A VISIT

TO

GREAT BRITAIN

IN

1911

BY

G. BOGUE SMART

Chief Inspector of British Immigrant Children and Receiving Homes in Canada

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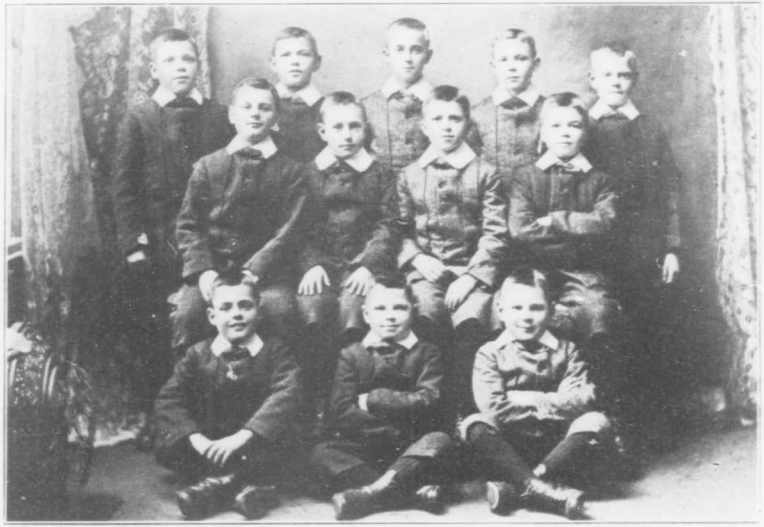
OTTAWA
GOVERNMENT PRINTING BUREAU
1912



A group of boys about to start for Canada.

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THE SUPERINTENDENT OF IMMIGRATION,
OTTAWA.

SIR,—I have the honour to report as follows with reference to my recent visit to Great Britain. The main object of the visit was to look into the methods adopted for the care and preliminary training of children who become emigrants to Canada.

My enquiries included the earlier life of the children, their reception into both private and certified homes and schools, their training therein, and the medical examinations to which they are subjected, and must pass, and lastly, and perhaps most important, the moral and christian influences under which they are brought up.

The Societies and institutions carrying on this work seem to meet perfectly every condition affecting the welfare of the children under their care.

The favourable opinion I have long held, and often expressed, was entirely confirmed by my observations on this occasion.

I believe that in no country in the world is a deeper or more practical interest taken in the education, personal security and social uplifting of children, who, through no fault of their own, have been placed in unfortunate circumstances, both by the voluntary unloosing of the purse strings of her private citizens, and the benevolence of the State, than in Great Britain. I think that it is realized that the care bestowed, and the large expenditures made in this connection, have from an economic point of view alone, been a wise and profitable investment. One need only look through the various avenues of activity to find therein persons of prominence who are indebted in a very large measure to the help bestowed through the channels referred to for their success in life.

To Canadians in their efforts to build up a strong, healthy, and industrious nation, the early life and training of these children are subjects of importance, seeing that so many of those emigrated, are destined to share the responsibilities of citizenship in this Dominion. That the people of Canada fully appreciate the importance to this country of securing contingents of well trained boys and girls is made clear by the

fact that while thousands have completed their apprenticeship on farms in various parts of Canada, each succeeding year brings a greater demand to fill the vacancies left by those who have gone forth to do for themselves. This demand for juvenile farm help has continued for over thirty years and the supply has never yet equalled the demand.

Many years ago Pestalozzi, the celebrated educationalist, and writer, laid down in his text books the axiom that every human being has a just claim to a judicious development of his faculities, on those to whom the care of his infancy is confided. This has been amply recognized by the Imperial Government, and an epoch in the history of Great Briain has new been reached, as the result of wise and sympathetic legislation, when the word "pauper," as applied to the children of the poor, has become practically a misnomer, save, perhaps, when adopted in the formal phraseology of legal procedure in the courts.

