectorate less forbidding and remote to the teachers. And one other useful consequence, albeit indirectly, was to draw attention to the exploitation of child labour in the fields and the towns.

It is unlikely that evacuation was the direct cause of any long-term innovations in the educational field, but it undoubtedly awakened the nation's interest in its children and their schools, and accelerated change where defects, both educational and social, were exposed. Within the school valuable experience was gained in less formal and more outward-looking methods, as well as in the resourcefulness which circumstances produced in the teachers. In the field of child and family welfare, the pragmatic process of redressing shortcomings revealed and produced by the evacuation left an inheritance in bricks and mortar, institutions and enlightened legislation. More important, the evacuation contributed directly to the pronounced post-war awareness of the importance of sociological influences in education.

It is fitting that the last word is given to one of that small handful of officials at the Board of Education who wrote the Green Book. Their names are constant factors in all the masses of material which was produced in the groundwork and are given here as a token of admiration and gratitude: Sir Maurice Holmes, Sir Robert Wood, Messrs. Wyn Wheldon, Cleary, G. G. Williams,^{G.} Wallis, S. H. Wood, Bosworth Smith and Dr. B. Davidson.⁽¹⁾ This closing prescient quotation is from Davidson's 1944 Draft, The Shaping of Educational Policy, para 65:⁽²⁾

"Indeed, it is not unlikely that in 100 years the historian will rather cursorily dismiss evacuation as an interesting experiment, paying

(1) D.E.S. Ed. 136 (Memo of 14 May 1941)

(2) D.E.S. Weitzmann Box 22

little attention to the detailed prodigies of hard work and devotion, and not much even to its blemishes, but will regard its historical significance as based mainly upon the Children's Charter to which it gave rise in the Education Act of 1944."

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE WAR 1939-1945 : DRAFTS ETC.

Ed 138

In September 1939, Mr D. du B. Davidson, who was at the time the Board of Education's Accountant General, was appointed as the Board's official war diarist. Files were opened and relevant documents collected and a number of drafts on various aspects of education in wartime were written by Mr Davidson and other officials of the Board. These individual files have been identified in the piece descriptions.

In 1945 Dr Sophia Weitzman was appointed by the Cabinet Office (Historical Section) to write the official history of education. She was assisted in the initial stages by other Cabinet Office historians and Miss I E Brown from the Ministry. Additional source material was collected, notably from HM Chief Inspector Mr Charles, various branch officials of the Ministry and from the official files etc. A number of chapters were written but the history had not reached a stage where it was suitable for publication at the time of Dr Weitzman's death in 1965.

The draft history had by this time been conceived as two volumes, the first volume to contain the chapters dealing chronologically with the impact of defence preparations on education up to 1939, and the general review of the war years, followed by "special studies" chapters dealing with such topics as the nutrition of the schoolchild, medical services, the 'under-fives' and the employment of children in agriculture. The second volume was intended as an historical survey of the growth of the national system of state education from the first half of the 19th century culminating in a detailed discussion of the 1944 Education Act. The draft survey ends with a summary of the Green Book (Education after the War) which was circulated in June 1941. An abridged version of the whole history was drafted but not completed.

After Dr Weitzman's death it was decided to abandon the volume and the papers connected with the draft history were collected together and made available at the Department to serious students. All the original files borrowed from other Government Departments and the London County Council were returned and the remaining material sorted under various headings. In most cases only the final draft versions of the chapters of the history have been preserved and form the first part of the class list. The source material follows and has been arranged chronologically under subject headings.

Class open in 1972.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE WAR OF 1939-1945
DRAFTS, ETC.

