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A Study in Policy Failure

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UK Child Migration to Australia, 1945–1970

A Study in Policy Failure

Gordon Lynch

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Gordon Lynch
University of Kent
Canterbury, UK



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*To OC and all the many former child migrants who have fought hard to
understand the truth of their early lives...*

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When writing this book, I have been very conscious of those who were caught up in these migration schemes as children, and who may still in some respects be trying to make sense of that experience. This is also true of the children and grandchildren of those former child migrants who may

also wonder about their experiences and how it shaped the lives of their own families. My hope is that this book might be able to make at least some small contribution to their process of making sense of the past, and it is to them that this book is dedicated.

Canterbury
September 2020

Gordon Lynch

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‘A Serious Injustice to the Individual’: British Child Migration to Australia as Policy Failure

Recommendation 61. *The emigration of deprived children should be subject to the condition that the receiving Government makes arrangements for their welfare and supervision comparable to those recommended in this report (para. 515).*

—Curtis Committee report, 1946

Counsel to the Inquiry: *Is there anything that you feel I have not covered in your evidence that you wanted to say?*

Witness A11: *I just—growing up, when I went to Bindoon, you sent me to a bloody slave camp... That’s all I could call bloody Bindoon, a bloody slave camp. That’s what it was. They just sexually abused you, they did what they want to you, they never believed you... What’s the worst handicap they’ve given me? Not allowing me to read and write, learn... And separating me from my mother, when we were asking time and time again, and I class that—my education and keeping my family away is worse than the sexual abuse, what they did, what they did to us. It was just unbelievable... They just had full control of you and nobody believed you, you know. And they made you go to confession. I said, “I don’t want to go”, and they make you go, you know. Yeah.*

—Witness A11, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Hearings on Child Migration Programmes, March 2017

Over the past 20 years, a number of countries across Europe, North America and Australasia have seen the rise of public inquiries and reports into cases of historic institutional child abuse.¹ This can, in part, be understood as an expression of relatively recent social trends, including greater public discussion of the nature and effects of child sexual abuse as well as the growing social influence of concepts of trauma and of moral restitution for past institutional failings.² Behind these more recent developments stands a longer and often hidden history of suffering caused through psychological, physical and sexual harm in childhood that has left lasting marks on individuals' emotions, relationships and bodies.³

In many of the cases from the past century towards which a critical historical gaze has now been turned, such suffering did not occur because of an absence of policy or legal prohibition. Surveys undertaken by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia documented 4444 individuals who had claimed to have been sexually abused in Roman Catholic organisations as well as 1085 complainants of sexual abuse concerning Anglican organisations since 1950.⁴ This abuse was often the subject of institutional responses that

¹ See, for example, (eds) Johanna Sköld & Shurlee Swain, *Apologies and the Legacy of Abuse of Children in "Care"* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Johanna Sköld 'Historical abuse—a contemporary issue: compiling inquiries into abuse and neglect of children in out-of-home care worldwide', *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 2013, 14(1), 5–23; Robin Sen, Andrew Kendrick, Ian Milligan and Moyra Hawthorn, 'Lessons learnt? Abuse in residential child care in Scotland', *Child and Family Social Work*, 13, 2008, 411–22; Matthew Colton, 'Factors associated with abuse in residential child care institutions', *Children and Society*, 16(1), 2002, 33–44.

² See, for example, Jennifer Crane, *Child Protection in England, 1960–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Kate Gleeson, 'The Hero's Journey: Gender and the Politics of Justice for Child Sexual Abuse' in Gleeson K and Lumby C (eds) *The Age of Consent? Young People, Sexual Abuse and Agency* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2019), pp. 31–48; Didier Fassin & Richard Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); John Torpey, *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparation Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

³ See, for example, Robert Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁴ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Claims of Sexual Abuse Made With Respect to Catholic Church Institutions in Australia* (Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), para 42; Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Analysis of Complaints of Child Sexual Abuse Received by Anglican Church Dioceses in Australia* (Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), para 41.

prioritised protection for organisations' public standing over criminal justice for child victims despite legal measures across Australian States prohibiting sexual assault and rape of children.⁵ Similarly, in Ireland, the Ryan Commission concluded that existing legislation and guidelines concerning the corporal punishment of children were routinely broken across all of the residential institutions that it investigated, leading to violence against children that was arbitrary, spontaneous and excessive by standards of the time and which had a lasting effect on those exposed to it.⁶ Rather than occurring through the absence of legal protections or policy standards, children suffered in these cases in spite of policy and legal frameworks intended to prevent it. The policy aspiration to protect children's well-being, reinforced by wider discourses around children's flourishing as both a public and private good, was for varying reasons too often undercut by other aims or loyalties, and impeded by institutional cultures, structures and systems.

This book is a study of another such case of policy failure in post-war children's out-of-home care. The nature of 'failure' in policy contexts is, as recent studies have argued, at least to some degree in the eye of the beholder and depends on the criteria being used.⁷ There were various ways in which organisations involved in child migration felt it to be a failure at the time. The numbers of children sent from the United Kingdom to Australia never matched either the ambition of, or financial investment from, the Australian Commonwealth Government and, by the early 1960s, assisted child migration was allowed to fade into obscurity in its immigration programmes. Others, as we shall see in coming chapters, thought of failure in this context primarily in educational terms and expressed concern

⁵ Hayley Boxall, Adam Tomison & Shann Hulme, *Historical Review of Sexual Offence and Child Sexual Abuse Legislation in Australia: 1788–2013* (Sydney: Commonwealth of Australia, 2014).

⁶ *Final Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* (Dublin: Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, 2009), vol. 4, paras 6.09–6.17.

⁷ On the wider interest in policy failure in current literature in public policy, including the value of fine-grained case studies for developing wider explanatory frameworks for policy failure, see, for example, Allan McConnell, 'What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze', *Public Policy and Administration*, 30(3–4), 221–42; Cathal FitzGerald, Eoin O'Malley and Deiric Ó Broin, 'Policy success/policy failure: a framework for understanding policy choices', *Administration*, 67(2), 2019, 1–24. On assessments of policy failure being shaped by the interpretative frame through which policy outcomes are viewed see, for example, Mark Bovens and Paul 't Hart, 'Revisiting the study of policy failures', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(5), 2016, 653–66.

that some receiving institutions were failing to provide a wide enough range of training suited to the needs of the individual child. As one administrator of the Fairbridge Society put it in 1945, the assumption that children need only be trained as farm labourers or domestic workers was ‘a serious injustice to the individual’.

The particular form of failure with which this book is concerned, however, is in the gap between the standards for children’s out-of-home care set out in the 1946 Curtis report which came to define child-care policies in the emerging welfare state and the conditions in Australia which many British child migrants experienced. Such a gap between policy aspiration and practice was far from unknown in the United Kingdom. The emphasis on the use of adoption and foster care over placement in residential institutions in the Curtis report and 1948 Children Act was still being unevenly implemented across Britain well into the 1960s, with services also, in many cases, being delivered and monitored by untrained child-care workers.⁸ However, assisted child migration was, in several important respects, a different case to children receiving out-of-home care in the United Kingdom. As the Curtis Committee recognised, sending a child thousands of miles away from other family members and beyond the jurisdiction of British authorities entailed a special responsibility for ensuring both appropriate standards of selection and overseas care for child migrants. To imagine that emigration would give a child a better life was much harder, from this perspective, if it involved sending children to types of residential institution that the Curtis Committee felt unable to endorse in the United Kingdom. Whilst civil servants and ministers at the Home Office—which became the lead government department for children’s out-of-home care in 1947—understood and supported this policy perspective on child migration, it proved ultimately ineffective in ensuring that this policy was applied. By 1956, the gap between these Curtis standards and the realities on the ground for British child migrants in Australia had become all too clear to British policy-makers and within a few years, civil servants were privately hoping that the schemes would wither and die for lack of children being made available for emigration rather than face serious

⁸ See J.A.G. Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966); Bob Holman, *Child Care Revisited: the Children’s Departments, 1948–1971* (London: Institute of Childcare and Social Education UK, 1998); Gordon Lynch, ‘Pathways to the 1946 Curtis report and the post-war reconstruction of children’s out-of-home care’, *Contemporary British History*, 34(1), 2019, 22–43.

confrontation with Australian authorities and the voluntary societies still supporting this work. Far from being an anachronistic critique of child migration programmes by today's standards, this book therefore seeks to provide a case study of how a post-war policy framework intended to safeguard children's emotional and social development failed in practice to achieve this. In short, it is an attempt to make sense of how 'All' and many others like him experienced childhood trauma through British child migration schemes in a policy context in which much better had been hoped for them.⁹

The experience of 'All' was far from unique. Child migrants' experiences could vary significantly, with some viewing them positively or seeing their experiences as both a mix of positive and harmful.¹⁰ However, the past 20 years has led to much greater documentation of forms of suffering experienced through child migration programmes. The recently concluded review of the abuse of child migrants undertaken by the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is the ninth investigation to have taken place that has, in some way, touched on this.¹¹ Child migrants have themselves published

⁹On the wider interest in policy failure in current literature in public policy, including the value of fine-grained case studies for developing wider explanatory frameworks for policy failure, see, for example, Allan McConnell, 'What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze', *Public Policy and Administration*, 30(3-4), 221-42; Cathal FitzGerald, Eoin O'Malley and Deiric Ó Broin, 'Policy success/policy failure: a framework for understanding policy choices', *Administration*, 67(2), 2019, 1-24. Whilst it is correct to argue that what is seen as a policy 'failure' is shaped by the interpretative frame through which policy outcomes are viewed (see Mark Bovens and Paul 't Hart, 'Revisiting the study of policy failures', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(5), 2016, 653-66), it is reasonable to claim that post-war child migration constituted a failure of UK Government policy in its own terms given that one of the Government's policy goals was to safeguard children's well-being through standards advocated in the Curtis report.

¹⁰See, for example, oral history interviews described in Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare and the Decline of the British World, 1869-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-5, 18; Evidence from witness FWS, *Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry*, Transcript of Day 179.

¹¹See Legislative Assembly, Western Australia, Select Committee into Child Migration, *Interim Report*, (Perth: State Government of Western Australia, 1996); UK Parliament Health Committee, Third Report, *The Welfare of Former British Child Migrants* (London: HMSO, 1998); *Preliminary Report on Neerkol for the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (Brisbane: Commission of Inquiry, 1998) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (Brisbane: Commission of Inquiry, 1999) also known as the Forde Report; Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee, *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record, Report on Child Migration* (Canberra: Australian Commonwealth Government, 2001); Historical

memoirs of their experiences as well as wider accounts of the history of particular schemes,¹² alongside books by journalists and others with significant involvement in this field.¹³ Oral histories have also been recorded, notably through a major project undertaken by the National Library of Australia, which explore former child migrants' memories of their lives before migration and in Australian institutions, their adjustment from institutions into adult life and their reflections on the history of child migration in a period of public apologies.¹⁴ These have provided various accounts of physical and sexual abuse, the pain of separation from families left in the United Kingdom or from siblings also migrated to Australia, the psychological effects of life in impersonal institutions and the longer-term effects of childhoods spent in some institutions that prioritised use of children's labour over their education. As Margaret Humphreys, the founder of the Child Migrants' Trust has put it, a number of child migrants faced multiple traumas in the wider context of a sense of fundamental loss of home and identity bound up with their migration from Britain.¹⁵

These experiences took place in a post-war policy environment in which renewed attention was being given to the administration and standards of children's out-of-home care. The establishment of the Curtis and Clyde

Institutional Abuse Inquiry, *Report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry* (Belfast: HIA, 2017); Australian Royal Commission, *Case studies 5 (on Salvation Army institutions in Queensland and New South Wales), 11 (on Christian Brothers institutions in Western Australia) and 26 (on St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol)* (Canberra: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse); Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report* (London: IICSA, 2018). For a useful summary of the wider context of critical understandings of child migration programmes in Australia, see Andrew Murray & Marilyn Rock, 'Child migration schemes to Australia: a dark and hidden chapter of Australia's history revealed', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 38(2), 2003, 149–67.

¹² See, for example, David Plowman, *Our Home in the Bush: Tales of Tardun* (Como, WA: Tardun Old Boys Association, 1994); David Hill, *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and Its Betrayal of Australia's Child Migrants* (Sydney: Random House, 2008); John Hawkins, *The Bush Orphanage* (Docklands, VIC: JoJo Publishing, 2009); Peter Harding, *Apology Accepted: A 1950s Kid from Fairbridge* (no location: Big Thumb Publishing, 2014).

¹³ Philip Bean & Joy Melville, *Lost Children of the Empire* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Margaret Humphreys, *Empty Cradles* (London: Doubleday, 1994); Alan Gill, *Orphans of the Empire: The Shocking Story of Child Migration to Australia* (Sydney: Random House, 1998).

¹⁴ Former Child Migrants and Forgotten Australians Oral History Project, National Library of Australia, completed 2012. See also oral histories available at ML: MLOH 539.

¹⁵ Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation*, Day 8 transcript, pp. 38–40.

Committees in 1945 to review systems and approaches to children's out-of-home care in England and Wales, and in Scotland, respectively, had emerged out of a growing recognition within and outside government that the fragmented systems of governance and oversight currently in place were inefficient and unsafe.¹⁶ With the experience of children's war-time evacuation fresh in the national consciousness, and the rise of popularised 'child psychology' continuing to focus attention on children's emotional lives and individual development,¹⁷ the Curtis report became a means not only of setting in train clearer lines of administration for children's out-of-home care in the emerging post-war welfare state, but a marker of standards to be expected for the future. Children's care was to move decisively from older institutional models of containment to a new era of more personalised care, attentive to the child's need to develop through play and increasing autonomy, in an environment that resembled as closely as possible the 'normal family home'. Although far from being a central concern in its final report, the Curtis Committee recognised that assisted child migration was likely to resume soon. Whilst not completely opposing this, it recommended that this be restricted to a very limited range of children for whom it would genuinely represent the best option for their individual future and that it only be undertaken on the basis of the standards commended in the Committee's report for children's out-of-home care more generally. This was the policy agenda that the Home Office, as the lead department for children's out-of-home care was to take up and that was meant to frame post-war child migration policy.

In attempting to explain the gap between post-war policy aspirations for children's out-of-home care and the lived experience of many British child migrants,¹⁸ this book focuses primarily on knowledge, assumptions and decisions within the parts of the UK Government most involved in the administration of this work: the Dominions Office (which became the Commonwealth Relations Office in 1947), the Home Office and the UK High Commission in Canberra. These governmental bodies operated in the context of wider trans-national administrative networks which involved

¹⁶ See, for example, Lynch, 'Pathways to the Curtis report'.

¹⁷ John Welshman, 'Evacuation, hygiene, and social policy: the *Our Towns* report of 1943', *The Historical Journal*, 42(3), 1999, 781–807; Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ On the uneven implementation of standards encouraged by the Curtis report in England and Wales, see, for example, Lynch, 'Pathways to the Curtis report'.

UK voluntary organisations and local authorities who provided children for migration, eight ‘recognised’ sending bodies (all of whom were voluntary organisations),¹⁹ UK-based immigration officials at Australia House in London and the Australian Commonwealth Government, Australian State Governments (particularly their child welfare and immigration departments) and voluntary organisations in Australia who received child migrants and acted as their custodians.

The decision to focus this analysis primarily on the UK Government is not intended to imply that the sources of policy failure in this context lay only with British policy-makers. The complex, multi-agency oversight of post-war child migration to Australia was an anomaly in the context of the emerging welfare state in which greater clarity and integration in the administration of children’s out-of-home care were being prioritised. Such complexity increased the potential for the delivery of assisted child migration to be compromised by competing policy priorities (including different policy goals for assisted migration and for children’s care), by failures in information-gathering and sharing and by caution in over-stepping departmental remits or causing overt confrontation with other organisational stakeholders. Failures to protect the welfare of British child migrants therefore occurred across many of the organisations involved in this work as well as in the policy and administrative systems through which they interacted with each other. In the case of the voluntary societies involved, I have shown elsewhere how their particular meso-level structures and cultures also contributed to failures to protect the welfare of child migrants.²⁰ These included distinctively religious factors, including different forms of governance structure within religious organisations, religious conceptions of the child and the ways in which actions that proved harmful to children were obscured through different forms of religious legitimisation.

¹⁹The eight ‘approved’ organisations which received funding from the Dominions Office/Commonwealth Relations Office for the assisted migration of unaccompanied children to Australia were the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee, the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement, the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service, Dr Barnardo’s Homes, the Fairbridge Society, the National Children’s Home, the Northcote Children’s Trust and the Salvation Army.

²⁰Gordon Lynch, ‘The Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement and post-war child migration to Australia’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 2020, 74:1, 798–826; Gordon Lynch, ‘Catholic child migration schemes from the United Kingdom to Australia: systemic failures and religious legitimisation’, 2020, 44:3, 273–94.

Whilst this book provides insights into wider systemic failures in these post-war child migration programmes, and within particular voluntary societies, its primary aim is therefore to develop a better understanding of policy failure in government systems. By providing a close reading of policy decision-making and administrative processes within the relevant departments of the UK Government, it seeks to clarify the specific factors which caused the gap between policy-makers' awareness of appropriate standards and the capacity of the machinery of government to ensure that these standards were applied. The focus of the coming chapters is therefore on archival material which provides evidence of key periods of decision-making and the operation of administrative systems for these child migration programmes from the early 1920s until the early 1960s, by which time unaccompanied child migration to Australia was substantially in decline. The coming chapters do not seek to provide a detailed account of former child migrants' own experiences of those early lives. That work has already been undertaken very substantially by the books, oral histories and inquiries referred to above. Rather this book has been written to provide the most extensive analysis yet undertaken to understand the policy context and systems in the United Kingdom through which their childhood experiences took place.

As the coming chapters will show, before child migration to Australia resumed in the summer of 1947, there was already a substantial understanding within the Dominions Office of both actual failures and potential risks associated with this work. Despite this, funding was provided by the UK Government to voluntary organisations for around 3200 unaccompanied child migrants sent to Australia in the post-war period. Child migration resumed and continued in the post-war period not because it was assumed to be without problems in the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office. Rather the post-war schemes operated in the midst of continuing negotiations about what conditions for child migrants were actually like, what standards could reasonably be expected and how problems might be mitigated bearing in mind the complex web of organisational relationships through which interventions needed to be implemented. Through this process, British policy-makers increasingly saw child migration as, at best, a tolerable system, perpetuated by precedent, rather than something strongly desirable. Organisational investments in this work and desire to avoid conflict with influential stakeholders meant that these programmes ultimately came to an end not through

central government intervention but the declining numbers of children put forward for migration.

Child migrants were therefore placed at risk not simply through over-complex systems of administration and governance, but because of specific institutional cultures, interests and decisions. In the case of the UK Government, this centred around policy-makers' sense of what was desirable for child migrants balanced against their perceptions of what was practical given the actual or imagined limits of their power and the need to maintain working relationships with other governmental and voluntary organisations. As the coming chapters will demonstrate, such causes of policy failure lie not simply in rational choices about policy priorities or macro-level political and economic factors, but in the meso-level structures of, and relations between, specific government departments and micro-level factors such as policy-makers' perceptions of affinity, trust and expertise.

In examining this case of policy failure, the book also seeks to contribute to the growing academic literature on the history of the early post-war welfare state. Whilst operating in a period of the consolidation of state power over the provision of children's out-of-home care, the history of post-war child migration to Australia further illustrates how the emerging welfare state operated not simply as a system of centralised control, but as a 'mixed economy' between state and voluntary organisations.²¹ The case of post-war child migration to Australia, which involved interactions between local and national governments in both the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as between a range of voluntary and professional organisations, provides a rich example of this 'mixed economy' in action. Supported by state funding, and operating at least notionally within systems of state oversight, these child migration programmes were delivered

²¹ See Geoffrey Finlayson, 'A moving frontier: voluntarism and the state in British social welfare, 1911–1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1(2), 1990, 183–206; Jane Lewis, 'Family provision of health and welfare in the mixed economy of care in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *Social History of Medicine*, 8(1), 1995, 1–16; Julie Grier, 'A spirit of "friendly rivalry"? Voluntary societies and the formation of post-war child welfare legislation in Britain', in (eds) Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey, *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), pp. 234–55; Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State: Charities and the Working-Classes in London, 1918–79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); (eds) Matthew Hilton and James McKay, *The Ages of Voluntarism: How We Got to the Big Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

primarily by voluntary organisations and involved at least five times as many children sent from the care of voluntary organisations than from local authorities. This system was not one of a straightforward divergence of provision by the state and voluntary sectors, however, but of complex and evolving interactions between them. Far from constituting an example of the growing power of the centralised welfare state, these child migration programmes provide evidence of policy-makers' perceptions of the limits of their power.²² They also demonstrate that whilst broad principles of 'child psychology' were becoming increasingly influential in post-war public policy on children's out-of-home care, that influence was not uniformly strong and could be diluted by other organisational pressures.²³

More specifically, this study adds to knowledge of the role of civil servants in these processes. Although high-level decisions about assisted migration policy and the administration of children's out-of-home care were ultimately made by politicians, the day-to-day operation of the child migration schemes was over-seen and managed by civil servants in Britain and Australia. Politicians only usually became involved in more detailed policy discussions when they either involved serious concerns about child migrants' welfare, substantial policy changes or parliamentary questions and debates. In practice, this meant that the evolution of policy on British child migration often took place through intra- or inter-departmental discussions between civil servants. By offering a fine-grained analysis of these policy interactions, this study in particular adds greater detail to the broader analysis of the working of the Home Office Children's Department provided by previous studies.²⁴

This book also seeks to contribute to the wider literature on the history of British child migration schemes. It provides the most extensive account yet published of the United Kingdom and Australian Commonwealth

²² A similar argument has been developed in Julie Grier, 'Voluntary rights'.

²³ This book therefore seeks to develop a more complex understanding of the relationship between child psychology and the post-war welfare state than that provided by Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge, 1989). Although not directly discussed in this book, this history should also be understood as running in parallel to the development of 'problem families' policies, in which individuals such as Somerville Hastings, Mary Rosling and John Ross were also involved (see, e.g., John Welshman, 'In search of the "problem family": public health and social work in England and Wales, 1940–70', *Social History of Medicine*, 9(3), 1996, 447–65; Michael Lambert, 'Problem families' and the Post-War Welfare State in the North-West of England, 1943–74, PhD thesis, Lancaster University, awarded 30/03/2017.

²⁴ See, for example, Griffiths, *Central Government*; Holman, *Child-care Revisited*.

Government's involvement in post-war child migration to Australia, adding to existing historiography on British child migration that has focused on migration to Canada,²⁵ Southern Rhodesia,²⁶ the work of particular voluntary organisations,²⁷ or more specific aspects or periods of policy and

²⁵ On British child migration schemes to Canada, see Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869–1924*, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Roy Parker, *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867–1917* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2010); Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982); (ed) Phyllis Harrison, *The Home Children: Their Personal Stories* (Winnipeg: Gordon Shillingford, 1979); Patrick Dunae, 'Gender, generations and social class: the Fairbridge Society and British Child Migration to Canada, 1930–1960', in (eds) Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey, *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), pp. 82–100, and Marion Diamond, *Emigration and Empire: The Life of Maria S. Rye* (New York: Garland, 1999). A number of references to the Prince of Wales farm school in British Columbia are also made in oral evidence about the work of the Fairbridge Society provided by Stephen Constantine to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (see Child Migration Programmes case study, Transcript of Day 12, 12 July 2017).

²⁶ Katja Uusihakala, 'Rescuing children, reforming the Empire: British child migration to colonial Southern Rhodesia', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 2014, 22(3), 273–87; and Ellen Boucher, 'The limits of potential: race, welfare and the interwar extension of child migration to Southern Rhodesia', *Journal of British Studies*, 48(4), 914–34. Comparatively little has been written about post-war child migration to New Zealand, although on this see oral evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse by Gordon Lynch on the work of the Royal Over-Seas League (see Child Migration Programmes case study, Transcript of Day 11, 11 July 2017). Retrospective views of this scheme by former British child migrants to New Zealand were also presented in evidence submitted by the British Child Migrants Society (NZ) to the House of Commons Health Committee (see Health Committee, Third Report, *The Welfare of Former British Child Migrants, Volume II: Minutes of Evidence and Appendices* (London: HMSO, 1997–98).

²⁷ Geoffrey Sherington and Chris Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1998); Marion Fox, 'British child migrants in New South Wales Catholic Orphanages', *History of Education Review*, 25(2), 1996, 1–17; Barry Coldrey, '“A charity which has outlived its usefulness”: the last phase of Catholic child migration, 1947–56', *History of Education*, 25(4), 1996, 373–86; Barry Coldrey, '“A strange mix of caring and corruption”: residential care in Christian Brothers orphanages and industrial schools during their last phase, 1940s to 1960s', *History of Education*, 29(4), 2000, 343–55; Geoffrey Sherington, 'Fairbridge child migrants' in *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 53–81; and David Hill, *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its Betrayal of Britain's Child Migrants to Australia* (Sydney: Random House, 2007). See also Barry Coldrey, *The Scheme: the Christian Brothers and Childcare in Western Australia* (O'Connor, WA: Argyle-Pacific, 1993). Coldrey's volume has since attracted controversy, primarily because it later came to light that he had submitted a private document to the General Council of the Christian

practice.²⁸ Through its discussion of the failings of religious organisations in their child-care work, it also seeks to demonstrate a shadow-side of religious involvement in post-war welfare systems that has not always received adequate attention in more positive historical and sociological accounts of religious welfare initiatives.²⁹ A related undercurrent within the book, reflected in the growing tensions between Curtis standards of care and some religious organisations, is the increasing divergence between secular concepts of childhood well-being, grounded in broad principles of child psychology, and understandings of childhood that prioritised formation within particular religious denominations. The emerging tension between secular and religious conceptions of the child in the post-war period—exemplified in diverging views of Curtis Committee members on the relative importance of religious formation within a particular denomination³⁰—remains an important topic for further exploration and is one which I hope to return to in more detail in future.

The first part of this book sets out the policy context from which post-war child migration schemes to Australia emerged. Chapter 1 examines

Brothers, titled *'Reaping the Whirlwind': The Christian Brothers and the Sexual Abuse of Boys 1920 to 1994*, in which he claimed to have intentionally minimised the extent of the sexual abuse of children at these Western Australian institutions in *The Scheme*.

²⁸Julie Grier, 'Voluntary rights and statutory wrongs: the case of child migration, 1948–76', *History of Education*, 31(3), 263–80; Kathleen Paul, 'Changing childhoods: child emigration since 1945', in (eds) Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey, *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), pp. 121–43; Stephen Constantine, 'Waving goodbye? Australia, assisted passages, and the Empire and Commonwealth Settlement Acts, 1945–72', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26(2), 1998, 176–95; Stephen Constantine, 'The British Government, child welfare and child migration to Australia after 1945', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 30(1), 2002, 99–132. For broader historical accounts, which offer less detailed discussions of the governance of British child migration to Australia see Boucher, *Empire's Children*; Gordon Lynch, *Remembering Child Migrants: Faith, Nation-Building and the Wounds of History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); and Geoffrey Sherington, '“Suffer little children”: British child migration as a study of journeyings between centre and periphery', *History of Education*, 32(5), 2003, 461–76. On child migration from Scotland, see Lynn Abrams, *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes from 1845 to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), pp. 122–61.

²⁹See, for example, Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); (eds) Anders Backstrom, Grace Davie, Ninna Edgardh & Per Pettersson, *Welfare and Religion in Twenty-First Century Europe: Configuring the Connections, Vol. 1* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

³⁰See *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, cmd.6922 (London: HMSO, 1946), pp. 183–4.

how the gradual growth of child migration work in the inter-war period was situated in a broader policy shift towards better co-ordinated and resourced imperial settlement, intended to promote more efficient use of the British Empire's natural and human resources. Leading to the passing of the Empire Settlement Act in 1922, this policy emphasis created an environment in which child migration was initially seen as a small part of wider imperial settlement strategies compared to juvenile migration schemes which were expected to play a more significant role. With UK Government support for most child migration to Canada ending in 1925, interest in child migration to Australia began to grow. From 1928, the global economic depression was to have a major effect on assisted migration policy more generally. As the economies of British Dominions declined, and unemployment grew, it was no longer politically nor economically sustainable for governments to fund adults or juveniles to travel overseas to Dominions in which the supply of paid employment was weakening. A major re-evaluation of British assisted migration policy took place, through both the Empire Migration Committee of the Economic Advisory Council and an Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, in which the belief that assisted migration could stimulate the imperial economy was now rejected in favour of the recognition that imperial migration was a symptom, and not a driver, of economic growth. Whilst ambitions for co-ordinated approaches to adult and juvenile migration were scaled back, child migration came to be seen as one of the most sustainable forms of assisted migration. Children did not pose immediate demands on the Australian labour market and the costs of their overseas care would not be significantly greater than if they remained in the United Kingdom. Further opportunities to send child migrants opened up with new farm schools associated with the Fairbridge Society being built in Victoria and New South Wales, and approval also being given for children to be sent to institutions run by Catholic religious orders in Western Australia. By 1939, child migration programmes to Australia had become a well-established element in the migration policies of both the UK and Australian Commonwealth Governments.

Chapter 2 examines how, during the war years, the Dominions Office and UK High Commission in Canberra became far more aware of a range of problems in the delivery of child migration work than in the inter-war period. Although the Dominions Office had already become involved in the 1930s in growing tensions that had arisen in administrative relations between Fairbridge committees in London and Australia, a succession of

incidents were to raise doubts about several of the institutions to which British child migrants were being sent. In 1942, the UK High Commissioner, Sir Ronald Cross, sent the Dominions Office a report detailing a number of concerns that he had about the living conditions and organisational attitudes he had observed during a visit to the Christian Brothers' farm school at Tardun. This was followed, a few months later, by a report from another member of staff at the UK High Commission, Walter Garnett, describing a series of problems at the Northcote farm school at Bacchus Marsh which were largely blamed on the out-going Principal. Whilst a follow-up report on Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia by a State Government official was judged by Clement Attlee to have alleviated some immediate concerns about Tardun, the need for a further visit from the UK High Commission was accepted. Copies of correspondence about the Northcote farm school forwarded to the Dominions Office by the Fairbridge Society in London also revealed their knowledge of a range of problems at Northcote, including failures to provide regular reports on children sent there, since 1939. Later in 1943, the Fairbridge Society in London also raised concerns with the Dominions Office about reports about restrictive training and work opportunities being provided for child migrants sent to Pinjarra. A few months later, Fairbridge forwarded on a dossier detailing a range of criticisms that had been made about the Pinjarra's management and which were supported by a critical independent report produced by a consultant, Caroline Kelly, for the Australian Commonwealth Government. Whilst Walter Garnett challenged many of the claims in the dossier, a fuller report that he produced in 1944 argued that significant improvements were required in the management, staffing, training and after-care at some institutions accommodating child migrants if these schemes were to resume successfully after the war. By 1945, the Dominions Office was coming to the view that in future Australian institutions receiving British child migrants would need to receive annual monitoring visits from an official at the UK High Commission, even if these were presented more as informal visits than formal inspections. Whilst concern was expressed about sending children to institutions over which the UK Government, or British voluntary organisations, could exercise little or no control, others suggested that to attempt control from the United Kingdom smacked of old colonialist attitudes inappropriate to a new era of autonomous government in the Dominions. Despite much greater knowledge of the ways in which child migration programmes could fail children, and of the lack of effective

monitoring in the past, the presumption remained, however, that child migration still had a useful if limited role for the future.

Chapter 3 examines the significance of the 1946 Curtis report in shaping the post-war policy landscape of children's out-of-home care in which child migration to Australia was to resume. Arising both out of an awareness within Government of the need to restructure a fragmented out-of-home care, and a successful public campaign by Marjorie Allen for an inquiry to examine standards in residential institutions, the Curtis report put forward a number of recommendations for reforming administrative systems that were subsequently implemented in the 1948 Children Act. Beyond its influence on the administration of children's care, the Curtis report also offered a substantial review of standards across a range of residential institutions and foster homes. Whilst recognising that standards of material provision were, on the whole, reasonably good, the report was far more critical of standards of emotional care in residential homes. Drawing on popularised concepts from child psychology, particularly from Susan Isaacs, the report argued that too many institutions failed to offer children sufficient individual attention, security of affection or adequate resources to develop through play. With this in mind, it recommended that children in future be cared for in environments that resembled as closely as possible the 'normal family home', ideally through adoption or failing that through boarding out with foster carers. Where residential care continued to be used, this should not follow the model of the large, impersonal 'barrack' institution, but smaller grouped or scattered homes, with no more than ten children under the care of a 'cottage mother'. Whilst aware of the existence of child migration schemes, the Curtis Committee chose only to receive evidence from central government departments with statutory responsibility for different forms of children's out-of-home care, which did not include the Dominions Office. The Committee's views on child migration were influenced by a memorandum from the Fairbridge Society which again raised the London Committee's concern about the problems of sending children to institutions in Australia over which it had no control with regard to standards of care. Whilst giving qualified support to the resumption of child migration, the Curtis report emphasised a point made by the Fairbridge Society that child migrants sent overseas should not receive standards of care that were any lower than those which the report recommended should be implemented in England and Wales. Whilst ostensibly creating a policy framework in which greater attention would

be given to conditions in Australian receiving institutions, limitations in achieving this were to become apparent in the following years.

Part two of the book discusses the processes through which post-war child migration to Australia resumed, grew and gradually declined. Chapter 4 begins by examining how post-war child migration to Australia operated in the context of more ambitious policy goals for child migration by the Australian Commonwealth Government, which began to be developed during the war years. Whilst initially aiming to receive 50,000 British child migrants in the first three years after the war, these plans were scaled down both in the light of reduced expectations of the numbers of children likely to be available for migration and a realisation about the cost of building new cottage-home style accommodation under State Government control. Whilst child migration was still seen as one important means of resisting an anticipated demographic decline in the Australian population through the middle decades of the twentieth century, a less expensive solution was found by funding the expansion of existing residential institutions run by voluntary organisations. In the context of this stronger interest from the Australian Commonwealth Government, several voluntary organisations in Britain and Australia sought to begin or to scale up their child migration work. Through a somewhat chaotic planning process, the first parties of post-war British child migrants began to arrive in Australia in the autumn and winter of 1947, facilitated by a visit by the Commonwealth Minister of Immigration, Arthur Calwell, to Britain that summer. Around this time, the Home Office, recently identified as the lead central government department for children's out-of-home care, began to involve itself more in policy discussions about expected standards for child migration work in the light of the Curtis report. Based on very limited knowledge, however, the Home Office's initial interventions were treated sceptically by Walter Garnett at the UK High Commission in Canberra where they were seen as uncritically mirroring the views of the Fairbridge Society in London and adding little to his report in 1944. Poor communication between what had become the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Home Office meant that the latter had little initial involvement in decisions about the approval of a growing number of residential institutions in Australia wishing to receive British child migrants. With two years elapsing before any inspection reports by Australian officials were forwarded to the UK High Commission, British child migrants were in some cases sent to institutions that were ill-prepared to receive them. By 1949, however, the Home Office was becoming better informed about

the organisational systems through which child migration programmes operated and making more sustained efforts to influence Australian policy in line with Curtis standards. Whilst managing a complex array of administrative reforms and expanded responsibilities, its Children's Department appeared confident of its ability to develop more effective controls over child migration and the process of drafting regulations for the child migration work of voluntary organisations under s.33 of the 1948 Children Act was begun.