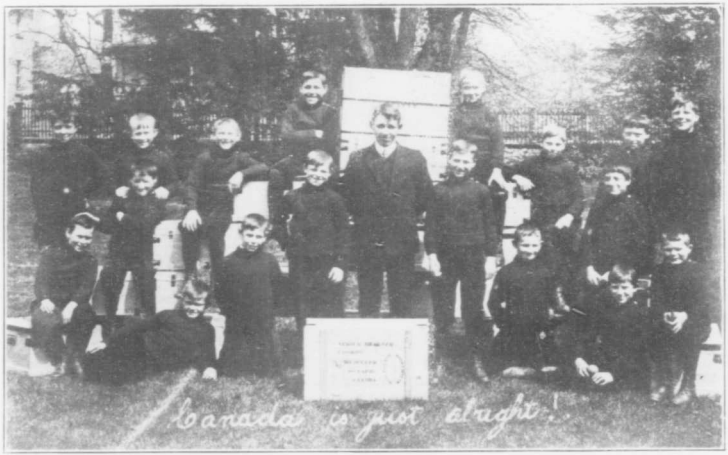
Time was, in the old land, when children were regarded as their father's chattels, and were to him without rights, and he to them without obligation. He knew no lawgiver to whom he must render an account. In process of time, however, laws have been enacted to safeguard the rights of childhood; but it was only in 1905 that the climax was reached, by the passage of the Childrens Act, which embodies almost every conceivable contingency affecting the well being of children; under which also education is made compulsory, and severe punishment is provided for neglect or illtreatment of a defenceless child.

From many quarters in the course of my itinerary, I gathered that the juvenile movement to Canada is regarded with favour both from a humane and an economic view point. Its true aim, by universal expression, is to give the children the best possible start in life, by providing them with homes where they will have all reasonable moral and material advantages, and will receive such training and help as will best fit them to fulfil rightly the duties and responsibilities that life will have for them in this important portion of the Empire. The local Government Board and the various societies continue to maintain close interest with children in Canada, until they reach their eighteenth year, at which age it may reasonably be taken for granted that, having completed their apprenticeship, they are competent to do for themselves.

Having personally followed the career of the children from their reception at the training homes and schools in England it may not be uninteresting to follow them at home and in Canada until they have attained their majority.

The only passport required for admission to either a poor law, industrial or private philanthropic school may be described in these two words, 'individual need.'

Poor Law Schools are for children who are destitute, orphans, or semi-orphans, i.e., the father, or mother, being dead, and as is often the case there is a large family and the parent from poverty superinduced may be by misfortune, sickness, or personal faults, is unable to properly support the children. Many of them are from



Young immigrants with their boxes ready for the farm.

good families. The parental tie is held inviolate, and parents have the prerogative of demanding possession of their children at anytime. In the Guardians' Guide, 1899, I find it stated that 'regard must be had to the parents, so that the relief may not make them reckless in bringing children into the world, or in neglect of provision for their maintenance. Regard must also be had to the children, in order that the methods adopted may remove them from pauperism and make them useful members of the community.' This is the ideal sought by the Local Government Board.

In company with Mr. Trevor Turton, Assistant General Inspector of the Local Government Board, I visited the Training ship *Exmouth* for boys at Grays, in Essex, where I inspected 700 boys of from 12 years of age, under training for the navy and merchantile marine. Many of these boys come to Canada; some join the crews of ocean liners, and others lake vessels, while those unable to qualify for a sea-faring life may be found in various occupations. At sixteen years of age they complete their course of instruction at the Naval School. I was most favourably impressed with those boys; they seemed to be a very superior and intelligent class, of good physique, honest and upright looking. On reaching the age of sixteen the majority go on into the Navy, but as above stated many come our way. These boys are originally selected from the rural elementary poor law schools. Their character must be above suspicion, and no boy with a record for criminality is permitted to join the *Exmouth*. I was present when three boys were being examined by a physician, and the lads' previous history was carefully enquired into, both by the physician and the superintendent of the ship. It happened during my visit that one boy was outfitted and dispatched to join a Canadian Pacific Ocean Liner sailing the following day from Liverpool to Canada.