Ed.138

| reference | Date | Description | All items bearing latest date 1941-1945, or otherwise stated be given in 1972. |
|-----------|-----------|---|--|
| Ed.138 | | DRAFT HISTORY OF EDUCATION | |
| 1 | - | Chronological chapters, volume I: Chapters 1-6, original version. | |
| 2 | - | Ditto: Chapters 2-7*, abridged version. | |
| 3 | - | Volume I Special studies: Technical education. Below school age - The under-fives. The nutrition of the school child. The medical services of education and the special schools. A rural problem - The employment of children in agriculture. Young people and the problem of leisure. | |
| 4 | - | Volume II Historical survey [dating from c.1800] and Education Act, 1944. Original version, sections 1-5, abridged version, sections 1 and 2 (incomplete). | |
| 5 | - | Chronological survey of evacuation and A.R.P. etc. 1938-1945. | |
| 6 | - | Material for bibliography. | |
| | | ADULT EDUCATION | |
| 7 | 1943-1945 | Further education and training scheme including Mr Davidson's file. Historical survey of adult education c.1800-1947. | |
| | | AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS IN SCHOOLS | |
| 8 | 1938-1945 | Various notes, Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. | |
| 9 | 1942-1944 | Mr Davidson's file, including Memorandum prepared by Mr S. Laskey, Board of Education, in 1942. | |
| 10 | 1944 | Schools and flying-bomb attacks. Mr S. Laskey's file. | |
| | | BELOW SCHOOL AGE - THE UNDER FIVES | |
| 11 | 1914-1945 | Miscellaneous notes, Circulars and Administrative Memoranda etc., including Mr Davidson's papers. | |
| 12 | 1939-1945 | Reports on visits to wartime nursery classes. Material supplied by H.M.I. Dr Llewellyn. | |

*The original chapters were renumbered and a new short
introductory chapter 1 was proposed but not drafted.

| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|---|---|
| Ed.138 | | BELOW SCHOOL AGE - THE UNDER FIVES - contd. |
| 13 | 1942 May- 1945 Jan. | Care of children of women war workers. Monthly returns of provision in selected areas for children under 5 in nursery schools and classes, and for children of school age in play centres. |
| | | BOARD (later MINISTRY) OF EDUCATION IN WARTIME |
| 14 | 1939-1942 1940-1944 1941-1945 1942 1942-1943 1942-1945 | Appointment of Mr Davidson as the Board's Official War Diarist: Mr Davidson's file. Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts: Mr Davidson's file including Miss Glasgow's original draft. Awards Branch: Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, notes etc. Mr Davidson's file. The Museums: Mr Davidson's File. Future of the Consultative Committee, notes from Department's files. Miscellaneous, including note on the Impington Village College by H.M.I. Mr S. N. Godfrey: Mr Davidson's file. |
| 15 | 1944 1944 1944 1944 1944 1945 | Civil History of the War: introductory chapter, developments between the wars, obstacles to reform, educational finance, administration, Mr Davidson's file. H.M. Inspectorate: Mr Davidson's file including C.I. Mr Duckworth's notes. Legal Branch: Mr Davidson's file. Staff matters, draft by Mr A. J. Finny; Mr Davidson's file. Excerpts from Report of Committee on Office Organisation and Staffing, July 1944. Welsh Department. Mr Davidson's file. Department of Intelligence and Public Relations. Mr Leadbetter's note. |
| | | COMMITTEES |
| 16 | 1940-1942 | Committee on Curriculum and Examinations (Norwood Committee) action leading to the setting-up of the Committee. Extracts from Department's files. |
| 17 | 1941-1943 | Public Schools Committee: extracts from Department's files. |
| | | EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR |
| 18 | 1940-1941 1941-1942 1942-1943 | Green Book Discussions. Extracts from Department's files. Discussions and correspondence with the Minister of Labour. Extracts from Department's files. Educational reform including Dual System. Extracts from Department's files. |

Special to open in 1972.
 Description

| Reference | Date | Description |
|--------------|-------------------|---|
| Ed.138 | | |
| | | EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR - contd. |
| 18 contd. | 1944-1945 | Various Circulars etc. issued following the Education Act, 1944. |
| 19 | 1941-1944 | Copies of certain papers referred to in volumes I -VI and VIII of Lord Chuter Ede's diaries. Extracts from Department's files. |
| 20 | 1945 | Dr Weitzman's interview with Mr Butler, Minister of Education, and his minutes on religious issues. Miss S. Goodfellow's, Private Secretary to Minister, summaries of events leading to, and background of, Education Act, 1944. |
| 21 | - | Additional source material. Definition of various types of secondary schools, omission from the Bill, letter from Mr Heaton, Ministry of Education 1953. Copy of Prime Minister's personal minute of 13 September, 1941 (PREM 4/11/61) in reply to President of the Board's letter of 12 September, 1941. |
| 22 | - | Preliminary draft and notes for section on the Green Book; copy of Green Book "Education after the War" attached. |
| | | EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS IN WARTIME |
| 23 | 1934 1939-1945 | Size of classes: Notes, Circulars and extracts from Department's files. Copy of draft section for Official History. |
| 24 | 1938-1944 | Returns relating to numbers of children and teaching staff in the area of each local education authority. |
| 25 | 1939-1944 | Educational Home Service. Notes from H.M. Inspectors on conditions in various areas. C.I. Mr Charles' papers and Mr Davidson's file. |
| 26 | 1939-1944 | Extracts from Department's Evacuation, Supply and War Damage files for selected areas. |
| 27 | 1939-1945 | Set of Board of Education Memoranda: The Schools in Wartime, Nos 1-40. |
| 28 | 1939-1945 | School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examination results. |
| 29 | 1939-1945 | Staffing of schools; notes, Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. Extracts from Departments files. |
| 30 | 1942-1945 | Ditto: Quotas of teachers, E. Grant Section of Schools Branch papers. |

| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| Ed.138 | | EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS IN WARTIME - contd. |
| 31 | 1939-1945 | Miscellaneous notes, statistics, various Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. |
| 32 | 1939-1945 | Evacuation and education in London. Various notes, material supplied by London County Council and extracts from Department's files. |
| 33 | 1939-1945 | Independent schools: Extract from Department's A.R.P., Evacuation, Release of Premises and General files, extracts from weekly reports, various notes etc. |
| 34 | 1940-1941 | Effect of wartime conditions on the life and work of public elementary schools, H.M. Inspectors' replies to Memorandum to Inspectors No. 433; C.I. Mr Charles' papers. |
| 35 | 1940-1941 | The schools under fire, notes by H.M. Inspectors. C.I. Mr Charles' papers. |
| 36 | 1940-1942 | War work in schools. Teachers' activities outside their schools, C.I. Mr Charles papers. |
| 37 | 1940-1944 | School attendance, notes and statistics and extracts from Department's files on 1943 school attendance enquiry. |
| 38 | 1940-1944 | Secondary education. Miscellaneous notes, extracts from Department's files on accommodation difficulties in certain areas. Additional wartime grants to direct grant schools. Mr Davidson's file. |
| 39 | 1940-1945 | H.M. Inspectors' reports on elementary schools inspected during the war and notes on schools not inspected, extracts from Department's files. |
| 40 | 1941-1942 | Review of the first fifteen months of wartime conditions on the life and work of public elementary schools. H.M. Inspectors' replies to Memorandum to Inspectors No. 43, New Series. C.I. Mr Charles' papers. |
| 41 | 1942 | Some aspects of wartime elementary education in Manchester. Mr Davidson's file. |
| 42 | 1944 | British secondary schools in wartime, extracts from Department's files on proposed pamphlet for British Information Service. |
| 43 | - | Additional source material: standard of work and attainment in the schools in wartime, Information collected from various sources in 1953. |

| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|-------------|---|
| Ed.138 | | |
| | | EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS IN WARTIME - contd. |
| 44 | - | Additional source material: Extracts from school magazines and reports collected by the London County Council and the Joint Four Secondary Associations on behalf of Dr Weitzman. |
| 45 | - | Ditto: Correspondence with London County Council and the Joint Four Secondary Associations in 1953 and 1954. |
| 46 | - | Ditto: Effect of the call-up on local education authorities' teaching and administrative staff, replies from selected local education authorities in 1953. |
| 47 | - | Ditto: Award of free and special places in wartime. Replies to questionnaires sent to local education authorities in 1954 by Association of Education Committees on behalf of Dr Weitzman. |
| | | EVACUATION |
| 48 | 1938-1945 | Government Evacuation Scheme. Planning, various notes, Circulars, Administrative Memoranda and Ministry of Health Circulars. |
| 49 | 1938-1945 | London County Council Record of Evacuation, 1938-1943 and 1938-1945. |
| 50 | 1939-1944 | Conditions in the reception areas, miscellaneous, materials including notes by H.M. Inspectors and papers detached from Private office file 2136 (remainder of file Ed. 136/184). Mr Davidson's file. |
| 51 | 1939-1945 | Miscellaneous notes, including H.M. Inspectors' reports on the evacuation of 1 September, 1939. |
| 52 | 1942-1944 | Mr Davidson's file, including memorandum prepared by Mr Laskey. |
| 53 | 1944-1945 | Winding-up of Government Evacuation Scheme. |
| 54 | c.1890-1938 | Historical survey source material, mainly extracts from Department's files, Circulars etc. |
| | | THE MEDICAL SERVICES OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS |
| 55 | - | Special schools. Historical survey, c.1800-1939. |
| 56 | 1939-1945 | Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1939. School Medical Service, various statistics, notes, Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, etc. |