Chapter 5 examines how the process of drafting these s.33 regulations developed in the context of growing criticisms of the resumption of child migration from some professional and political organisations. Beginning with initial discussions of the principles for these regulations with its new Advisory Council on Child-Care in the spring of 1949, the Home Office Children's Department oversaw a slow consultation process on these draft regulations which took almost three years until the Advisory Council were presented with an initial draft for their approval. The sensitivity of these regulations was demonstrated both by a defensive reaction to them from both the Australian Commonwealth Department of Immigration and the UK High Commission in Canberra as well the creation of a new body, the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, intended to provide voluntary organisations with a stronger representative voice in this process. Whilst formally approving the vast majority of the proposed regulations, some constituent members of the Council were far more concerned about whether such regulations might effectively curtail their child migration work and the Children's Department continued to take the view that relations with the Council's members required careful handling. More problematic for the drafting process was advice from Government legal officers that, whilst in some respects contradictory, broadly indicated that it would be impossible for the UK Government to introduce regulations that would bear directly on standards of care received by British child migrants after they had arrived overseas. This advice increasingly created doubts within the Home Office as to whether the draft regulations would have any practical benefit in protecting child migrants' welfare overseas and serve only to create unnecessary additional administrative work. Another significant factor influencing this process was the production of a report on the systems and standards of child migration to Australia by a former member of the Curtis Committee, John Moss. With the Home Office still only having relatively limited information about receiving institutions for child migrants in Australia, the suggestion made by Moss in the

summer of 1950 that he combine a personal holiday in Australia with visits to receiving institutions was welcomed by the Children's Department. Although initially intended by the Home Office as a low-key, informal information-gathering exercise, Moss's tour attracted growing publicity and he began to insert himself into policy debates in which he had no formal role. When he eventually presented the Home Office with a broadly positive report on child migration to Australia in the summer of 1952, in which he recommended further expansion of this work, the Home Office had little choice but to agree to arrange for its publication in some form. Although Moss's report attracted comparatively little public interest, its suggestions for future policy improvements were broadly endorsed by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, keen to demonstrate its willingness to respond to feedback that would enable this work to continue and grow. With the Home Office Children's Department reassured that Moss's comments indicated that child migration was working well enough, and signs of Australian willingness for further improvements, the Home Office took the view that the s.33 regulations were not urgently needed and that a policy of gradual, moral persuasion was likely to be more productive.

Chapter 6 examines how the optimism of supporters of child migration for further expansion of this work in the wake of the Moss report proved short-lived. By 1954, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration was becoming increasingly unhappy with the limited numbers of child migrants arriving from the United Kingdom given the financial investment it had made in expanding residential institutions to accommodate them, as well as with the 'quality' of many of the children sent in the original migration parties of 1947. Prospects for increasing the numbers of child migrants being sent faced the obstacle of opposition from most local authority Children's Officers, who took the view that it was not a suitable option for the vast majority of children in their care. Despite numbers of child migrants being sent from the United Kingdom beginning to fall, the mid-1950s saw an increasingly intense policy discussion about assisted child migration between the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office. Periodic inter-departmental reviews of the wider post-war policy of assisted migration to Australia had demonstrated that whilst there was limited strategic benefit to the United Kingdom in continuing to contribute financially to its citizens' emigration to Australia, a complete withdrawal of financial support risked a strongly critical response from the Australian Commonwealth Government. Assisted child migration, which

constituted a comparatively small part of the wider assisted migration budget, could, it was suggested, be continued as a symbolic expression of commitment to Anglo-Australian relations whilst the larger budget was substantially reduced. A further review of this policy in 1954 led to a consensus position between the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office that further improvements were needed in the care of British child migrants in Australia, but that these were best addressed through a process of gradual reform rather than any more sudden policy intervention. Although it was hoped that this policy could be endorsed and implemented through periodic reports on assisted migration by the government advisory body, the Oversea Migration Board, support for child migration amongst some of its members delayed this process. The Board was eventually manoeuvred into proposing that a formal fact-finding mission be sent to Australia. When the mission, led by the former head of the Children's Department, John Ross, undertook its work in the spring of 1956, it returned a far more critical view of receiving institutions than that given by Moss and recommended stronger policy interventions that would have made it easier to prevent continued migration of children to a number of specific institutions. Fearing the political consequences of the mission's work, and sceptical of the practical value of its proposals for tighter controls, the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office agreed to return to the policy of gradual reform, introducing new unofficial inspections of sending organisations' work the following year. Whilst events around the mission's work had demonstrated that the Australian Commonwealth Department of Immigration was prepared to tolerate standards of child-care very different to those advocated in the Curtis report, UK Government officials were unable to find a way of addressing this policy challenge. Instead, their hope increasingly became that child migration would wind down over time through falling numbers of available children.

Chapter 7 reviews this history and considers the underlying factors within the UK Government which led to post-war child migration to Australia resuming and continuing against the grain of child-care standards reflected in the Curtis report. Supporting the argument that such policy failures are best understood multi-causally, factors identified include the competing timetables and priorities of policy agendas for assisted migration and children's out-of-home care, civil servants' unwillingness to stray into the policy remit of other government departments, policy-makers' perceptions of the limits of their power, the influence of precedence on policy decisions, caution about provoking overt conflict with

other organisational stakeholders and the persistence of beliefs about a policy's value despite contradictory evidence. Each of these factors contributed to policy processes in which effective policy interventions were delayed and deferred. Although the largest numbers of unaccompanied child migrants sailed to Australia over little more than a ten-year period, from 1947 until the end of the 1950s, the slow and ineffectual process of managing these programmes allowed them to persist over a period of time which could constitute an individual's entire childhood. Much recent work on historic abuses of human rights and transitional justice has tended to focus on contexts in which rights were violated as a matter of conscious policy, or regarded with indifference as acceptable damage in the pursuit of other policy goals. The case of the UK child migration schemes to Australia shows how, in other cases, vulnerable individuals can be exposed to considerable harm in contexts where policy-makers can both express concern about their welfare whilst perpetuating a system that harms it. Whilst this book therefore seeks to contribute to our understanding of the specific history of child migration from the United Kingdom to Australia, it also offers insights into the harmful effects of failures in policy systems that may prove relevant to a wider range of cases in which governments fail their vulnerable citizens.

Although the following chapters provide the most substantial available account of policy processes within the UK Government concerning assisted child migration to Australia, they do not complete our understanding of the history of these programmes.³¹ Better understanding of the organisational conditions through which child migrants experienced trauma in institutional care will also be possible through work that situates children's experience of life in residential institutions in both the history and social dynamics of specific institutions as well as the wider systems and policy context within which they operated.³² Comparatively little has been

³¹ Given the focus of this book on UK Government policy discussions, attention is not paid here to the same degree to the policy and administrative systems through which an estimated 310 Maltese child migrants arrived in Australia between 1950 and 1965 (see, e.g., Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee, *Lost Innocents*, 2.120–2.131)

³² This is an issue productively considered by the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institution* and Hill, *Forgotten Children*; see also Lynch, *Possible Collusion Between Individuals Alleged to Have Sexually Abused Boys at Four Christian Brothers' Institutions in Western Australia, 1947–1965: A Secondary Analysis of Material Collated by Historical Abuse Inquiries*, independent report uploaded to Kent Academic Repository, 12 December 2019, accessible at <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/79274/>.

published from material in Australian State archives on how child migrants' experiences were shaped through the relationships that existed between receiving organisations and immigration officials, child welfare officers and politicians of the State Governments responsible for over-seeing and part-funding their work. As many former child migrants come to the end of their lives, this work may become the concern of a new generation, keen to understand a history that continues to speak to the ways in which societies can fail vulnerable members through welfare initiatives which claim to improve their lives.

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‘The Risk Involved is Inappreciable... and the Gain Exceptional’: Child Migration to Australia and Empire Settlement Policy, 1913–1939

The decision by the UK and Australian Commonwealth Governments to support the post-war resumption of child migration to Australia built on what had already become a growing field of collaboration between government and voluntary organisations before the outbreak of war.

Although child migration work to Australia had taken place on a small scale in the nineteenth century,¹ the practice of sending child migrants to farm schools and other forms of residential institutions began with the opening of the Pinjarra farm school in Western Australia by Kingsley Fairbridge in 1913.² After experiencing a series of financial crises, in 1920 Pinjarra became the first institution of its kind to receive direct financial support from the UK Government as a result of Fairbridge’s prodigious networking and personal contacts, including with the then Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, Leo Amery.³

¹See, for example, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report*, p.65.

²Although an important advocate of the farm school model, previous initiatives had been undertaken in both Canada and Australia to establish farm schools for juvenile migrants, see Parker, *Uprooted*; also Sherington and Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 46–7. On early correspondence with the UK Government about the work of the Child Emigration Society and the Pinjarra farm school, see TNA: MH102/1400.

³Sherington and Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 45–85.

The slow expansion of child migration work to Australia from this point on took place in the wider context of greater integration of imperial migration policies by the UK Government. This was informed by substantial work undertaken between 1912 and 1917 by the Dominions Royal Commission in assessing how the human and natural resources of the United Kingdom and its five self-governing Dominions could best be developed.⁴ The Royal Commission fully endorsed child and juvenile migration as the most advantageous forms of emigration for supporting the future development of Britain's overseas Dominions, given the 'youth and adaptability' of such migrants. The 'risk involved' in such schemes, it claimed, 'is inappreciable, and the gain exceptional'.⁵ Moreover, the Commission argued in its final report that there was scope for far more active encouragement for the emigration of those children amongst the estimated 35,000 healthy, orphaned and deserted children over five years of age who were now in the care of Poor Law authorities, as well as amongst the 200,000 children receiving some form of Poor Law assistance for whom parental consent to their migration would be needed.⁶ Given this large pool of potential child migrants, the Commission noted with disappointment that the annual total of Poor Law children being emigrated between the years 1909 and 1913 never exceeded more than a few hundred.⁷ Their criticism of the 'certain want of imagination' on the part of local Boards of Guardians was to be echoed later in the post-war period in complaints by advocates of child migration about the lack of understanding within many local authorities of the benefits of emigration of children in their care. The Royal Commission concluded that financial and administrative arrangements for child migration should be reviewed to encourage greater emigration of children, whilst the well-established

⁴ See *Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, Trade and Legislation of Certain Portions of His Majesty's Dominions*, cmd.8462, London: HMSO, 1917. On the significance of debates between policies of Imperial Preference and free trade as a major dividing line in UK national politics in the opening decades of the twentieth century, see, e.g., David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History*, London: Allen Lane, pp. 10–18.

⁵ *Final Report of the Royal Commission*, para 508. On subsequent developments with juvenile migration programmes in the inter-war period, see Marjory Harper, *Emigration from Scotland Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 157–94.

⁶ *Final Report of the Royal Commission*, paras 483–508.

⁷ *Final Report of the Royal Commission*, paras 494–495, which show the largest number of Poor Law children emigrated in that period to be 617 in 1911.

model of child migration to Canada should also be extended to Australia and New Zealand.⁸

The Royal Commission's calls for greater administrative and strategic co-ordination of emigration led, in 1919, to the creation of the Oversea Settlement Committee which took on both responsibility for the development of emigration policy and the allocation of Government funding to support it. Under the auspices of the Committee, Viscount Milner and Leo Amery convened a discussion with representatives of the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Governments of proposals for the financial support of emigration from the United Kingdom within a wider strategy of both securing the Dominions and encouraging the development of imperial trade.⁹ It was agreed that assisted migration to the Dominions was to be encouraged not to address short-term problems with unemployment in Britain, but as an element of a wider strategy of encouraging primary production (particularly of agricultural goods) in order to sustain greater economic development and trade within the Empire as well as ensuring the most effective use of the imperial labour-force. A provisional agreement was reached that the UK Government would establish a sustained policy of assisted migration supported by spending of up to £2,000,000 in any given year, with these funds to be allocated to encouraging land settlement in the Dominions, more general assisted passages for emigration or any other migration scheme that appeared worthy of support. Supporting agricultural development in the Dominions was seen as particularly valuable as this would be required by any future substantial expansion of the Dominions' secondary industries. Encouraging settlement in rural areas also had the advantage of avoiding rapid increases in migration to urban areas which would add competition for limited housing and jobs and create friction with the Dominions' organised labour movements.

Ratified by the 1921 Prime Ministers' Conference,¹⁰ this arrangement was formalised through the passing of the 1922 Empire Settlement Act.

⁸ *Final Report of the Royal Commission*, para 497.

⁹ *Conference of Prime Ministers and Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, held in June, July and August, 1921: Summary of Proceedings and Documents*, cmd. 1474, London: HMSO, 1921, pp. 59–63.

¹⁰ *Conference of Prime Ministers: Summary of Proceedings and Documents*, pp. 8–9. In ratifying this agreement, the South African Government indicated that the lack of need for white labour in South Africa meant that it was unlikely to participate in this arrangement in this form which seemed more suited to the needs of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Presented to the House of Commons by Leo Amery, the Act was a short piece of legislation that empowered the Secretary of State, in conjunction with Dominion Governments and other approved organisations, to develop and fund schemes for assisted emigration. With such funding remaining subject to financial agreement from the Treasury, the UK Government's financial contribution was not allowed by the Act to exceed half of the total expenses of the scheme. The initial funding to be provided for these schemes by the UK Government in 1922 was to not exceed £1,500,000 or £3,000,000 in subsequent years, and the commitment to provide this funding extended only for a period of 15 years from the passing of the Act, subject to further renewal of the legislation. The assumption from the 1921 Prime Minister's Conference was, however, that such renewals of the Act should occur as empire settlement was to be regarded as a permanent policy in support of the social and economic development of the empire and not simply as a policy tool for managing short-term needs within the United Kingdom. Despite its slow initial effects,¹¹ the numbers of assisted passages funded by the Act had grown to several tens of thousands by the mid-1920s and the Act (and its successor legislation) became the legislative means through which the UK Government continued to give financial support for child migration through to the 1970s.

In the wake of this new funding arrangement, and slow initial progress in increasing rates of imperial emigration through it, the Oversea Settlement Committee sent a delegation to Australia and New Zealand in 1923–1924 to review existing arrangements for the settlement of British emigrants and to consider how the aims of the Empire Settlement Act might best be conducted in the future. Led by Sir William Windham, formerly of the Ministry of Labour, the delegation produced reports for each country in which some attention was paid to issues of child and juvenile migration.¹²

¹¹ *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December, 1923*, cmd.2107, London: HMSO, pp. 4–5.

¹² *Report to the President of the Oversea Settlement Committee from the Delegation appointed to enquire into conditions affecting British Settlers in New Zealand*, Oversea Settlement Delegation to New Zealand, cmd.2167, London: HMSO, 1923, especially pp. 10–13, 29–31, and pp. 28–29 on consultation with organised labour; *Report to the President of the Oversea Settlement Committee from the Delegation Appointed to Enquire into Conditions affecting British Settlers in Australia*, British Oversea Settlement Delegation to Australia, cmd.2132, London: HMSO, 1924, especially pp. 93–96, and pp. 92–93 on consultation with organised labour.

With regard to New Zealand, the delegation noted that whilst there were few current schemes in existence, excellent prospects potentially existed for juvenile migrants and there was clear evidence of interest in organisations and individuals wanting to provide agricultural apprenticeships. No form of government assistance for child migration was currently available, although the delegation did visit a Salvation Army farm school that had recently received 20 children from the United Kingdom. However, recognising the economic difficulties in encouraging land settlement given currently inflated land values, the delegation made no specific recommendations for the extension of these schemes.

By contrast, Australia offered far better prospects for juvenile emigration. Although the delegation recommended that care needed to be taken to ensure that any land settlement initiatives proceeded on an economically sustainable basis, it saw considerable potential for young people eventually being able to set up their own farms if given suitable agricultural training on arrival. Furthermore, well-established schemes to train boys over school-leaving age in farm work such as the Dreadnought Trust were already in existence, well supported in Australia and were judged to be achieving good results in producing future Australian citizens. The delegation also visited Fairbridge's farm school at Pinjarra, which was by now receiving on-going maintenance grants from the United Kingdom, Australian Commonwealth and Western Australian State Governments. Whilst warmly commending its work, the delegation expressed doubt that the costs and subsidies required for this form of training institution for children would make it a practical model to be developed on any large scale in the future. Alongside its emphasis on the value of juvenile migration schemes for giving young emigrants from Britain the chance to learn new skills and establish themselves in work, the delegation also acknowledged the potential risk that some might be placed with unsatisfactory or exploitative employers. Whilst recognising that some safeguards had been put in place, the delegation nevertheless recommended that further steps should be made to ensure more regular and effective inspections to check their progress and welfare.

In 1924, another Oversea Settlement Committee delegation was sent to Canada by James Thomas, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the short-lived minority Labour Government, in response to an invitation from the Government of Canada to obtain first-hand information about

the system for sending and placing child migrants in Canada.¹³ Led by the Northampton MP, and influential trade unionist, Margaret Bondfield, the delegation sailed to Canada in September 1924 and arrived back in early November, by which time MacDonalld's Government had fallen and Bondfield had lost her seat in the ensuing general election. As with the Windham delegation reports, the Bondfield report supported the view that emigration could offer good prospects overseas for young people, whether or not they ultimately remained in agricultural work, and broadly regarded the current system as satisfactory. However, whilst the Bondfield delegation generally found that child migrants were well-treated in the private homes in which they were placed, it noted some cases where children were being expected to undertake more work for the household than was reasonable. Furthermore, it expressed concern that younger children were, in principle, less able to resist having their labour exploited, and educational opportunities curtailed, because of their greater dependence on the adults entrusted with their care. As a result it recommended that no further support should be given by the UK Government to the emigration of children under school-leaving age—unless for children emigrating for the purposes of adoption in Canada—but that the emigration of children over the school-leaving age of 14 should be actively encouraged.

The Bondfield report was somewhat different in tone to the Windham reports on emigration to New Zealand and Australia. Bondfield did not evaluate the benefits of child migration to Canada in terms of a wider framework of imperial trade and development, but only in terms of the benefits to the child themselves, arguably reflecting her long-standing concern with individual's experiences of their working conditions. By comparison, the Windham reports, whilst interested in the value and risks of migration to young people as individuals, understood this more explicitly in terms of wider national and imperial needs. When meeting teenage migrants in Australia who complained about the relatively better wages earned by other young people not working in agriculture, the Windham delegation was at pains to remind them that 'they were not required in Australia for positions of this kind, but only for work on the land, and that

¹³ *Report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, President of the Oversea Settlement Committee, from the Delegation Appointed to obtain information regarding the System of Child Migration and Settlement in Canada*, British Overseas Delegation to Canada, cmd.2285, London: HMSO, 1924, especially pp. 9, 11–13, 16–17. A Parliamentary Secretary at the time to the Minister for Labour, Bondfield was appointed to lead this delegation in her capacity as a member of the Oversea Settlement Committee.

they must fulfil the obligation into which they had entered to undertake that work'.¹⁴

Despite these differences, the Bondfield and Windham reports nevertheless shared both a recognition of the value of emigration for young people and of their potential vulnerability. Given that there was no imminent prospect of significant demand for the increased migration of children under school-leaving age to Australia and New Zealand, and juvenile migration was considered a more important priority by the Windham and Bondfield reports, the policy adjustment of no longer supporting the migration of children under school-leaving age to Canada was not considered to be a contentious one by the Oversea Settlement Committee. As the in-coming Conservative Government's successor to Thomas as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Leo Amery duly accepted this recommendation in 1925.¹⁵ The Canadian Government concurred, conceding to a growing campaign against child migration in Canada itself.¹⁶ Although the figure of 1407 children under 14 that Bondfield reported to have been migrated to Canada in 1923 was not insignificant, the Committee took the view that the majority of child migrants were now being sent around the age of 14 anyway and that any numbers lost through ending support for migration under the age of 14 could be compensated for by increased juvenile migration in the future.¹⁷ Bondfield's recommendation that no further Government funding be provided to support farm schools, given

¹⁴ *Report to the President of the Oversea Settlement Committee from the Delegation Appointed to Enquire into Conditions affecting British Settlers in Australia*, p. 75. The Bondfield Report was, by contrast, more relaxed at the prospect of young migrants choosing not to remain in agricultural work and drifting towards urban occupations.

¹⁵ See *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December 1924*, cmd. 2107, London: HMSO, p. 8, in which it is noted that Amery made this decision in consultation with the Oversea Settlement Committee and with the agreement of the Canadian Dominion Government. Although there were criticisms being made at that time of child migration by some organisations in Canada (see, e.g., 'Canada's Child Immigrants: Grave Charges', *The Manchester Guardian*, 12th March 1925, p. 9), Bondfield's report did not generally support these and she herself offered a robust response to them (see 'Canada's child immigrants', letter to editor from Margaret Bondfield, *The Manchester Guardian*, 14th March 1925, p. 7).

¹⁶ Patrick Dunae, 'Gender, generations and social class: the Fairbridge Society and British child migration to Canada, 1930-1960', in (eds.) J. Lawrence and P. Starkey, *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989, p. 87.

¹⁷ *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December 1924*, p. 8.

the lack of evidence for their benefits for young emigrants' employment prospects, was not however taken up.

The decision to end Government funding for the future migration of children under school-leaving age to Canada, whilst maintaining it for children to be sent to Fairbridge's Pinjarra farm school, might appear inconsistent. However, Bondfield's main objection to the migration of younger children related to their vulnerability to being over-worked or being taken out of school to undertake household labour. These concerns were not assumed to apply to the Fairbridge scheme in which agricultural work and training was ostensibly integrated into the farm school's educational curriculum and to which the Windham Delegation had given its endorsement. Amery's personal sympathies for Fairbridge's work may doubtless have also helped. On the basis of the evidence it received from these delegations, there were therefore no strong grounds for arguing that Bondfield's concerns should lead to the cessation of child migration to Pinjarra—not least because there was little expectation on the Oversea Settlement Committee's part at that stage that child migration to Australia would grow much beyond Fairbridge's experimental project in Western Australia.¹⁸ The fact that, prior to the Bondfield delegation visit, agreements had already been made by the United Kingdom Government under the terms of the Empire Settlement Act to contribute to the cost of passages and overseas maintenance for child migrants in Canada and Pinjarra, also created a precedent which made financial support for other Australian schemes possible.¹⁹

THE INTER-WAR EXPANSION OF CHILD MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

The early death of Kingsley Fairbridge in 1924, at the age of 39, could have brought this nascent experiment in child migration to Australia to an end. By this point, however, the Child Emigration Society that he had co-founded whilst a Rhodes scholar at Oxford had well-established committees

¹⁸ See *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December, 1923*, p. 9 which recorded that Australian authorities currently regarded juvenile migration as more suited to local needs and resources than child migration schemes.

¹⁹ See *Report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, President of the Oversea Settlement Committee, from the Delegation Appointed to obtain information regarding the System of Child Migration and Settlement in Canada*, p. 3.

in both London and Western Australia with strong connections to politicians and other influential figures in public life (including Geoffrey Dawson, who was to serve as the editor of *The Times* from 1923 to 1941).²⁰ With more secure funding and governance,²¹ and the powerful symbolic narrative of a founder who had given his life to his vision of saving British children for the sake of the Empire,²² the Child Emigration Society (renamed Fairbridge Farm Schools Incorporated in 1935) was to become a substantial charity, soon enjoying the active support of members of the Royal Family. In addition to strong public support from the Prince of Wales, and an enthusiastic visit to Pinjarra from the Duke and Duchess of York, Fairbridge's work was also endorsed by Prince Henry who, as Duke of Gloucester, subsequently became the charity's President by 1938.²³

The development of the Pinjarra farm school had, by that point, also been made more secure by the decision in 1923 by Dr Barnardo's Homes to begin sending child migrants there, following initial difficulties Barnardo's experienced with placing child migrants with its recently established branch in New South Wales.²⁴ This collaboration was further consolidated by the implementation of Bondfield's recommendation to end UK Government support for the migration of children under 14 to Canada, a decision against which Dr Barnardo's Homes had protested. By the mid-1920s, half of the children resident at Pinjarra had been sent there by Dr Barnardo's Homes, with Barnardo's continuing to send at least a

²⁰ Under Dawson's editorship, *The Times*, printed a range of letters and articles in support of the Fairbridge Farm Schools, including the leader articles, 'British children for Australia', in *The Times*, 12th June 1930, p. 15, and 'Children of the Farm School', *The Times*, 22nd June 1933, p. 15.

²¹ See copies of Empire Settlement Act funding agreements between the UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Child Migration Society dating from 1923 in NAA.C: A659.1945.1.511.

²² See, e.g., the preface and epilogue written by Leo Amery and Sir Arthur Lawley, respectively, to Kingsley Fairbridge, *The Autobiography of Kingsley Fairbridge*, London: Oxford University Press, 1927; also Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, p. 167.

²³ See, e.g., 'Prince of Wales and Child Emigrants', *The Times*, 9th November 1923, p. 9; Prince Henry's attendance and speech at a lunch hosted by the Society in 1924 (*Fairbridge Farm Schools: Child Emigration Society, Annual Report, 1924*, BL: 362.732 FAI); 'Australia Day: Prince of Wales on Empire Settlement', *The Times*, 27th January 1926, p. 8; 'The Royal Tour: Visit to Fairbridge Farm School', *The Times*, 20th May 1927, p. 14; Duke of York's statement in support of Fairbridge (*Fairbridge Farm Schools: Child Emigration Society, Annual Report, 1927*, BL: 362.732 FAI).

²⁴ Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 109–111.

third of those arriving at the farm school between 1925 and 1930.²⁵ From 1925, two other sending bodies in Britain who had previously been involved in the emigration of children under school-leaving age to Canada began sending children to Pinjarra as well: the Church of England Waifs and Stray Society²⁶ and Middlemore Homes in Birmingham (which later began to operate as a national reception centre for children before their migration to Fairbridge farm schools).²⁷ The Over-Seas League also began to support the Fairbridge Society's work, initially sponsoring a child to be sent to Pinjarra and later (after its own direct involvement in sending child migrants overseas ended in the mid-1950s) continuing regularly to donate funds to support Fairbridge's work.²⁸

New organisations that were later to engage in child migration work also began to be created in response to empire settlement policies. In 1923, the Oversea Settlement Committee had recommended that imperial emigration could be increased by greater liaison between overseas organisations, who would propose group nominations for immigrants whom they would support or help to find work, and organisations in the United Kingdom who could publicise and recruit emigrants for these opportunities.²⁹ Whilst some voluntary organisations had overseas affiliates with whom they could collaborate in this way, the trans-national nature of Christian denominations meant that churches were particularly well-placed to undertake this work. In response to a direct appeal from Dominions Governments, the Church Assembly of the Church of England

²⁵ See Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 10–131, where the total number of children sent by Dr Barnardo's Homes to Pinjarra between 1925 and 1930 is said to be 116. John Lane, *Fairbridge Kid*, South Fremantle: Fremantle Press, 1990, provides an autobiographical account of the author's experience of Pinjarra farm school having been sent there by Barnardo's in 1933.

²⁶ See Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report*, London: IICSA, 2018, p. 98.

²⁷ Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, p. 134. Other child-care organisations involved in sending very small numbers of children to Pinjarra around this time included the Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuge and Homes, and the Whinwell Children's Home in Stirling.

²⁸ Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programme*, transcript of Day 13 hearing, 13th July 2017, pp. 97–99.

²⁹ *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the year ended 31st December, 1923*, pp. 7–8. The Committee credited this proposal to Major Cyril Bavin, who at that point was Migration Secretary for the YMCA, and who was later to play a significant role in post-war child migration.

proposed that a new body, the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement, be created to publicise and select people for opportunities for emigration. Established in 1925, initially through voluntary subscriptions, the Council quickly expanded its work and by 1928 a substantial majority of its income came from funding from the UK Government through the Empire Settlement Act, as well as from Dominions Governments.³⁰ Whilst supporting the emigration of families and single, adult workers, the Council also became significantly involved in juvenile emigration as well.³¹

Concerned at the risk to the faith of Catholics who might emigrate through non-Catholic bodies such as the Church of England Council who might take little interest in placing them near Catholic churches or priests, the Archbishop of Westminster, Francis Bourne, initiated the formation of the Catholic Emigration Society in 1927.³² Although lukewarm about the value of the emigration of Catholic adults and families from the United Kingdom, Bourne argued that such a body was necessary to safeguard the Catholic faith of those who would inevitably be drawn to the prospects offered by emigration. Focusing on supporting adult and family emigration, the Catholic Emigration Society was meant to complement the work of the Catholic Emigration Association, originally formed in 1904, to co-ordinate Catholic child and juvenile migration. In the wake of growing tensions between these two bodies, however, discussions began about integrating them into a single Catholic Emigration Council in 1935, with the Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales finally approving this in October 1938 to form the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement.³³ Child migration work undertaken by the Council was to be under the exclusive control of its Children's Sub-Committee which would be made up of representatives from all of the diocesan child rescue societies in England and Wales, making its membership the same as that of the Catholic Child Welfare Council.

³⁰ See, e.g., *Annual Reports of the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement*, CERC: CECES-2.

³¹ On the complementary work being done by the Church of England Immigration Council in Australia in this period, which also received some core funding from the Australian Commonwealth Government, see NAA.C: CP211.2.3.104.

³² See *Appeal brochure for the Catholic Emigration Society*, 1927, ABA.

³³ See circular letter from Griffin to bishops, 6th January 1939, ABA; also Griffin to Wiseman, 3rd July 1939, enclosing the new constitution of the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement, TNA: DO35/691/1.

Whilst continuing to send children to Pinjarra, Dr Barnardo's Homes subsequently opened its own farm school at Mowbray Park, Picton, in New South Wales in 1929.³⁴ The UK Government had previously contributed to the capital development costs of the Pinjarra farm school through a £20,000 grant to the Child Emigration Society in 1920. Following this precedent, between 1930 and 1939, a total of around £7500 was loaned to Dr Barnardo's Homes by the UK Government under the terms of the Empire Settlement Act to support the initial construction and subsequent development and expansion of the Picton site.³⁵ Empire Settlement Act funding was also provided to cover maintenance costs of child migrants at Picton.³⁶ The capital funding was granted on the condition that the site would only be used to receive child migrants from the United Kingdom, a condition only temporarily suspended between 1944 and 1946 when the Dominions Office allowed Barnardo's to admit Australian children to the farm school until child migration had resumed.

By 1931, the global economic depression was having significant effects on imperial emigration.³⁷ Rising unemployment and the slump in the market for agricultural products in the Dominions led to their Governments introducing more stringent immigration controls and substantially reducing their support for assisted migration.³⁸ Following a review of Pinjarra farm school by its Development and Migration Commission that questioned its cost-effectiveness as a migration scheme, the Australian Commonwealth Government also considered whether it could continue to contribute to Pinjarra's on-going costs, not least because other organisations including the Catholic Church and Salvation Army were pressing for comparable funding.³⁹ In 1932 the Commonwealth

³⁴ On Dr Barnardo's Homes' child migration activities in the inter-war years, see also June Rose, *For the Sake of the Children* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978), pp. 105–11, which includes an account of one girl's emigration to Australia against her wishes.

³⁵ A summary of these agreements is provided in Memorandum to Clayden, 17th July 1959, TNA: DO35/10262.

³⁶ See agreements between the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Dr Barnardo's Homes starting from August 1931, at NAA.C: A659.1945.1.511.

³⁷ The Commonwealth Government in Australia had already become reluctant to encourage further immigration by January 1929, see, e.g., Memorandum to Minister, 23rd January 1929, NAA.C: CP211.2.3.104.

³⁸ See, e.g., *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the Period 1st April 1931 to 31st March 1932*, cmd.4143, London: HMSO, 1932.

³⁹ Although an initial decision was made to end this Commonwealth funding, the Minister responsible for reviewing this, John Daly, chose to reverse this because he judged that

Government eventually decided to make Pinjarra an exceptional case for continued funding against the background of cutting almost all other expenditure on assisted migration.⁴⁰ The United Kingdom Government followed suit, substantially reducing its own funding for empire settlement. In its seventh annual report in 1932, the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement noted that its core funding through the Empire Settlement Act had now been completely withdrawn. Rather than supporting further emigration, the Council's work increasingly turned to tracing and supporting those it had already helped to emigrate but who had moved from their original placements in search of work. By 1934, a review commissioned by the Church Assembly recommended that the Council be wound down in its current form and replaced by an advisory council—a body which in the post-war period was to involve itself in child migration.⁴¹

The level of both imperial emigration and assisted passages specifically funded through the Empire Settlement Act was substantially reduced. Whilst the numbers of people emigrating annually to other parts of the Empire had averaged around 180,000 in the decade between 1922 and 1931, by 1933 this had halved.⁴² Assisted passages funded through the Empire Settlement Act, which had ranged from 29,000 to 71,000 per annum between 1923 and 1930, had, by 1933, fallen to 196.⁴³ In the context of this decline, an Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy was established to advise on future policy with regard to assisted migration, chaired by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Malcolm MacDonald, the former Labour MP and son of Ramsay MacDonald.⁴⁴ Its

Pinjarra had 'pre-eminent claims to consideration'. See 'Report by T.H. Garrett on the Child Emigration Society', 16th March 1928; Beasley to Premier of Western Australia, 16th April 1930; Daly to Heath, 24th November 1931; NAA.C: A461/C349/1/7.

⁴⁰ 'Cancellation of the £34,000,000 migration agreement', 8th February 1932, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/505. Following the decision by the Western Australian Government to reduce its maintenance payments to Fairbridge, the Commonwealth Government did subsequently follow suit given that the arrangement had been premised on match-funding the State's contribution.

⁴¹ Church Assembly, *Report of the Church of England Council of Empire Settlement*, 1934, CERC: CECES-2-CA547.

⁴² See *Report to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy*, cmd.4689, London: HMSO, 1934, p. 6.

⁴³ *Report of the Oversea Settlement Committee for the Period 1st April for the Period 1st April 1935 to 31st March 1936*, London: HMSO, 1936, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Malcom MacDonald was to soon after visit, and commend, the Fairbridge farm school at Pinjarra (*Fairbridge Farm Schools: Child Emigration Society, Annual Report, 1934*,

Report, published in 1934, signalled a significant shift to the policy approach to assisted emigration that had led to the Empire Settlement Act.⁴⁵ Building on previous work done by the Economic Advisory Council's Committee on Empire Migration which took a pessimistic view of the economic prospects for future emigration to the Dominions,⁴⁶ the report argued the empire settlement policy had previously been premised on the flawed economic view that imperial migration was a stimulus for, rather than a symptom of, economic growth. It was not feasible, the report stated, simply to treat imperial migration as a transfer of human resource from a surplus of the white population of the United Kingdom to underdeveloped parts of the Dominions without recognising that economic conditions in the Dominions needed to be sufficiently strong to support immigrants' livelihoods. The Report therefore recommended a movement away from structured planning for imperial emigration—including ostentatious and expensive schemes for group settlements—and for future assisted migration to provide some support for individuals and families who had realistic prospects overseas.⁴⁷

One of the main exceptions to the report's aversion to more organised assisted migration initiatives was child migration.⁴⁸ Children who emigrated at a young age did not, it noted, place the same immediate social and economic demands for work and private accommodation as adult migrants. Although the costs of their maintenance overseas could be

pp. 30–31, BL: 362.732 FAI).

⁴⁵ See *Report to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy*, pp. 71–75.

⁴⁶ *Report of the Committee on Empire Migration of the Economic Advisory Council*, cmd.4075, London: HMSO, 1932, which argued that whilst imperial emigration might be of short-term benefit to the United Kingdom in addressing unemployment in some declining industries, the economic depression meant that the Dominions were not well-placed to receive, and that by the time the Dominions had experienced economic recovery, it was no longer likely to be in Britain's economic interests to encourage widespread emigration given its declining birth-rate. This Committee did also briefly consider the role of farm schools in imperial migration, and whilst commending the suitability of the Fairbridge model and encouraging its expansion subject to support from Dominions governments also commented that the cost of doing so made it unlikely such expansion would be widespread (see paras 124–126).

⁴⁷ This emphasis on immigration through personal individual nominations rather than group settlement schemes was also endorsed by the Commonwealth Department of the Interior, see Paterson to Lyons, 8th February 1937, NAA.C: CP4/2, 57.

⁴⁸ See *Report to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy*, pp. 45–49.

substantial, these costs were in many cases likely to be placed anyway on charitable or public funds were these children to remain in the United Kingdom. Whilst noting the Bondfield Report's recommendation about the cessation of the migration of children to Canada under school-leaving age, the report proposed that this policy would be reviewed and that younger children should be sent to be boarded out again in Canadian households on the understanding that they were not placed primarily for their labour and would receive more regular inspections and better local support. In addition to recommending that such boarding out be entirely conducted on the basis of fees being paid to private households—which might reduce their expectations on the amount of work to be done by a child—the report introduced the policy idea that such child migration work should only be allowed to be undertaken by voluntary organisations approved by both the United Kingdom and Dominion Governments. The farm school system, used at Pinjarra and Picton, was praised by the report as being 'beyond question the most satisfactory and successful method of establishing young children overseas'. Financial support by the UK Government should continue for the overseas maintenance costs of child migrants, it recommended, with the creation of new farm schools also being supported by capital funding from the UK Government up to half of the total costs.