Again, in company with Mr. Turton, I visited the Sidcup Village Homes and Schools, which proved most interesting. Children are annually sent to Canada from this institution. The grounds surrounding the Homes are some sixty acres in extent. There are twenty cottages in the village, which accommodate, by regulation, fifteen girls each, besides three cottages for twelve boys each, and four others housing fifty three boys. There are in addition four other commodious houses, designated as 'prolation' homes, at the moment occupied by eleven boys. Every opportunity was afforded me to make a careful inspection of the children under training. A splendid and liberally equipped school is provided for them. A staff of certified teachers is engaged, and in order to make life as nearly as possible like that of an ordinary town or village, the children have a five or ten minutes walk each day to and from school. Their course of training extends over four or five years, before they are considered eligible to enter situations. Each child is subjected to a medical examination, and on arrival at the Homes I found the Medical Officer engaged in this work. Very particular attention is paid to the physical and mental condition of the children before being sent out, and I was assured that no child is ever sent from the schools concerning whose general condition there exists in the minds of the authorities any reasonable doubt. Great attention, I was pleased to observe, is paid to the condition of the children's teeth. A dentist makes an examination of each child's teeth at least three times a year. Of the large number of children I found

Old Country boy at work in the harvest field.

here, it is worthy of note that there were only four in the infirmary. The houses were in every particular well equipped, and the whole practically a self contained village. The children go about after school hours with freedom and reasonable latitude. They are under good but not too strict discipline. They are sent to the town of Sidcup, which is near by, and do messages and shopping. Their personal appearance, and politeness when spoken to, reflected credit on the Superintendent and lady Matron, and while there were, as might be expected, some poor and indifferent types among the children, the percentage of such was small. The Staff of Officers, from the Superintendent and Matron down, seemed to me to possess qualities well calculated to inspire manliness and self-respect in the children.

The St. Pancras Schools and Homes were next visited. These schools and homes, which are splendidly equipped and officered, are classified as follows:—

(*a*) Maternity wards. As the name indicates these are really hospitals. They are part and parcel of the workhouse system. Their need is felt in a great Metropolitan city like London, with its complexity of population. Women who are homeless, or without proper home conveniences, are cared for and provided with free medical and nursing attention in these wards. The children seen here are not all born in the workhouse, but are in many cases brought there at an early age by parents or guardians. The mother and child, (if it happens to be an infant of the nursing age) remain in the nursing mother's ward until the infant is weaned, when it passes on to the nursery. At the age of three years it is transferred to one or other of the block or district homes.

(*b*) Nursery wards, provided for children of three years and under.

(*c*) A Receiving Home for 'in and out' transients, and children en route for one of the block schools. Almost immediately following the reception of an unaccompanied child in the workhouse it is sent to the Receiving Home, its stay in the workhouse depending upon the hour of its reception. A child received after 8.30 p.m. usually spends the night in the workhouse, but does not come in contact with the adult population of the Institution and therefore cannot properly be designated a 'workhouse child.'

As far back as 1837 the attention of the Home Government was directed to the necessity for better facilities for the instruction of children than the then existing schools, situated within the workhouse area, afforded. The Local Government Board thereupon addressed a circular letter to the various Boards of Guardians, urging that where feasible Boards should group and combine to establish homes and schools in which a more satisfactory training and education could be had, and with the further object of removing young children from association with the ordinary workhouse habitue. The result is the present system.

St. Margaret's Receiving Home (Parish of St. Pancras) at the time of my visit contained thirty-three children, twenty of whom were from three to eight years of age, and thirteen from eight to sixteen years of age. The children of school age attend the London County Council schools in the neighbourhood, and associate with

the children of the district or parish. The home is in charge of a matron and trained nurses. During their residence there the children are taught habits of tidiness and personal cleanliness. Their stay depends on the child, but is limited to a month or six weeks, or not longer than is necessary (as there are others on the waiting list) before being transferred to the Block School at Leavesden, or if the child is a Roman Catholic then it goes to a certified Roman Catholic school.

(*d*) The Block School.—This is situated at Leavesden, near Watford (Herts), and some miles from London, in the country. There were over four hundred children under training. I made a careful inspection of this school, accompanied by Mr. J. S. Oxley, General Inspector of the Local Government Board. I paid particular attention to the type and physique of the children, and their daily life routine, and the opinion I formed was that fully sixty per cent of these children would meet the requirements of the Canadian Government regulations, and if given the chance many would develop into good, industrious citizens. In addition to the elementary instruction, the curriculum includes, for the girls, cooking, sewing, and general housework, and for the boys gardening, shoemaking, carpentry and other trades. Sports and games, and a splendid brass band are provided for the children; every endeavour is made to make their lives as happy as possible. The Superintendent and his wife, an experienced and estimable couple, are deeply interested in their charges. A number of children from Leavesden have been emigrated to Canada, under the auspices of the Church of England Society, and the Superintendent informed me that they had done well. Previous to its actual adoption into the school each new recruit, for reasons of health, spends a certain time in a lodge at the entrance to the grounds, and for three weeks it is under the scrutiny of the Medical-Officer. A well equipped infirmary or hospital is provided in connection with the school.