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| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|------------------------|--|
| H.138 | | THE MEDICAL SERVICES OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS - contd. |
| 57 | 1942-1945 | Handicapped pupils and special schools, Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, etc. |
| 58 | 1944 | Evacuation and the School Health Service. Mr Davidson's file. |
| | | NUTRITION OF THE SCHOOLCHILD |
| 59 | 1907-1945 | School milk and meals: miscellaneous notes including copy of Mr Birch Jones' historical survey written c. 1934; various Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. |
| 60 | 1944 | War history of school milk and meals; Mr Davidson's file containing draft by Mr E. D. Marris, Board of Education. |
| 61 | - | Mr E. D. Marris' (Ministry of Education) comments in 1951 on draft chapter; copy of draft attached. |
| 62 | 1920-1922 1939-1945 | A rural problem - The employment of children in agriculture. Extracts from Department's files, Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, etc. |
| | | SCHOOL BUILDINGS |
| 63 | 1939-1945 | Various notes, Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, etc. |
| | 1940-1945 | Priority release of requisitioned premises. Requisitioning of schools for use as reserve hospitals. |
| | 1940-1945 | Board (later Ministry) of Education's iron and steel estimates, Architect's Branch file. |
| | 1940-1945 | Supplies of rationed and priority goods. Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. |
| | 1941 | List of educational building works suspended owing to the war. |
| 64 | 1941-1945 | War damage: Notes, Circulars and Administrative Memoranda. |
| | 1942 | School railings: Mr H. B. Jenkins, Board of Education, file. |
| | 1942-1944 | Wartime building problems: Mr H. B. Jenkins' file. Mr Davidson's files including Mr F. Jackman's, Board of Education, note on wartime activities of Architect's Branch and Mr Maxwell-Hyslop's drafts on re-opening occupied schools and occupation and release of schools during the war. |

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Reference

Date

Description

Ed. 138

SCHOOL BUILDINGS - contd.

64
contd.

1945

Disposal of surplus Government stores. Acquisition of land or buildings for educational purposes. Additional accommodation required for the compulsory raising of the school leaving age. Preparation of development plans.

-

Comments of Mr Maxwell-Hyslop (Ministry of Education) in 1953 on Mr Ferguson's draft chapter, "School Buildings, 1939-1945"; copy of chapter attached.

SCOTLAND

65

1939-1945

Education in wartime, including evacuation and A.R.P. etc. Scottish Education Department monthly progress reports 1940-1945; material supplied by Mr Arbuckle of Scottish Education Department.

66

1942

Mr Davidson's file.

TEACHERS

67

1939-1943

Evacuation of teacher training colleges, extracts from the Department's files.

68

1939-1945

Teachers and National Service: Administrative Memoranda and Circulars etc., Mr Nevinson's file.

69

1939-1945

Teacher training: Copies of training college letters and Teacher Training Branch's precedent letters. Various Administrative Memoranda and Circulars.

70

1940

Salaries. Local Government Staffs (War Service) Act, 1939: List supplied by National Union of Teachers on position in 1940 of payment by local education authorities.

71

1940-1945

Various Circulars, Administrative Memoranda, etc.

72

1942-1944

Superannuation. Mr Davidson's file.

73

1943-1944

Emergency recruitment and training. Mr Davidson's and Mr Flemming's files.

74

1943-1945

Uncertificated teachers; various notes etc.

75

1944

McNair Report on the training of teachers and youth leaders. Mr Davidson's file.