Whilst economic depression had a stultifying effect on most forms of imperial migration, for supporters of child migration it reinforced their belief in the value of taking children from impoverished homes and future unemployment in the United Kingdom to better opportunities in the Dominions.⁴⁹ Alongside the policy encouragement provided by the Inter-Departmental Committee's report, new child migration initiatives began to develop. There was no resumption of the boarding out of child migrants to Canada. However, a substantial public appeal for donations was made in 1934 for the development of three new Fairbridge farm schools, endorsed and contributed to by the Prince of Wales. Through funding raised through this, and a £10,000 capital grant from the UK Government, Fairbridge opened its new Prince of Wales farm school in British Columbia the following year.⁵⁰ In 1934, a bequest of £200,000 was also left by the estate of Lady Northcote, the wife of a former Governor-General of

⁴⁹ See, e.g., Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 156–158; 'The Fairbridge Model', Rev A.G.B. West, 1936, ML: MLMSS9025, Box 2.

⁵⁰ See *Fairbridge Farm Schools: Child Emigration Society, Annual Report, 1933*, p. 2, BL: 362.732 FAI ; 'Fairbridge Farm Schools: An Imperial Investment'; *The Times*, 21st June

Australia, specifically to support child migration to Australia following the Fairbridge model.⁵¹ By October 1936, the trustees had received agreement that the UK Government would contribute £14,000,⁵² and the Australian Commonwealth Government £7000, towards the capital costs of setting up a new farm school at Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, as well as contributing towards the maintenance costs of child migrants sent there.⁵³ The Fairbridge Society in the United Kingdom agreed to take on the role of recruiting, selecting and arranging passages for the children under this programme, and Colonel Heath, who had been Principal at Pinjarra, was appointed to take charge of the new Northcote farm school. Setting a precedent for post-war child migration, the Commonwealth Government undertook an inspection of the farm school site before agreeing to the arrival of the first party of boys in July 1937. Whilst agreeing to accept this project, the State Government of Victoria indicated that the on-going effects of economic depression in the State meant that its resources needed to be directed to its existing population and it could offer no financial support. The political sensitivity of child immigration was further illustrated by a strong letter of complaint at the creation of the farm school sent to the Commonwealth Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, by the City Council of Port Melbourne, which stated that ‘the Council feels that in view of the acute unemployment problem which has every indication of being intensified with the growth of mass production methods in industry, ...such action is ill-advised and will react to the detriment of Victorian children’.⁵⁴

New initiatives also began to develop in New South Wales. Support for Fairbridge’s work led to a call in 1935 at the biennial conference of the fellowship of Rhodes scholars for farm schools to be established across all

1934, p. 32; ‘Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School Capital Contribution’, TNA: DO35/691/5; Dunae, ‘Gender, generations and social class’, pp. 88–90.

⁵¹For correspondence relating to the bequest and the subsequent development of the Lady Northcote training farm, see NAA.C: A461.B349.1.7.

⁵²The actual UK Government capital contribution eventually rose to £27,500 when it became clear that the Northcote Trustees could not raise additional funds through public subscription under the terms of the Trust (see Memorandum by Garnett, 15th February 1938, TNA: DO35/691/6). Garnett also questioned in this memorandum whether such increased capital costs reflected over-lavish aspirations on the part of the voluntary organisations as to the standard of building being required.

⁵³Correspondence relating to the establishment and early operation of Northcote is also at NAA.C: 436/1945/5/85.

⁵⁴Town Clerk to Lyons, 11th August 1937, NAA.C: A461.B349.1.7.

Australian States.⁵⁵ This suggestion was taken up with particular enthusiasm by former Rhodes scholars in New South Wales, who sought to lobby staff of the Fairbridge Society to make New South Wales one of the sites for the new farm schools envisaged in the charity's Prince of Wales appeal in 1934.⁵⁶ By mid-1936 they had been sufficiently successful with initial fund-raising and lobbying of the State Government to make the creation of a Fairbridge farm school in New South Wales a viable proposition. The London headquarters of Fairbridge were initially unhappy with this proposal, wishing to concentrate on potential further expansion of their work in other countries and fearing unnecessary competition for work placements in New South Wales with Barnardo's farm school at Picton. However, having failed to make progress with the hoped-for establishment of a farm school in New Zealand and having reached an agreement that this new Fairbridge farm school would be situated at a site far from Picton, Fairbridge's London office decided to support this proposal. With the UK Government providing a £15,000 capital contribution⁵⁷ and contributing to child migrants' maintenance costs,⁵⁸ and maintenance contributions also being made by the Commonwealth and New South Wales State governments, the first party of children arrived at the new Fairbridge farm school at Molong in March 1938.⁵⁹ The Australian Commonwealth Government refused a request to provide capital funding for the Molong farm school on the basis that it was now receiving similar requests from other organisations (including the Catholic Church and the Salvation

⁵⁵ See Bohan to Prime Minister, 26th January 1935, and Pearce to Bohan, 25th February 1935, NAA.C: A461/K349/1/7. The Rhodes conference had initially called for the extension of Fairbridge-style farm schools across Australia to address domestic unemployment by training Australian-born children, but the Commonwealth Government indicated it did not have the constitutional powers to develop that project.

⁵⁶ This process is summarised in Green to Plant, 7th June 1937, TNA: DO35/691/5.

⁵⁷ An attempt by the Fairbridge Society to get the UK Government to increase this amount in the light of higher than expected building costs was unsuccessful (see Memorandum by C.R.P., 8th September 1938, TNA: DO35:691.6). As with Picton and Nortcote, this funding was provided as an interest free loan which was considered repayable to the UK Government if the Molong farm school stopped being used as a training institution for British child migrants, see correspondence in TNA: DO35/692/1.

⁵⁸ See TNA: DO35/691/4.

⁵⁹ On the initial development of Molong, see Sherington & Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 167–172; minutes of meetings of Fairbridge Farm Schools New South Wales, ML: MLMSS9025, Box 4.

Army), and did not want to consolidate a precedent through which these would also have to be approved.⁶⁰

From 1936, attempts were also made to send child migrants to the Burnside Homes run by the Presbyterian Church in Parramatta, New South Wales. Efforts to recruit children through the Church of Scotland, however, proved unsuccessful with insufficient numbers of children being put forward.⁶¹ In a letter to Walter Garnett, Assistant Secretary to the UK High Commissioner in Canberra with particular responsibility for immigration, the Dominions Office civil servant, G.E. Crutchley, commented that this failure called into question whether there would be sufficient children to recruit for the expanding number of Fairbridge farm schools and noted that the reluctance of parents and guardians to send children overseas was 'not uncommon'.⁶² With recruitment to Burnside continuing to prove difficult, the Presbyterian Church turned to Cyril Bavin, the Migration Secretary of the YMCA, to attempt to find suitable children from the United Kingdom—although as Garnett noted the YMCA had 'no previous experience in connection with the migration of young children'.⁶³ A party of 17 children was eventually sent to Burnside in 1939 from the Quarriers Orphan Homes of Scotland in 1939. These relationships between Bavin and the Presbyterian Church in Australia were to be revived in the early 1950s when similar problems arose with the recruitment of child migrants through the Church of Scotland for the Dhurringile Rural Training Farm in Victoria.

Towards the end of the 1930s, plans were also successfully introduced to begin child migration to Catholic residential institutions run by the Christian Brothers in Western Australia. An earlier attempt had been made in 1928 to secure government funding for 50 boys per annum to be sent to the Christian Brothers' orphanage at Clontarf on the basis that this would function in a comparable way to the work of the Fairbridge farm school at Pinjarra. The proposal for Clontarf reflected other attempts by voluntary organisations in both the inter-war and post-war to secure

⁶⁰ Minute presented by Deputy Minister of Interior, 15th July 1938, NAA.C: A461/K349/1/7. The Salvation Army appear to have concentrated more on juvenile than child migration to Australia in this period, see *Empire Settlement and Migration*, NAA.C: A1/1937/10056.

⁶¹ Correspondence relating to this and a brochure for Burnside Homes is at TNA: DO35/686/7.

⁶² Crutchley to Garnett, 3rd February 1937, TNA: DO30/686/7.

⁶³ Garnett to Costar, 8th June 1938, TNA: DO35/686/7.

government funding by arguing that their proposals were comparable to schemes and institutions which were already receiving public money. This initiative was rebuffed, however, coming as it did at a time when the Commonwealth Development and Migration Commission had recently challenged the cost-effectiveness of the Pinjarra scheme and argued that it no longer be funded as a migration scheme.⁶⁴

In 1937, however, renewed proposals for child emigration to Catholic residential institutions in Western Australia were initiated through contact between Canon George Craven, Secretary of the Catholic Emigration Association and the Principal of the Tardun farm school, Brother Conlon. With the prospect of increasing levels of assisted migration in the future, and continued concern about the risk of loss of faith if Catholics emigrated through non-Catholic organisations, this proposal developed alongside one for the creation of a more general co-ordinating body for Catholic immigration in Australia. Concern about the loss of Catholic child migrants to non-Catholic receiving institutions had also been made more acute by the recent opening of the new Northcote and Fairbridge farm schools.⁶⁵ By January 1938, the Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Redmond Prendiville, had secured the financial support of the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments for the immigration of children to Catholic institutions in Western Australia, now successfully using the precedent of funding for the Pinjarra farm school to argue for this. Brother Conlon was appointed to administer this process. Whilst formally operating as an initiative undertaken under the patronage of the three Catholic bishops with dioceses in Western Australia, Conlon's role as its Australian administrator and the placement of boys at Christian Brothers' institutions at Castledare, Clontarf, Tardun and Bindoon meant in practice that it was delivered on the ground through the Brothers' organisational structures. Publicised more generally in the United Kingdom by the auxiliary bishop of Birmingham, Bernard Griffin, as Secretary of the Catholic Emigration Association,⁶⁶ Conlon recruited 110

⁶⁴ See correspondence in NAA.C: CP211/2/74/28.

⁶⁵ For correspondence on this initiative with Australian Commonwealth and State governments, see NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499, and on the Child Emigration Society initiative, see, e.g., Lyons to Rankellor, 8th April 1938 in this file. On concerns about the loss of children's Catholic faith if sent to Fairbridge institutions, see Conlon to Craven, 13th February 1937, TNA: DO35/690/4.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Griffin to Doull, 19th September 1938 with accompanying brochure, *The Christian Brothers' Associated Schemes for the Training of Poor Boys in Western Australia*, NRS: ED11/384.

boys for these migration parties in 1938 and 1939 mainly through direct contact with institutions run by the Sisters of Nazareth.

Despite having gained approval for this scheme from the Australian Commonwealth Government on the basis that child migrants would benefit from the advanced agricultural training available at Tardun,⁶⁷ Conlon subsequently informed the Dominions Office that boys could only be placed there if government capital funding were made available to increase its accommodation. The total cost of this, Conlon proposed, would be £20,000: £10,000 in cash costs and £10,000 in costs of labour and services provided by the Brothers (which in practice was made up to large degree by the labour of teenagers resident at Tardun). Conlon later added to this the cost of £4000 to construct a convent for a small group of Sisters of Nazareth at Tardun to provide domestic care of boys placed there.⁶⁸ The Dominions Office took the view that these costs appeared high and included elements, such as a chapel and classrooms, for which Empire Settlement Act funding would not normally be provided.⁶⁹ Some concern was also expressed at funding a large building that felt like putting children into an institution resembling a ‘huge “Concrete Block”’, not in keeping with recent trend of favouring ‘cottage’ style accommodation for overseas training farms, and with providing a substantial capital contribution towards a building which would remain under the permanent control of an independent religious organisation.⁷⁰ Despite reservations from the UK High Commission in Canberra about the necessity of providing this support, there was a strong endorsement of the Tardun scheme from Walter Garnett, now based at the Dominions Office.⁷¹ A comparatively cautious

⁶⁷ See Conlon to Lyons, 20th January 1938, also Memorandum by Garrett, Department of Interior, 20th June 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499 (copy of Conlon letter also at NAA.C: A461/M3491/1/7). Conlon later presented the request for additional funding for accommodation at Tardun as arising from the particular interest showing by Catholic authorities in the United Kingdom in sending children there, whilst also acknowledging that no space at all was available at Tardun without further expansion (see Lyons to Minister for the Interior, 16th June 1938, in same file).

⁶⁸ Lyons to Minister for the Interior, 29th June 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499; Conlon to Wiseman, July 3rd 1938. TNA: DO35/690/5.

⁶⁹ Costs of constructing and staffing classrooms were understood to be the financial responsibility of Australian State governments; on high costs see notes by Wiseman, 6th May 1938, and by Ives, 12th May 1938, TNA: DO35/690/4.

⁷⁰ Notes by Ives, 7th May 1938, and by Wiseman, 14th May 1938, TNA: DO35/690/4.

⁷¹ See Costar to Garnett, 19th May 1938 and Garnett to Costar, 8th June 1938, TNA: Do35/690/4.

financial offer was made to Conlon in which the UK Government would pay £250 per annum to cover the interest costs of a £5000 overdraft that the Brothers would be able to take out to fund this construction work. The Dominions Office informed the Australian Commonwealth Government that they were making this offer to Conlon with the tentative condition that some comparable capital funding be provided by the Commonwealth and Western Australian State governments. Rather than simply reflecting an expectation for some matched funding, this condition was unusually introduced in this case as a means of obtaining 'confirmation from the local authorities that the methods of training at Tardun are on the right lines and to enable us to refer for advice to authority on the spot independent of Christian Brothers on any point of difficulty that might arise'.⁷² The agreement that maintenance funding would last for no longer than five years for any individual child was also seen as a disincentive for the Brothers to arrange the emigration of very young children.⁷³

This request for a contribution towards capital funding for Tardun was actively supported by Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, a devout Irish-diasporan Catholic. The Commonwealth Department for the Interior refused capital funding for Tardun, however, having just refused a similar request for the farm school at Molong on the basis that it would create a precedent that would make it difficult to refuse any other future requests by voluntary organisations wishing to accommodate child migrants. By the time this refusal was confirmed to the UK High Commission in Canberra in July 1938,⁷⁴ the first party of 37 Catholic child migrants had already left Britain for Western Australia with a further 31 sailing just four days later. On the advice of Walter Garnett, the Dominions Office took the view that having agreed to provide capital funding for the Molong farm school despite no contribution from Australian Commonwealth or State governments, it would not be reasonable to refuse similar capital assistance with regard to Tardun.⁷⁵ Garnett was supported by Robert Wiseman, Assistant Secretary in the Dominions Office, who argued that the Commonwealth and State governments' commitment to pay maintenance for child migrants placed at Tardun could be considered sufficient

⁷² See Acting High Commissioner to Secretary, Department of the Interior, 18th May 1938, with enclosed telegram, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

⁷³ Note by Ives, 19th April 1938, TNA: Do35/690/4.

⁷⁴ Garrett to Acting High Commissioner, 12th July 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

⁷⁵ Note by Garnett, 11th July 1938, TNA: DO35/690/5.

indication of their endorsement and continued commitment to that scheme.⁷⁶ Despite the failure to secure any specific reassurance of the calibre and oversight of the Brothers' migration scheme from the Commonwealth and Western Australia State governments, the Dominions Office therefore proceeded with its proposed annual capital funding contribution for Tardun in addition to its maintenance payments.⁷⁷

The benefit of the doubt extended to Conlon's work at Tardun quickly proved unwarranted. A civil servant from the Commonwealth Department of the Interior, Reuben Wheeler, visited Tardun with the Bishop of Geraldton in mid-July and expressed concern that child migrants should not be sent there until more permanent accommodation was completed. The Bishop reassured him that Brother Conlon would not allow any child migrants to be sent to Tardun without satisfactory accommodation being provided.⁷⁸ However, Conlon subsequently wrote to Lyons on 22nd August indicating that 50 of these child migrants had indeed been placed immediately at Tardun and that whilst accommodation was in the process of being built for them this would place an unbearable financial burden on the Brothers without further capital funding support.⁷⁹ This request was again refused by the Commonwealth Department of the Interior.⁸⁰ A further 42 boys sailed to Western Australia under this scheme in 1939. Despite concerns about the exploitation of labour of child migrants to Canada, and the value of Tardun being premised on child migrants' receiving secondary education and agricultural training, the Dominions Office raised no concerns when Conlon confirmed that trainees and staff at Tardun were undertaking most of the building work of the site, including making concrete blocks, quarrying stone, transporting materials from the nearest railway siding (ten miles away), laying foundations,

⁷⁶Note by Wiseman, 21st July 1938, TNA: DO35/690/5.

⁷⁷See Memorandum, Department of the Interior, 17th January 1939, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499, and Wiseman to Hale, 29th July 1938, TNA: DO35/690/5; also correspondence and agreement in TNA: DO35/691/1 and DO35/1138/M1020/2.

⁷⁸See extract from report by R.H. Wheeler, 21st July 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

⁷⁹Conlon to Lyons, 11th August 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499. Conlon also later notified the Dominions Office that the 50 boys had been placed immediately at Tardun to 'keep them away from the city and with a view to make them country-minded' (Conlon to Wiseman, 30th September 1939, TNA: DO35/691/1).

⁸⁰Garrett to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 30th September 1938.

brick-laying, and installing electric lighting and plumbing.⁸¹ Whilst other residential institutions accommodating child migrants undertook significant expansion and renovation of their buildings as more children arrived, the unpreparedness of the site at Tardun—and use of child migrants to rectify this—contrasted with the Northcote training farm where sufficient accommodation was available to receive child migrants whilst new cottage homes were being built.⁸²

The migration of children to Christian Brothers' institutions stimulated further proposals for child migration to other organisations in Western Australia. In 1939, approval was given for assisted passages and maintenance funding for child migrants to be sent to the Methodist Homes for Children, in Victoria Park, Perth, and a newly built residential institution to be run by the Sisters of Nazareth in Geraldton.⁸³ In both cases, however, no children were sent before the suspension of assisted migration with the outbreak of war that September—a decision made by the UK Government on grounds of both the anticipated security risks of long sea journeys and the significantly increased cost of shipping berths.⁸⁴ Methodist involvement in child migration to Australia in this period was not limited to the Victoria Park proposal, however, as 38 children were also sent to the Northcote farm school by the National Children's Home.⁸⁵

⁸¹ See Conlon to Wiseman, 2nd April 1939 and Wiseman to Conlon, 3rd May 1939, TNA: DO35/691/1. See also Secretary to Under-Secretary, 26th August 1927, in which the opening of the farm at Tardun had earlier been noted with some concern unless boys being sent there were paid proper wages to develop it, also Director of Education to Secretary, Child Welfare Department, 21st January 1943, and Meacham to Minister, 2nd March 1943, on other concerns about funding requests made by Keaney, WASR: 1031/AN/145/1/913/27.

⁸² See 'Report on Visit to Fairbridge Victoria Farm School', 23rd February 1937, and 'Department of Interior report on visit to Northcote', 15th November 1938, NAA.C A436/1945/5/85.

⁸³ On the Methodist scheme see correspondence in NAA.C A461/N349/1/7; on the approval of the Geraldton initiative see Secretary, Prime Minister's Department to Conlon, 27th January 1939.

⁸⁴ Carrodus to Jackson, 29th September 1939, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499; Wiseman to Hambro, 29th September 1939, TNA: DO35/703/5.

⁸⁵ See Hambro to Grey, 15th October 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

POLICY CONSOLIDATION AND THE IMPLICATIONS
OF INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY

By the outbreak of war in 1939, child migration to residential institutions in Australia had evolved from a precarious experiment at Pinjarra to become an established part of United Kingdom empire settlement policy. Between 1913 and 1939, 3029 children had been sent to residential institutions in Australia through such schemes.⁸⁶ In some respects, the policy motivation for empire settlement was unchanged from the period immediately after the First World War. Under-populated Dominions were seen as constituting a significant risk to the security of the Empire, a concern renewed with increased global military spending through the 1930s. However, whilst empire settlement had previously been undertaken in terms of a transfer of human resources to stimulate imperial trade and economic development, the economic depression of the 1930s had demonstrated that policies of empire settlement were highly vulnerable to economic conditions in receiving countries. The passing of the 1931 Statute of Westminster, which made the national governments of the Dominions legally autonomous from the United Kingdom,⁸⁷ reflected a wider pattern of change in which the United Kingdom's Dominions could no longer simply be understood as part of an integrated political entity. In one sense, this growing political and legal autonomy made imperial emigration even more important as a means for maintaining a sense of shared identity between the United Kingdom and its Dominions, which it was hoped would find expression in continued political and economic co-operation.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ See Chairman of Council to High Commissioner, n.d., ML: MLMSS9025, Box 13 which states that 1431 children were migrated to New South Wales by Dr Barnardo's Homes between 1922 to 1939, with a further 409 sent by Barnardo's to Pinjarra. The number of other child migrants sent to Pinjarra by the Fairbridge Society and other agencies in the period 1913–1939 was 766, and the numbers sent to Molong and Northcote in the inter-war period were 135 and 161 respectively (see Sherington and Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 264–5. Adding to these numbers the 110 boys sent to Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia in 1938/39 and the 17 children sent to the Burnside Homes in New South Wales, the total number of UK child migrants sent to Australia in the inter-war period appears to be 3029.

⁸⁷ Although never used in practice, s.9(2) of the Statute of Westminster did allow the UK Government to make legislation in relation to States of Australia on any matters which did not fall under the authority of the Australian Commonwealth Government.

⁸⁸ See, e.g., this argument about the importance of emigration for a future sense of collective imperial identity being made in *Report of the Committee on Empire Migration of the Economic Advisory Council*, pp. 64–65.

In practice, however, it made overarching policy initiatives—such as population transfer through empire settlement schemes—more difficult to enact. Although the Empire Settlement Act was renewed in 1937, it was in the context of more chastened aspirations for empire settlement planning despite signs of economic recovery in the Dominions. It was hoped by some organisations that the Imperial Conference of 1937 would lead to a renewed commitment and strategy for assisted migration, not least because of the perceived need to strengthen imperial ties with the acceleration of international rearmament.⁸⁹ However, assisted migration did not even become a matter of substantive discussion at the Conference.⁹⁰ Group settlement schemes had been shown not always to be successful, and adult emigration had been found to be subject both to economic constraints and political pressures in receiving countries. But child migration—even on a relatively modest scale—appeared by 1939 to be one form of assisted imperial emigration that had a more viable and stable future.⁹¹

The number of voluntary organisations sending child migrants to Australia were to increase in the post-war period, and policy encouragement for these schemes from the Australian Commonwealth Government was to become much stronger. However, the fundamental administrative architecture of the schemes was clearly established in the pre-war period. Operating with the framework of assisted migration policy, funding and administrative systems, child migration functioned on the basis of organisational collaboration between a range of voluntary organisations and the United Kingdom, Australian Commonwealth and State governments (with contact between the national governments mediated through the UK High Commission in Canberra and immigration officials at Australia House in London). The different ethos, social networks, systems of governance and economics of voluntary organisations participating in this work meant, however, that child migration was never a homogenous form of welfare intervention.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., the Salvation Army, *Empire Settlement and Migration*, pp. 14,16, NAA.C A1.1937.10056.

⁹⁰ See, e.g., Booth to Lyons, 14th May 1937 and accompanying copy of *Empire Migration and Settlement* by the Salvation Army, NAA.C: A1/1937/10056, and *Imperial Conference, 1937, Summary of Proceedings*, cmd.5482, London: HMSO, 1937.

⁹¹ On the issue of cost-effectiveness, note Leo Amery's argument that it cost the same to support eight to ten child migrants overseas as it would to support one adult through a land settlement scheme (*Fairbridge Farm Schools: Child Emigration Society, Annual Report, 1927*, pp. 7–8, BL: 362.732 FAI).

This point can be illustrated, briefly, through a comparison of the Christian Brothers and the Fairbridge Society. As a trans-national religious order focused primarily on the provision of Catholic education, and with its roots in Irish nationalism, the Christian Brothers occupied a significant role in an Australian Catholicism still dominated at that time by Irish diasporic social networks.⁹² Support for the British Empire within Irish-Australian Catholicism was far from solid. The influential Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, had been both a leading opponent of conscription during the First World War and faced attempts by the UK Government to prevent him from addressing public gatherings in Ireland and Britain in 1920 following his appearance at Irish nationalist rallies across the United States.⁹³ For many Irish-Australian Catholics, their sense of relationship to the British Empire was refracted through opposition to the effects of British colonialism in Ireland—as Mannix put it, ‘the Ireland that England was to do justice to was not merely the Ireland at home, but also that Ireland of men and women who were scattered to the ends of the earth’.⁹⁴ Such sentiments towards the British Empire were further reinforced by Catholic experiences of Australian society as dominated by an Anglo-Protestant elite. Against this background, Catholic immigration from Britain was perceived as having the potential to increase the Catholic population in Australia, thus strengthening its position not only against Protestant hostility but also against the threat of the anti-Christian sentiments of both sections of the political left in Australia and the powerful non-Christian countries of East Asia.⁹⁵

In the wider context of Catholic education that sought greater social mobility for a predominantly working-class Australian Catholic population,

⁹² See Ronald Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia, 1806-1950*, (2 vols), Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1959; Patrick O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History*, West Melbourne: Nelson, 1977; Barry Coldrey, *Faith and Fatherland: the Christian Brothers and the Development of Irish Nationalism, 1838-1921*, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1988; Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, (2 vols), North Blackburn, VA: DoveCollins, 1992; Thomas O’Donoghue, *Upholding the Faith: The Process of Education in Catholic Schools in Australia, 1922-1965*, New York: Peter Lang, 2001. On earlier, complex patterns of Irish involvement in British colonialism, including in Australia, see Hilary Carey, *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801-1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 114–47, 287–304.

⁹³ Brenda Niall, *Mannix* (Melbourne: Text Publishing Co, 2015), pp. 146–75.

⁹⁴ O’Farrell, *The Catholic Church*, p. 341.

⁹⁵ Tom Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics*, revised edition, Melbourne: Georgian House, 1960.

the Christian Brothers practised a disciplinarian and instrumentalist educational approach focused on achieving strong examination results. This was underpinned by an organisational ethos of emphasising the corporate mission of the order over the importance of personal attachments. As the Brother's rules of the order stated, their communal life sought to 'reduce within the bounds of Christian charity all those sentiments for relations with which flesh and blood would inspire them' as it was 'not sufficient that the body quits the world, the heart also must break off all attachment thereto'.⁹⁶ Although the Catholic Church's interests were rarely prioritised in the policy platforms of the main Australian political parties, there were strong links between Catholic working-class voters and the Australian Labor Party, as well as influential Catholic politicians in other parties. Bonds of religious affinity between Catholic leaders and Australian politicians—exemplified in direct correspondence on child migration matters between Br Conlon, Archbishop Prendiville and Prime Minister Joseph Lyons—underpinned attempts by the Brothers to utilise the resources of the State to support their organisational goals. This could also lead to an assumption that State systems would simply facilitate these goals without close attention to the administrative processes through which those systems operated—exemplified by Conlon's arrival in the United Kingdom to recruit child migrants in 1938 without the required group nomination for them having previously been submitted to Australian immigration officials.⁹⁷

The possibility of leveraging such resources had particular economic significance in an Australian policy context in which Catholic schools had, by 1893, no longer been eligible to receive public funding. Religious orders such as the Brothers benefitted from periodic donations and bequests—including the donation of the land on which Bindoon and Tardun were built. But the fact that much financial resource was expended by Catholic families on supporting the costs of fee-paying Catholic primary and secondary schools—considered a pressing religious duty by the Australian Catholic hierarchy—meant that private donations would always offer a limited source of income. Conlon's correspondence with Australian and British government officials in the early years of Catholic child migration to Western Australia was therefore characterised with repetitive requests for additional funding to an extent not evident with any of the

⁹⁶ O'Donoghue, *Upholding the Faith*, p. 43.

⁹⁷ Lyons to Prendiville, 18th May 1938, NAA: A659/1945/1/499.

other voluntary organisations undertaking similar work.⁹⁸ The Brothers' approach to child migration also reflected an arguably wider Catholic understanding of children in their out-of-home care as corporate resources of the shared body of Christ with limited agency and individuality.⁹⁹ Publicity images of children in Christian Brothers' institutions, produced to support Conlon's recruitment work, showed boys in ordered groups—disciplined, studious, productive and serious—embodying the principle in the order's rule that the good student was one who understood both the importance of obedience and that 'religious life is a life of labour and devoutness'.¹⁰⁰

The Fairbridge Society, by contrast, functioned on the basis of two inter-locking social networks—the British upper-class of colonial administrators (often also bound through shared contacts in the officer classes of the armed forces) and the trans-national network of the Rhodes Trust, with its hub at the University of Oxford. As noted above, these networks enabled contacts and support both amongst serving politicians and the Royal Family in the United Kingdom, as well as to a certain extent with senior politicians in Australia. Although its support extended beyond this, the social class of Fairbridge's leading figures led naturally to affinities with the Conservative Party, with Kingsley Fairbridge himself regarding rural settlement of British emigrants an important means of preventing their assimilation into undesirable socialist masses in urban areas. This proximity to government circles in the United Kingdom—with a civil servant from the Dominions Office, G.F. Plant, serving on Fairbridge's Council for most of the inter-war period¹⁰¹—was reflected in a comparatively stronger appreciation of state administrative systems compared to the Christian Brothers. The mutual recognition and shared social networks of government, civil service and the social circles from which Fairbridge's leaders

⁹⁸ See, e.g., Conlon to Curtin, 9th November 1941 and 3rd March 1942, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499. On similar attempts to leverage public funds to support the Brothers' work in the pre-war period by Br Keaney, see Director of Education to Under-Secretary, 29th December 1929, Trethowan to Redmond, 28th March 1930, WASR: 1031/AN/145/1/913/27. See also numerous cases of discounted claims by the Dominions Office for individual boys made under the capital funding agreement for Tardun in TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/2.

⁹⁹ Lynch, 'Catholic child migration'.

¹⁰⁰ *The Christian Brothers' Associated Schemes for the Training of Poor Boys in Western Australia*, NRS: ED11/384; O'Donoghue, *Upholding the Faith*, p. 64.

¹⁰¹ See Green to Wiseman, 23rd February 1938, TNA: DO35/703/5.

were drawn made Fairbridge's operations feel, culturally, more like an extension of the work of the colonial British State¹⁰² and appears to have been reflected in the more generous capital funding extended to its work by the Dominions Office than that given to Dr Barnardo's Homes or the Christian Brothers.¹⁰³ Its organisational sense of being embedded with the broader British policy structures of assisted migration was reinforced by the repeated praise given to its work in Government reports, praise that was re-circulated through Fairbridge's annual reports. The inter-twining of inter-personal relations between Fairbridge and the State was exemplified in Sir Ronald Cross's recruitment of Charles Hambro as a senior officer in the Special Operations Executive at the start of the Second World War, whilst Cross was Minister of Economic Warfare. Hambro was already at that point the chairman of Fairbridge's London Committee, a role he continued into the post-war period. By 1941, Cross had been appointed UK High Commissioner to Canberra.

Although Kingsley Fairbridge had initially envisaged his farm school proposal as a stand-alone experiment that could be taken up more widely within a government-managed system,¹⁰⁴ the Child Emigration Society quickly evolved into a charity with its own organisational logics of self-publicity, consolidation and growth. Its close association with elite social networks both created the potential for significant individual donations and helped to build up a wider national network of local supporters for its work. Although suffering greater financial pressure through the depression in the 1930s, Fairbridge's income from supporters and the UK Government had enabled it to build a comfortable surplus through the 1920s that the economic slump did not substantially deplete. Its requests for additional government funding were, thus, far less frequent than those made by the Christian Brothers. The fact that its work at Pinjarra relied to a large degree on charitable funds raised through donations in Britain was also to create tensions between the London and Western Australian

¹⁰²On the over-representation of people from upper-middle-class backgrounds in the upper ranks of the civil service in both the inter-war and early post-war periods, see R.K. Kelsall, *Higher Civil Servants in Britain: From 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), p. 157.

¹⁰³See, e.g., note by Wiseman, 22nd August 1938, TNA: DO35/690/5, pp. 34–35, which notes the view that Fairbridge constituted 'an exceptional case' in terms of decisions about capital funding.

¹⁰⁴See *Juvenile Emigration and the Farm School System*, pamphlet produced by the Child Emigration Society, 1910, TNA: MH102/1400.

Committees about what such funding implied in terms of the degree of control the London Committee might expect to exert over Pinjarra.

Although at times presenting its activities as a form of non-denominational religious work, the ethos of the Fairbridge Society was grounded more in an emphasis on the importance of settling Britain's dominions with British stock and a belief in the power of the open spaces of the Dominions to release the inherent health and vitality of children removed from the enervating effects of British slums. In contrast to the disciplined group photographs of boys in Christian Brothers' publicity materials, Fairbridge annual reports contained romanticised images of children at work and play in their farm schools, focusing on the individual's effort, pleasure and pride at their achievements.¹⁰⁵ The effect of this understanding of the atomised child—just as with the Brothers' view of the child as corporate member of the Church—was to downplay any enduring emotional significance of bonds that the child might still have with family members left behind in Britain. The self-presentation of its work as bringing civic and moral flourishing to the individual child-settler, and thus to the British Empire, was intrinsic to its capacity to attract public support, and provided an attractive philanthropic narrative that glided over the more complex, and often more painful, lives of the children in its farm schools.

The policy framework and administrative architecture of assisted child migration to Australia therefore created a context in which voluntary organisations with very different social networks, modes of operating and organisational cultures, could pursue their different organisational aims within a common funding framework. Whilst delivered as an element of wider empire settlement policies, voluntary organisations undertaking this work did not necessarily share a common commitment to the political project of building up the empire through the transfer of white, British stock to Australia—exemplified in the unsuccessful attempt by Archbishop Prendiville and Brother Conlon to recruit child migrants from the Irish

¹⁰⁵ See annual reports of the Child Emigration Society and Fairbridge Farm Schools Inc. at BL: 362.732FAI.

Free State.¹⁰⁶ Regardless of these organisational differences, by 1939 politicians and civil servants in the Dominions Office saw the general policy of child migration as a wholly positive development. However, the war years were soon to bring a greater awareness of the potential shortcomings of these schemes.

¹⁰⁶ Although the Australian Commonwealth Government had, in principle, agreed to contribute towards travel and maintenance costs of child migrants from the Irish Free State (Lyons to Prendiville, 18th February 1938, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499), the Irish Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, informed Conlon that he was not prepared to sanction the emigration of Irish children. See also note by Garrett, 15th July 1937, NAA.C: A1/1937/10056, which commends the immigration work of the Salvation Army in Australia but describes it as being more primarily concerned with 'social uplift' of individuals than the wider social and economic benefits of imperial migration.

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Flawed Progress: Criticisms of Residential Institutions for Child Migrants in Australia and Policy Responses, 1939–1945

The archival records of the Dominions Office relating to child migration to Australia before 1939 are characterised by an almost complete absence of any sense of the need for any formal monitoring of the welfare of children sent overseas. In 1911, officials at the Local Government Board had stated that annual reports would need to be sent on the welfare and progress of individual child migrants up to the age of 16, if local Boards of Guardians were to be allowed to pay for children under their care to be sent to Fairbridge’s proposed farm school at Pinjarra.¹ To the extent that such reports were subsequently provided there are no indications that civil servants in the Dominions Office were aware of their contents. Instead, the belief that organisations involved in child migration were undertaking good work appears to have been reinforced more in the Dominions Office by formal visits to Pinjarra by public figures—including Leo Amery and Malcolm MacDonald—which were carefully prepared public events. At the start of 1937, the Fairbridge farm schools were regarded in the Dominions Office as one of the most successful forms of assisted migration since the passing of the Empire Settlement Act.²

Before the outbreak of war, however, the Dominions Office was starting to become aware of operational challenges that suggested a more

¹See Notes, 17th August 1911, and other correspondence and reports in TNA: MH102/1400.

²See note to Machtig, 22nd January 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4.

complex picture to the idealised stories and pictures of children's transformation presented in the Child Emigration Society's annual reports. In February 1937, G.F. Plant, the Dominions Office civil servant who had served as a member of the Fairbridge Society Council, met with Winifred Cullis, Professor of Physiology at the University of London. Although publicly supportive of the Fairbridge scheme, Cullis wished to raise concerns she had about children of 'bad stock' being sent to Pinjarra who had no realistic hope of becoming productive citizens overseas.³ Plant rebuffed her criticisms internally in the Dominions Office, sharing the Fairbridge view that the whole point of the Society's work was to effect transformation in children by changing their environment.⁴ After having met Cullis himself, however, the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald was said to have been alarmed by her accounts of two individual children sent to Pinjarra—one epileptic, the other said to have homicidal tendencies. Eric Machtig, then an Assistant Under-Secretary of State, noted MacDonald's view that Fairbridge's London office would need to be more careful in its selection of children if it were to avoid negative publicity for its work, an issue that MacDonald raised directly with Fairbridge's London office.⁵

Criticisms of Fairbridge's selection policy were made by other people around the same time. Little more than a week after Cullis's meeting with MacDonald, a conversation was recorded by Dominions Office officials with the then principal of Pinjarra, Dallas Paterson, who was visiting England. Paterson was soon to resign from his position after conflict with the London Society over his views that poor selection of children were leading to too many cases of former residents at Pinjarra failing to settle in work, becoming involved in criminality, falling pregnant or having other forms of emotional difficulty.⁶ The note of Paterson's conversation at the Dominions Office only recorded his proposal that the Fairbridge Society should change its selection policy to recruit 'the finest raw material'. However, later private communication between Charles Hambro, Chair of the Fairbridge London Society and Edward Cavendish, the

³ Winifred Cullis, 'Fairbridge School in W. Australia', *The Times*, 23rd February 1937; note of conversation with Cullis, 15th February 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4.