A visit to the Camberwell Homes, under the guidance of the Assistant Inspector of the Local Government Board, interested me particularly, because very many of their children are emigrated under the auspices of Dr. Barnardo's and other agencies, and in due course come to our notice in Canada. The plan of receiving children of tender years into the Camberwell Homes and Schools is similar to that of other poor law schools and homes. It should be always borne in mind, however, that children are not permitted to remain within the gates of these institutions longer than is absolutely necessary. There is here also a receiving lodge for children from three to sixteen years of age. They first come to this probationary home and are bathed and given a thorough cleaning up, after which they receive fresh outfits of clothing. The medical officer visits the home twice daily and his preliminary examination always includes the weighing and measuring of each child and testing their eyes. Children termed 'ins and outs' are those who have parents (or one parent) living, whose parental rights, with respect to the child, as previously stated, are not affected by its admission to the home. In one such case, a family of seven children were 'in' and 'out' of the homes no less than ninety times in ten years, a thing allowable under the letter, but clearly against the spirit of the law. The outfit of clothing given to the children on their admission and discharge is the inducement to this species of abuse. There were five hundred and forty children of from three to fifteen years enrolled in this institution. Before passing on to the other cottages in the process of promotion

based on length of residence in the home, and on character and behaviour. Each child must remain at least a fortnight on probation, thus affording the Superintendent and his staff reasonable opportunity to learn the individual character of each juvenile. The cottages within the area, or block, as it is termed, are graded, and the children practically undergo a system of filtration during their residence and training. Each house is modern and self-contained. It is presided over by an experienced matron, who assumes the role of a mother, and was, I observed, called 'mother' by the children in her cottage. The aim is to make each home as nearly as possible like that of a private family, and the children are treated as members of the family. They wear no distinctive uniform, but are allowed some freedom of taste in regard to dress —a good thing in the development of character. I happened to arrive at one of the homes, 'Scott Cottage,' at the dinner hour, and found the children 'home from school,' all looking very bright and happy, well clothed, and without the air of institutionalism so noticeable in many such places where a different system prevails.

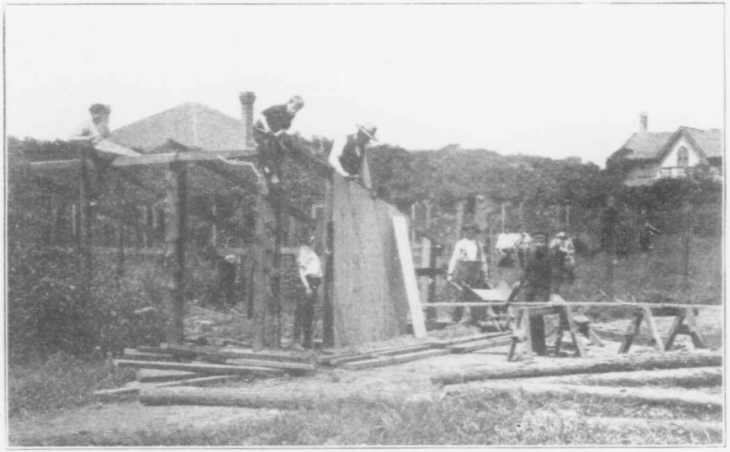
The Local Government Board, in its instructions to Poor Law Guardians, makes the following very admirable observations, which I quote as illustrating their attitude towards this whole subject:—

'In the treatment of children under the Poor Law the primary object to be kept in view is their education to independence of character, and habits of industry. The considerations which apply to other cases of relief are not applicable in their entirety to the case of children, whose pauperism is always due to misfortune and for whom the preventive and curative process of help advocated by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress offers the surest prospects of success. In the care of the children lies the most responsible and at the same time the most hopeful work of the Guardians.'