76

1944-1945

Release of teachers from H.M. Forces. Cost of equal pay for women teachers. Mr Flemming's file.

| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|-----------|--|
| Ed.138 | | |
| | | TEACHERS - contd. |
| 77 | - | Salaries: Memoranda on the composition of the Burnham Committee; extracts from Department's files and 1948 Burnham Committee Report. |
| 78 | - | Draft History of Teacher Training, 1803-1949. |
| 79 | - | Preliminary drafts; evacuated teacher's allowances. |
| 80 | - | Ditto: Teachers; Mobilisation policy; supply and distribution of teachers; the impact of policy - staffing and the schools; teachers and their non-teaching duties; teachers and their training; reconstruction. |
| | | TECHNICAL EDUCATION |
| 81 | 1939-1940 | Training for wartime industry, Mr Wallis' (T. Branch) file. |
| 82 | 1940 | Wartime production in technical colleges and schools. Summary of technical college extensions since the outbreak of war, Mr Wallis' (T. Branch) file. |
| 83 | 1940-1944 | Wartime courses. Mr Wallis' (T. Branch) file. |
| 84 | 1940-1945 | Administrative Memoranda, Circulars, etc. |
| 85 | 1941-1944 | Engineering cadetships; training of wireless personnel; engineering education; Mr Wallis' (T. Branch) files. |
| 86 | 1943-1944 | Building Apprenticeship and Training Council; Mr Wallis' (T. Branch) files. |
| 87 | 1944 | Technical Branch contributions to the History of Education in wartime; Mr Davidson's file. |
| 88 | 1944-1945 | Art and craft education in wartime: Material given to Dr Weitzman by H.M. Inspector Mr Dickie; Mr Davidson's file. |
| 89 | - | Draft preliminary chapter on Universities and Technical Education c.1950. |
| | | YOUTH AND THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE |
| 90 | 1939-1945 | Youth Service: Various notes, Administrative Memoranda, Circulars, etc. |
| 91 | 1941 | Informal Youth Training Committee: Incomplete set of papers. |
| 92 | 1941-1942 | Juvenile delinquency. Extracts from Department's files. |

| Reference | Date | Description |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| Ed.138 | | YOUTH AND THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE - contd. |
| 93 | 1941-1945 | Registration of Young Persons. Administrative Memoranda. |
| 94 | 1944 | Interdepartmental Committee on the Educational and Recreational Needs of Young People in the Coal Mining Industry. Mr Wallis' file. |
| 95 | 1944 | Youth Service: Mr Davidson's file. |
| 96 | - | Mr Miles Davies, Ministry of Education, comments on draft chapter in 1952. Copy of draft attached. |

APPENDIX 9

Government Evacuation Scheme

Total number billeted in all areas

(Chapter XVIII)

| | England and Wales | | | | | Scotland | | | | | Total for Great Britain (all classes) |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Unaccompanied children | Mothers and children | Teachers and helpers | Other adults ¹ | All classes | Unaccompanied children | Mothers and children | Teachers and helpers | Other adults ¹ | All classes | |
| September 1939 | 765,000 | 426,500 | 89,000 | 18,000 | 1,298,500 | 62,000 | 99,000 | 13,000 | 1,000 | 175,000 | 1,473,500 |
| January 1940 | 420,000 | 56,000 | 43,400 | 3,380 | 522,780 | 37,600 | 8,900 | 3,100 | 200 | 49,800 | 572,580 |
| August 1940 | 421,000 | 57,000 | 27,000 | 14,000 | 519,000 | 17,900 | 7,400 | 1,500 | 100 | 27,000 | 546,000 |
| February 1941 | 480,500 | 571,000 | 25,000 | 262,200 ² | 1,338,700 | 11,800 | 15,700 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 30,000 ³ | 1,368,700 |
| September 1941 | 435,700 | 450,000 | 21,000 | 157,000 | 1,063,700 | 25,600 | 85,000 | 1,300 | 29,700 | 141,600 ⁴ | 1,205,300 |
| March 1942 | 332,000 | 279,000 | 18,000 | 109,000 | 738,000 | 18,400 | 47,400 | 1,400 | 13,400 | 80,600 ⁵ | 818,600 |
| September 1942 | 236,000 | 196,000 | 13,000 | 85,000 | 530,000 | 13,600 | 31,500 | 1,200 | 8,200 | 54,500 ⁶ | 584,500 |
| March 1943 | 181,000 | 148,000 | 9,000 | 68,000 | 406,000 | 9,500 | 23,000 | 1,000 | 6,500 | 40,000 ⁷ | 446,000 |
| September 1943 | 137,000 | 124,000 | 6,400 | 55,000 | 322,400 | 7,800 | 18,800 | 900 | 5,500 | 33,000 ⁸ | 355,400 |
| March 1944 | 124,000 | 132,000 | 5,400 | 58,000 | 319,400 | 6,000 | 15,700 | 700 | 7,600 | 30,000 ⁹ | 349,400 |
| September 1944 | 284,000 | 601,000 | 6,800 | 121,000 | 1,012,800 | 5,100 | 15,900 | 400 | 6,000 | 27,400 ⁹ | 1,040,200 |
| March 1945 | 132,000 | 243,000 | 4,000 | 59,000 | 438,000 | 1,700 | 11,200 | 100 | 3,200 | 16,200 ¹⁰ | 454,200 |
| September 1945 | 13,250 | — | — | — | 13,250 | 150 | 3,550 | — | 1,800 | 5,500 ¹¹ | 18,750 |