⁴ On this ethos, see *Juvenile Emigration and the Farm School System*, pamphlet produced by the Child Emigration Society, 1910, TNA: MH102/1400.

⁵ Note by Machtig, 24th February 1937, and MacDonald to Lumley, 17th February 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4.

⁶ Note of conversation with Paterson, 25th February 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4; see also Sherington and Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and Child Migration*, pp. 145–147.

Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, suggested that the Dominions Office were aware that Paterson was making wider criticisms of Pinjarra and were apparently reassured by Hambro that, where valid, his criticisms were already being dealt with.⁷ The view that Fairbridge should concentrate on sending a better class of child, more suited to leadership roles in Australia, was also put to Plant at the Dominions Office by Miss Gertrude Drayton, Secretary of the Victoria League. Drayton also claimed that dissatisfaction with Fairbridge's current work was also felt by Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, the UK High Commissioner in Canberra, and Lord Gowrie, Governor-General of Australia.⁸ The view of the Dominions Office, expressed both to Paterson and Drayton, was that organisational policy matters were a decision for the Fairbridge Society itself, and not something in which the Dominions Office could become involved. It was also noted within the Dominions Office that such a radical change to the type of children recruited by the Society would constitute a significant shift away from the original vision of Kingsley Fairbridge and might cause problems amongst those who had already made substantial donations to the Society on the basis of that.

Whilst these criticisms about Fairbridge's selection methods, and its mixed results at Pinjarra, did not appear to create any significant doubts in the Dominions Office about the fundamental value of the Society's work, further problems were soon to present themselves. In June 1937, Gordon Green, the Secretary of Fairbridge's London Society, and Charles Hambro alerted the Dominions Office to emerging difficulties in the trans-national governance of their organisation.⁹ Kingsley Fairbridge had incorporated the organisation's Western Australian committee prior to the incorporation of its London committee. This formally allowed the Western Australian body to act as an entity independent of the London society, although in practice it was dependent on it both financially and for the recruitment of children. A similar organisational division had now more recently occurred with the development of the Fairbridge farm school in New South Wales, where the local committee also established itself as an

⁷Hambro to Cavendish, 6th December 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4. Hambro's letter, addressed to 'My dear Eddie', was sent to Cavendish's private address rather than formally to him at the Dominions Office.

⁸See note of meeting with Drayton, 16th March 1937, and Plant to Drayton, 20th March 1937, TNA: DO35/686/4.

⁹See, e.g., Memorandum by Green, 26th June 1937, and note of meeting on 28th June 1937, TNA: DO35/691/5.

incorporated body for tax reasons and had been able to initiate the development of the Molong farm school through substantial local donations. Whilst in principle the Fairbridge child migration programme could operate in a spirit of mutual collaboration between its London and Australian committees, in practice operational tensions that had always existed in these arrangements were becoming increasingly strained. The Western Australia committee was resisting attempts by the London office to develop the after-care of children leaving Pinjarra. In New South Wales the organisation's proposed articles of association gave the London society no representation on its committee and decisions had been made about the final location of the farm school without agreement from London. Issues between the London and New South Wales committees were ultimately resolved by the end of the summer, with the latter agreeing to having up to four members of its committee nominated by London, as well as giving the London committee the power to make the appointments of Molong's Principal and after-care officer.¹⁰ During this process, however, staff in the Dominions Office had expressed considerable reluctance to take any formal role in mediating between the London and the New South Wales committees, even less to be seen as the 'official big stick' which could be used by sending organisations in the United Kingdom to try to control the activities of receiving organisations in Australia.¹¹ Instead, they sought more informally to encourage conciliatory efforts from London. The potential organisational difficulties of managing child migration as a trans-national initiative were, however, becoming clear.

Knowledge of problems with child migration was by no means limited to the UK Government. The report on the future of Pinjarra, compiled by T.H. Garrett of the Commonwealth Migration and Development Commission in 1928 had already noted significant conflict between the Child Emigration Society's London and Western Australian committees to the extent that the London committee had threatened not to send any more children unless it could exert more control over the work being done in Australia.¹² In 1937, the Premier of New South Wales wrote to the Commonwealth Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, to confirm his approval

¹⁰See Reid to Whiskard, 12th August 1937, and Agreement between Fairbridge Farm Schools Incorporated, and the Fairbridge Farm Schools of New South Wales, 30th September 1937, TNA: DO35/691/5.

¹¹Note by Plant, 8th July 1937, TNA: DO35/691/5.

¹²Report by T.H. Garrett on the Child Emigration Society', 16th March 1928, NAA.C: A461/C349/1/7.

of the sending of assisted child migrants to Molong on the condition that effective medical checks be undertaken on child migrants before departure at Australia House given that his State Department of Labour and Industry had previously raised concerns about the health and fitness of children sent to Dr Barnardo's farm school at Picton.¹³ Questions about the quality of after-care at Pinjarra were further raised, in 1939, by an immigration official at Australia House who suggested to Gordon Green that the recent case of a teenager repatriated back to the United Kingdom by Fairbridge on grounds of unsatisfactory behaviour reflected less on the character of that boy than on inadequate after-care that had been provided to him.¹⁴ As was to be the case after the war, such knowledge held by Australian authorities was not always, as a matter of course, passed back to the Dominions Office or UK High Commission.

CHILD MIGRATION, THE ONSET OF WAR AND FAILING INSTITUTIONS

The outbreak of war caused considerable disruption to child migration programmes. Fairbridge's London office initially supported the UK Government's decision to suspend assisted migration, reportedly in part because it was concerned at the reputational damage to its work that would be suffered if a ship carrying children it had sent overseas was torpedoed.¹⁵ By 1940, the financial challenges of reduced numbers of children being received by its farm schools, and the start of overseas evacuation of British children through the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB),¹⁶ led Fairbridge to lobby the Dominions Office to allow it to send children overseas whom it had recruited before the start of the war. The Dominions Office agreed to this request in April, 1940, and then in September 1940, sought to apply pressure on the Children's Overseas Reception Board when it initially refused to give up some of its allocated

¹³ Premier of New South Wales to Prime Minister, 2nd April 1937, NAA.C: A461/K349/1/7.

¹⁴ Stables to Green, 18th July 1939, A659/1945/1/505.

¹⁵ See note to Duke of Devonshire, TNA: DO35/703/5.

¹⁶ On the emigration of children to Australia by the CORB, see Edward Stokes, *Innocents Abroad: The Story of British Child Evacuees in Australia, 1940-45* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

berths for Fairbridge children.¹⁷ However, the torpedoing of the *City of Benares* on 18th September, en-route to Canada, resulting in the deaths of 77 CORB evacuees, soon led to the wider CORB programme being suspended. Despite this the Dominions Office indicated that it was still willing to allow children previously recruited by Fairbridge to be sent overseas, but was prevented in doing so on grounds of the children's safety by the Treasury, before Fairbridge themselves indicated that it also wished to suspend migration of further children for the time being.¹⁸ This led to continued financial pressures on its farm schools, mitigated in the case of the Northcote farm school by the decision to allow children of Australian soldiers to be accommodated temporarily there during the war.¹⁹ Children remaining at Northcote were eventually transferred to Molong in 1944. Declining numbers also put increasing pressure on the work at Pinjarra.²⁰ Before the suspension of the CORB programme, Brother Conlon sought to persuade the Australian Commonwealth Government to place CORB evacuees at Catholic institutions in Western Australia which he claimed, without any obvious grounds, could receive at least 250 boys and 250 girls.²¹ This request was refused by the Australian Commonwealth Government on the basis that CORB evacuees had been sent on the understanding that they would be placed in private households, and not residential institutions.²² Even after the sinking of the *City of Benares* Conlon continued to press for 200 girls to be sent to Nazareth House, Geraldton and 300 boys to Christian Brothers' institutions in

¹⁷ MacLeod to Green, 8th April 1940, Kimber to Wiseman, 14th August 1940, and Wiseman to Syers, 18th September 1940, TNA: DO35/703/5.

¹⁸ See note by Wiseman 5th October 1940, note by Wiseman 7th October 1940, note by Machtig, 10th October; and Syers to Wiseman, 3rd October 1940; Fairbridge was subsequently able to send a small group of five children to its farm school in British Columbia in the autumn of 1941 through contacts in the Admiralty, MacLeod to Hardie, 11th September 1941, TNA: DO35/703/5.

¹⁹ For notes and correspondence on this arrangement, and other proposals for mitigating costs from the loss of income with the suspension of child migration, see DO35/692/1. Dwindling numbers at Northcote led to the 42 remaining children there being transferred to Molong in December 1944 to save costs, Green to Secretary, 31st January 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

²⁰ Given the lack of opportunities for child migration during the war, Fairbridge also decided not to take up the offer of the donation of a property and land for it to establish a new farm school in New Zealand, TNA: DO35/698/5.

²¹ Conlon to Foll, 2nd July 1940, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

²² Minister of the Interior to Conlon, 24th July 1940, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

Western Australia, but was refused again by the Australian Commonwealth Department of the Interior on grounds on the unsafe shipping conditions.²³

At the same time as the Dominions Office was trying to persuade the Children's Overseas Reception Board to give some of its allocated berths to Fairbridge recruits, tensions arose again between Fairbridge's London and New South Wales committees. The latter decided to present the then Principal at Molong, Richard Beauchamp, with an ultimatum of resigning his post or face being suspended, acting without the prior agreement of the London Committee. When Beauchamp contacted the London office to complain he was resigning under duress, the London committee initially asserted its power by indicating that it was not prepared to accept this resignation. The London committee soon reversed this decision under encouragement from the UK High Commissioner, Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, and regretfully accepted Beauchamp's resignation.²⁴ Whilst the Dominions Office understood that this action had been taken because of long-standing disagreements between Beauchamp and the New South Wales committee, it does not appear to have been informed by Fairbridge that its immediate cause was that the committee had received information indicating that Beauchamp was failing to maintain appropriate standards of sexual morality at the farm school by failing both to prevent sexual contact between boys and girls and to ensure appropriate punishment for 'homosexual offences'.²⁵

On the basis of the information it had received, the Dominions Office responded to Beauchamp's resignation as another incident in which it needed to undertake an informal mediating role between Fairbridge's London and New South Wales committees, rather than as an issue that had a bearing on child migrants' welfare. Clearer concerns about some of the other residential institutions were soon to emerge, however.

In December 1942 Whiskard's replacement as UK High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Ronald Cross, submitted a report to the Dominions

²³ Conlon to Honeysett, 1st December 1940, Carrodus to Conlon, 20th December 1940, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499.

²⁴ Telegram, UK High Commissioner to Dominions Office, 11th September 1940, and telegram, Dominions Office to UK High Commissioner, 20th September 1940, TNA: DO35/692/1. Beauchamp had a long-standing relationship with the Fairbridge Society, having previously ran its field office in Glasgow.

²⁵ See Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation*, Day 12 transcript, 12th July 2017, pp. 94–99.

Office of his impressions of informal visits to the Pinjarra and Tardun farm schools during a more general tour that he was making of Western Australia the previous October.²⁶ Cross had relatively little to say about Pinjarra other than to compare it favourably to conditions at Tardun which, he noted, had not been visited by any representative of the UK Government since boys first arrived there in the summer of 1938. Cross's account of conditions there differed substantially from the positive account given by Conlon.²⁷ Whilst the boys at Tardun generally appeared healthy, he was 'somewhat taken aback... to see a number of boys who had the appearance of ragamuffins, being barefooted and dressed in extremely old, untidy and dirty looking shirts and shorts'. Although smarter outfits were used when the boys later gave a concert in honour of their visitors, Cross speculated how the poor condition of their work clothing could be reconciled with the on-going maintenance funding being received by the Christian Brothers particularly as the labour used in the up-keep of the farm school was provided free of charge by both the Brothers and the boys and food costs would also be limited. The farm school was suffering from considerable over-crowding, as boys from the Christian Brothers' residential institution at Clontarf had been transferred there earlier that year when it was seconded for use by the Royal Australian Air Force. Accommodation at Tardun was described by Cross as being 'extremely rough' and often unclean, and still in one part only just nearing completion. Cross was particularly concerned by the Principal, Br Sandes, whom he found to be very vague on a range of administrative issues ranging from the financial budgets of the farm school, the effects of over-crowding on the boys' education and the Christian Brothers' approach to after-care. When pushed on future careers, the Principal speculated that many of the boys would probably want to remain working for the Brothers, which Cross found hard to reconcile with the principle that boys were being trained at Tardun as agricultural settlers. Whilst Cross commented that it was unlikely that another visit from a representative of the UK Government could be made to Tardun in the near future, given its isolated location more than 300 miles from Perth, he nevertheless felt that periodic visits of this kind would be 'in every way desirable'. In the absence of any such visit in the near

²⁶ 'Notes on visit to Tardun', 15th December 1942, TNA, DO35/1138/M1020/1.

²⁷ See, e.g., Conlon to Wiseman, 21st March 1941, TNA: DO35/691/1 which stated the child migrants at Tardun 'are doing well and have made a most favourable impression on all visitors, including the Government inspectors who visit the school at regular intervals'.

future, however, Cross recommended that Catholic sending organisations be notified of these concerns with a view to them raising these issues with the Christian Brothers. He also proposed that the Australian Commonwealth Government be approached to obtain a report by Western Australian State officials on the welfare of the child migrants in the Brothers' institutions.

Cross's report was passed up through civil servants at the Dominions Office to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Paul Emrys Evans. Emrys Evans concurred with Cross's recommended course of action whilst also accepting his civil servants' suggestion that Bishop Griffin be made aware of the report's criticisms but discouraged from contacting the Christian Brothers until the Australian State report had been received. It was also noted that as the five-year maintenance agreement had nearly expired for most of the boys sent to Tardun, there might be little scope for effecting change at the institution before these finally ran out.²⁸ Part of the value of the report from Western Australian State officials, it was assumed, would be that it would include some assessment from an official experienced in evaluating educational institutions who could offer an informed view on Br Conlon's claims about the value of Tardun as a vocational training institution.²⁹

After a request for a State inspection report was passed on to the Western Australian Government via the Commonwealth Prime Minister's office, a senior official in the Western Australian Lands and Immigration Department, Francis McAdam, undertook an inspection of the Christian Brothers' institutions at Tardun, Bindoon and Castledare in April, 1943.³⁰ McAdam, who actively supported the work of the Christian Brothers College in Perth,³¹ and who had no expertise on educational matters, produced reports that focused primarily on the material infrastructure and holdings of each institution, and offered only brief comments on the education and welfare of children. In addition to giving assurance that the terms of the UK Government's maintenance agreements for Castledare and Tardun were being 'carried out to the letter', McAdam offered

²⁸ See notes dated 5th February, 8th February, 9th February, 10th February and 16th February 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/1.

²⁹ In 1944, Walter Garnett appeared to think that the training in trades at Tardun was relatively limited compared to Bindoon, see 'Farm Schools in Australia' in October 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

³⁰ Correspondence and copies of the reports are held at NAA.C: A659/1945/1/499 and TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/4.

³¹ Obituary of McAdam, Annual of Christian Brothers College, Perth, 1946.

particularly effusive praise for Bindoon about which he commented that ‘the present ambitious scheme of making practical provision for the future of migrant boys and state wards at Bindoon reflects credit on the community of Christian Brothers and its lion-hearted Superior, Br Keaney’. Attached to the copies of McAdam’s reports sent to the UK High Commission in Canberra was a list of the child migrants who had been sent to Western Australia in 1938 and 1939, indicating their chosen occupation (including ‘Farmer’, ‘Baker’, ‘Plumber’, ‘Farmhand’ and ‘Electrician’). No further information was given about the adequacy of the vocational training that would be provided to prepare the other boys for their indicated future occupation.

In his covering letter when forwarding these documents on to the Dominions Office, Sir Ronald Cross noted that McAdam’s report did not address points that had concerned him from his own visit to Tardun, such as over-crowding, inadequate sanitary arrangements or lack of clarity about after-care arrangements.³² He also commented that there was insufficient evidence that the settlement of boys on the land as farmers in their own right was being attempted to the same degree as had been indicated when Conlon had initially sought UK Government funding support. At the same time, Cross acknowledged, McAdam had not specifically been asked to report on the issues raised by him, and the fact that a new Principal had been appointed at Tardun might represent a change from its previous poor management.

Clement Attlee, as the new Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, replied to Cross offering a more positive assessment and commenting that the reports indicated improvements at these institutions (although no information had been received by the Dominions Office about Castledare or Bindoon prior to this).³³ As 25 of the child migrants were reported to being trained up as farmers and with land being cleared for them, Attlee commented that ‘I feel doubtful whether more could have been done to settle the boys on the land’. Cross suggested that a follow-up visit to Tardun by an experienced official representing the UK Government should be made as soon as a convenient opportunity arose, and Attlee concurred. Other internal disagreements were also recorded within the Dominions Office. The Assistant Secretary, Robert Wiseman, commented that ‘it is satisfactory that the Inspector should have found things in so

³² Cross to Attlee, 24th June 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/4.

³³ Attlee to Cross, 30th July 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/4.

good a condition'; in response, the Under-Secretary of State, Paul Emrys Evans, wrote that 'I do not think that Sir R. Cross feels that the situation is satisfactory although he thinks there has been an improvement'.³⁴ Wiseman had already by then met with Bishop Griffin and Canon Craven to make them aware of Cross's initial criticisms and discouraged Griffin from contacting the Christian Brothers directly until the Australian State report had been received.³⁵ He met with Griffin again in August 1943 to indicate that the Australian report had been satisfactory and that a follow-up visit to the Christian Brothers institutions would be made by a representative of the UK High Commission.³⁶ Wiseman also took the opportunity to discuss the possibility of the resumption of assisted migration in collaboration with the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement after the war, noting that it might be a year or two after the war's end before assisted migrants could again be sent to Australia.

Three weeks before Cross forwarded on McAdam's reports, the Dominions Office also became aware of significant problems at the Northcote farm school at Bacchus Marsh. A letter from Evelyn Baring, a Northcote trustee then working at the Foreign Office, had previously commended the excellent staff at Northcote led by the Principal, Colonel Heath.³⁷ In early June 1943, however, Walter Garnett, now returned to the UK High Commission in Canberra as Official Secretary, wrote to Robert Wiseman about a number of problems that he had recently learned about at Northcote.³⁸ By then, Garnett had a long history of involvement in migration matters, having served as the secretary to the 1924 Bondfield delegation whilst working for the Overseas Settlement Department and as one of the joint secretaries to the Economic Advisory Council's Committee on Empire Migration.³⁹ From 1943 onwards, he was to become a pivotal figure

³⁴Note by Wiseman, 19th July 1943, and note by Emrys Evans, 26th July 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/4.

³⁵Note by Wiseman, 23rd March 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/1.

³⁶Note by Wiseman, 24th August 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/4.

³⁷Baring to MacLeod, 28th May 1942, TNA: DO35/692/1. Baring was later to become the UK's Governor in Kenya at the time of the Mau Mau uprising.

³⁸Garnett to Wiseman, 4th June 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

³⁹See Garnett's account of the Bondfield delegation and report in Report on Child Migration (British and white alien), 17th March 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5.

in representing the UK Government in Australia on what were to become increasingly difficult issues concerning child migration.⁴⁰

Garnett had been alerted to possible problems at Northcote after one of the cottage mothers had written with a series of complaints to Lady Gowrie, wife of the Australian Governor-General. Having seen this letter, Garnett decided to go to Melbourne where he met the Secretary of the Northcote Trustees and was able to establish more information about recent events. He learned that after two teachers at the neighbouring State school had been charged with sexually assaulting three girls from the Northcote farm school, the Principal, Colonel Heath, had been asked to resign towards the end of 1942. Complaints had also been received about a high proportion of the 56 children who had so far been placed out in employment from Northcote and, when pressed about this before his resignation, Colonel Heath had reportedly said that when he was Principal at Pinjarra the results of the training provided were not as good as Fairbridge publicly claimed there either and that a number of former residents at Pinjarra had ended up in reformatories.

Garnett was also told that the Trustees had been increasingly sceptical about the value of a child migration programme in which children were accommodated in separate institutions with limited ability to mix with the wider community until they left the farm school. The Trustees also felt that agricultural training could well be of limited value for the boys at the school given the poor opportunities for career progression in agricultural work. Bad management at the dairy farm had led both to sickness amongst the children and the production of poor-quality dairy products. External dairy farm inspectors had indicated that problems had resulted in part from the farm school's attempt to run too large a dairy herd with poorly trained boys, where the work involved in simply managing the herd had prevented staff having enough time to train the boys properly. When ascertaining whether the State Child Welfare Department had inspected Northcote during this period, Garnett was also surprised to discover that State Child Welfare inspectors only had jurisdiction over State wards and so did not have any supervisory powers over child migrants.

⁴⁰ Garnett had also become involved in child migration issues soon after his appointment as an assistant to the British Government Representative in Canberra in 1931, trying to intervene to prevent the reduction of the Commonwealth Government subsidy for children at Pinjarra after this had been reduced by the Western Australian State Government, Garnett to Secretary, Dept of the Interior, 1st September 1932, NAA.C: A659/1945/1/505.

Overall, Garnett suggested, failings at Northcote might be less as a result of systemic problems within the Fairbridge scheme and more a result of a combination of local factors where Heath had both managed the farm school inadequately and received insufficient support and oversight from a relatively inexperienced local committee. In this regard, Garnett noted, similar problems could also be seen with the running of the farm school at Molong. Although, after making a return visit to Northcote in July 1943, Garnett gave a more optimistic report about prospects for the farm school under its new Principal, he added that problems with placing children in employment might well have been the result of poor initial selection by Fairbridge which led to Northcote being overloaded with ‘difficult’ cases.⁴¹ Garnett was later to revise this view, suggesting that these problems arose more from problems in management and after-care at Bacchus Marsh rather than the quality of children sent.⁴²

When Wiseman shared the results of Garnett’s report with the Northcote trustees in London, it became clear that there were problems with the sharing of information about conditions at the farm school.⁴³ The Australian trustees had not apparently known about the critical reports about conditions at the dairy which had gone only to Heath, nor the fact that the new Principal had already been absent through a long period of ill health. Not only was communication between the different trans-national arms of this organisation poor, but those involved tended to attribute failings to parts of the system other than those in which they were directly involved. Whilst the Australian trustees blamed problems on poor selection of children in Britain, the British trustees blamed the difficulties with children’s work placements on bad teaching at the local State school. Blame was also attributed, diplomatically, to those removed from the system—notably the retiring, Colonel Heath—rather than to those with whom different actors in the scheme still needed to co-operate.⁴⁴ When approached with Garnett’s report, Gordon Green initially acknowledged that he had already been aware of the case of the teachers prosecuted for sexual assault, but not about other problems at the farm school. He saw no problems in Fairbridge’s selection of children and blamed failings at

⁴¹ Garnett to Wiseman, 16th August 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

⁴² ‘Report on Farm Schools in Australia’, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁴³ See both Note by Wiseman on meeting with Gordon Green, 2nd July 1943, and notes following letter from Wiseman to Lord Grey, 3rd July 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Grey to Luxton, 29th December 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

Northcote on Heath being kept in post for too long. Although Green thought that the British trustees had full confidence in the Australian trustees, the British trustees reported to Wiseman that they thought too many of the Australian trustees had been appointed because of their pre-eminence and not necessarily because of their suitability or active interest in the farm school.

Criticisms of Fairbridge's selection methods created tensions between Fairbridge's London office and Northcote's British trustees, as a result of which Gordon Green passed Wiseman a file of previous correspondence between Fairbridge and Northcote's trustees in Britain and Australia which documented a series of problems at the farm school over a number of years.⁴⁵ In January 1939, Charles Hambro had written to Lord Grey to make him aware of criticisms made of Northcote by Helen Bentwich, then serving as Honorary Secretary for the United Kingdom Committee for the reception of refugee children from Germany. After visiting Northcote, Molong and Pinjarra, Bentwich told Hambro that she felt the system was failing by isolating children from local Australian communities, segregating boys and girls to too great a degree and not having enough opportunity to learn to manage a regular pocket money allowance. Northcote gave Bentwich particular concern because the future employment prospects for girls after leaving there seemed particularly poor—worse than if they had remained in the United Kingdom—and the girls were sufficiently unhappy there to tell her that they wanted to come back home from Australia. This problem, Hambro noted, might have resulted in part from the lack of sympathy towards the girls from the Principal's wife, Mrs Heath, which had also previously been a source of difficulty at Pinjarra.

In June 1941, Gordon Green had also written to Evelyn Baring noting both that he had just received half-yearly reports on children at Northcote a year late and that Northcote did not have any administrative officer in Britain who could deal with any queries from parents or guardians about the welfare of their child after emigration to Bacchus Marsh. Hambro followed this up a month later with a letter to Baring asking for more prompt half-yearly reports, monthly updates on any illness or movement of a child and annual after-care reports on children placed out in employment.

⁴⁵See Green to Wiseman, 15th October 1943, with enclosures, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

A letter from Green to Hambro in March 1942 indicated both that Fairbridge were already aware by then that Heath was to be removed as Principal of Northcote and that, whilst not ideal as a Principal, he had previously been able to serve for eight years at Pinjarra because he had been able to keep the local committee in Perth happy. A copy of a letter from December 1942 from the Australian trustees to Lord Grey, held in Fairbridge's file, noted the problems with finding work placements for children given their behaviour, the fact that Heath's tenure as Principal had been marked by discipline based on fear rather than affection, and that whilst the trustees appreciated Heath's efforts, he lacked any understanding of child psychology. As a consequence, many of the old boys of the farm school had no desire to return to it in their holidays.

In January 1943, Green wrote to Northcote's Australian trustees pointing out that as Fairbridge were not prepared to take the organisational responsibility of becoming the full legal guardians of children when they were sent to Australia—because of the potential liabilities involved—it was essential that sufficient regular information be provided from Northcote back to Fairbridge's London office for this to be passed back to children's parents and guardians in Britain. Despite it being hoped that Heath would continue the practice of regular reporting back that he had maintained at Pinjarra, Fairbridge's London office had received no information at all about the welfare and progress of children at Northcote for periods of between 18 months and two years since his appointment. Green was also concerned to discover that girls had been sent out to work from Northcote at the age of 14, despite Fairbridge's undertaking that they would not be placed into work from the farm school until nearly the age of 16. Green had followed this up with a letter to Lord Grey in February 1943 indicating that before further children be sent to Northcote, once shipping routes were open again, a formal agreement would need to be made between Fairbridge and Northcote to ensure that such regular reporting was maintained. Such concerns were accentuated, Green noted, by cases such as a mother who had contacted Green after receiving a letter from her son indicating that he had become a labourer after leaving Northcote despite it being recognised in earlier school reports that he was capable of more advanced agricultural education. As the mother pointed out, if she had known that he was not to receive better education and training she would not have allowed him to go to Australia. The last letter in the file, dated 22nd September 1943, concerned a boy from Northcote who had ended up before a Magistrate after the appointment of Heath's

replacement, and where the Magistrate's criticisms indicated the need for after-care from Northcote to be more effectively organised.

Fairbridge's correspondence with Northcote therefore demonstrated both that Fairbridge's London office and Northcote's British trustees had knowledge of substantial problems at the farm school pre-dating Garnett's report in the summer of 1943. The file also suggested that there had been long-standing problems with standard of care, post-migration reports and after-care at Northcote which had not previously come to the attention of the Dominions Office and which had also occurred to some extent at Pinjarra. When Wiseman wrote to Garnett in December 1943 to make him aware of the file—although not its full contents—he remained supportive of the broad Fairbridge model.⁴⁶ Wiseman also noted, however, that whilst the Fairbridge ideal of transforming children's lives through moving them to new environments was undoubtedly valid, this ideal could be undermined by poor conditions in receiving institutions which needed to be run on principles of 'constant supervision, constant care and constant scrutiny'. In response, Garnett sought to defend Northcote's operations in Australia—a stance he was to take up on other occasions in the future when criticisms were made from London.⁴⁷ It was not fair, he wrote, to expect Northcote staff in Australia to deal with problematic children of whom they had been given insufficient detail about their backgrounds. But even faced with this challenge, Garnett commented, the local Northcote trustees were 'justly proud' of the improvement in children placed at their farm school, as they upheld the Fairbridge principle that the right kind of environment could enable a child to progress regardless of their previous background.

THE 'PINJARRA DOSSIER' AND THE GARNETT REPORT

At the same time as Garnett and Wiseman were engaging in this correspondence, further problems arose in relation to the Fairbridge farm schools. In late November 1943, Sir Charles Hambro met with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Viscount Cranbourne, expressing concern at rumours about the management of Pinjarra including its apparent insistence that children at the farm school be prepared for agricultural

⁴⁶ Wiseman to Garnett, 7th December 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

⁴⁷ Garnett to Wiseman, 22nd January 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1.

work regardless of their preferred future career.⁴⁸ In view of the concern being raised by these rumours, Hambro felt it would be beneficial if Walter Garnett be asked to make an inspection visit to Pinjarra as soon as possible. Robert Wiseman took a sympathetic view of this request, noting that it had always been intended that a follow-up inspection visit to Western Australia be undertaken in view of Sir Ronald Cross's comments on Tardun and that 'any difficulty which has so far been felt in sending him to Western Australia has been the difficulty of sparing staff from the High Commissioner's Office at Canberra'.⁴⁹ Planning for this inspection visit soon became mired in discussions about the relative importance of this visit given other demands on the High Commission's time and the extent to which the Dominions Office should take responsibility for over-seeing conditions at receiving institutions in Australia. Whilst Eric Machtig took the view that it was not possible to spare Garnett's time for such a visit, the Secretary of State, Viscount Cranbourne over-ruled him, stating that the circulation of unsatisfactory rumours about Pinjarra merited further investigation by representatives from the High Commission and the Australian Commonwealth Government—albeit one that required no 'tearing hurry'.⁵⁰

With staff shortages delaying any arrangements for Garnett's inspection visit the following spring, Gordon Green sent Robert Wiseman a dossier of documents in April 1944 detailing problems at Pinjarra from both former staff members and residents.⁵¹ Although compiled by Fairbridge prior to Hambro's meeting with Cranbourne the previous November, Fairbridge's London officers had been cautious about circulating a copy of it before taking legal advice on whether its contents might be libellous. The dossier itself contained a series of detailed complaints about the ways in which the Fairbridge committee in Western Australia had created an environment at Pinjarra in which children were given little or no opportunity to develop interests, education or training beyond agricultural and domestic work, had been transferred to a local reformatory for minor infractions and were placed out in exploitative work placements with little opportunity for advancement. Concerns were also raised about the ability

⁴⁸ See note 26th November 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁴⁹ Note by Wiseman, 29th November 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁵⁰ Note by Machtig, 1st December 1943, and note by Cranbourne, 2nd December 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁵¹ Extract from letter from Garnett, 9th March 1944, and Green to Wiseman with enclosures, 21st April 1944, TNA: DO35/1330.

of cottage mothers to provide individual attention to children when caring for more than 12 children in their ‘cottage’ home, and the ways in which children were transferred between cottages with little or no concern for helping them to maintain relationships with siblings or friends. Allegations of verbal and physical abuse by cottage mothers at Pinjarra were passed on to the Dominions Office a year later.⁵² Lack of effective sex education was also seen by one former member of staff as a significant cause of problems in the mixed school environment and had led to early pregnancies for some former girls from the farm school. One letter in the dossier, from a god-parent who was sponsoring a boy at Pinjarra, expressed disillusionment with the farm school’s ethos, seeing in its refusal to encourage his wider interests an attitude of not wanting ‘to give the children ideas above their station’.⁵³ As the author put it, in language that was to be reflected in the 1946 Curtis Report, whilst children at Pinjarra ‘have been better housed, fed and clothed than they would have been in their conditions here [in the United Kingdom], I very much wonder whether they have been happier except as regards their material condition’.

Wiseman noted that the dossier revealed ‘a most distressing state of affairs’ and arranged for a copy to be sent as quickly as possible to Garnett in Canberra to inform decisions about the planning of his inspection visit to Western Australia.⁵⁴ Soon after this, however, the Dominions Office became less confident of the wisdom of such a visit, as Wiseman was informed by Sir Roger Dalton, a member of Fairbridge’s New South Wales committee, that the local committees for Molong, Northcote and Pinjarra were now in communication with each other about their dissatisfaction with on-going attempts by Fairbridge’s London office to exercise control over the running of their farm schools.⁵⁵ Whilst Wiseman and Machtig

⁵² See Tempe Woods to Wiseman with enclosures, 5th April 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2, which notes that although the current cottage mothers at Pinjarra were of a better kind, in the recent past ‘very unsuitable cottage mothers have been allowed to remain on the farm. They have spoken very roughly to the children and hit them. Girls in their teens have been beaten. Children have been locked in rooms’.

⁵³ Merryless to Hart, 28th January 1944, TNA: DO35/1330.

⁵⁴ Note by Wiseman, 9th May 1944, and Wiseman to Garnett, 20th May 1944, TNA: DO35/1330.

⁵⁵ Notes by Wiseman, 26th May 1944 and 7th June 1944, TNA: DO35/1330. The Dominions Office believed that Dalton, the UK Government’s Senior Trade Commissioner in Australia, represented the London Society on Fairbridge’s New South Wales Committee but Gordon Green later claimed that Dalton was not put forward for that role by London nor had they had much contact with him (see ‘Report on Farm Schools in Australia by Mr

supported Dalton's view that the Dominions Office should be cautious about undertaking any imminent inspection, given the risks of becoming caught up in the conflict between Fairbridge's London and Australian committees, Paul Emrys Evans argued that if conditions at Pinjarra were as bad as had been claimed then the Dominions Office had 'definite responsibilities' to investigate.⁵⁶ Viscount Cranbourne suggested that Fairbridge's London office send a representative to Australia to resolve the conflict as quickly as possible so that no controversy would arise during a forthcoming planned visit to Australia by the Duke of Gloucester.⁵⁷ The decision to send Garnett to Western Australia in the midst of this internal dispute within Fairbridge was supported by Sir Ronald Cross. It was also given further weight by a visit to the Dominions Office from Reuben Wheeler, who met with Emrys Evans, Wiseman and C.W. Dixon, an Assistant Under-Secretary of State, to pass on his impressions from visits to the farm schools at Bacchus Marsh, Picton and Molong. Wheeler told this meeting 'that both the Commonwealth and the U.K. Governments must be held in some way responsible for not realising how things had been going wrong at Northcote and he thought also at Pinjarra'. Wheeler argued that it was the duty of each Government to be aware of conditions at these institutions and that 'each school ought to be inspected at least once a year on behalf of each Government'.⁵⁸ Paul Emrys Evans agreed that Wheeler's recommendation should be implemented, and Sir Ronald Cross concurred with this on the basis that this take the form more of an informal annual visit than a formal inspection.⁵⁹ As Wiseman noted, though, for a member of staff at the UK High Commission in Canberra to undertake annual inspections of Northcote, Pinjarra, Molong, Tardun and Picton would represent a significant investment of administrative time.⁶⁰

W. Garnett and Comments of the General Secretary of the Fairbridge Farm Schools, Inc', TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2).