Industrial Schools are under the Home Office Department, and are for the reception, under the order of a Magistrate, of children under the age of fourteen years, who may be found begging, wandering, homeless, associating with undesirable persons or truants from school. A limited number of children from these schools come to Canada under the auspices of the emigrating agencies.

I visited the Edinburg Original Ragged School for Girls, at Gilmerton, established by the celebrated Dr. Guthrie. There were seventy girls in residence, all under sixteen years of age, undergoing a thorough training in domestic work. After conversing with the children and inspecting their handywork in the home and classroom, all of which was most creditable, I proceeded to the Boys Industrial School, Liberton, another of Dr. Guthrie's foundations. In this school there were one hundred and seventy eight fine looking Scotch lads. A comprehensive education is given the boys in industrial as well as in general learning. These boys and girls would make good settlers in Canada.

St. George's (Roman Catholic) Industrial School for boys, Liverpool, is doing a good work. For many years boys have been sent out to Canada under the supervision of the Catholic Emigration Association and placed in farm employment. The Superintendent mentioned to me a number of their former protégés who were quite prosperous and doing well in the Dominion.



Old Country boys building a poultry house at the 'Coombe Home' Hespeler, Ontario.

Industrial training forms an important branch of the work of this institution. Twenty six boys were in residence. In connection with the school and situated within a few minutes walk, is a Home for working-boys. It was established for boys who had served their apprenticeship at St. George's and were working in the city at their trades.

In the Liverpool Protestant Industrial School for girls, one hundred and five girls of from five to fifteen years of age were being cared for, and given a practical training in sewing, cooking and other branches of domestic work. They would do well in Canada as nurse and house maids. The Matron, however, informed me that she experienced no difficulty in finding places for them, in Liverpool and vicinity.

On the suggestion of the Assistant Superintendent of Emigration, an appointment was arranged to meet Mr. Amphlett, of the Foundling Hospital, (London), an institution than which few command a deeper or more wide spread interest. The King is Patron. The authorities had been considering the emigration of a limited number of their wards, and I took the opportunity of explaining to them the requirements of the Canadian Government in regard to Juvenile emigration. There are six hundred and fifty-five children, all foundlings, under the guardianship of this institution. They are received only after careful enquiry, and while the children are under one year of age, so that the training given may have its effect from earliest infancy. On reaching a certain age many are boarded out in the country districts under an effective system of supervision. It was proposed as an experiment to send this year three selected lads to Canada, all of whom I saw and could unhesitatingly approve. Arrangements will be made for their emigration under the auspices of one of the agencies accredited by the Local Government Board and the Department of the Interior. The emigration of children from this celebrated school merits approval, as the training and the good moral influences under which they have been brought up well qualify them for lives of usefulness in the Dominion.

I attended the Edinburgh Conference, and at its close went to Preston, Bolton and Edgworth in Lancashire. At the latter place are located the Village Homes for Children, an important branch of the National Children's Home and Orphanage, and one of the most prominent farm training schools in England. A thorough industrial and farm training is provided here. This colony has a population of three hundred and eighteen children, two hundred and twelve of whom are boys and one hundred and six girls, of from three and a half to sixteen years of age, occupying fifteen well built and arranged brick houses, scattered over an area of one-half mile. I spent part of the forenoon going over the farm and saw the boys at work in the harvest fields under the directorship of an experienced foreman. The different branches of farming are taught. A large herd of cows are kept and a fairly profitable dairy business is carried on. Since the homes and schools were established approximately two thousand children—chiefly boys—have been emigrated to Canada, and many have become practical farmers, owning farms in this country.

The Edgworth Homes are situated on one of the highest elevations in Lancashire, and the children have plenty of fresh air, to which fact I attributed in a large measure

their general healthy appearance. In this conection I may state that there was but one patient in the infirmary—a remarkably satisfactory circumstance, considering the large neighbouring population of children. The work of the farm and workshops is performed exclusively by juvenile labour. Some very valuable stone quarries on the farm are operated by the boys. In the knitting factory a number of the girls are employed, and in the carpentry department windowsash and doors are manufactured by the boys, and the results of their labour are very creditable. Each house is occupied by a separate family, and is in charge of a lady whom the children call 'mother.' There was here also a noticeable absence of institutionalism. The children go about without restraint and are shown that confidence is placed in their honour. The Edgworth farm village school is in many respects a 'George Junior Republic.' The children are being brought up under Christian influences. They attend the village church and Sunday school—a mile and a half away—and wear no mark of distinction. It seemed to me that the early instruction afforded the children in outdoor and farm work would be invaluable to them as farm helps in Canada.