562

¹ Includes homeless persons, expectant mothers, children in nurseries, camps and hostels, invalids, old people, the crippled, the blind, civil defence personnel, emergency medical service staff and war workers up to April 1942. The last three groups are excluded thereafter.

² Mainly homeless people; including 66,200 such people billeted in evacuation areas.

³ Including 11,700 evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁴ Including an unknown number of evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁵ June 1942. Including an unknown number of evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁶ December 1942. Including an unknown number of evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁷ June 1943. Including an unknown number of evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁸ December 1943. Including 4,300 evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

⁹ June 1944. Including 5,100 evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

¹⁰ April 1945. Including 10,600 evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

¹¹ October 1945. Including 850 evacuees from English areas billeted in Scotland.

History of Second World War (U.K. Series)

"Problems of Social Policy" Titmuss
(H.M.S.O. 1950)

APPENDIX 10

Government Evacuation Scheme

Estimated number of persons evacuated in organised parties or assisted with travel vouchers and billeting allowances between September 1939 and September 1941 in Great Britain¹ (Chapter XVIII)

| Period | Unaccompanied children | Mothers and children | Children under five evacuated to nurseries | Expectant mothers evacuated under the special scheme | Teachers and helpers | Other classes (homeless persons, etc.) | Total |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|--|--|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| September 1939 | 797,000 | 524,000 | 7,400 | 12,700 | 103,000 | 7,000 | 1,451,100 |
| September 1939 to April 1940 | 36,000 | — | — | 575 | — | — | 36,575 |
| May to 1st August 1940 | 213,000 | Included in column 7 | — | — | 5,000 ² | 55,000 | 278,000 |
| Children's Overseas Reception Board evacuation (summer 1940) ³ | 2,664 | — | — | — | — | — | 2,664 |
| 1st August 1940 to February 1941 | 120,000 | 563,000 | — | — | — | 262,000 | 947,000 |
| February to September 1941 | 120,400 | 173,000 ⁴ | — | — | — | — ⁵ | 293,400 |
| September 1939 to September 1941 | — | — | 4,000 | — | — | — | 4,000 |
| May 1940 to June 1941 | — | — | — | 20,700 ⁶ | — | — | 20,700 |
| | 1,289,064 | 1,262,000 | 11,400 | 33,975 | 112,000 | 325,000 | 3,033,439 ⁷ |

¹ Including mothers, children and other classes evacuated to hostels, group homes, residential nurseries, camp schools and other institutions, but excluding most of those who were helped with travel vouchers and who found their own accommodation for which billeting allowances were not paid.

² This figure refers to staff accompanying only a proportion of the children. For other schemes in 1940 and for the years 1941-5 no details are available of the evacuation of teachers and helpers.

³ The Government also permitted the evacuation (by private arrangements) of some 15,000 children and adults to the U.S.A. and Canada.

⁴ Including some homeless persons and other classes.

⁵ A number of 'other classes' are included in the figure of 173,000 under col. 3 and in the figure of 262,000 under col. 7, but for the bulk of the movement under this heading during February-September 1941 no figures are available.

⁶ Excluding Scotland, the figures for which are included in appendix 11.

⁷ This statement includes a small number of persons assisted to move to Eire and N. Ireland but it excludes:

(a) about 10,500 Gibraltarians, some 29,000 Channel Islanders, refugees from over forty different countries totalling just over 30,000 and

(b) transferred doctors, nurses, health visitors, social workers, medical students, industrial workers, nursery staffs, civil servants, sick patients, civil defence workers, police and others. Many of these people were billeted in reception areas.