⁵⁶See notes by Machtig, 7th June 1944 and Emrys Evans, 9th June 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁵⁷Note 9th June, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁵⁸See minute of meeting with Wheeler, 6th July 1944, also confidential reports by Wheeler on visits to Bacchus Marsh, 8/9th May 1944, Molong, 19th May 1944, and Picton, 21st May 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁵⁹Note by Wiseman, 12th July 1944, and by Emrys Evans, 5th September 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁶⁰Note by Wiseman, 18th August 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

Before Garnett undertook his visit to Western Australia, further criticisms about standards at Pinjarra were also received by the UK High Commission in Canberra. In 1943, the Australian Commonwealth Government had established an inter-departmental committee to explore the prospects for post-war immigration, which in turn established a sub-committee specifically to examine the potential for resuming child migration.⁶¹ The sub-committee approached Caroline Kelly, an anthropologist who had previously undertaken government advisory work on welfare and immigration matters, to produce a report examining both existing organisational support for child migration and prospects for future development. Kelly produced a national survey of current child migration schemes in 1944, from which an extract on Pinjarra was sent to Garnett confidentially by the Commonwealth Department of the Interior.⁶²

In this confidential report, Kelly made significant criticisms of the governance of Pinjarra, which she said needed completely overhauling if the farm school were to continue to receive Commonwealth Government funding. She began by noting that the current Acting Principal (who had originally joined the staff as a gardener and then been appointed to this post from being the former Principal's clerk) did not have appropriate training for this senior role. At least, Kelly commented, the Acting Principal could be commended for his honesty, unlike other members of the Committee that she met. Kelly found the Perth Committee elusive and uncooperative, and was later informed indirectly that this was because they had assumed that she was 'a minion of London doing a little more spying'.

Despite difficulties in eliciting information from the Perth Committee, Kelly was able to visit Pinjarra itself. There she noted that there was a high turnover of staff, and an uneven approach to the care of children amongst the cottage mothers. Staff that the London committee described as supporting children's vocational training at the farm school were not in post, and the wife of the chairman of the Western Australia committee told Kelly that there was little point in providing bursaries for children at Pinjarra to pursue grammar school education as they would only feel out of place when mixing with their 'social superiors'. Time after school that

⁶¹ See Carrodus to Director-General, Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, 30th November 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2864; also Kelly's work on European refugees in New South Wales at NAA: A1336, 39459.

⁶² See note by Peters with enclosures, 26th June 1944, NAA: A436, 1945/5/54. The Caroline Kelly archives are held at the University of Queensland Library.

children living in their own homes might normally use for homework was taken up with chores. After leaving school at the age of 14, boys were kept on at Pinjarra as trainees and Kelly noted that there was pressure to keep them there after the age of 16—when they would normally be placed out in external labouring jobs—in order to keep Pinjarra’s farm running. Similarly, after the age of 14, girls were retained as trainees, which in practice involved them in undertaking domestic tasks to support the farm school rather than receiving any further training in domestic science. As a consequence, their skills when placed out in work after the age of 16 were limited to general ‘housework’. Kelly also found the committee negligent with regard to limiting sexual contact between boys and girls. An on-site hostel for former residents of the school offered little management of its accommodation for older boys and girls. Whilst there were many cases of Fairbridge girls becoming unmarried mothers, the committee reportedly dealt with this only through expelling these girls and placing them in local Foundling Homes rather than responding more pro-actively to prevent such cases. Kelly also cited, supportively, a psychiatric assessment undertaken of several children at Pinjarra in 1936 which claimed that far too many children were being sent from the United Kingdom who were either ‘mental defectives’ or had some other problematic hereditary psychological trait.

Sir Ronald Cross telegraphed the Dominions Office confirming the receipt of this extract from the Kelly report and noting that it confirmed that ‘all charges referred to in the [Fairbridge] dossier are within knowledge of the Commonwealth Government’. Cross also summarised Garnett’s impressions from visits he had made to Picton, Bacchus Marsh and Molong with Wheeler earlier that spring before Wheeler had travelled to London, which suggested problems both with the composition of the local Fairbridge committees, the lack of effective after-care at Northcote and Molong and the possible need to end co-education at the Fairbridge schools (as had already happened at Picton).⁶³ In view of the Kelly report, Cross concluded, Garnett should now definitely proceed to visit Pinjarra and Tardun, where for the former the issues of problems with its local management and the training provided to children seemed far more pressing than on-going struggles between the London and Western Australian

⁶³ See also ‘Confidential report on visit to Northcote Children’s Farm School, 8/9th May 1944’, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2, which Wheeler had handed over to the Dominions Office at his London meeting.

committees.⁶⁴ A copy of Cross's telegram was also shown, by Paul Emrys Evans, to the acting chairman of Fairbridge's London committee, the Conservative MP, Sir William Brass, who had also served as a former Parliamentary Private Secretary to Leo Amery.⁶⁵

Garnett visited Pinjarra, and the Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia in the late July and early of August of 1944. The first substantial document that he sent to the Dominions Office after this was a lengthy rebuttal—endorsed by the High Commissioner—of allegations made in the 'Pinjarra dossier'.⁶⁶ Garnett recognised that there were aspects of Fairbridge's Western Australian committee which needed revising. Like the committees for the farm schools at Bacchus Marsh and Molong, the Western Australian committee largely consisted of elderly men, appointed on the basis of their preeminent public positions, but without specific qualifications for over-seeing farm schools of this kind. In Western Australia, this had led the committee to take some rigid views and not always to be as helpful to promising children in its care as it could have been. At the same time, however, Garnett commented, the London committee's anxiety to monitor the work being done in Australia had led to threats of withholding children or funds from the Australian institutions which had bred mistrust and resentment towards the London Society. Many of the specific allegations in the dossier, Garnett noted, were made by two disgruntled former employees (although one of them had in fact paid his own fare back to England to raise concerns with the London committee) and he questioned the accuracy of some of their claims having reviewed records at Pinjarra itself.⁶⁷ Much of the weight of their complaints, Garnett observed, was that children were not being given a wide enough range of vocational opportunities even though this was something

⁶⁴ Cross to Dominions Office, 28th June 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁶⁵ Note by Wiseman, 12th July 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁶⁶ Garnett to Wiseman, with enclosures, 23rd August 1944, TNA: DO35/1330; also telegram from High Commission to Dominions Office, 15th August 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2..

⁶⁷ The Dominions Office subsequently received a letter from the Chair of the Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women, vouching for the credibility of one of the complainants, a former after-care worker at Pinjarra, Miss Tempe Woods (Thompson to Wiseman, 9th April 1945), Wiseman's handwritten note on the letter is 'Please don't bother to reply'. Tempe Woods had herself written to Wiseman summarising her previous concerns with Pinjarra on 5th April 1945: TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

that the Fairbridge farm schools in Australia never set out to achieve. That one of these complainants had lamented the lack of opportunities for children at the school to be taught music was, in Garnett's view, indicative of a failure to understand the purpose and limits of the education being provided at a farm school. To avoid placing young girls in vulnerable positions in isolated rural placements, or the occasional failure to ensure employers paid trainees' wages, would require a substantial re-working of the whole scheme. Whilst Garnett felt that the scheme could only work better in the future with a more constructive relationship between the London and Australian committees, implicit in his comments was a sense that interference from the United Kingdom in the affairs of Australian organisations reflected an unreconstructed attitude which failed to recognise the growing autonomy of Australia as a Dominion. This sentiment was regarded with some sympathy in the Dominions Office.⁶⁸

In October, Garnett submitted his full report on the farm schools, including an Appendix on the Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia, which followed the instruction that he should give particular attention to the issue of child migrants' training.⁶⁹ Noting that numbers at these institutions (other than those run by the Christian Brothers which also admitted Australian children) had declined significantly as a result of the cessation of child migration during the war, Garnett presented his report both as an assessment of current practice and an evaluation of potential for the future resumption of these schemes.

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the schemes so far, Garnett noted that 1071 children had been sent to Pinjarra since its opening with 825 being assessed as having 'made good' (i.e., being in stable employment and/or married). The remainder were variously categorised as 'definite failures', 'doubtful failures', 'still at school', 'lost touch' or 'no record'. Of these, 25 had been sent to reformatories from Pinjarra. Although the State Child Welfare Department found that most of their misdemeanours arose either from misunderstandings with staff or lack of sympathetic management by employers, Garnett interpreted this more in terms of Pinjarra sometimes lacking staff who could deal with 'difficult children'.

⁶⁸ See note by Dixon, 2nd November 1945, also Garnett's acknowledgement (in 'Report on Farm Schools in Australia') of grounds for grievance of Fairbridge's Western Australian Committee and his recommendation that the London Society no longer seek to have the final say on senior appointments in the farm schools, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁶⁹ William Garnett, 'Report on Farm Schools in Australia', para 35, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

Only 76 children had so far been placed out in employment from the Northcote farm school and a high proportion of them had left their placements without notifying the school. Garnett noted that many of those considered unsuccessful in their work placements had received excellent reports whilst at the farm school itself. Of the 59 children placed in employment from Molong, around half had joined the armed forces and it was generally said that the children were reluctant to continue in agricultural work and showed little loyalty to their employers. In the case of Picton, 940 boys had so far been placed out in employment, either joining the armed services or mainly remaining in agricultural work. The 700 female child migrants who had left Dr Barnardo's Homes' institutions in New South Wales were, in the majority of cases, married, with the rest mainly in domestic service or the armed services.

A clear assessment of the farm schools' effectiveness was made harder by war-time conditions, Garnett argued, both because of the growth of better-paying war-time industries that were more attractive than farm work and because of the option of joining the armed services themselves. The focus on these farm schools on training children for agricultural labour or domestic service constituted the core mission on which they had been founded and claims, for example, by the Fairbridge's London Society that children would receive vocational training according to their talents had been misleading. The fact that Dr Barnardo's Homes in New South Wales seemed to have less difficulty with their children than the farm schools associated with Fairbridge was attributed potentially to Barnardo's longer organisational experience with child-care and the fact that its child migrants were already under the charity's care and training in the United Kingdom before coming to Australia.

Despite the clear mission of the farm schools to provide training for rural life, Garnett noted that the evidence of the inter-war period in Australia had been that it was generally economically unviable to attempt to settle immigrants on their own land as farmers unless they had their own capital. The Windham delegation's optimism about the potential for settling young British farmers in Australia had therefore not been borne out by economic reality and very few of those leaving farm schools had gone on to establish themselves as farmers in their own right. Given that these economic conditions were unlikely to change, Garnett argued, it was more realistic in the future to think of the farm schools as providing training for children for a range of occupations for rural life in addition to agricultural labour. This would also help to address the evident

dissatisfaction of child migrants who found the agricultural work that they were directed towards unattractive. Better training in agricultural theory should nevertheless be given, however, as farm managers at Bacchus Marsh and Molong had been unqualified to do this and too often the need for children to support the day-to-day running of the farm was prioritised over more advanced training. More generally, educationally able children should be given more opportunities to advance beyond the primary level of education typically provided at the farm schools, supported where necessary by hostels that could accommodate trainees who were receiving secondary or technical education away from the farm school. Whilst this would constitute a shift away from the farm schools' original mission, Garnett argued that this was a necessary response to anticipated new welfare provisions in the United Kingdom which would reduce the number of children available for emigration and 'raise the standard of treatment which public opinion will expect of them'. 'It will be difficult', he wrote, 'to justify a scheme which determines the careers of children for them before they are of an age to have developed any predilections of their own' and 'public opinion in the United Kingdom will be unlikely in the future to favour schemes under which children are sent overseas... to undertake work which Australians themselves are reluctant to perform'.⁷⁰

Garnett recommended that to deliver this revised mission, greater attention needed to be paid to the appointment of Principals in future, who at the farm schools associated with Fairbridge too rarely had any previous experience of child-care work. Poor relations between Fairbridge's London and Australian committees could be addressed by more effective representation of the London Society on the Australian committees and the possible appointment of a liaison officer who would be able to give first-hand accounts of child migrants' treatment to the London office. Australian committees should also have a greater representation of members (including women) with experience of working with children, including at least one child psychologist. The recruitment of appropriate cottages mothers had proven to be an increasing problem, with both the high turnover of staff in these roles and poor appointments known to have a harmful effect on children. A possible solution to this would be to make such posts more attractive to better qualified women who would be relieved to

⁷⁰On seeing Garnett's report, Dr Barnardo's Homes also sought to broaden training offered in New South Wales beyond agricultural work, see Kirkpatrick to Hart, ML: MLMSS.9025, Box 13.

a large degree of domestic duties normally associated with the role. In the absence of more appointments of workers with child-care training due to limited financial resources, the farm schools should seek to have at least one member of staff with suitable child-care training who could supervise the cottage mothers. After-care officers were in post at Pinjarra and Picton. But at Bacchus Marsh and Molong, reliance was still primarily placed on checking children's welfare by correspondence—a system which the Windham delegation had considered inadequate more than 20 years before. Garnett recommended that after-care officers should be appointed if not already in post, and that their work should be extended to include interviews with prospective employers and inspection of their work places prior to children being placed with them. Effective record-keeping of children after arrival in Australia was essential and was generally being well done by the farm schools, however there was a notable lack of these at the institutions run by the Christian Brothers. Garnett remained uncertain about the value of sending too much case information with a child to Australia, as he saw the danger of this information being used inappropriately by staff directly involved in the child's care outweighing the likely benefits of such information being shared. More generally, Garnett was critical of the tendency of the farm schools to operate as isolated institutions that provided too few opportunities for child migrants to mix with local children and communities and which therefore prepared them poorly for life beyond the institution. More effort, he wrote, should be put into helping child migrants participate in local activities and attend local schools outside of the farm school.

Garnett's assessment of the Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia was mixed. On the one hand, the provision of a wider range of training in trades at Bindoon and the training of Christian Brothers as teachers (mainly at the order's Strathfield College in Sydney) offered advantages over the more limited training and largely unqualified staff at the other farm schools. He also noted the Brothers' claim that a third of the boys who had completed secondary school had gone on to complete the early secondary level qualification, the Junior Certificate, a rate which was said to compare favourably with other state schools. The involvement of boys in the construction of new buildings at Bindoon was also seen as a useful part of their vocational training. At the same time, Garnett had strong reservations. The standard of accommodation at Castledare and Tardun was particularly poor (in stark contrast to the recently built Nazareth House at Geraldton), and the lack of female help at Castledare

made it particularly unsuitable as an institution for receiving young children. Without further improvement Castledare was not, Garnett concluded, an appropriate place for further British child migrants to be sent—a view with which Redmond Prendiville, the Archbishop of Perth, reportedly concurred. Accommodation at Tardun remained ‘primitive’ and was still incomplete and insufficient for the number of boys being kept there. Garnett also observed that the retention of boys without pay at Tardun up to the age of 18 offered little educational benefit to them. More generally, their training seemed to be subordinated to the use of their labour to generate income from the farm to alleviate the considerable overdraft built up during its development.⁷¹ The particularly isolated location of Tardun, and the fact that the quality of its land meant that it would not have been used for this purpose had it not been gifted to the Brothers, also made it far from ideal as a place to receive child migrants before school-leaving age. Very few records of individual children appeared to be kept, and the quality of after-care—devolved to local parish priests—was unclear.

When forwarded a copy of Garnett’s report, Gordon Green replied that the problems described at Pinjarra reflected the Western Australia’s committee resistance to pressure from London for appropriate staff to be appointed. He also noted that the Salvation Army reformatory fortunately appeared to be a more ‘kindly place’ for the Fairbridge children that had been expelled there.⁷² Similar dissatisfaction in New South Wales at the results of children placed out in work from Molong was, Green claimed, again a result of failure to accept appropriate oversight from London.

Green was unhappy with the notion that boys should be placed in farm work, and girls in domestic service, simply as a benefit to Australian society. He argued that ‘to coerce Fairbridge boys and girls, whatever their tastes or capabilities, into agricultural or domestic work, would certainly mean a serious injustice to the individual and would invalidate the beneficence of Fairbridge care and custody of the child’. He added that contact with Old Fairbridgeans who had returned to the United Kingdom with the armed services had confirmed that in very many cases, those leaving Pinjarra had gone on to very poorly paid farm jobs in isolated areas in

⁷¹ See also note by Ives, 31st May 1943, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/2 which observes that claims for maintenance payments for boys at Tardun suggested that fewer were leaving there than was the case at Picton or the farm schools connected to Fairbridge.

⁷² Green to Wiseman, 31st August 1945, and Report on Farm Schools in Australia by Mr W. Garnett and Comments of the General Secretary of the Fairbridge Farm Schools, Inc., TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

which 'the despised farm labourer had little contact with the master and the master's family'. When asked by an after-care officer from Pinjarra why a Fairbridge trainee was being paid nearly half the wage of Australian-born workers at the same farm, the employer reportedly replied, 'Ah, but he is only a Fairbridge boy'.

Given such experiences, Green noted, it was unsurprising that those leaving Pinjarra would seek to move away from farm work. Too many children had been taken from poor backgrounds in Britain only to become an 'underprivileged class' in Australia 'out of which only those with exceptional ability have been able to climb into a happier economic climate'. The farm schools at Bacchus Marsh and Molong were also problematic in their expectation of 'docility and uniformity' amongst the children in their care, and without greater control over operations in Australia, the London Society would be unable to ensure that the best interests of children were being served. The model of more diverse training in trades reportedly provided by the Christian Brothers would, Green suggested, be best taken up as a model by Fairbridge in the future.

Whilst he concurred with Garnett's assessment about the likely reduction in the supply of children from extremely poor backgrounds after the war, Green nevertheless anticipated that there would still be a ready supply of 'illegitimate children' who 'have no place in a normal family' and for whom emigration to the Dominions would offer 'a shelter against the harsh disadvantages of illegitimacy'. Green did, however, challenge a claim made by Garnett that the Western Australian committee were justifiably unhappy with the London committee for failing to provide expected numbers of children for Pinjarra once the other farm schools opened. Contrary to the suggestion that Pinjarra had been starved of expected recruits because the London Society had over-stretched itself with the opening of new farm schools, Green countered that recruitment to Pinjarra had fallen because the London Society was unhappy with standards and after-care there and that the Western Australian committee had, by that stage, built up sufficient financial reserves for reduced recruitment not to cause them financial difficulty.

Garnett's encouragement of better relations between the London and Australian committees failed to take account, Green argued, of the fact that the Australian bodies seemed largely able, on past history, to refuse direction from London. This left Fairbridge's London committee with responsibility for the children it sent overseas but no power over their care. This could only be resolved with a re-drawing of the legal basis of

Fairbridge operations in Australia which would make the London Society the legal centre for their work. In the absence of any resolution of this unsatisfactory situation, Green argued that both the UK and Australian Governments should play a more active role in ensuring proper protection of children at these farm schools. Without more control from London, Green also questioned whether any more child migrants should be sent to the Fairbridge farm schools in Australia to suffer at the hands of 'obscurantist committees' with placing children out in foster care a preferable option to this. Garnett, when forwarded a copy of Green's comments, expressed scepticism about a number of his claims and recalled a submission from the Fairbridge Society to the Economic Advisory Council whilst he acted as a secretary for it, stating that the Society's aim was for the training up of agricultural workers and there was no need to supply children for other kinds of work.⁷³ It would be more gracious, Garnett suggested, if the London Society recognised that its original mission was out-of-date rather than placing all the blame for the narrow vocational training at the farm schools on the Australian committees.

Composing a memorandum on Green's response, Wiseman took the view that it offered an unduly negative view of the Australian committees whom, he noted, the UK High Commission believed were responsive to improving the farm schools.⁷⁴ Whilst a common charter of principles agreed by all the Fairbridge committees could be a useful initiative, this could only be based on a principle of the committees being equal bodies and any attempt by London to exert control over Australian bodies would, he thought, be disastrous. Much of the poor outcomes with placing child migrants in agricultural work could be attributed to war-time conditions, and if in future shortcomings were identified at the farm schools by visits such as those undertaken by Garnett and Wheeler, or by State welfare officials, 'it is likely that the Australian committees would respond to the suggestions without difficulty'. It was not entirely clear, however, on what evidence Wiseman's optimistic view was based.

The view that greater control from London over the Australian committees was impractical was endorsed by a meeting between John Parker MP, the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Dominions Affairs in the Attlee Government, Sir John Stephenson, Deputy

⁷³ Garnett to Wiseman, 15th January 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁷⁴ Memorandum by Wiseman, 31st October 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

Under-Secretary of State, Wiseman and Miss Wall,⁷⁵ a representative from the Children's Branch of the Home Office.⁷⁶ The Home Office became drawn into these discussions after Fairbridge's London committee had formally requested advice from the Home Office on revising its charter and constitution in line with current standards of child welfare. This meeting was the first occasion in which the Home Office was to become involved in direct discussions with the Dominions Office about child migration policy, reflecting the fact that, up to that point, this had been understood primarily as a part of central government policy on assisted migration rather than on children's out-of-home care.

In preparing for the meeting, Sir John Stephenson wrote an internal note indicating that whilst the proposal that Fairbridge's London Society should have legal control over the Australian committees was not feasible, he nevertheless sympathised with their argument that they needed to be satisfied that their obligations to children and their guardians were being properly discharged once the children were overseas. The difficulty that Fairbridge's London committee had in exerting control over child migration was, Stephenson commented, indicative of a similar challenge facing the UK Government:

In fact, these particular issues raise a wide general issue of policy. In present conditions, is it right that the Government here should not exercise greater responsibility? In other words, is it right that the migration of children from this country should be handed over to a private society to organise without any complete power of control by the Government beyond their power to make occasional investigations and call for reports from the Society? There can be no doubt that the original idea of the Scheme... is sound. But it is for consideration whether the maintenance of a plan of this kind should now be left to charitable private enterprise, the part of Government being limited to

⁷⁵The role of Miss Wall, and later Mary Rosling, at higher administrative levels in the Home Office in work relating to the care of children should be understood in the context in which women made up a very small proportion of higher administrative staff within the civil service in this period (see Kelsall, *Higher Civil Servants*, p. 175).

⁷⁶Minute of meeting at the Dominions Office, 18th December 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2. Prior to this meeting, the Home Office Children's Branch had seen copies both of Garnett's original report and Green's response and held a short summary of this on file (TNA: MH102/1401). As this file was on proposals for future arrangements for Fairbridge, the summary of Garnett's report held by the Home Office did not make any reference to the Christian Brothers.

certain financial contributions and a general but not very effective power of supervision.⁷⁷

Such concerns were, by then, not merely raised by the Australian experience, but also by critical reports that the Dominions Office had received about the Fairbridge Prince of Wales farm school in British Columbia.⁷⁸

In response, Parker wrote that he agreed that the Fairbridge case raised wider policy questions relating to the governance and oversight of institutions receiving child migrants.⁷⁹ This was particularly the case given indications from the Australian Commonwealth Government that it was interested in a considerable expansion of child migration following the end of the war. Without specifying what form it might take, Parker supported the creation of a 'more formal machinery' in the United Kingdom to 'keep a watch on all of the child migration schemes to Australia' which would involve representatives from the Dominions Office, the Australian High Commission in London and those organisations sending child migrants. In Australia, State Government representatives should be appointed to management committees of receiving institutions, along with representatives of other welfare organisations, and periodic inspections should also be made by staff from the Commonwealth Government and UK High Commission in Canberra. Whilst seeing child migration as having served a useful purpose which would continue, for a limited number of children, for many years to come, Parker proposed that UK Government funding support for Fairbridge farm schools be brought to an end if they did not broaden their training. Sending organisations should recognise the 'Dominion status' of receiving bodies, however, and should not direct control over them, just as the UK Government no longer sought control over her Dominions. Given the likely pressures to resume child migration in the near future, Parker recommended that

⁷⁷Note by Stephenson, 29th November 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁷⁸Criticisms about the 'administration, methods and outcomes' of the Prince of Wales farm school were initially raised in a review of the CORB evacuation scheme to Canada (see 'General Review of the CORB Scheme in Canada, 1940-1944', TNA: DO35/1140/M1156/36). This led to further inquiries through the UK High Commission in Canada which established that recent reviews had identified serious failings at the farm school in terms of staff appointments and behaviour, its isolation and approach to training and problems with the sexual behaviour of those leaving the farm school (see note by Dixon, 14th November 1944, TNA: DO35/1137/M894/1).

⁷⁹Note by Parker, 18th December 1945, DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

arrangements for the proper governance, oversight and delivery of child migration work needed to be put in place as quickly as possible. ‘It will create a very bad impression’, he noted, if child migration were delayed ‘because of difficulties which up to now have been kept out of public view’.

In the event, though, limited staffing resources at the UK High Commission in Canberra meant that no regular inspections of receiving institutions were made by its staff when assisted child migration resumed in the post-war period. In the absence of such direct inspections, British policy-makers were to remain largely reliant on institutional approval and inspection reports generated by Australian State officials—information which was often shaped by the particular interests and working relationships operating between State officials and voluntary societies on the ground. In one sense, reliance on reports from ‘regional’ inspectors reflected existing practice within the Home Office, in which civil servants undertaking administrative and policy work in its Children’s Department rarely, if ever, undertook any direct visits to local authorities and voluntary societies and based their decisions on reports from the Home Office Inspectorate.⁸⁰ It was only some years into the post-war period, however, before it became clear that Australian State inspectors might be interpreting institutional conditions for child migrants quite differently to standards used by Home Office inspectors.

‘THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF THE SCHEME... IS SOUND’: INTERPRETATIVE FRAMES AND POLICY-MAKING

The war years therefore heralded a significant shift in understanding in the Dominions Office of the need for better governance and more careful monitoring of the institutions to which child migrants were being sent in Australia. From the generally positive presumptions made about the delivery of child migration schemes in 1939, the notes by Stephenson and Parker in the winter of 1945 showed that there had been a significant move towards recognising the need for more careful monitoring of the training and after-care of child migrants, including an active role for the United Kingdom and Australian Commonwealth and State governments. Despite this change in attitude, a wider assumption of the beneficial effects of child migration remained.

⁸⁰ J.A.G. Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 371–81.

Given evidence of failings in the schemes that had gathered in the war years, the persistence of this assumption might seem remarkable. Although no settled view seemed to have been reached as to whether difficulties in Australia arose from poor selection of children in the United Kingdom, the Dominions Office had seen repeated evidence of problems within organisational structures, in the selection and oversight of staff, in standards of institutional care and after-care, in the range and quality of training given and of the experiences of child migrants when placed out with employers.

Despite this, the long-standing assumption of the benefits of child migration, reinforced through the past 30 years of reviews of empire settlement policy, provided a framework through which these problems were not seen as fundamentally undermining the value of this work. Rather, they were, perceived as temporary problems, arising from particular circumstances or the failings of particular individuals, rather than endemic in the system of child migration itself. Optimism for its future was thus maintained. Both the reports by Caroline Kelly and Walter Garnett had suggested that whilst there had been past failings at farm schools, these should be treated on the principle of 'what's past is past'. Such a willingness to write off past shortcomings made sense if it was assumed that the fundamental principle of child migration was sound and that such shortcomings need not be repeated in the future. Garnett's willingness to accept that there would inevitably be failures with individual child migrants again was understandable if the schemes were, in general, seen as beneficial. In this same spirit, policy-makers' concerns were eased by assurances from trusted figures that conditions for child migrants would improve and hope for the future of the work was renewed whenever failing managers of receiving institutions were replaced. Such confidence tended to be reinforced by British policy-makers' reliance on written inspection reports produced in Australia, whose authors (including State immigration officials with an institutional interest in maintaining assisted migration) provided their own interpretative gloss on the inherent value of these schemes. The systemic problems inherent in such a trans-national welfare initiative were therefore interpreted as contingent quirks in a policy in which those in government continued to keep their faith.

Such positive presumptions towards child migration work foreclosed more critical inferences that could obviously have been drawn from the material already at hand for policy-makers. No one in the Dominions Office or UK High Commission appears to have been led by the Fairbridge

file on Northcote to ask how such problems had persisted there for so many years without their knowledge. Attlee was happy to believe that things were reasonably well at the Christian Brothers' institutions despite the evidently limited value of McAdam's reports and the minimal information provided about child migrants' vocational training. Although confidence in Fairbridge's work appeared to have been shaken temporarily in the Dominions Office following its receipt of the Fairbridge dossier in May 1944, this was soon restored by the rebuttal of much of the dossier by the UK High Commission. Whilst Garnett's rejection of these criticisms was argued in some detail, there remained grounds for remaining unsure whether all was entirely well given that Garnett had not personally visited former Pinjarra residents placed out in work and had too easily attributed complaints to staff falling out with the Western Australian committee. The claim in his 1944 report that a substantial number of former residents had 'made good' by finding stable employment was not subjected to any critical scrutiny in the light of Green's claims of what former Pinjarra residents had told him about how they were marginalised and under-paid by the farmers who took them on. Although there was a hardening of opinion in the Dominions Office about the need for more regular government monitoring of institutions in Australia, this was seen as a safeguard for ensuring the effective delivery of a programme still assumed to have a useful social role. Generalised notions of the potential benefit of child migration thus provided the frame within which specific evidence of its failures was understood. As John Parker put it, where problems had clearly been established, these needed to be rectified so that public confidence in the value of this work was not lost. The reputation of this work—given that it was fundamentally a social good—needed to be protected.

The importance of the interpretative frames through which civil servants and politicians understood the information they received about child migrants in Australia can also be seen in terms of what they believed constituted problems in this context. The fundamental understanding of child migration as an opportunity for education and training that would fit a child for a productive life as an imperial citizen meant that evidence of shortcomings in this training in the Fairbridge dossier and reports by Kelly and Garnett aroused strong concern in the UK High Commission and Dominions Office. Child migration was, in Gordon Green's words, thus understood as a 'serious injustice to the individual' if it acted against the ability of the child to make some decision about their future career in accordance with their ability or led to British children effectively being

forced into menial roles that Australians were not prepared to take. The strength of feeling about this was evident in both Green's and Parker's willingness to withdraw support for children being sent to Fairbridge farm schools after the war unless training was broadened and allowed children greater scope to follow their interests and aptitudes. Similarly there was a consensus in the Dominions Office and the UK High Commission that if child migrants were to be assimilated effectively as citizens of British Dominions they could not live most of their childhoods in self-contained institutions with little contact with local communities, families or other children. By comparison, although Garnett recognised the need to address the problem of retaining appropriately skilled cottage mothers, there was little or no internal discussion within the Dominions Office of the likely effects on children of a high turnover of cottage mothers or the appointment of cottage mothers unsuited to providing appropriate emotional care for children. This emphasis on child migration as a form of vocational and civic training, and the comparative lack of emphasis on the quality of care of children, was to continue to be a feature of thinking about child migration amongst some supporters of empire settlement work well into the post-war period.

The other interpretative frame that proved significant for how child migration was perceived by British policy-makers was the wider movement towards greater political freedom for Britain's Dominions. In contrast to a backward-looking colonialism, valuing the autonomy of Australian governmental and voluntary bodies and trusting in their good-will to achieve appropriate standards seemed a far more progressive position to policy-makers in the Dominions Office and UK High Commission. Aversion to strict oversight and control from Britain was evident not only in responses to attempts by the Fairbridge Society in London to act as the effective centre of operations for the farm schools, but in Cross's suggestion that annual inspections to receiving institutions in Australia be re-cast more as friendly visits. It is interesting to note that whilst such discomfort with any hint of continuing colonial control from Britain may have been felt amongst some British civil servants and politicians, it was not necessarily shared by their Australian counter-parts. Reuben Wheeler—in 1944—was perfectly happy to propose that the British Government undertake formal inspections of institutions for child migrants.

Whilst presumptions about the inherent value of child migration, and the need to respect the autonomy of the Dominions, still fundamentally

underpinned British policy-makers' attitudes, the experiences of war-time failures had at least begun to make them more aware of the need to maintain some form of oversight of this work. The policy environment in which this was to take place, though, was about to change significantly as a result of the transformation of the structures of children's out-of-home care arising from the work of the Care of Children Committee led by Myra Curtis.

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‘Providing for Children... Deprived of a Normal Home Life’: The Curtis Report and the Post-war Policy Landscape of Children’s Out-of-Home Care

The *Report of the Care of Children Committee* was presented to Parliament on 13th September 1946.¹ Chaired by Myra Curtis, a retired senior civil servant and Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, the report constituted the most substantial review of the out-of-home care of children to have been undertaken in England and Wales for a generation. Neither the war-time coalition Government, nor the in-coming Labour administration of 1945, had originally intended that such a Committee of Inquiry be established. Although it was well-recognised within the Ministry of Health, the Home Office and the Board of Education that the fragmented legislative and administrative system that had evolved for children’s out-of-home care was inefficient and in need of reform, it was assumed that reform could be managed through a private governmental inter-departmental committee.² In 1944, however, a public campaign for an inquiry into standards of care in residential children’s homes, led by Marjorie Allen, created the political conditions in which the Labour Government felt obliged to create an over-arching review of children’s out-of-home care that would produce a public report relating both to its

¹ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, cmd.6922 (London: HMSO, 1946).

² On the process by which the Care of Children Committee came to be established, see Lynch, ‘Pathways to the 1946 Curtis report’.

administrative structures and to appropriate standards of care.³ Although its creation was formally announced by the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, in the House of Commons in December 1944, the membership of the Committee was not announced until the following February. By then, Morrison was under growing pressure to expedite the Committee's work with public attention further focused on failings in children's out-of-home care as the case of Dennis O'Neill, who was beaten to death by his foster-father, attracted sustained press attention.

The work involved in the production of what became known as the Curtis report was substantial. Between March 1945 and June 1946, the 17-member committee received oral and written evidence from representatives of 51 governmental, professional and voluntary organisations and 18 individuals, as well as a further 31 written memoranda from other interested organisations and individuals.⁴ In addition to collating comprehensive statistics about the different forms of out-of-home care in which children were currently accommodated, and the various public authorities responsible for their care, members of the Curtis Committee also divided into sub-groups that undertook inspection visits to 451 residential institutions and an unspecified number of foster homes across 41 counties. On the basis of these inspections, the Committee claimed that from a total of 124,900 children currently 'deprived of a normal home life', they had been able to form direct impressions of the standards of care for around 30,000. In addition, members of the Committee reviewed children's case files and institutional inspection reports held by relevant public bodies both to compare these with their own impressions and to establish the extent to which systems of inspection were proving effective in identifying and changing poor standards of care.

Recognising the limitations of what could be learned from single visits to institutions, the Committee acknowledged that they were unlikely to become aware of specific cases of children being subjected to harsh or cruel treatment by staff and that their exposure to individual institutions lacked sufficient depth to identify any by name for particular praise or

³ On Allen's campaign, see Lynch, 'Pathways to 1946 Curtis report', pp. 28–32. As well as being well-known to the UK Government, cuttings from *The Times* of correspondence relating to Allen's campaign were also held on file by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Post-War Reconstruction in the context of policy discussions about the resumption of post-war child migration (see NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589).

⁴ See indexes of memoranda and transcripts of oral evidence in TNA: MH102:1451a and 1451d.

censure. Nevertheless, this range of underpinning evidence made it possible for its report to identify what the Committee understood to be a wide range of examples of both current good and bad practice in child-care, as well as the shortcomings of a fragmented policy framework.⁵

The report's recommendations played a central role in shaping the administration, ethos and oversight of post-war out-of-home care for children and were substantially implemented in the 1948 Children Act. These recommendations were not wholly innovative and in many respects reflected changes to administrative structures which had been proposed in an internal report produced by the Ministry of Health in 1944.⁶ Its critiques of impersonal residential children's homes, discussed in more detail later in this chapter, also reflected views already familiar to those responsible for different aspects of children's out-of-home care in the Ministry of Health, Home Office and Board of Education,⁷ and, as Marjorie Allen's campaign illustrated, had wider public and professional support.⁸ The fact that the Curtis report built on well-established ideas meant that it was able to exert considerable influence over both the policy framework for children's out-of-home care in the emerging post-war welfare state and public understandings of appropriate standards of child-care. Although some of

⁵ For a summary of the Committee's methodology in relation to these inspection visits, see *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 2, 100–105, 397; on the point about single visits being unlikely to identify any children 'being cruelly used in the ordinary sense' see para 418.

⁶ See *The Break Up of the Poor Law and the Care of Children and Old People*, TNA: MH102/1378.

⁷ Similarities between the 1944 Ministry of Health report on 'The break-up of the Poor Law' and the *Report of the Care of Children Committee* are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. By 1944, staff in the Home Office, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education also recognised that there was widely held critique of the psychologically damaging effects of impersonal institutional care for children and of the benefits of forms of care more closely resembling family life, such as adoption or foster care ('Draft of a Joint Memorandum which it is suggested might be submitted to the Reconstruction Committee by the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education', 30th November 1944, MH102/1161).