At Coleshill, near Birmingham, is situated St. Edward's Catholic Home for Children, under the supervision of Reverend Father Hudson. My visit here was most interesteing and instructive. The children looked happy and well cared for. The Sisters of the Order of St. Paul have charge of the home. It is from this home that a number of children are annually emigrated under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Emigration Association, and have done well in Canada.

It was a great privilege to meet Mr. R. J. Parr, director of the National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children, by whom I was afforded a most instructive interview, in the course of which I gained much information concerning the real character and scope of the work of his influential organization. It is one of the most valued of the many societies in the United Kingdom. It is the protector of children of every class of society against injustice, neglect, and illtreatment, and is in short, the champion of children's rights. It has a large army of active agents in every centre of Great Britain and Ireland, and has accomplished a work, the good effect of which is manifest not only at home but even in our own Dominion. Through their instrumentality, numbers of children have been removed from undesirable surroundings and sent to Canada, where reports, which I was permitted to peruse, would indicate that they are on the high road to useful citizenship. The pleasure was subsequently afforded me of addressing a meeting of the executive committee of this society, when I explained briefly the policy of the government of Canada in relation to the juvenile emigration movement; the methods of supervision, and in general the steps taken for the protection of the interests of the juvenile immigrant.

The following extract from an address delivered in London in July of the present year by Sir J. Crichton-Brown, M.D., that eminent sociologist, expresses fully the view held in philanthropic circles as to the most desirable type of young person to emigrate:—

"We are losing to a great extent that bold peasantry which should be the country's pride, while retaining the comparatively feeble and unintellectual prolotariat which is crowding into the slums of the large towns. It is not proposed to dump on the Dominion the dregs of our child life. There must be careful selection. We shall have to retain and deal with as best we can those children who are mentally defective or morally depraved, or charged with disease. There are large numbers of children in London who only want an opportunity to rise out of their reduced circumstances to eliminate the pauper taint and become strong, healthy and good men and women."

The writer has known many children anxious to go to Canada, but whom it was found necessary to reject at the last moment from the belief that they were unfitted for Canadian farm life and work.

'There are three classes of children in England,' said Brother Finn Barr, of St. Joseph's Industrial School, Manchester, at the Edinburg conference, '(1) The intelligent smart boy, (2) the dull, plodding, awkward lad, and (3) the boy below par in intellect, and requiring permanent supervision. These lads at the age of furteen are taken from school and find work in a 'blind alley' occupation. When they reach their eighteenth year they are too old and big for their 'jobs' and find themselves not qualified for any other kind of occupation. There are thousands of boys in Great Britain whose parents are so poor as to make it absolutely necessary that their children must earn a few pence to help along, and they take a blind alley job, such as sitting on the rear of van to prevent the theft of goods and similar occupation, which leads to nothing. I have come into personal contact with many of this class of boys in London and other cities, at work, when they should have been at school. The question of overcrowding the blind alley kind of employment will never be settled satisfactorily until the broad acres of England are again brought under the spade and plough.'

The teaching of trades in England, would from my observation appear to be perhaps a trifle overdone, and one wonders where the great army of tailors, shoemakers and harness makers, that are being turned out of the schools will find employment at their trades, in this age of labour saving devices. If 'jobs' could be found for these young people as gardeners and farm labourers they would soon be sufficiently trained to take places as farm labourers in Canada, and the way would thus be open to them to success and an independent and happy life.

Before leaving the old country I visited the various Juvenile Emigration Agencies and Homes, and one and all agreed that the children sent by them to Canada had done remarkably well. There would appear to be a disposition, on their part to emigrate a larger number of children than heretofore.

Your obedient servant,

G. BOGUE SMART,

Chief Inspector of British Immigrant Children and Receiving Homes.

OTTAWA, December 21, 1910.