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(H.M.S.O. 1950)

The table is reproduced from Appendix II of Criminal Statistics, 1947-49.
*Number of children and young persons found guilty of indictable offences in
England and Wales — all courts*

| Year | Boys | | | | Girls | | | |
|------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | Number of offenders | | Number per 100,000 of the population of boys in the age group | | Number of offenders | | Number per 100,000 of the population of girls in the age group | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 and under 14 | 14 and under 17 | 8 and under 14 | 14 and under 17 | 8 and under 14 | 14 and under 17 | 8 and under 14 | 14 and under 17 |
| 1938 | 14,724 | 11,645 | 798 | 1,131 | 835 | 912 | 46 | 90 |
| 1939 | 16,724 | 12,281 | 930 | 1,248 | 941 | 889 | 53 | 91 |
| 1940 | 23,167 | 16,071 | 1,304 | 1,674 | 1,449 | 1,500 | 83 | 158 |
| 1941 | 23,083 | 17,000 | 1,324 | 1,824 | 1,530 | 1,981 | 89 | 214 |
| 1942 | 20,382 | 14,691 | 1,184 | 1,613 | 1,563 | 1,913 | 93 | 212 |
| 1943 | 21,058 | 14,212 | 1,234 | 1,591 | 1,666 | 1,827 | 100 | 206 |
| 1944 | 22,525 | 14,625 | 1,330 | 1,654 | 1,558 | 1,846 | 94 | 211 |
| 1945 | 22,922 | 17,349 | 1,361 | 1,967 | 1,500 | 1,732 | 92 | 199 |
| 1946 | 19,912 | 14,347 | 1,175 | 1,638 | 1,433 | 1,396 | 87 | 162 |
| 1947 | 19,567 | 13,027 | 1,140 | 1,515 | 1,591 | 1,509 | 96 | 178 |
| 1948 | 24,684 | 15,980 | 1,433 | 1,902 | 2,043 | 1,727 | 123 | 212 |
| 1949 | 23,164 | 14,126 | 1,351 | 1,708 | 1,717 | 1,423 | 104 | 177 |

GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME.

Hostels established in Bognor Regis.

| Name and Address of Hostel | Type of Evacuee | Total Accommodation | Name of Matron <i>a</i> | Date of opening of hostel in Bognor Regis | Date of closing or transferring of Hostel | Number of Evacuees admitted, from date of opening to date of closing or transfer of Hostel | | |
|--|--|---------------------|--|---|---|--|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Male | Female | Total |
| Aldwick Home for Boys, Aldwick Road* | "Difficult" boys aged 7-15 | 30 | Miss D. E. Sturges (original Master and Matron, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Simmonds) | 26.1.40 | 20.2.45 | 195 | — | 195 |
| Arthur's Home for Girls, Aldwick Road | "Difficult" girls all ages, boys up to 7 years | 42 | Mrs. K. Davidson (original Matron, Miss Kettle) | 1.10.42 | 13.2.46 e | 45 | 81 | 126 |
| Redgate Hostel, Upper Bognor Road (later St. Albans Hostel, Esplanade) † | "Difficult" girls all ages, boys up to 7 years | 14 | Miss D. Jarrett | 14.7.44 | 29.11.45 s | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| Miramar Hostel, Belmont Street ‡ | "Difficult" boys up to 9 years | 8 | Sister Gertrude | 14.7.44 | 13.8.45 | 9 | — | 9 |
| Denmead Hostel for the Blind, Victoria Drive | Blind persons | 24 | Miss P. Halford (original Matron, Miss Ballantyne) | 12.10.39 | 7.9.45 — | 51 | — | 51 |
| East Dome Hostel for the Blind, Upper Bognor Road | Blind persons | 40 | Mrs. L. Ruffell (original Matron, Mrs. Pentland) | 2.9.39 | 30.3.46 | 32 | 36 | 68 |
| | | 158 | | | | 345 | 121 | 466 |

* On 11.7.44 received, for amalgamation, hostel removed from Dyants, Ditchet Green, Sevenoaks.

† Transferred from Northcote, Sutton-at-Hone, Dartford.

‡ Transferred from Hollydene, Hildenborough, Tonbridge.

a As at 17.10.44.

|| Hostel transferred to Pinchurst, Park Road, Camberley.

s Hostel transferred to and amalgamated with Arthur's Home, Aldwick Road, Bognor Regis.

e Hostel transferred to Pilgrim's Wood, Sandy Lane, Guildford.

— Hostel transferred to and amalgamated with East Dome Hostel, Upper Bognor Road, Bognor Regis.