⁸ See, for example, the leader article in *The Times*, 31st July 1944, p. 5, which noted the 'virtual unanimity with which children's magistrates, child psychologists, education experts, workers in, and officers responsible for, children's homes' had written, supporting Allen's concerns. The letters pages of *The Times* over the previous month actually suggested more diverse views, but *The Times* editorial sought to emphasise the views of those supporting Allen from these professions over the views of correspondents from voluntary organisations who had sought to defend current standards in residential care.

the report's aspirations were slow to be realised—notably in terms of improving levels of training for child-care workers and the proportion of children placed in foster care rather than residential institutions⁹—it nevertheless shaped the policy landscape of children's out-of-home care in the early post-war period, providing the background within which child migration to Australia was resumed, managed and contested.¹⁰

THE CURTIS REPORT AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRUCTURING OF CHILDREN'S OUT-OF-HOME CARE

The *Report of the Care of Children Committee* focused on three main areas of concern: the administrative structures for government oversight and management of the out-of-home care of children, the ethos of child-care needed to provide an appropriate compensation for the lack of a family home, and the framework of staffing, training and inspection needed to ensure that these standards were maintained. With some minor variations, these concerns and key recommendations were also shared by the *Report of the Committee on Homeless Children*, or Clyde Report, that had submitted its review of the out-of-home care of children in Scotland at the end of July 1946.¹¹

⁹ See, for example, a survey showing that in 1964, 61% of local authority child-care officers were still not fully qualified, with significant regional variations in the proportion of local authority staff with suitable training (J.A.G. Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 364). In some cases, Children's Officers were still in post in the early 1960s because of their more general administrative abilities rather than any specific qualifications in child-care, the quality of Children's Officers was uneven and local authority child-care could still be influenced by elected members of Children's Committees having more direct involvement in children's case-work and other operational matters than was appropriate for their experience and training (*ibid.*, pp. 383–6, 392).

¹⁰ On the process and significance of the Curtis report, see also Gordon Lynch, 'Pathways to the 1946 Curtis report and the post-war reconstruction of children's out-of-home care', *Contemporary British History*, 34(1), 2019, 22–43; Gladys Kammerer, *British and American Child Welfare Services* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962); Janet Fink, 'Inside a hall of mirrors: residential care and the shifting constructions of childhood in mid-twentieth century Britain', *Paedagogica Historica*, 44(3), 2008, 287–307.

¹¹ *Report of the Committee on Homeless Children*, cmd.6911 (London: HMSO, 1946), see also Holman 'Fifty years ago' and John Stewart, 'The most precious possession of a nation is its children: the Clyde Committee on homeless children in Scotland', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 21(1), 2001, 43–66. The main differences in the recommendations of the Clyde and Curtis reports were that the former did not see a need for an inspectorate to be distinct from existing community-based professionals (such as medical practitioners and min-

In relation to issues of administration, Myra Curtis had already been told on appointment to her role that her Committee was not to make any specific recommendations about which central government department should assume primarily responsibility for children's out-of-home care.¹² Whilst observing this request (even though most of its members appear to have favoured giving this responsibility to the Home Office),¹³ the Committee's report nevertheless made the more general case for administrative reform by observing the failings of the current fragmented system within central government. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that the central government department responsible for a child's out-of-home care varied depending on the particular legal measure through which they had come into care.¹⁴ Some institutions could receive multiple inspections from different public bodies if children had been placed in them through different statutory processes, whilst some children (e.g., in endowed voluntary children's homes not reliant on public subscriptions or children aged nine and above who were boarded out for payment) received no inspections at all.¹⁵ Of particular concern to the Committee were fragmented local authority structures, where it found evidence of both inconsistent systems and of poor standards of care and record-keeping resulting from dysfunctional relationships between different committees within the same local authority.¹⁶ These problems became even more acute in the

isters) who currently undertook inspections in Scotland and was more prepared than Curtis to accept the value of institutional care for children (whilst recognising the need for skilled staff in this role and the avoidance of institutional rigidity). The Clyde report made no reference or recommendation explicitly relating to child migration.

¹² See 'Homeless Children' memorandum, 1st April 1946, TNA: MH102/1387.

¹³ See 'Memorandum to Secretary of State', 13th December 1946, TNA: MH102/1393 on private contact between a Home Office official with Henry Salt, and Rosling to Allen, 24th October 1946, MRC: MSS.121/CC/3/7/1-17.

¹⁴ Lynch, 'Pathways to the Curtis report'; F.M.G. Willson, *The Organization of British Central Government, 1914-64*, 2nd edition (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968).

¹⁵ See, for example, *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 98-99. Examples of correspondence between the Home Office and Ministry of Health about their separate inspection interests in a single institution can be found in TNA: MH102/1399 in relation to the Middlemore Emigration Homes.

¹⁶ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 106-120, 123, 129-35. On occasion there even appeared to be some confusion between committee members about what system of local inspection was being discussed (see, e.g., Notes of a meeting held at the Home Office, Whitehall, SW1, on Monday 26th March 1945, pp. 15-17, TNA: MH102/1451D/C1).

cases of children, like Dennis O'Neill, who were boarded out by one local authority in private homes within another local authority. The lack of consistent notification of the 'receiving' local authority meant that children could sometimes be placed in foster homes by the 'sending' authority that the 'receiving' authority had previously rejected as unsuitable. Such failings arising from fragmented structures in local authorities posed an even greater risk to vulnerable children, the Committee concluded, than those in central government.¹⁷

One of the most important emphases in the report's recommendations was therefore a series of measures to develop a simpler and more comprehensive administrative structure within central and local government.¹⁸ The lead department in central government was to take responsibility not for all aspects of the lives of children 'deprived of a normal family home', but specifically for those aspects of their lives where the lack of this family environment needed to be compensated in some way. This department would establish a central register of all children's residential institutions and have the right both to inspect these and to de-register them if their standards of care were unacceptable. It would set out consistent standards for boarding out to be adhered to by all local authorities and voluntary organisations. This lead department would also develop an inspectorate with sufficient resources both to undertake direct inspections of residential institutions and to oversee local systems of inspections for boarded out children. These recommendations were subsequently implemented after the Labour Cabinet decided, in March 1947, to make the Home Office the lead department for children's out-of-home care in England and Wales, and the Home Department within the Scottish Office, the lead department for Scotland.¹⁹ This led both to the creation of Advisory Councils on Child Care in England and Wales, and in Scotland, to offer guidance to their respective Secretaries of State on how their new

¹⁷ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 438.

¹⁸ Recommendations about these administrative structures occur in *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 423–26, 429–34, 438–46, 452, 454, 472, 475, 492.

¹⁹ See 'Cabinet, Responsibility for the Care of Deprived Children', Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, 12th March 1947, TNA: MH102/1393, and 'Extract from Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet 29(47)', held on Tuesday 18th March 1947, TNA: MH102/1393. The exception to this new administrative arrangement was with the Ministry of Pensions retaining responsibility for children who had having lost one or both parents during the war, and who were regarded as special cases with regard to public sympathy and support (Cunnison to Barlow, 12th March 1945, TNA: MH102/1381).

responsibilities might be discharged in line with current thinking on child-care. An expanded Home Office Children's Department Inspectorate with regional offices across England and Wales was also established.

The Committee could have recommended that responsibility for the out-of-home care of children would be allocated to just this one central government department, following Lady Allen's suggestion that local authorities be removed from this work altogether.²⁰ However, it rejected this approach as likely to generate too impersonal a system. Instead it made a series of recommendations about local authorities' continued involvement, working within the wider framework set down by the central government department. Recognising that a number of local authorities were already moving towards having a single committee responsible for the out-of-home care of children, the Curtis Report recommended that this take the form of newly created Children's Committees. Through these new committees, local authorities would discharge a more integrated and expanded range of duties, including taking responsibility for all children currently maintained under the Poor Law, the Children and Young Persons Act, the Public Health Act and the Adoption Act. In addition, the local authority would no longer be able to refuse the duty of care for a child placed with it by a juvenile court under the Children and Young Persons Act. The local authority would maintain oversight of all residential children's homes within its area and continue to develop and manage its own residential institutions. It would also maintain oversight of foster homes within its area, keep a register of approved foster homes, ensure regular inspections of these and develop new policies to encourage registration of privately arranged foster placements. The work of these Children's Committees was to be led by the newly created posts of Children's Officers, comparable in standing to local Directors of Education and Medical Officers of Health, and who would become the *de facto* guardian of all children placed in the local authority's care. Communication over the transfer of children between local authorities would also be improved by responsibility for this also being placed on the respective Children's Officer of each authority.

²⁰ Home Office staff consulted with Myra Curtis in early 1946 to check her views about Lady Allen's proposal that all local government involvement in children's out-of-home care should be ended. Curtis indicated that the Committee definitely favoured retaining local authority involvement and that Curtis personally preferred the model of having children's officers appointed at a comparable level to directors of education (Note, 15th February 1946, TNA: MH102/1385).

Whilst the report offered significant continuity with ideas already discussed in Government,²¹ there was one policy initiative amongst these that Curtis did press forward despite significant opposition. The Ministry of Health's internal report on *The Break-Up of the Poor Law* had suggested the creation of Children's Committees within local authorities and the creation of Children's Officers as senior local government posts subsumed to neither health nor education. This was an idea to which Curtis herself was also strongly committed.²² These ideas were highly controversial, however, particularly for those who were used to local authority education officers and committees taking leading roles in children's out-of-home care (e.g., through their responsibility for oversight of children placed under 'fit person' orders with local authorities through the Children and Young Person's Act).²³ Before the Committee's report had even been submitted to the Home Secretary, Ellen Wilkinson, the Minister for Education had already raised objections on this issue during discussions at the government's inter-departmental committee on the break-up of the Poor Law.²⁴ After the publication of the Curtis report, Wilkinson continued to press the case for local education committees being given responsibility for children's out-of-home care, finding support in this from the National Union of Teachers, the Association of Educational Committees, some local authorities and Lady Allen herself.²⁵ In the face of this opposition, the Home Office and Ministry of Health found themselves less willing to

²¹ See Ministry of Health, *The Break-Up of the Poor Law*; see also 'The future of the homeless child: outlines of a suggested scheme', 11th March 1946, TNA: MH102/1387, which sets out proposals that are very close to the eventual recommendations of the Curtis Report.

²² See the summary of Curtis's views on this in Maxwell to Pimlott, 14th March 1946, TNA: MH102/1386.

²³ See, for example, *Report by Sir Walter Monckton*, pp. 4–5, although Monckton also demonstrated local variations to this with LEA responsibility for boarded out CYPA children being delegated to Public Assistance Committee in Shropshire as they had more experience of over-seeing foster placements.

²⁴ 'Minutes of meeting on Thursday 18th July', recommendation 26(g), TNA: MH102/1390.

²⁵ See 'Draft Cabinet Paper, Administrative responsibility for the care of deprived children', Memorandum by the Minister of Education, 19th November 1946, TNA: MH102/1390. File MH102/1395 is a collection of papers relating to the NUT's intervention in this debate. See also 'The Curtis Report – A.E.C. Memorandum', *Times Educational Supplement*, 16th November 1946, TNA: MH102/1396, and 'Some criticisms of the Curtis Report, by Lady Allen of Hurtwood', MRC: MSS.121/CC/3/7/1-17. This view was not shared by everyone associated with the field of education, however, and an editorial in the *Times Educational Supplement* supported the creation of separate Children's Committees working under the

give outright backing to the Curtis recommendation on the separation of Children's Committees from local authority education or health committees, suggesting instead that local authorities could be allowed to make whatever administrative arrangements for over-seeing children's out-of-home care they felt appropriate, subject to final approval by the Home Secretary.²⁶ It was only as discussions of the implementation of the Curtis report continued in spring 1947, that Arthur Greenwood, the Lord Privy Seal, was able to argue successfully in Cabinet that Children's Committees should be established as separate entities from health or education committees. He was able to secure this agreement on the grounds that the special issues relating to the out-of-home care of children should not be subsumed within committees that had responsibilities for all children living in that area.²⁷ Although the creation of Children's Committees and Children's Officer posts formed part of the distinctive legacy of the Care of Children Committee, the implementation of this continued to face opposition in some local authorities for a number of years afterwards.²⁸

CRITICISMS OF EXISTING STANDARDS OF CARE

In addition to its attention to administrative structures, the Curtis report also had much to say about approaches to child-care on the basis of the hundreds of visits to residential institutions and foster homes that its members had undertaken. Whilst its recommendations about the future administration of the out-of-home care of children played a pivotal role in shaping the architecture of post-war children's services, its vignettes about standards of care arguably played a more important role in shaping public reception of its findings. In its call for urgent government action on the

oversight of the Home Office ('Who Shall be the Guardian?', 16th November, 1946, *Times Educational Supplement*, TNA: MH102/1396).

²⁶ See 'Report of the Curtis Committee, Memorandum by the Minister of Health', 23rd November 1946, 'Children Deprived of a Normal Home Life, Memorandum by the Home Secretary', 21st November 1946, and 'Note to Secretary of State', 11th November 1946, all TNA: MH102/1392. See also papers discussed at a Cabinet sub-committee meeting on the Curtis Report, 12th December 1946, in TNA: CAB130/15.

²⁷ 'Cabinet, Responsibility for the Care of Deprived Children, Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal', 12th March 1947, TNA: MH102/1393. Curtis herself later re-stated her support for this idea having been consulted again by the Home Office, see Memorandum to Secretary of State, 27th March 1947, TNA: MH102/1396.

²⁸ Roy Parker, 'Getting started with the Children's Act: What do we learn?', *Adoption and Fostering*, 35(3), 2011, 17–29.

report's recommendations, *The Spectator*, for example, quoted at length from one of its most critical accounts of a children's ward in a workhouse in which Committee members had found:

an eight-year-old defective child who sat most of the day on a chair-commode... There were two babies with rickets clothed in cotton frocks, cotton vests and dilapidated napkins, no more than discoloured cotton rags. The smell in this room was dreadful. A premature baby lay in an opposite ward alone. The ward was very large and cold. The healthy children were housed in the ground-floor corrugated hutment which had once been the old union casual ward... They slept in another corrugated hutment in old broken iron cots, some of which had their sides tied up with cords. The mattresses were fouled and stained... The children wore ankle-length calico or flannel frocks and petticoats and had no knickers. Their clothes were not clean. Most of them had lost their shoes... Their faces were clean; their bodies in some cases were unwashed and stained.²⁹

Whilst adopting a more measured tone than *The Spectator*'s call to action, an editorial in the *Economist* also commented that the report's accounts of standards of care in residential homes had clearly demonstrated the need for 'a complete change of attitude on the part of many local government officials and others... and a great many more of the right sort of workers'.³⁰

The report itself was, in some respects, more cautious than this in its general statements about standards of care. With apparent reference to Lady Allen's campaigning work based mainly on second-hand testimony, it observed that its own direct research into current practices in residential homes 'has given us a firmer basis for conclusions about actual present day conditions'.³¹ On the basis of this, the Committee found little direct

²⁹'The Government and the Children', *The Spectator*, 22nd November 1946, TNA: MH102/1396, see also *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 136–156. In this respect, the Curtis report mirrored criticisms of the conditions for the care of children in workhouses made in the *Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission: Part I, the Break-Up of the Poor Law* (London: National Committee to Promote the Break-Up of the Poor Law, 1909), pp. 83–135.

³⁰'Common-sense on Curtis', *The Economist*, 30th November 1946, TNA: MH102/1396. On accounts of children's experience of residential care in the inter-war period, see, for example, Laura Tisdall, '“That was what life in Bridgeburn had made her”: reading the autobiographies of children in institutional care in England, 1918–46', *Twentieth Century British History*, 24(3), 2013, 351–75.

³¹*Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 418.

evidence of very serious cases of 'neglect or harsh usage' in children's homes, suggesting that accounts of abusive forms of discipline that had recently received public attention might be a reflection of conditions ten years ago or more, and that a 'gentler and more sympathetic' approach was more pervasive now. Serious allegations had been made about some institutions that Committee members judged, on the basis of their visits, to be excellently run. On this basis, the report refrained from censuring any single organisation for its standards of care. However, it noted that even in well-run organisations that had admirable policies, individual staff 'may develop harsh or repressive tendencies or false ideas of discipline' and that effective systems of inspection needed to be maintained to ensure appropriate forms of care were being delivered.³² The report's account of the workhouse children's ward cited at length by *The Spectator* was, in fact, very much the exception rather than the rule, and whilst there were considerable variations in standards across residential institutions, 'by far the greater number of Homes were, within the limits of their staffing, accommodation and administrative arrangements, reasonably well run from the standpoint of physical care, and in other ways the child has more material advantages than could have been given to him in the average poor family'.³³

The report's strongest criticisms were aimed less at the basic standards of physical care provided to children, however, and far more at the unsuitability of the physical and emotional environment of many institutions for supporting children's development. Underpinning its comments on what it saw as both good and bad standards of child-care, the report placed a consistent emphasis on the importance of nurturing children's individuality with particular attention to the emotional and imaginative dimensions of their inner lives. To become emotionally healthy and socially capable adults, children needed security of affection, opportunities to develop their individuality through play, and an environment which provided them with a sense of belonging, self-respect and a growing awareness of personal responsibility. This required continuity of staffing; the ability of staff to give children individual attention; suitable spaces and materials for play including access to gardens and green outdoor spaces; environments that were light, colourful and visually stimulating; and the ability for children to acquire and keep personal possessions. The ultimate goal of children's

³² *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 417.

³³ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 418; see also paras 170, 180/181, 189, 242, 243.

out-of-home care should be their successful integration into wider society as adults. To this end, children needed opportunities to interact with others in activities and settings beyond the residential institution or foster home. Maintaining their bonds with siblings, and where possible other relatives, also constituted an important element of both their present sense of emotional security and their future sense of belonging. Their capacity to act as responsible and autonomous future citizens also needed to be nurtured through them being given regular pocket money that they could learn to manage, save and spend, respecting others' private property, learning how to undertake domestic chores (to the extent that might reasonably be expected of any child of their age), and acquiring relevant skills of self-caring. The latter, for girls, included the motivation and ability to care for and repair their own clothes. Discipline of the child should be understood in the context of the emotional significance that it would have for them in terms of their wider psychological development. In this context, the report stated that enuresis should be managed as an issue that disclosed underlying problems with a child's sense of emotional security, and not a matter for which a child should be humiliated or punished.³⁴

In too many cases, residential homes run by both local authorities and voluntary organisations failed to provide these conditions, with children instead being 'brought up by unimaginative methods, without opportunity for developing their full capabilities and with very little brightness or interest in their surroundings'.³⁵ In some cases, local authorities were found still to be using old barrack-style accommodation for children, because they judged that to leave them unused would constitute too great a cost for local rate-payers. Management of large numbers of children in such environments inevitably led to a regimented and impersonal ethos. Even in cases where children were placed in grouped homes (i.e., a number of 'cottage homes' gathered on a single site), the Committee found instances where the high numbers of children accommodated in each 'cottage' precluded anything like individual attention. A number of examples were found of both larger institutions and grouped homes in which children lacked outdoor spaces for play other than empty, walled asphalt yards, and had either no indoor playrooms or playrooms that were dark, drab

³⁴ See, for example, *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 207, 208, 214, 217, 247, esp. 427, 485, 493.viii; on failures to administer discipline with appropriate emotional sensitivity, or the punitive or stigmatising treatment of enuresis, see paras 261–63, 265.

³⁵ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 418.

and equipped with little or nothing by way of play materials. Insufficient play materials could lead to children fighting over or breaking what little they had, leading staff to complain that they could not be trusted to look after them. Poor play resources were not simply attributable to war-time deprivation however, the Committee noted, as varying levels of provision could be observed in different residential homes run by the same local authority. In many homes run by local authorities, children were unable to keep personal possessions because no lockers were provided. In homes run by voluntary organisations where lockers were provided, children were often not allowed to have personal possessions in their bedrooms which consequently lacked 'comfort and individuality'.³⁶

Individual attention to children was made harder by low ratios of staff to children, caused often by difficulties in recruiting even untrained staff and in some cases by over-crowding of children. Whilst some staff were praised for their evident ability to create a sense of personal relationship with children in their care, the report noted that this was often difficult to achieve either because of lack of time, lack of training, or lack of staff aptitude for this work. In the case of many voluntary organisations, non-managerial staff often had training of a specialist religious nature rather than training relevant to the care of children. The challenges of recruiting staff—often because of the poor conditions of employment—meant that it was rarely possible to appoint staff on the basis of their suitability to work with a particular age group of children. Lack of individual attention to children marred not only their time in residential institutions (including their educational attainment), but planning for their lives beyond it. Vocational training and after-care were found often to pay little attention to the specific interests of the individual child. Training and after-care were found to be very poor in around two-thirds of all children's homes run by voluntary organisations, with a third simply directing boys in their care to manual labour and girls to domestic work.³⁷ In this respect, standards at many residential homes in Britain were not significantly better than those

³⁶ See, for example, *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 141, 159, 195, 208, 234–36, 252–4.

³⁷ See *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 151, 169–71, 173, 176–79, 222, 237, 270, 329, 331; on recommendations regarding more individualised attention in after-care see paras 502–07. On the pressures and difficult working conditions of female staff in residential child-care, see also Katherine Holden, 'Other people's children: single women

which the Dominions Office and UK High Commission had come to view critically at Pinjarra.

Low levels of staffing in some institutions could also lead to an over-reliance on children's domestic labour to maintain the running of the institution. High expectations could also be placed on children's labour in residential homes in which there was a culture of spotlessness, which the report described as a 'fetish of tidiness and high polish'. Whilst children in well-run residential homes might be expected to undertake a total of half an hour of domestic work per day, in other institutions Committee members noted that children were doing to do up to four hours per day. It was observed that this was not always because of under-staffing and that filling children's time with domestic work was sometimes used as a means of controlling their behaviour. Such over-use of children's domestic labour was problematic, the Committee noted, not only for its effects on their ability to concentrate on schooling, but on their capacity to cultivate their individual interests and imaginative lives through free leisure time. In terms of their formation as future citizens, the report also commented that over-exposure to domestic chores would have the deleterious effect of reducing children's sense of intrinsic value in tasks they would need to undertake when running their own households.³⁸

Whilst standards varied considerably, many residential homes also failed to provide children with sufficient contacts and experiences outside of the institution that would support their sense of social belonging and their future social integration. Siblings were commonly separated from each other when accommodated in grouped homes in which individual cottage homes were segregated on lines of age or gender. Whilst the principle of maintaining relationships between siblings appeared to be recognised more often in the context of boarding out, in practice foster placements continued to be made in which siblings were split up and had varying degrees of on-going contact. Although some voluntary homes fared better in this regard, staff often made little effort to maintain contacts between children in their residential homes and relatives in the wider community, assuming that these relatives would have little interest in these children. Involvement with wider community activities were, if they happened at all,

and residential childcare in mid-20th century England', *Management and Organizational History*, 5(3-4), 2010, 314-330.

³⁸See *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 186, 188, 190-91, 194, 238, 240, 247, 250.

found to take place in structured ways that gave children little opportunity to build significant relationships beyond the institution. Informal friendships with children outside the institution were rarely supported or encouraged. Lack of prams in some residential nurseries suggested that infants accommodated in them rarely left the institution. Although some homes run by voluntary organisations had instituted 'aunts and uncles' schemes in which children would be enabled to visit or stay with local families, this could lead in some instances of favouritism in which better opportunities were given to children that receiving families considered 'attractive'. The geographical isolation of some residential homes obviously hindered children's opportunities for constructive engagement with the wider community. Constraints on children's external contacts could be particularly acute in residential homes run by religious organisations in which the children's schooling also took place within the same institution. Pocket money in some homes was paid at such a low level or pooled to spend on group activities so that children had little experience of personal management of their own money.³⁹

Whilst claiming to be cautious about claiming any causal relationship, the Committee nevertheless commented that children in institutions in which they received little individual attention either craved attention from visitors (including complete strangers) or seemed listless and withdrawn. Concern was particularly expressed that children in many homes run by voluntary organisations appeared to become progressively more withdrawn as they grew older. Social skills that might be expected of children at different ages were, in such homes, often missing. By contrast, the report observed that children who benefitted from individual attention were far more likely to interact with visitors in engaged and spontaneous ways, or indeed show complete indifference to visitors if they had no interest in interacting with them. Children raised in more attentive environments were found to be more likely to engage with adult visitors on the assumption that adults would show interest, sympathy and the capacity for a common sharing of amusement. Such varying outcomes for children appeared to be more the result of the quality of staff relationships with children than institutional policy with examples found, for instance, of

³⁹ See *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 161, 167, 199, 201–03, 206, 213, 250, 256–58, 375.

children's homes run by the same authority offering very different emotional environments.⁴⁰

'CHILD PSYCHOLOGY' AND THE ETHOS OF CHILD-CARE

The Committee's emphasis on the emotional conditions for healthy child development can be understood in the context of growing interest in the inter-war period in the psychology of children.⁴¹ This included theoretical developments in psychoanalytic, behavioural, educational and developmental psychology, as well as initiatives including the child guidance movement, play centres, progressive education and a growing interest in new psychological understandings of child-care amongst both professionals and the wider public.⁴² Although some histories of child-care have situated the influence of an awareness of the psychological importance of the child's relationship with the parent primarily from the late 1940s onwards (often in association with the work of John Bowlby),⁴³ these inter-war developments indicate earlier origins than this.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ See *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 210–11, 239, 241, 264.

⁴¹ The Committee's concerns about the unsuitability of workhouses as environments for the care of children, about which Myra Curtis herself had particularly strong feelings, also had a clear precedent in the kinds of criticisms made in the *Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission*, pp. 83–211.

⁴² See the excellent discussion of these developments in Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1–16, 109–39. See also Christina Hardyment, *Dream Babies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Harry Hendrick, *Narcissistic Parenting in an Insecure World: A History of Parenting Culture 1920s to Present* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016). See also Maureen McAleer, *Freedom to Grow: Sister Marie Hilda's Vision of Child Guidance* (Glasgow: John S. Burns & Son, 1981) on the opening of the first Catholic child guidance centre in Scotland in 1931.

⁴³ See, for example, Eileen Youngusband, *Social Work in Britain: 1950–1975, A Follow-Up Study, Vol. 1* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), pp. 36–7.

⁴⁴ For example, Susan Isaacs, *Childhood and After: Some Essays and Clinical Studies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), pp. 208–36, cites a range of pre-war and war-time studies demonstrating the importance of family bonds for children's physical, emotional and cognitive development. Of the 159 studies cited by John Bowlby in his influential report for the World Health Organisation on the psychological effects of separation from home and parents, *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, 55 had been published before the end of 1945 and 19 of which had been published before 1939. Examples of pre-war and war-time literature on child psychology used in early post-war child-care training courses include J.R. Rees, *The Health of the Mind* (London: Faber & Faber, 1929); Mary Burbury, Edna Balint and Bridget Yapp, *An Introduction to Child Guidance* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1945);

Care should be taken, however, in drawing precise lines of influence between this growing field and the Committee's claims about the conditions for children's healthy psychological development.⁴⁵ Child psychology was not a homogenous movement, but riven by conflicts over theoretical concepts, clinical practices and the roles of different professional groups as well as by complex relationships between 'elite' and popularised uses of psychology.⁴⁶ The Committee's emphasis on the nurturing of children's individuality through stable, warm and attentive care reflected particular approaches within the wider field of child psychology, very different to behavioural emphases on discipline, order and the careful management of affection.⁴⁷ These ideas can be traced to the growing interest in the meaning of children's emotional worlds and the significance of parental, particularly maternal, bonds for children that were associated with psychoanalysis. Care again needs to be taken in tracing this

D.E.M. Gardner, *The Children's Play Centre* (London: Methuen & Co, 1937); Rogerson, C.H., *Play Therapy in Childhood* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939); Charlotte Buhler, *From Birth to Maturity* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1943); Emanuel Miller, *The Growing Child and Its Problems* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1937); (ed) John Rickman, *On the Bringing Up of Children – By Five Psycho-Analysts* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1936), Phyllis Blanchard, *The Child and Society* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1928), and W. David Wills, *The Barns Experiment* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945) and (ed.) Cyril Burt, *How the Mind Works*, 2nd edition (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1945). Psychological models used within these ranged across behavioural, psychoanalytic and eclectic approaches. Muriel Payne's *Oliver Untwisted* (London: Edward Arnold & Co, 1929), which gave a fictionalised account of more empathic approaches to child-care in a poor law residential institution, remained popular throughout this period and had, by 1949, gone into its seventh reprinting.

⁴⁵ For example, the account of the influence of psychological theory on post-war child-care in Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 151–77, fails to take sufficient account of the ways in which the popularization of child psychology re-shaped psychological theories or the use of 'child psychology' as a placeholder term rather than reference to particular theorists, or the wider assumptions about gender, class, domesticity and the formation of the civic subject within which ideas of child psychology were taken up. Rose, like others (see Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society*, p. 56) also places more emphasis on the importance of John Bowlby's work on early post-war child-care policy than is warranted (see notes 107, 114 below).

⁴⁶ See, for example, Stewart, *Child Guidance in Britain*, pp. 123–4, 132–7 on conflicts over whether child guidance clinics should always be run by psychiatrists rather than psychologists, as well as disagreements over clinical practice such as Donald Winnicott's dismissal of the value of play therapy. Also Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, *passim*.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Michal Shapira, "'Speaking Kleinian": Susan Isaacs as Ursula Wise and the Inter-War Popularisation of Psychoanalysis', *Medical History*, 61(4), p. 532.

psychoanalytic influence. Although Melanie Klein's work on the psychodynamic processes of early infancy attracted much attention in the psychoanalytic world, popularised forms of psychoanalysis bore little relation to her vivid technical language for the conflicts of the infant's internal object relations. In part, this reflected a view amongst some psychoanalysts that their theoretical concepts and clinical practices should be reserved for the relationship between analyst and patient and could not simply be transferred, in diluted form, to the ways in which parents or teachers might engage with children.⁴⁸ As a consequence the psychoanalytic interest in a child's emotional world and formative relationships did not lead so much to the direct transmission of specific psychoanalytic ideas to other social and professional contexts as contribute to a wider cultural 'psychological mindedness' in which the importance of a child's emotional security and individual development were recognised. The term 'child psychology', as it appeared, for example, in *The Times* correspondence in response to Lady Allen's campaign or in public reception of the Curtis report, therefore referred less to a specific body of psychological theory but functioned as a placeholder term for a more general understanding of the role of care and attention to the individual child in promoting their personal and civic development.

A key figure, in developing this wider public interest in child psychology, was Susan Isaacs, whose influence was more widespread and well-established by the time that the Curtis Committee sat than either Donald Winnicott or John Bowlby.⁴⁹ Isaacs was a pioneering female psychoanalyst,

⁴⁸ Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 130–31.

⁴⁹ See Philip Graham, *Susan Isaacs: A Life Freeing the Minds of Children* (London: Karnac, 2009); Michal Shapira, "'Speaking Kleinian": Susan Isaacs as Ursula Wise and the Inter-War Popularisation of Psychoanalysis', *Medical History* 61(4), 2017, 525–47. Unlike Isaacs, Bowlby's work was generally not referenced in reading lists for child-care training courses in the early post-war period, unsurprisingly given his more popular work was not published until the 1950s (see, e.g., training course reading lists in TNA: MH102/1420 and TNA: MH/1435). Even then the reception of Bowlby's work was far from being universally supportive (see, e.g., Riley, *War in the Nursery*, pp. 106–8; Pat Thane & Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 96–8). Although Winnicott was more recognised than Bowlby as an authority in the psychological development of children by the time the Committee sat (see, e.g., war-time papers later published in his 1957 collected papers, published as *The Child and the Family* and *The Child and the Outside World*), his influence on the Committee's conclusions appears to have been very limited (see n.114) and his more influential work again post-dated the Committee's report. Isaacs's own memorandum to the Care of Children

having joined the British Psychoanalytical Society only two years after its formation in 1919. From 1924 to 1927, Isaacs was appointed head of the Malting House School in Cambridge, an experimental initiative in progressive education, and during that period became increasingly committed to Kleinian theory.⁵⁰ After leaving the school, Isaacs went on to write two popular books based on that experience, *The Nursery Years* and *The Children We Teach*, which were widely read by parents, nurses and teachers. She also began to write for a number of magazines aimed at middle-class parents as well as a weekly advice column (under the pseudonym 'Ursula Wise') for the magazine, *Nursery World*.⁵¹ Through the 1930s, Isaacs continued to publish a number of books for professional and public audiences and develop her influence on educational professionals through her appointment as head of the newly created Department of Child Development within the Institute of Education at the University of London. Her professional activities included her leadership of a major study of the early war-time evacuation of children from London to Cambridge, to which the Curtis Committee member, Sibyl Clement Brown, and John Bowlby, also contributed.⁵²

Isaacs's work exemplifies the complex relationship between psychoanalysis and popular conceptions of 'child psychology'. Despite her early attachment to the emerging psychoanalytic movement in Britain, her psychological ideas were initially also significantly influenced by Piaget's theory of child development as well as John Dewey's work on progressive education. Although her theoretical interests became increasingly Kleinian, she rarely made any direct reference to technical Kleinian language in her

Committee cited a wide range of psychological and clinical studies which provided evidence of better developmental and emotional outcomes for children raised within the family, or 'family-like' environments, than for those living in institutions. None of this literature included work by Winnicott. Isaacs did make reference to Bowlby's study of the family backgrounds of 44 juvenile thieves, but this was only 1 of 12 studies she cited with her memorandum giving more prominence to the work of Charlotte Buhler, Jean Piaget and (implicitly) Melanie Klein.

⁵⁰ Case material from her time at the Maltings was written up by her in Susan Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth in Young Children* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930) and *Social Development in Children* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1933).

⁵¹ For edited collections of these columns, see Susan Isaacs, *Troubles of Children and Parents* (London: Methuen & Co, 1948) and Caroline Vollans, *Wise Words: How Susan Isaacs Changed Parenting* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁵² Susan Isaacs, ed., *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey: A Wartime Study in Social Welfare and Education* (London: Methuen & Co, 1941).

public work and instead tried to find accessible ways of referring to Kleinian concepts such as the inherently aggressive instincts of the infant.⁵³ Similarly, at other points, her work was far less concerned with the explicit communication of psychoanalytic concepts than a psychoanalytically inflected rejection of children's exposure to behaviourism or other forms of rigid moral training. As she wrote in 1929 in *The Nursery Years*:

If we can really get into our bones, so to speak, the sense of slow growth of the infant's mind through these various bodily experiences, and the knowledge that each phase has its own importance in his development, we are more likely to give him [sic] the gentle care and patient friendliness which he most needs to carry him on successfully from one phase to the next, and to avoid the harsh and hasty methods which may make him fear and hate us. For this is the surest way to bind him in his infantile ways. The child who goes in fear of scoldings and naggings cannot expand freely and happily into social life. He is thrown back on the infant's mode of gaining love by his helplessness, or driven into the blind protest of rage and tantrums. It is now common knowledge among humane parents that fear of whippings or severe punishments has this evil effect, but it is not yet widely realised that the fear of carpings and harsh criticism may be just as paralysing to the sensitive child. He can most easily learn to fit himself into the social world if he is free from undue anxiety about possible mistakes, and has a sense of affectionate unity with those around him.⁵⁴

As letters to her Ursula Wise advice column also showed, Isaacs's role for her readers was not simply one of conveying technical information about child development but in giving practical advice in how to practise a 'humane' form of parenting with which many of those readers already sympathised.⁵⁵

Although the Care of Children Committee received evidence from Isaacs, Winnicott and Bowlby, the nature of their influence on the Committee's final conclusions was also complex. Given the Committee's interest in the conditions necessary to compensate a child for the loss of a 'normal' home life, it is unsurprising that these three specialists in the psychology of children's emotional development should have been invited to present evidence to it. Other current aspects of psychology, such as

⁵³ See, for example, Isaacs, *The Nursery Years*, pp. 81–83; also Isaacs, *Childhood and After*, pp. 217–224.

⁵⁴ Isaacs, *The Nursery Years*, p. 31.

⁵⁵ Shapira, "Speaking Kleinian", pp. 535–47.

intelligence testing, which became increasingly important in other policy contexts relating to children,⁵⁶ fell beyond the Committee's concerns.

It was far from the case, however, that the Committee were simply persuaded by the strength of psychological insight or research presented by these witnesses. When Winnicott appeared before the Committee with the then psychiatric social worker, Clare Britton, nearly all of the questions focused on Britton's experience of managing a group of hostels for children in Oxfordshire.⁵⁷ Winnicott was not asked any questions about his psychoanalytic work, and in a rare exchange focusing on Winnicott's wider opinions, he presented a far more accepting view of the use of corporal punishment for children in care than that eventually taken in the Committee's report.⁵⁸

Bowlby's evidence to the Committee focused primarily on his claims of the association of separation from a mother-figure for a pre-school child and that child's later delinquency, based on a study he had undertaken before the war at the London Child Guidance Clinic.⁵⁹ However, Bowlby appeared quite diffident about generalising from this study, noting the need for more research and his lack of further work with children during the war. His evidence, in several respects, ran with the psychological grain of the Committee's Report. He emphasised the importance of continuity of care with a foster-mother and of the emotional demands this could place on carers, noting that early separation from an established foster-mother could be as traumatic for a child as separation from the birth mother. He also recognised the value of continuity of care within the wider family in the case of the loss of the mother, saw value in the use of play therapy, and supported the use of trained workers in assessing and inspecting foster carers. However, Bowlby's caution in straying beyond his own research led him to say less about the importance of emotional bonds for older children or even to express a clear view on the relative merits of institutional versus foster care. His view that children were best removed from unmarried mothers in order to provide them with a greater

⁵⁶ See, for example, Thomson, *Psychological Subjects*, pp. 110–13.

⁵⁷ See TNA: MH102/1451D/C48. The Committee had previously received a copy of an article co-authored by Britton and Winnicott for the New Education Fellowship on lessons learned from these hostels, TNA: MH102/1451B/69, which included the claim that a stable home life with accepting parents was a key basis for children's psychological development and those children who lacked this proved harder to maintain in evacuation billets.

⁵⁸ See also Winnicott's memorandum on corporal punishment, TNA: MH102/1451B/96.

⁵⁹ See TNA: MH102/1451B/22 and MH102/1451D/C18.

opportunity for a stable family life was one which the Committee's final report clearly did not share. Whilst the Committee seemed sympathetic to his psychological insights, these were largely reduced to basic, core principles. As Myra Curtis asked him at one point, 'Your prescription, if I may so call it, of affection and stability is really what all the children with whom we are concerned need, is it not?'

Isaacs's evidence before the Committee focused primarily on a memorandum she had submitted to it⁶⁰ advocating for the use of foster care rather than institutional care, on the basis that the former was more likely to provide the consistency of individual attention, flexibility and opportunities for wider social activities essential for children's healthy development.⁶¹ The significance of family bonds, or life in a 'family-like environment', for meeting children's essential needs was emphasised as was the developmental importance of children's access to play materials and opportunities for broader forms of learning through engaging in domestic tasks.⁶² Myra Curtis in particular pressed Isaacs on whether institutions were absolutely unable to provide these conditions, and whether trends in institutional care were already taking more progressive directions. In response, Isaacs clarified that she did not wish to proscribe the use of institutional care altogether—'a first class institution can be better than an indifferent or even second class foster home... I do not want to idealise the foster home'. She also acknowledged that effective inspection of children's care might be easier in well-run institutions than in trying to supervise a larger number of dispersed foster homes. However, her views on what would constitute tolerable institutional care were substantially

⁶⁰ See TNA: MH102/1451B/33. This memorandum was reprinted in full in Susan Isaacs, *Childhood and After*, pp. 208–36.

⁶¹ See TNA: MH102/1451D/C32.

⁶² Much of the psychological literature cited by Isaacs on the importance of children's affective bonds with parents focused particularly on the developmental importance of these for pre-school children. Isaacs pointed to evidence in the Cambridge Evacuation Study that older children similarly experienced considerable distress at parental separation (*Childhood and After*, p. 209), although Thomson has argued that the Cambridge Study gave this issue relatively less attention than subsequent studies of evacuation which indicated that many children appeared to fare better if kept with their families even if they remained in areas under bombardment (Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, pp. 59–64). This suggests that the principle of the importance of family bonds throughout childhood, supported by the Committee's report, may have been as much influenced by the experience of evacuation as psychological and psychoanalytic studies of the significance of emotional relationships with parents for children's early years' development.

reflected in the Committee's eventual findings. Isaacs argued that if institutional care were to be used it should be organised around groups of no more than 10–12 children (reflecting the old, 'large' family), should not be segregated around age or gender, should engage children in appropriate domestic tasks whilst not allowing this to impede on their education or leisure time and should use staff with some training in child psychology. The tendency of large institutions to fall into an 'institutional atmosphere' and fail to provide a 'simple, friendly, homely atmosphere' had to be 'carefully guarded against'. As her evidence progressed, Curtis and Isaacs concurred on the central point in the Committee's final conclusions that appropriate institutional care might be needed in cases where there were insufficient numbers of the 'best foster homes'.

Isaacs's, and to a lesser extent Bowlby's, broad psychological perspectives were therefore accepted by the Committee. This acceptance arose, however, not simply because the Committee deferred to their professional experience, but out of the apparent desire of at least some Committee members to make sense of what they had already observed by that stage from their inspection visits to residential institutions. As the Committee's final report made clear, their experience of undertaking these inspections had made them uncomfortably aware of the emotionally unsettled behaviour they had experienced from children in many large residential institutions. Their public hearings with Isaacs and Bowlby included interactions in which Committee members tried to make sense of what they were observing in these visits:

Curtis: I should like to put a different point, arising of our recent experience when we visited a very large Children's Home in which young children were concentrated, not in what you would call the cottage home but in a large house of two units, with thirty in each. Those children were merrily playing and talking in their play-hour and when we went into the room they were obviously most anxious for any kind of sign of physical affection; they wanted to handle one and touch one and press one's hand and climb all over one. Do you think this is a normal symptom?...

Bowlby: Again I feel that we would like more information, but I would like to stress that these chronic delinquents, if you meet them, very often appear normal, lively, even affectionate children. If you meet them, you say "What a nice child", but it is all superficial; in some curious ways there are absolutely no roots to their relationships.⁶³

⁶³TNA: MH102/1451D/C18.

Harford: May I ask what your main tests of whether an institution is satisfactory... when you go to see it? Might I ask whether there is any significance in whether the children particularly the younger ones, come very much to the visitor, anxious to touch and handle bags and anything belonging to the visitor...? What would you advise people to look out for?

Isaacs: ...It is awfully difficult to lay down a rule, but I would judge much more by the way [emphasis original] in which the child came—if he looked greedy, unsatisfied, anxious or frightened, or came in a way you felt meant there was something missing in his life.... You can tell when people are feeling happy and free and active and interested. I think that is a very important indication.⁶⁴

The Committee's views on the appropriate ethos of child-care can therefore be traced not simply to an abstract interest in principles of 'child psychology', nor to deference to the work of particularly well-regarded psychologists or clinicians, but to a desire amongst at least some Committee members to make sense of children's behaviour that they had found disturbing.⁶⁵

The influence of ideas from 'child psychology' on the Committee's report was also refracted through wider assumptions about gender, class and domesticity. Whilst it is doubtless the case that the notion of the mother's bond with a child took on particular public significance in the context of women's post-war withdrawal from the work-place,⁶⁶ gendered understandings of adult child-care roles were already well-established by then⁶⁷ and had operated concurrently with women's increased involvement in the work-place during the war years. These assumptions firmly placed primary responsibility for the child's emotional care, and attention to their internal world, on the mother rather than the father. In the round-up of letters written in response to Lady Allen's, published in *The Times* on 1st August 1944, one correspondent commented that vulnerable children 'needed, above all else, one person throughout the day whom they could

⁶⁴ TNA: MH102/1451D/C32.

⁶⁵ See also Youngusband, *Social Work in Britain, Vol. 1*, p. 39.

⁶⁶ Riley, *War in the Nursery*, pp. 80–196; though see Thane, 'Family life and "normality"', pp. 208–9, on the more complex patterns of encouragement and discouragement for different groups of women to participate in the post-war work-place.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Jane Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1909–1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c.1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); also Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

trust and on whom they could depend: in other words, someone who would act in the capacity of a mother'. Another argued that children's homes should be run by a 'man and wife', not just a house mother, whilst adding the qualification that 'I do not suggest that the man should make it his life work, any more than any father makes the care of his children his only interest'.⁶⁸ Such gendered assumptions about women's inherent suitability for the emotional care of children were reflected in the Committee's view that Children's Officers were more likely than not to be women and that evidence of an improvement in quality of inspection reports could be attributed to the recent employment of more female inspectors.⁶⁹ Whilst its Interim Report on *Training in Child Care*, recognised that 'house fathers' should be expected to be interested in, and understanding of, children in his care, it also commented that 'his domestic work will lie on the side of out-of-door and recreational activities rather than the physical care of the child'. Training for men in this role should focus on areas such as gardening, poultry keeping, care of grounds, and household maintenance, in place of content for women on cooking, housework and care for clothing.⁷⁰

If concepts of 'child psychology' were over-laid on existing assumptions about the domestic and work roles of men and women, the same was also true of structures of class. Based on the evidence it received, including its own inspection visits, the Committee took the view that the majority of direct child-care being provided through foster care or cottage homes was by working-class women.⁷¹ With this in mind, it recommended that training for house mothers should avoid being 'too academic'. Content on child development should be 'non-technical' (i.e. devoid of abstract psychological theory), and would form just one element of the training alongside practical household management, childhood health and disease, children's play, wider forms of social service provision and basic record-keeping. Some attention should also be given to content that would improve 'the general standard of culture', developing house mothers' taste in areas such as literature, music, art and drama.⁷² Training that

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 1st August 1994, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para.414, 444; see also paras 477, 478.

⁷⁰ *Training in Child Care*, paras 10, 14. On the more complex realities of gendered labour within the home, see Claire Langhamer, 'The meanings of the home in post-war Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40(2), 2005, 341–62.

⁷¹ See, for example, *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para. 465.

⁷² *Training in Child Care*, paras 4, 14.

explicitly engaged with theories of child psychology was to be reserved for middle-class workers, such as senior managers or boarding-out visitors.⁷³ Whilst it was hoped that this psychological ethos would permeate through the provision of children's out-of-home care, for the working-class women undertaking this work this ethos was generalised to the broadest principles of recognising the child's individuality and providing stability of care and affection.

The notion that emotionally healthy development through childhood was important for an individual's formation as a citizen was also situated in an emphasis on the civic importance of domestic life.⁷⁴ As noted above, the Committee's report did not see out-of-home care as simply needing to support the child's emotional development, but as needing to provide them with the essential skills and attitudes to manage their own household in the future. The underpinning assumption of the social importance of the home, structured around a stable family life, was itself an expression of demographic trends established by the 1930s towards reductions in both early parental deaths and the average number of children within a family.⁷⁵ This notion of the smaller, nuclear family as a social norm continued to be consolidated demographically in the early post-war period. In this context the home was seen as an important building block for society which functioned not simply as a place of privacy and leisure, but of various forms of emotional and physical labour and acts of self-responsibility upon which decent communal life rested. As one respondent to a Mass Observation interview put it, in 1943, 'a happy home and family life is the bulwark of a Nation'.⁷⁶ Parents, too, increasingly came to recognise the home as a place in which greater investment could be made in the care and development of their children, such that their children could go on to enjoy more

⁷³ *Training in Child Care*, para 23; *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, Appendix 1, Section 4.

⁷⁴ On the concept of the child as constructed in relation to concepts of adult citizenship in this period, see, for example, Laura Tisdall, 'Education, parenting and concepts of childhood in England c.1945 to c.1979', *Contemporary British History*, 31(1), 2017, 24–46, and Laura King, 'Future citizens: cultural and political conceptions of children in Britain, 1930s-1950s', *Twentieth-Century British History*, 27(3), 2016, 389–411.

⁷⁵ Pat Thane, 'Family life and "normality" in post-war British culture', in (eds) Richard Bessel & Dirk Schumann, *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 193–210.

⁷⁶ Langhamer, 'The meanings of the home', pp. 344–5; see also Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945–64* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

opportunities and a better standard of living than they had experienced themselves.⁷⁷

This underpinning ethos, of broad notions of 'child psychology', refracted through assumptions about gender, class and domesticity, was to inform the report's view on forms of out-of-care for children that should now be prioritised.

A FUTURE BEYOND RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

If the Committee's recommendations about administrative structures reflected ideas that had already been circulated in government, its recommendations about appropriate forms of out-of-home care appear to have gone significantly beyond what was being considered in draft policy statements within the Ministry of Health and Home Office. Whilst the Government anticipated recommendations addressing standards in residential care, the *Report of the Care of Children Committee* presented a set of conclusions that sought to move child-care provision significantly away from residential children's homes altogether. Whilst recognising that residential institutions could provide better standards of material care than in family homes that were significantly affected by poverty, it concluded that the lack of individual attention, unimaginative and unstimulating environments, and problems with staffing of such institutions meant that their standards of emotional care could be far worse. Although a child's family home might not be a good one in all respects, it might nevertheless provide more in terms of affection, individual interest, support and belonging than an impersonal residential home. As a consequence, the presumption should be that a child should be kept within the family home (including remaining with unmarried mothers), wherever that home could be made 'reasonably satisfactory'. To remove the child from that home, the report concluded, implied a very serious responsibility on those organisations involved to ensure that the substitute home provided a better, 'indeed much better', standard of care.⁷⁸

With this in mind, the Committee presented a hierarchy of forms of substitute care which, if managed with appropriate safeguards, might provide the social and emotional benefits that would be associated with the 'normal' family home. The most preferable option, they argued, was

⁷⁷Thane, 'Family life and "normality"', p. 207.

⁷⁸*Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 427, 447.

adoption, in which the child would have new parents and the adoptive parents would have full rights and responsibilities, becoming the ‘real parents so far as human nature allows’. The Committee recommended improving existing safeguards by ensuring that all children placed for adoption had a probationary period of at least three months (and not usually more than six months) during which time they would fall under the supervision of the relevant local authority’s Children’s Officer. In cases where an adoption placement proved to be unsatisfactory, juvenile magistrates should be empowered to place the child with the local authority as a ‘fit person’, other than adoptions arranged by recognised adoption societies who were obligated to take children back during their probation period if their placement failed.⁷⁹

The second best option, in the Committee’s view, was boarding out.⁸⁰ The report recognised that foster placements (as the O’Neill case had demonstrated) had the potential to cause acute unhappiness for children, were vulnerable to vagaries of circumstance affecting the individual foster home and could have problems that were not always easily observable on superficial inspection. Nevertheless, the Committee concluded, ‘we found in the children in foster homes we visited almost complete freedom from the sense of deprivation which we have described among the children in Homes’. In one of its strongest censures, the report particularly deplored what it regarded as the perverse policy of one unnamed organisation, which boarded children out as infants before taking them back from settled foster placements once they reached school age.⁸¹ Whilst anonymised in the report, this appears to refer to the work of the Catholic Child Welfare Council, on behalf of whom George Craven had given evidence that children over school age were taken from Catholic foster homes into institutions both to create space for more children in those foster homes

⁷⁹ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 448–59.

⁸⁰ Whilst the Curtis Committee, and the Home Office Children’s Department, emphasised the value of boarding out purely in terms of the social and emotional well-being of the child, it was also substantially cheaper than residential care. In the post-war period the Parliamentary Select Committee on Estimates periodically encouraged the Home Office to increase the proportion of children boarded out on grounds on economic efficiency (see Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, pp. 393–4).

⁸¹ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, para 451.

and to ensure institutional protection of those children's Catholic faith and practice.⁸²

Given the potential value of this form of substitute home, the Committee expressed concern that of the total of 125,000 children they had identified as living in different forms of out-of-home care, only 31,000 of these were boarded out, and of these only 11,000 had been placed in foster homes by a public authority. Divergent policies within voluntary organisations were also noted, with Dr Barnardo's Homes and the Church of England Children's Society supporting boarding out, whilst the National Children's Home and Catholic Child Welfare Council averse to doing this as a matter of policy. Even so, those voluntary organisations that supported boarding out in principle were still found to be maintaining most of their children in residential institutions.

Local authorities were therefore encouraged to embark on initiatives to identify new foster homes. Significant expansion in foster-care provision should not be made, the Committee warned however, at the expense of approving homes that were less than satisfactory. Prospective foster homes that were a source of concern for any reason should not be used because rigorous supervision and the ability to remove the child were insufficient in mitigating the emotional harm caused to a child through being put through one, or indeed several, failed placements. Stronger and more consistent safeguards for boarding out should be established by having a single set of boarding-out regulations produced by the lead central government department for all placements made both by local authorities and by voluntary organisations. Children's Officers should maintain an informal register of approved foster homes for use by their own or any other local authority as well as any voluntary organisation. Homes on this list should be subject to supervision from boarding-out visitors, working under the direction of the Children's Officer, who would be provided with new training specific to that role. Suitably trained workers could also undertake this role for voluntary organisations. Such safeguards would, the Committee hoped, constitute a significant improvement on current weaknesses in the quality and frequency of visits to boarded-out children, particularly by volunteer workers. The lack of more cases nationally such as Dennis O'Neill's was, it noted, probably more an indication that

⁸² Evidence of Catholic Child Welfare Council, 26th May 1945, TNA: MH102/1451D/C14, p. 6.

boarding-out care was generally good rather than that existing inspection systems were adequate in detecting problems.⁸³

Whilst the Committee hoped that these proposals would lead to greater use of boarding out, it also recognised that any such expansion would take considerable time to accommodate the numbers of children currently ‘deprived of a normal home life’. Although the introduction of new family allowances and social insurance were likely over time to reduce the numbers of children needing out-of-home care, the Committee anticipated that a third option—institutional care—would still be needed for at least the next 10–15 years and beyond.⁸⁴ The Committee recognised that large residential homes could have advantages for children, including greater recreational facilities, a wider social circle within which to form friendships, more activities and ‘often the society and friendship of more cultivated and educated people’. However any such benefits were outweighed by their impersonal atmosphere that left children continually feeling ‘the lack of affection and personal interest’. To mitigate against this, institutional care would best be delivered through children being looked after by a house mother, or house mother and father, in small units. Whilst the model of the ‘scattered home’ (first pioneered by public assistance officers in Sheffield) was best placed to offer individualised care and access to the wider community, the Committee also recognised that this entailed risks of isolation for the house mother. As an alternative ‘grouped homes’ might also be used. The numbers of children accommodated in these units should be kept low, however, to allow as ‘family-like’ an atmosphere to develop as possible. The maximum number of children in any individual home should not exceed twelve, and would ideally be around eight, with a staff ratio of one house mother per ten

⁸³ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 420–22, 460–75; on existing problems with boarding out inspections, see paras 349, 371–2, 376, 394. Home Office staff had acknowledged in oral evidence to the Committee that they had no central guidelines on the criteria by which foster homes should be selected, and although they had the right of inspection of individual foster homes this was in practice wholly delegated to local authorities. The Home Office had no comprehensive overview about local authorities’ approach to inspections, although had the view from inspections of a substantial number of local authorities that the suitability of those undertaking inspections varied significantly (Notes of a meeting held at the Home Office, Whitehall, SW1, on Monday 26th March 1945, TNA: MH102/1451D/C1).

⁸⁴ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, paras 157/8, 161, 163, 462, 476–96.

children. Children would be mixed by age and gender within these homes, allowing siblings to remain together, and would ideally remain in the care of the same house mother until school-leaving age at 15. A national programme of specialist training for house mothers had already been proposed in the Interim Report published by the Care of Children Committee back in March 1946,⁸⁵ which the Committee recommended be introduced alongside appropriate support and conditions of employment. The residential environment for children should also have all the qualities—homeliness, space for private possessions, materials for reading and play—that the Committee found lacking in many larger institutions. It should also provide children with regular pocket money, good opportunities to develop interests and friendships outside of the home and on-going contact, where not harmful, with other relatives. Whilst local authorities should look to develop their own scattered and grouped homes in appropriate ways, there was also no reason why children should not be placed in voluntary homes that offered suitable care. Indeed, there could be value in continuing to maintain a 'friendly rivalry' between voluntary and public provision.

THE CARE OF CHILDREN COMMITTEE AND POST-WAR CHILD MIGRATION

The attention given to the issue of child migration in the Curtis report was far briefer than other forms of children's out-of-home care and was entirely unaddressed in the Clyde report. In the case of the Curtis Committee, this appeared to reflect its assumption that any post-war resumption of child migration would only take place on a relatively small scale, an assumption reinforced by the limited evidence that the Committee received on this issue.

Of those voluntary organisations who involved themselves in post-war child migration work, only the Fairbridge Society and Dr Barnardo's Homes presented any formal evidence on this subject to the Committee. Neither the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society (soon to become the Church of England Children's Society), the National Children's Home, nor the Catholic Child Welfare Council, gave any indication of

⁸⁵ *Training in Child Care: Interim Report of the Care of Children Committee*, cmd.6760 (London: HMSO, 1946).

their interest in developing this work in their evidence.⁸⁶ For several of these organisations no plans were being developed to resume their migration work until the Australian Commonwealth Government had confirmed its arrangements for financial support. By the time this confirmation was given, in August 1946, the Committee's work had been completed. The decision by the Catholic Child Welfare Council, in June 1946, to support the resumption of child migration to Catholic institutions in Western Australia also post-dated its oral evidence to the Committee the previous month,⁸⁷ although the confidential nature of the Council's June meeting makes it unclear that disclosures about its migration plans would have been made to the Committee at that point anyway.

A memorandum submitted to the Committee from Dr Barnardo's Homes set out the history of its child and juvenile migration work, focusing particularly on its work in Canada, as well as the recent policy context and a brief note on its future plans.⁸⁸ Parental consent, it acknowledged, was being given less frequently for the emigration of children because of parents' 'very natural desire not to be separated [from their children], and secondly, the knowledge that the type of child suitable for migration is precisely the type of child for whom [our] Homes are able to find excellent openings in technical trades in this Country'. The decreasing population in Britain, continued parental reluctance, greater job opportunities in technical trades and lack of encouragement from overseas Dominions meant that the post-war resumption of child migration faced significant challenges. Nevertheless, Barnardo's claimed that the clear benefits of their past migration work both to the children involved and to the countries receiving them meant that its resumption should be encouraged. The memorandum stated that Barnardo's Council intended its future migration work to be concentrated in Ontario, Canada, following its long-established practice of boarding out younger children and placing juveniles in employment. The work envisaged was to be on a small scale, with groups of only 30 children and juvenile migrants sent to Canada per annum, similar to the numbers of juvenile migrants sent by the charity to Canada through the 1930s.

As a summary of its organisational history and future plans, the memorandum said curiously little about the charity's child migration work to

⁸⁶The Waifs and Strays Society did make a very brief reference to their past migration work in their written memorandum to the Committee, TNA: MH102/1451B/14.

⁸⁷TNA: MH102/1451D/C14.

⁸⁸TNA: MH102/1451B/123.

Australia. Although it noted that Dr Barnardo's Homes had sent children both to the farm schools at Picton and Pinjarra, no reference was made to Empire Settlement Act funding for their child migration work to Australia, including the loan from the Dominions Office towards the costs of developing the Picton site. The lack of any reference to future plans for resuming child migration to Australia also appeared to be a significant omission as Dr Barnardo's Homes General Superintendent, Mr P.T. Kirkpatrick, had been corresponding with the Dominions Office since June 1944 on various administrative matters relating to the Picton farm school on the assumption that it would continue to receive more children from Britain after the war.⁸⁹ Kirkpatrick had also indicated to an Australian Commonwealth Government sub-committee in the spring of 1944 that it would be possible, with three months' notice, to fill the Picton farm school (accommodating 100 boys and 50 girls) to capacity again.⁹⁰ Given that Kirkpatrick was the most senior administrator of Dr Barnardo's Homes at that time and led the Barnardo's group that gave evidence to the Curtis Committee,⁹¹ it seems unlikely that the omission of the intention to send children to Australia in this memorandum would have happened simply through error.

A memorandum from the Fairbridge Society was also sent to the Curtis Committee following a fact-finding visit on behalf of the Committee to Fairbridge's London office by Letitia Harford.⁹² Harford, who was well aware of Fairbridge's work partly through her sister who had previously

⁸⁹ See Kirkpatrick to Wiseman, 8th June 1944, 17th December 1945, and 6th March 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M996/1. See also Kirkpatrick to Hart, 26th April 1945, ML: MLMSS9025, Box 13, enclosing a draft letter to the Australian High Commissioner from Barnardo's Chairman of the Council indicating that they hoped to resume sending children to New South Wales but that given greater resistance to child migration in view of demographic trends in Britain this would be made easier if their child migrants could be given better resources and opportunities in Australia in future. Reference is also made to Barnardo's extensive plans for sending children to Australia in the post-war period in 'Australia as Home for War Orphans', *Daily Telegraph*, 3rd November 1943, and 'Plans for British Orphan Migrants', *Canberra Times*, 4th November 1943, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716, and its General Manager wrote a public letter offering Barnardo's help when the Australian Commonwealth Cabinet announced its plans for the immigration of 50,000 children in the immediate post-war years ('Child Immigrants', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8th December 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716).

⁹⁰ See Report on Child Migration (British and white alien), 17th March 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5.

⁹¹ See TNA: MH102/1451D/C11.

⁹² See Note for Mr Green, 5th October 1945, ULSCA(F): H6/2/14.

worked for Fairbridge, was briefed on the concerns which the London office had about its ability to ensure that proper standards of care were maintained for children it had sent to Australia. In a note on this meeting, Harford was said to have recognised clearly ‘how serious a matter it is that “London” has responsibilities which *in law* (emphasis original) it is powerless to honour’. Harford also reportedly told a member of staff at the London office that the Curtis Committee had also received two critical reports about child migration work, one from an unnamed ‘responsible source’ and the other from Miss Tempe Woods, whose criticisms of Pinjarra had formed an important part of Fairbridge’s dossier which had been submitted to the Dominions Office. These critical accounts were never published by the Curtis Committee, or publicly acknowledged, and formed part of the wider body of information received by the Committee that was treated as informal and confidential material. It was also noted during this visit that there had initially been problems in securing adequate monitoring of CORB children who had been placed out with families in Australia and that this had only been put in place after successful lobbying of the Commonwealth Minister of the Interior by social workers and State child welfare officers.

On the basis of this briefing, Harford recommended that Fairbridge submit a formal memorandum outlining its future plans and the powers it had to achieve them. This memorandum, submitted to the Curtis Committee in January 1946, briefly outlined the extent of the involvement of the Australian Commonwealth and State governments in approving the selection of children for migration and providing a financial contribution to their maintenance until school-leaving age.⁹³ It noted, however, that there was no compulsory government inspection of the farm schools, nor of after-care, by the Australian authorities. As a consequence, the sending of children to incorporated bodies in Australia, over which the London society had no control, meant that these children ‘forfeit the shelter of what is (and further, will be) provided by the State

⁹³ Memorandum, 25th January 1946, ULSCA(F): H6/2/14. Fairbridge also provided the Committee with a copy of a memorandum originally submitted by them to the Dominions Office on 25th January 1945 which described both the rationale and working methods of the organisations, and re-iterated its view of the need to ensure appropriate protections for child migrants in Australia (see copies in both ULSCA(F): H6/2/14 and TNA: DO35/1139/M1118/1). The Dominions Office was also notified that this memorandum had been shared with the Curtis Committee (see Green to Bottomley, 24th May 1946, TNA: DO35/1139/M1118/1).

in the United Kingdom for the care and protection of homeless children and are then yielded to the discretion of the Executive Committees of the Incorporated Fairbridge Societies in Australia'. Given that these overseas committees effectively functioned as 'closed societies', there was no way of ensuring that members who could provide appropriate advice and oversight of standards of care were appointed to them. This had proven particularly problematic, it was noted, in relation to conditions at Pinjarra.

The aspiration, the memorandum argued, should be to ensure that standards of care for British child migrants were no worse overseas than they would have been had they remained in the United Kingdom. As it observed:

Recently, agreement has been reached between the United Kingdom Government and the Australian Commonwealth Government whereby migrants will not forfeit by their translation to Australia their rights of pensions and other social benefits which would have been theirs had they remained in the United Kingdom. We suggest that child migrants in like manner should find in Australia no less effective State protection, no lower standard of education, no inferior opportunity for work and equipment for citizenship than they would have enjoyed had they remained in this country—in the category of "children without families" in the care of voluntary societies answerable to the State.

Part of the solution to this, it was suggested, might be for the UK Government to approach the Australian Commonwealth Government to ensure that the guardianship of child migrants was transferred to the Commonwealth Government on their arrival in Australia. Whilst this would not necessarily ensure that the local committees in Australia would necessarily always maintain proper standards, such a measure would at least mean that the farm schools in Australia would be subject to more formal government scrutiny to ensure 'care and protection no less effective than that ensured for children in this country and also for Australian children'. The assumption that standards of care expected in future by the state would be comparable in both the United Kingdom and Australia was, as the following chapters will demonstrate, to prove unwarranted.

After receiving this memorandum, the Curtis Committee invited representatives of Fairbridge's London office to give evidence at a full meeting

of the Committee on 14 May 1946. Mr Kirkpatrick was also invited to appear on behalf of Dr Barnardo's Homes, whose main hearing before the Committee had taken place eight months before Fairbridge's memorandum had been received. This meeting which, according to Fairbridge's records, focused particularly on sensitive issues around the governance of child migration programmes, appears to have been conducted as a closed session.⁹⁴ Whilst Kirkpatrick reportedly emphasised that Dr Barnardo's Homes in the United Kingdom exercised effective control over its branch in New South Wales and that this arrangement had proven to be an 'unqualified success', Gordon Green and his assistant, Miss Hart, reiterated the concerns set out in Fairbridge's memorandum. They were also questioned by Committee members who were evidently concerned that after-care be conducted in an effective way.

Despite having some knowledge of problems associated with child migration work, the Curtis Committee did not seek any evidence from the Dominions Office, concentrating instead only on the four government departments which it knew to have any form of statutory responsibility for children's out-of-home care—the Ministry of Health, the Home Office, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Pensions. Whilst it had some understanding of problems both with standards and systems of governance, it does not appear to have been aware of the extent to which the Dominions Office had already invested financially in farm schools in Australia nor of the aspiration of the Australian Commonwealth Government (known within the Dominions Office) for child migration to be significantly increased when assisted migration resumed. In the absence of this knowledge, the Committee appears to have seen child migration as a relative minor challenge compared to the other problems it sought to address with regard to children's out-of-home care.

There was no consensus amongst the Committee's members as to whether child migration was, in principle, an appropriate form of welfare intervention. John Litten had already visited Australia before the outbreak of war to explore possibilities for child migration and took a leading role in establishing the child migration work of the National Children's Home after the war.⁹⁵ Other

⁹⁴ See 'Curtis Committee – Care of Children, 14th May 1946', ULSCA(F): H6/2/14. This session is not listed in the index of transcribed hearings at TNA: MH102/1451D.

⁹⁵ See 'Children as migrants: proposals for Australia', *Argus*, 2nd November 1937, & *Melbourne Herald*, 'Home Principal's Visit', 1st November, NAA.C: A436/1945/5/85; Boucher, *Empire's Children*, pp. 180–3.

Committee members, such as John Moss (who was to undertake an informal review of receiving institutions in Australia in 1951/2) and Letitia Harford, do not appear to have had any absolute objections to child migration. Given the Committee's rather tepid support for the resumption of child migration, it appears other members were less convinced of its value. There was, however, clear concern amongst the Committee about what they had learned from Fairbridge about the challenges of maintaining appropriate standards of care for child migrants in Australia. The single paragraph in its report that dealt with child migration re-iterated Fairbridge's point about the need for parity of treatment for children whether remained in the United Kingdom or were migrated overseas. As the report put it:

We understand that organisations for sending deprived children to the Dominions may resume their work in the near future. We have heard evidence as to the arrangements for selecting children for migration, and it is clear to us that their effect is that this opportunity is given only to children of fine physique and good mental equipment. These are precisely the children for whom satisfactory openings could be found in this country, and in present day conditions this particular method of providing for the deprived child is not one that we specially wish to see extended. On the other hand, a fresh start in a new country may, for children with an unfortunate background, be the foundation of a happy life, and the opportunity should therefore in our view remain open to suitable children who express a desire for it. We should however strongly deprecate their setting out in life under less thorough care and supervision than they would have at home, and we recommend that the arrangements made by the Government of the receiving country for their welfare and after care should be comparable to those we have proposed in this report for deprived children remaining in this country.⁹⁶

This statement was condensed into the report's single recommendation explicitly concerning child migration that 'the emigration of deprived children should be subject to the condition that the receiving Government makes arrangements for their welfare and supervision comparable to those recommended in this report'.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ *Care of Children Committee Report*, para 515.

⁹⁷ *Care of Children Committee Report*, recommendation 61.

The qualification that the Curtis report placed on the resumption of child migration work was significant. By recommending that unaccompanied children only be sent overseas if standards of care were comparable to those it had advocated for future implementation in Britain, the Committee set out expectations that were to be repeatedly referred to in policy and operational discussions about this work in the coming years. As noted in the previous part of this chapter, progress in implementing the report's recommendations in existing areas of child-care provision such as staff training and greater use of foster care was gradual in many parts of England and Wales. However, the proposed resumption of child migration was effectively regarded by the Committee as a new initiative on which the report's standards could be imposed from the outset. What was to prove more difficult in the coming years was the process of establishing measures that would effectively ensure that these Curtis standards would be maintained for child migrants.

The Committee's concern about ensuring appropriate standards of care for child migrants was subsequently taken up in the 1948 Children Act. In s. 17(1–3) of the Act, local authorities were empowered to seek the migration of any child in their care—thus extending existing powers available to a local authority who served as a 'fit person' for a child under the terms of the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act (s.84:5). As had been the case under the 1933 Act, the migration of a child in the care of the local authority was, however, subject to the consent of the Home Secretary, with the 1948 Act noting that:

The Secretary of State shall not give his consent under this section unless he is satisfied that emigration would benefit the child, and that suitable arrangements have been or will be made for the child's reception and welfare in the country to which he is going, that the parents or guardian of the child have been consulted or that it is not practicable to consult them, and that the child consents,

[p]rovided that where a child is too young to form or express a proper opinion on the matter, the Secretary of State may consent to his emigration notwithstanding that the child is unable to consent thereto in any case were the child is to emigrate in company with a parent, guardian or relative of his, or is to emigrate for the purpose of joining a parent, guardian, relative or friend. (s.17:2)⁹⁸

⁹⁸ The second paragraph of this clause was interpreted differently in Scotland compared to the rest of the United Kingdom (see Opening comments of Senior Counsel to the Inquiry, Transcript of Day 42, *Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry*, pp. 40–43). Whereas in

The Act also empowered the Secretary of State to introduce regulations controlling the emigration of children by voluntary organisations, which would require those organisations to provide satisfactory information about their operational approach to child emigration as well as the arrangements made for the reception and welfare of children overseas (s.33:1–2).

The 1948 Act therefore appeared to create a statutory framework for child migration in keeping with the recommendations of the Curtis Committee. However, in reality, the measures introduced in the Act, and their subsequent interpretation by civil servants, created significant variations in the processes through which children came to be emigrated from the United Kingdom. Whilst the 1948 Act empowered the Home Secretary to introduce regulations for the child migration work of voluntary organisations, such regulations were never introduced in the post-war period in which these schemes actually operated.⁹⁹ The reasons for this will be discussed further in Chap. 5, but it is important to note at this stage that this lack of regulation of voluntary organisations created a dual-track system for post-war child migration. Whereas children emigrated by local authorities required the consent of the Home Secretary (in practice, a procedure that was delegated to staff in the Home Office Children's Department),¹⁰⁰ those emigrated by voluntary organisations required no such consent. In the case of children emigrated by voluntary organisations the only consent effectively required for their migration was that of the signature of a parent, or someone signing as their guardian, on the application form used by immigration officials of the country receiving them. Whilst, in principle, the Home Secretary was able to refuse a child's migration from the care of a local authority on grounds of their personal circumstances or the suitability of arrangements for their care overseas, the lack of regulation of

England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the requirement of a younger child being migrated with a parent or guardian was interpreted loosely to allow voluntary organisations migrating and receiving children overseas to be recognised as their 'guardians', in Scotland the term 'guardian' was understood strictly to refer to a specific individual. In practice, this meant that the migration of children under 12 years of age from local authority care in Scotland was significantly curtailed as such cases were only allowed by the Scottish Home Department where the child was migrating with an individual parent or guardian, and not simply under the auspices of a voluntary organisation.

⁹⁹Grier, 'A spirit of "friendly rivalry"?'', pp. 241–3 argues that the failure to introduce regulations for the voluntary sector in the original 1948 Act reflected what some saw at the time as the under-regulation of the voluntary sector in the Act more generally.

¹⁰⁰See, for example, the discussion of the cases of children to be emigrated from the care of Cornwall County Council to Fairbridge Farm Schools in Australia in TNA: MH102/1954.

voluntary organisations meant that the UK Government had no comparable powers for children migrated by them. Measures intended to rectify this discrepancy were not introduced until the spring of 1957, nearly ten years after the first British post-war child migrants had arrived in Australia.

The policy influence of the Curtis report therefore provided a complex background to the post-war child migration. Its acceptance of the possible benefits of migration in the cases of some children created a permissive policy framework in which child migration programmes were able to resume on a larger scale than at least some of the Committee's members had anticipated. At the same time, the Curtis report had articulated a set of expectations about standards in child-care which the Committee expected to be met for those children being sent overseas. By insisting on particular standards of care for child migrants, the Curtis report shaped a policy context in which child migration resumed after the war in the midst of increasing scrutiny of its effects on children and new discussions about standards involving voluntary organisations and government departments in both Britain and Australia. Managing the gap between Curtis standards and the reality of child migration programmes was to become one of the defining challenges for post-war child migration policy.

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‘Australia as the Coming Greatest Foster-Father of Children the World Has Ever Known’: The Post-war Resumption of Child Migration to Australia, 1945–1947

When the first parties of British child migrants sailed to Australia in 1947, they did so in the context of a significantly changed policy context. A re-evaluation of immigration needs by the Australian Commonwealth Government during the war years led to it developing far more ambitious policy goals for assisted immigration supported by the creation of a new senior ministerial post. Following the decision to make the Home Office the lead department for children’s out-of-home care, its Children’s Department which began to involve itself far more in policy discussions about child migration with staff in what had been the Dominions Office and was (from the summer of 1947) renamed the Commonwealth Relations Office. The break in child migration work during the war years provided an opportunity for voluntary organisations to make new decisions about their continued involvement in it and, in the face of a more co-ordinated policy from the Australian Commonwealth and State Governments, other organisations began to involve themselves in child migration for the first time. The experience of the war years, particularly in relation to the effects of mass evacuation on children, also led to a number of voluntary and professional bodies raising concerns about the effects of emigration on children, creating a more contested public environment

for child migration schemes than had existed during the inter-war years.¹ All of this took place in the broader policy landscape of children's out-of-home care in Britain which was beginning to be re-shaped in response to the publication of the Curtis report.

The Commonwealth Government's evolving policy for assisted child migration had a profound effect on the systems and conditions that post-war British child migrants experienced and played a crucial role in shaping the policy environment in which British civil servants and politicians operated. A review of the role in child migration in supporting Australia's future immigration needs had been initiated by the Australian Commonwealth Government well in advance of the end of the war. In 1943, an Inter-Departmental Committee to consider post-war immigration needs established a sub-committee specifically to review prospects for the resumption of child migration. The sub-committee was created in the context of wider public discussion about future prospects for child migration and increased war-time anxiety about Australia's insecurity through the under-population of its large land mass.² A memorandum recording the sub-committee's formation noted that assisted child migration was as a potentially valuable element of wider immigration policy given that children could be more easily assimilated into Australian society than adults and that their introduction soon after the end of the war would not divert housing and employment from de-mobilised servicemen and women.³ Child migration could even create new employment opportunities, for example, for war widows who could be enlisted as paid carers.⁴ Ben Chifley, the Minister for Post-war Reconstruction, who was to become Prime Minister from 1945 to 1949, was also noted as being particularly enthusiastic about making early arrangements for the resumption of child migration.

¹ See, for example, TNA: DO35/1133/M803/41.

² See, for example, the range of press cuttings in NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716. These include a critical account of policy failures to ensure that child and juvenile migrants were properly assimilated and supported on arrival in Australia from a man who had migrated to Australia under the Dreadnought scheme in 1925 ('English Boy Migrant Tells of Trials in Friendless Land', *Melbourne Herald* 21st December 1943). On similar concerns on the insecurity of under-populated Dominions, see also the Royal Empire Society, *Empire Emigration and Overseas Settlement Report*, 29th December 1943, TNA: DO35/1139/M1124/1.

³ Memorandum by Peters, 29th November 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

⁴ Secretary, Department of the Interior to Official Secretary in Great Britain, 20th December 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

An initial audit of voluntary organisations that had been, or might in future be, involved in child migration was undertaken by the sub-committee, leading to fuller reports being commissioned from Caroline Kelly.⁵ Reuben Wheeler was tasked with trying to obtain more information about the level of interest in voluntary organisations whilst he was based as Chief Migration Officer at Australia House in London,⁶ and Walter Garnett was also briefed about and consulted on the sub-committee's work.⁷ The Dominions Office were also aware of the sub-committee's work and eventually provided, on repeated request from Wheeler, a non-committal memorandum indicating that no firm view could be taken about likely prospects for post-war child migration until broader inter-governmental policies around assisted migration had been agreed.⁸

The issue of the available supply of child migrants remained a matter of concern for the sub-committee. It learned that there were probably no more than 2000 war orphans in the United Kingdom and that public sentiment towards them made it more likely that they would be considered priorities for adoption or foster care in the United Kingdom rather than being made available for emigration.⁹ As before the war, child migrants

⁵ See Memorandum by Peters with enclosures, 29th November 1943; Notes on Child Migration, 10th December 1943; Confidential Report on Sydney Non-Government Migration Agencies (no date); Public Opinion (no date); Survey of Child Migration Agencies in Sydney, January 1944, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

⁶ Peters to Wheeler, 20th December 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

⁷ See Memorandum on Child Migration by Peters, 22nd December 1943; also Notes on Meeting of Sub-Committee on Child Migration, 24th January 1944, attended by Garnett, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684

⁸ Memorandum prepared in the Dominions Office, London, for the Information of the Sub-Committee on Child and Juvenile Migration, 31st March 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; also note by Wheeler, 12th February 1944, and Garnett to Wheeler with enclosure, 31st March 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

⁹ See Report on Child Migration (British and white alien), 17th March 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; on similar reservations about the migration of children who had lost parents in war-time service for Britain, see the opinion piece 'Future of Britain's War Orphans', *Melbourne Herald*, 1st November 1943, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716. After the publicising of the Commonwealth Government's ambitious post-war child migration plans, the UK Minister of Pensions, Sir James Womersley, made it clear that he would not sanction the migration of any war orphans under his care until they were aged at least 15 or 16 and able to express a meaningful opinion about their migration ('Emigration to Australia—Decision Left to War Orphans', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5th February 1945, see also cablegram High Commissioner's Office to Prime Minister's Department, 3rd October 1944, and cablegram Wheeler to Peters, 23rd August 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716). The likelihood that there would be few, if any, children under the care of the UK Ministry of

were seen as most likely to come from residential children's homes or poor families. Walter Garnett also made it clear that the decreasing birth-rate in Britain and the prospect of improved family allowances meant that the supply of post-war child migrants from Britain was unlikely to be substantial and that consent to children's emigration would only happen in future if those responsible for them were 'persuaded that very great advantages will accrue' to the children.¹⁰ Whilst an interest was also taken in the possibility of immigration of children from continental Europe as an extension of the 'white Australia' immigration policy, it was also understood that this might involve overcoming some popular prejudice against immigration from southern Europe as well as anti-Semitic sentiment against the immigration of Jewish children.¹¹ Although the immigration of non-British European children was regarded as inevitable, given the likely limitations on the supply of children from the United Kingdom, attracting children of 'British stock' remained the preferred policy. In spite of repeated warnings about the limited numbers of children available from Britain, however, the gap between the Commonwealth Government's aspirations for the level of post-war child migration from the United Kingdom and the actual numbers of children it received was to become a recurring theme in the post-war period.

An initial assumption made by Chifley was that post-war child migration would become a more formalised element of Commonwealth immigration policy. Rather than leaving this work to interested voluntary organisations,

Pensions available for migration to Australia was again emphasised by the UK Government in Hankinson to Forde, 23rd July 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

¹⁰Notes on Meeting of Sub-Committee on Child Migration, 24th January 1944, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684. On the recognition of the limited numbers of children likely to be available from the United Kingdom, see also Meeting of Prime Ministers, 12th May 1944, Appendix 2 Australian Post-War Migration Policy, TNA: PREM4/42/1.

¹¹See, for example, Extract from Report to the High Commissioner's Office, London, by Sir Herbert Emerson, 2nd February 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; Public Opinion (no date), also views of a Protestant Minister on the immigration of Jewish children only being acceptable if they were dispersed through the community and not supported with any continued Jewish affiliation and practice in Confidential Report on Sydney Non-Government Migration Agencies (no date), NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684. See also Amery to Curtin, 25th July 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716, in which Leo Amery suggested that immigration of children from Germany would be a sensible initiative, given that 'there is nothing wrong with the German race, which after all is closely akin to ours' in contrast to 'Southern Europeans'. On similar reluctance to take Jewish child refugees in South Africa, see Turner to Goode, 14th September 1946, TNA: MH102/1549.

the Government would, he proposed, establish receiving institutions for child migrants with suitably trained staff so that child migration could be encouraged and managed on a much larger scale.¹² The idea that child migration be used as a means of addressing Australia's pressing need for an increase in its population in the coming decades marked this proposal as somewhat different in emphasis to other suggested settlement schemes for refugee children which had a more primarily humanitarian intent of rescuing children from 'their bombed and battered homelands'.¹³ The Commonwealth Government's ambition was to take advantage of the social upheaval across post-conflict Europe to try to attract 50–60,000 child migrants within two or three years of the end of the war.¹⁴ Suitable accommodation could be provided through repurposing buildings previously used by the armed services and other organisations.¹⁵ The Director-General of the Department of Post-war Reconstruction further modified this idea by arguing that large-scale camps would not be appropriate places to house children on a long-term basis and that after no more than two years in these reception camps, children would be moved to smaller hostels in urban areas under the care of cottage mothers.¹⁶

¹² See Minute of Child Migration Sub-Committee, 15th December 1943; also Howarth to Peters, 26th January 1944 on voluntary organisations' apparent lack of capacity to immigrate children on the scale required NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684; also Memorandum by Coombes, 19th October 1943, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5. On the decline of boarding out as a method of child-care in Australia in the inter-war period, see Nell Musgrove and Deirdre Mitchell, *The Slow Evolution of Foster Care in Australia: Just Like a Family?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹³ See, for example, 'Civilian relief for and rehabilitation of children from war stricken areas by emigration', 8th February 1944, Owen to Evatt, 5th February 1944, Keik to Curtin, 9th September 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; on wider public discussion of such humanitarian migration schemes see, for example, Plan for Child Migrants Urged', *Daily Telegraph*, 2nd November 1943, and 'Australian Homes "Owed to European Orphans"', *Daily Telegraph*, 17th November, 1943, 'NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716'.

¹⁴ See Child Migration (Secret), Department of Post-war Reconstruction, 18th January 1943, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

¹⁵ Report on Child Migration (British and white alien), 17th March 1944; also confidential request for information about possible availability of army sites as accommodation for large numbers of child migrants, Coombs to Secretary, Department of the Army, 5th November 1943, and list of possible sites (including former internment and prisoner of war camps) in Sinclair to Coombs, 8th January 1944, and in Coombs to Davis, 1st November 1944, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

¹⁶ Coombs to Chifley, 30th December 1943, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

Support for this plan was not universal, however. Officials in the Department of the Interior suggested that, at least in the short term, it would be better to continue to undertake this work through interested and experienced voluntary organisations albeit with greater government support.¹⁷ The Department of the Interior was also more sceptical that children would be available for migration from Britain to the extent that supporters of the mass government scheme believed and instead took the view that it would be more productive to direct funding to incentivise immigration from widows with children or families with young children.¹⁸ The sub-committee on child migration also supported the option of working through approved voluntary organisations and initially excluded any reference to the idea of a government-managed scheme in its report to the main Inter-Departmental Committee on Immigration.¹⁹ Walter Garnett also expressed the view that working through voluntary organisations would be preferable because they were better placed to identify suitable children for migration in the United Kingdom, were more experienced in this work, provided suitable care and their religious or philanthropic ethos made them more acceptable to parents and guardians in the United Kingdom.²⁰ Garnett's preference for the ethos of voluntary organisations rather than the impersonal and 'soulless' services provided by the state continued despite his knowledge, by the end of 1943, of problems at both Tardun and Northcote. Evidence of failings at these receiving institutions also did nothing to affect Garnett's confident reassurance to the Australian sub-committee on child migration that the UK Government remained committed to increasing the British stock of the Dominions and would continue encourage child migration as part of this wider policy.²¹

Despite the sub-committee's recommendation that child migration should continue to operate primarily through supporting the work of voluntary organisations, the Department of Post-war Reconstruction continued to advocate for its more ambitious, government-managed proposal. Although Chifley's enthusiasm for child migration as an element of

¹⁷Peters to Wheeler, 20th December 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

¹⁸Peters to Wheeler, 10th October 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

¹⁹Report on Child Migration (British and white alien), 17th March 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; Child Migration (confidential), no date, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

²⁰Memorandum on Child Migration by Peters, 22nd December 1943, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

²¹Notes on Meeting of Sub-Committee on Child Migration, 24th January 1944, NAA: A441, 1952/13/2684.

post-war Australian reconstruction was initially kept confidential—for fear that other Dominions might seek to steal a march on the possible supply of children from Europe—it began to be aired publicly as a policy proposal by the middle of 1944. At a speech to the Trade Union Conference in Melbourne in June, the acting Prime Minister Frank Forde argued that without substantial immigration to increase its population the future security and viability of Australia was at risk. Encouraging immigration on the basis of cheap labour was, Forde told his audience, an anathema to the Labor Party and child migration offered an alternative and more sustainable means for substantial population growth.²² By the autumn of 1944, Chifley's Department of Post-war Reconstruction had successfully lobbied the Cabinet to ensure that its proposals would be considered again by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Immigration and then by the Cabinet.²³ In addition to setting out the demographic case for acting in a concerted way to draw on the short-term supply of children displaced through the war, it offered some specific suggestions about this scheme's implementation. It was proposed that legislation be introduced to bring child migrants under the guardianship of the Minister for the Interior (following the model used for Children's Overseas Reception Board [CORB] evacuees). An outline budget for this work was also suggested, estimated to be in excess of A£26 million over eight years not including any building costs.²⁴ Whilst the Treasury recognised this to be a very significant financial commitment, it also argued that if substantial funding were to be directed towards population growth in Australia then child migration represented a more cost-effective and secure means of achieving this than funding schemes designed to encourage Australian families to have more children.²⁵

²² Draft notes for part of speech by the Hon. F.M. Forder to Trade Union Conference, June 1944, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589; also coverage of the speech 'Europe's War Orphans as Migrants', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7th June 1944, cutting in NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5.

²³ Chifley to Collings, 20th September 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716; Child Migration (confidential), no date, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; Departments of the Interior and Post-War Reconstruction, Child Migration with appendices, no date, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

²⁴ The inclusion of the budget appears to have been strongly encouraged by the Department of the Interior in the hope that its scale might reduce support for the proposals, Peters to Wheeler, 31st October, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

²⁵ Department of the Treasury Minute Paper, Child Migration, 28th November 1944, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589.

After receiving widely publicised Cabinet approval in principle for these proposals in December 1944,²⁶ a consultation meeting was arranged with representatives of State Governments the following month.²⁷ Presenting this scheme to the meeting, the Director-General of the Department of Post-war Reconstruction suggested that this should be seen as a national initiative that sought to avoid stigmatising child migrants as ‘charity cases’. Whilst recognising the administrative challenges of this work, State representatives were generally supportive of the proposal, including the suggestion that children be placed in cottage homes in urban areas as soon as possible after their arrival to avoid institutionalisation in reception camps (although some preferred adoption or foster placement to cottage homes).²⁸ A pre-circulated memorandum from the Departments of the Interior and Post-war Reconstruction also suggested that some cost savings could be found, for example, by involving child migrants in growing their own vegetables—as long as this did not extend into an exploitative use of their labour. It was also recognised, however, that recruiting and retaining suitable cottage mothers would require attractive rates of remuneration.

On the basis of this positive response, State Governments were then asked to provide proposed budgets for the delivery of this scheme in their State. A provisional agreement between the Commonwealth and States was also drafted in which the Commonwealth offered a relatively generous financial provision (compared to the pre-war period) of funding children’s

²⁶ 17,000 Child Migrants a Year—Australian Plan Announced, 7th December 1944, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85; see also ‘Child Migrant Goal in Post-War, 50,000’, *Melbourne Herald*, 7th December 1944, NAA.C: A689, 1944/43/554/2/5; ‘Government Plans to Bring Out 17,000 in Each year’, *Daily Telegraph*, 7th December 1944, ‘17,000 Child Migrants in New Plan’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7th December 1944, ‘Child Migration Plan Adopted by Cabinet’, *Canberra Times*, 7th December 1944, ‘17,000 Child Migrants a Year’, *The Argus*, 7th December 1944, and ‘34 Shiploads a Year of Child Migrants’, 8th December 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716. In cablegram London Representative to Acting Prime Minister and Department, 8th December 1944, same file, disappointment is expressed that insufficient publicity for this decision was organised in Britain.

²⁷ Notes Taken at Conference of Commonwealth and State Officials, 9th January 1945, NAA.C: A9816, 1944/589; see also Child Migration, draft 11th December 1944, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716. This meeting also attracted national press coverage, see, for example, ‘Fed. State Talks on Migration’, *Canberra Times*, 10th January 1945, ‘Early Moves in Child Migrant Plan’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10th January 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

²⁸ A few months after the meeting, however, the Acting Premier of Queensland indicated the State was unlikely to support the scheme as its costs would significantly outweigh any limited future benefits (Nutt to Carrodus, 16th May 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716).

selection, emigration, maintenance to the age of 16, and half of capital building costs, with States expected to bear the cost of children's education and the other half of capital costs. By August 1945, estimated costs from State Governments had been received and collated by the Department of the Interior.²⁹ These indicated that the total cost of the immigration of 51,000 children would be in the range of A£64 million to A£71 million,³⁰ for which the Commonwealth Government would be liable for around 70% of this and State Governments the remainder. This did not include projected costs for children's overseas recruitment, outfitting, passages and escorts for shipping which could rise to a further A£4 million if all the 51,000 children were migrated. The main reason for the substantial rise in projected costs was that this new budget now included costs for the construction of new cottage homes, hostels and additional school buildings (estimated to be just over A£32 million), for which cottage homes accounted for most of this budget. After the cost of the construction of new cottage homes, the staffing of those homes was the next most expensive item in the total budget, estimated to be around A£31 million. Even if financially practical, it was doubted that a building programme on this scale would be possible given wider national pressures on building materials at the end of the war. Given the uncertainty as to whether child migrants on this scale would even be available, it was suggested that another alternative might be to set up a pilot scheme for 440 child migrants to be received across four States as a means of assessing the viability of a larger scale initiative at a cost of around A£700,000.

Although the likely costs of these proposals were much greater than had initially been anticipated, they remained under consideration by the Commonwealth Government.³¹ This policy appeared set to receive further support with the creation of a new Commonwealth Department of Immigration in July 1945. Arthur Calwell, its first minister, had just published a short book outlining the serious demographic challenges facing Australia in the coming decades and supporting the child migration

²⁹ Nutt to Acting Secretary Department of the Interior with enclosures, 8th August 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

³⁰ Figures were given as a range because neither Queensland nor Western Australia had by then returned projected costs, and estimates made on their behalf by the Department of the Interior were calculated on the basis of likely minimum and maximum amounts.

³¹ See, for example, Evatt to Calwell, 24th July 1945, NAA.C: A1066/ER45/6/8/7/77; Calwell to Morel, 1st February 1946, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

plan as an integral part of the national response to this.³² Even though, Calwell acknowledged, there might be fewer children available for emigration than some hoped, it was nevertheless gratifying to see that a London newspaper had declared Australia to be ‘the coming greatest foster-father of children the world has known’. Calwell further endorsed the plan to bring 50,000 war orphans to Australia in his first major ministerial speech to the Australian Parliament that was released as a separate Government publication.³³ Whilst maintaining the ‘white Australia’ immigration policy and preferring ‘good British stock’, Calwell was, however, increasingly willing to accept that the numbers of white immigrants that Australia needed—including child migrants—would need to be taken from continental Europe as well as the United Kingdom.³⁴

By this point, the Dominions Office had already begun drafting free and assisted passage schemes, including support for child migration, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government.³⁵ However, it paid relatively little attention to Calwell’s proposals for child migration and took more interest in the implications of Calwell’s policy announcement relating to free passages for discharged British servicemen and, later on, the possible inaccuracies of subsequent Commonwealth Government publicity material for potential immigrants on the costs of living in Australia.³⁶ Whilst the aim of supporting British emigration to its

³² Arthur Calwell, *How Many Australians Tomorrow?* (Melbourne: Reed & Harris, 1945), especially pp. 52–53 where Calwell both aspires to introducing up to 50,000 child migrants to Australia *per annum* whilst also recognising that the supply might be far more limited than that. See also his autobiographical account of his work as Minister for Immigration in Arthur Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not: ‘The Fearless Memoirs of a Great Labor Leader’* (Perth: Rigby, 1978), pp. 96–110.

³³ ‘Migration to Australia – New Minister Explains Government Plans’, 2nd August 1945, TNA: DO35/1135/M822/29/1.

³⁴ On the initiatives to attract white immigrants of different nationalities encouraged by Calwell and later Ministers for Immigration see, for example, Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), pp. 166–203; also Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia’s Immigrants, 1788–1978* (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), pp. 127–51. On these post-war immigrants’ experiences, see Catherine Panich, *Sanctuary: Remembering Post-War Immigration* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988).

³⁵ See, for example, Dixon to Wheeler, 23rd December 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1014/1. On wider policy discussions with Dominions governments about post-war migration, which had been initiated by the UK Government in 1924, see TNA: PREM4/42/1.

³⁶ See correspondence and other documents in TNA: DO35/1138/M822/29/1.

Dominions was still seen as valuable in terms of maintaining social, cultural and strategic bonds across the Commonwealth (with Australia seen as the most proactive Dominion government with regard to arrangements for post-war migration), the prospect of the loss of British citizens during a period of a falling birth-rate and need to maintain a strong work-force for economic recovery was regarded with concern.³⁷ Support for widespread emigration was therefore not as strong in the Dominions Office as it had been with the original passing of the Empire Settlement Act. As one official commented rather tepidly, 'if the Dominions wished for immigrants from the United Kingdom, and if emigrants wished to go, the United Kingdom Government would not be disposed to stand in the way'.³⁸

Doubts were growing, however, about the viability of the policy which was now taken up by Calwell. By the summer of 1945, it was publicly recognised that even if potential child migrants were available in the United Kingdom and continental Europe, the lack of available shipping for possibly at least two years constituted a significant logistical challenge.³⁹ Further discouragement for the Department of Post-war Reconstruction's ambitious plans came from a report commissioned by Calwell from a Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee that he convened from delegates attending an International Labour Office conference in Paris.⁴⁰ Within its wider remit of investigating attitudes and prospects for emigration to Australia from the United Kingdom and continental Europe, the Advisory Committee was also tasked specifically with assessing the feasibility of the plans for recruiting 50,000 child migrants. The Committee's views, set out in its report submitted in February 1946, were dismissive. It commented that wide publicity for these proposals were premature, had been made without any adequate survey of children's availability and, as a consequence, had been the source of 'a certain amount of embarrassment'. The countries they surveyed had few war orphans, apart

³⁷ On this point see also Conclusions of War Cabinet, 16th April 1945, TNA: PREM4/42/1.

³⁸ Duff to Hosking, (day unclear) February 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1124/2.

³⁹ This shipping shortage was acknowledged by Calwell himself in his Parliamentary speech on 2nd August 1945; see also 'Shipping Bar to Child Migration', *The Melbourne Herald*, 25th May 1945, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716. Calwell (*Be Just and Fear Not*, p. 99) later noted that around two thirds of all ships sailing under British Commonwealth flags at the start of the war had been sunk during it.

⁴⁰ *Report of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee*, Presented 27th February, 1946, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66716.

from Norway who claimed this status for the special case of children fathered by German soldiers, and former enemy countries were not considered suitable places for recruitment. Suitable countries also generally wished to make their own provisions for the limited numbers of war orphans they had and did not want to consider emigration for them. As the recruitment of children on the scale envisaged was highly unlikely, the Committee recommended that the substantial investment that such a scheme required would be better spent on assisting adult and family migration. Given the lack of grounds for pursuing the proposed Commonwealth Government scheme, it also concluded that it would be more sensible to provide encouragement to voluntary organisations already interested or involved in child migration work and who appeared 'to have done a reasonable job in the past'. Their views about the challenges facing the policy of mass child migration came as no surprise to Calwell as he himself had acknowledged in the Australian Parliament the previous autumn that the prospects for recruiting war orphans from Britain or continental Europe did not look strong in the near future.⁴¹ A memorandum from the UK High Commission in Canberra to the Dominions Office summarising the Committee's report also commented that 'the non-availability of children is, however, possibly the least of the difficulties with which this scheme would have been faced. Its promoters had little appreciation of the problems connected with the transfer of children and had principally been attracted to this form of migration by what they thought to be its simplicity'.⁴²

In view of these evident challenges, Calwell sought to revise the Commonwealth Government's policy on child migration away from the ambitious Government-controlled plan and back to the policy of supporting the work of voluntary organisations that had originally been favoured by the Department of the Interior.

Before these proposals were finalised at the Premiers' Conference in August 1946, Calwell also introduced new legislation that made the Commonwealth Minister of Immigration the legal guardian of all child immigrants to Australia who were unaccompanied by their parents. The Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Bill was presented to Parliament by Calwell in July in part because the National Security (Overseas Children)

⁴¹ Migration to Australia—Further Statement by Minister, 3rd October 1945, TNA: DO35/1135/M822/29/1.

⁴² See extract from minute, 9th August 1946, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85.

regulations which had brought CORB evacuees under the legal guardianship of the Commonwealth Government was due to expire at the end of December 1946 and successor legislation was required to cover more than a hundred CORB evacuees still resident in Australia.⁴³ The Bill, which received Assent in August and came into effect on 30th December, placed all child evacuees and child migrants under the Minister's guardianship until they reached the age of 21.⁴⁴ The Minister was empowered both to delegate his powers and responsibilities as guardian to State officials (in practice usually State Child Welfare departments) and to place child migrants under the custodianship of organisations which had been approved by the Minister for such work.⁴⁵ The Act also allowed for the drawing up of regulations regarding principles guiding the placement of children with custodian organisations and the standards to be upheld by custodian organisations, although in practice such regulations were never brought forward.

The Premiers' Conference in 19th August 1946 finalised the proposed financial and administrative arrangements by which the Commonwealth and State Governments would support child migration.⁴⁶ Rather than persist with the ambitious government-managed scheme—passed up by the Conference, according to a note from the UK High Commission, because

⁴³Statement by the Prime Minister, Migration—British Migrants, Children, 2nd July 1946, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85.

⁴⁴Commonwealth of Australia, Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act, No. 45 of 1946, see, for example, copy held on DO35/1134/M822/85.

⁴⁵The communication about these processes and responsibilities does not always appear to have been clear with, for example, R.H. Hicks, the Director of Child Welfare for New South Wales, complaining to Heyes in 1949 that he had not formally been notified that Fairbridge or Dr Barnardo's Homes had been formally approved under this legislation and on what grounds such approval had been made (see Hicks to Heyes, 1st March 1949, also Heyes to Best, 11th May 1949, Heyes to Hicks, 19th May 1949, and Wall to Heyes, 2nd September 1949, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50). As this particular correspondence shows, organisations such as Fairbridge and Dr Barnardo's Homes who had been involved in child migration before the war were not required to go through a renewed approval process by the Australian Commonwealth Government and were assumed to be fit to continue to undertake child migration work (see note by Metcalffe, 19th May 1949, same file). See note 9th September 1947, TNA: DO35/3435, which suggests that the Commonwealth Relations Office felt that confirmation was needed that conditions were satisfactory at Molong, Bacchus Marsh and Benmore before post-war child migrants proceeded to them.

⁴⁶On the wider policy context of the Assisted Passage Agreement that was formalised between the Australian Commonwealth and UK Governments in March earlier that year, see TNA: DO35/1138/M1014/8.

of its 'exorbitant cost'⁴⁷—it was agreed that child migration would be pursued 'under the auspices of approved voluntary migration organisations'.⁴⁸ The Commonwealth Government's proposal was not abandoned but officially suspended until conditions were such that the scheme might be revived. States agreed to fund up to a third of capital costs for building work that voluntary organisations required for child migrants—with the Commonwealth Government being left to decide how much of the remaining costs would be paid for by itself and the voluntary organisation concerned. States also agreed to pay 3/6d per week maintenance for child migrants (with significant differences emerging in later years between this level of funding between States)⁴⁹ to the age of 16, in addition to maintenance funding from the UK Government and from the Commonwealth Child Endowment scheme. State Governments would be responsible for the reception and after-care of migrants, with the Commonwealth Government responsible for all work relating to immigration matters conducted overseas. If States did not already have Immigration Departments, they agreed to establish one or ensure that a branch of another department would take responsibility for immigration matters. The Commonwealth Government also agreed to establish a small office in each State run by a regional Commonwealth Migration Officer to support effective liaison between State and Commonwealth immigration bodies. These arrangements were confirmed, on 10th September, by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration,⁵⁰ with the Commonwealth contribution to voluntary organisations' capital grants set at one third to match that of the State. The Commonwealth's contribution was also agreed as being repayable, without interest, should the voluntary organisation to which it was paid cease to receive and accommodate child migrants. Given concerns about the difficulties of safely placing child migrants directly into foster care, the Committee agreed that additional maintenance funding would not be paid for child migrants in private households for the time being, unless no further places were available at receiving institutions. Whilst the clear policy preference was to encourage child migrants from the United Kingdom, a conference of Commonwealth

⁴⁷ Extract of minute, 23rd August 1946, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85.

⁴⁸ See Immigration: Decision of Premiers' Conference, 20th August 1946, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Australian Senate Community Affairs Committee, *Lost Innocents*, paras 2.77–2.81.

⁵⁰ Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration, 10th September 1946, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

and State officials the following December confirmed that similar terms of support would apply to child migrants from other European countries.⁵¹

The effective abandonment of Chifley's original vision of a national child migration plan was to have significant implications. For some of its advocates, this policy was intended to mark a significant shift away from the charitable management of child migration—in which children might be cast as objects of pity and suspicion—to a collective project of nation-building which should elicit civic pride. Whilst this emphasis was softened in some public statements by the Commonwealth Government, which suggested that the government-managed scheme was intended to supplement rather than replace voluntary organisations' child migration work,⁵² the scale of the proposed Commonwealth scheme was such that it is difficult to imagine that its implementation would not have led to children being diverted away from residential institutions run by voluntary organisations in Australia. However, the costs of building and staffing new government-run homes meant that the Commonwealth Government's continued interest in child migration was ultimately outsourced back to voluntary organisations for its delivery. Although Arthur Calwell had previously claimed that post-war child migrants would not be placed in institutions,⁵³ the Commonwealth Government's plan of accommodating them in scattered cottage homes in urban areas with carefully selected and well-remunerated staff was never realised. Instead, for many post-war child migrants, their living conditions were to take institutional forms that some advocates of the government-run scheme had previously criticised as unfitting for this new national project.

THE RESUMPTION OF ASSISTED CHILD MIGRATION IN 1947

The confirmation of the Commonwealth Government's financial support for child migration in September 1946 created conditions in which practical arrangements for the migration of parties of British children during the

⁵¹ Extract from Summary of Proceedings of Conference of Commonwealth and State Officers, 16th and 17th December 1946, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

⁵² See Australian News and Information Bureau, Child Migration, 7th December 1944, TNA: DO35/1134/M822/85.

⁵³ Migration to Australia—Further Statement by Minister, 3rd October 1945, TNA: DO35/1135/M822/29/1.

following year began to be made.⁵⁴ In many cases, voluntary organisations had already by then been developing plans in anticipation of the post-war resumption of child migration, either to resume their pre-war activities or to enter the field of assisted child migration for the first time.

The numbers of children involved reflected the more pessimistic assessments that had been made about the availability of children from the United Kingdom. With sailings of child migrants to Australia beginning in the autumn of 1947, by 31st March 1948 group nominations from voluntary organisations for 749 child migrants had yielded only 472 arrivals.⁵⁵ This pattern of slow recruitment was to persist in coming years. In his 1944 report, Walter Garnett had estimated that a realistic figure of 200 children would need to be sent each year for five or six years merely to fill existing spaces in institutions already receiving child migrants by then, let alone allowing for the approval of new receiving institutions. Between 1947 and departure of the last known unaccompanied child migrants in 1970, there were only six years in which the numbers of child migrants leaving the United Kingdom reached that level.⁵⁶

From the autumn of 1947, the Fairbridge Society began to send small numbers of children to its farm school at Molong, with 70 having arrived there by the end of August 1948.⁵⁷ Despite pressure from the Western Australian Government to expedite the migration of up to 300 children to Pinjarra, neither the Commonwealth Relations Office nor the London

⁵⁴ A helpful table of numbers of assisted child migrants sent by each sending organisation approved by the United Kingdom Government between 1947 and 1965 is provided in Stephen Constantine, 'The British Government, child welfare, and child migration to Australia after 1945', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 30, no. 1, Jan 2002, appendix, 126–7. See also the anonymised table of details of child migrants sent from 1947 to 1949 inclusive, on TNA: MH102/2337, which although detailed does not appear to include all children migrated in that period. No statistics were reportedly kept by the Home Office for the number of children migrated in this period who required Secretary of State consent (TNA: MH102/2330). The issue of the failure of the Home Office to maintain statistics in relation to child migration was also raised as a question in the House of Commons, *Hansard*, column 1458, 22nd February 1951 (copy held on TNA: DO35/3434).

⁵⁵ 'Position at 31st March 1948', NAA.C: A445, 133/2/24.

⁵⁶ From figures in Constantine, 'The British Government', these were 1947, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955 (where 199 children were sent), and these years usually coincided with higher numbers of children being sent by Catholic organisations and/or the Fairbridge Society.

⁵⁷ '28 Children Are Sailing to a New Life', *Evening Standard*, 15th August 1947; 'Developing the Fairbridge Farm Schools', *Birmingham Post*, 21st October 1947, and name unclear to R.L. Dixon, 31st August 1948, TNA: DO35/3402.

branch of the Fairbridge Society were happy to countenance this until the conflict between the Fairbridge organisations in London and Western Australia had been resolved.⁵⁸ As Garnett observed, though, the UK Government had little power to prevent the emigration of children to Pinjarra if they were accepted by immigration officials at Australia House, other than ending its maintenance agreement for their upkeep.⁵⁹ Following a resolution to this conflict in the autumn of 1947, agreement was reached for 20 children to sail to Pinjarra in December 1948, on the basis of some evidence of progress in renovating the farm school after dilapidation caused by its limited use during the war.⁶⁰ The scale of operations at Pinjarra was also reduced, with the pre-war capacity of 400 children now halved to 200. By the end of 1949, 155 children had been sent to the two Fairbridge farm schools in Australia. Despite its hopes to provide substantial support to the Australian Commonwealth Government's ambitions for increased child migration, Dr Barnardo's Homes had only sent 104 children to its institutions in New South Wales from the autumn of 1947 until the end of 1949.⁶¹ The Northcote farm school re-opened in June 1948 with the arrival of 20 British children, but only a total of 47 had been sent by the end of 1949.⁶² This fell considerably short of the Trustees hopes to receive 50 child migrants a year, leading it to make an unsuccessful request to Arthur Calwell for a grant to bridge the shortfall in its

⁵⁸See Smith to Heyes, 14th October 1946, Panton to Williams, 7th November 1946, TNA: DO35/3402; Memorandum, July 1946, TNA: DO35/3395; note by R.L. Dixon, 10th January 1947, DO35/1139/M1118/1.

⁵⁹Garnett to Head, 29th October 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁶⁰Garnett to Bankes Amory, 5th February 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2; Logan to Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Office, 15th November 1948, 'Youth emigration', *Birmingham Post*, 15th December 1948, Garnett to Costley-White, 10th December 1947, TNA: DO35/3402.

⁶¹On Barnardo's post-war resumption of child migration see documents and correspondence on TNA: DO35/3379 and MH102/1893.

⁶²On policy proposals for the resumption of child migration to the Northcote farm school by its Principal, see TNA: DO35/1138/M1019/1. The UK Secretary of the Northcote Trust, Vera Grenfell, consulted with the Home Office about appropriate standards for the farm school, the Principal reportedly met with members of the Curtis and Clyde Committees whilst on a fact-finding mission to Britain, and the Home Office also arranged for Miss Tempe Woods, one of the lead complainants in Fairbridge's 1944 dossier, to attend new post-war training for house mothers in London conducted by Claire Britton before taking up the position of head of training at Northcote, see documents and correspondence, see documents and correspondence TNA: MH102/1591.

income until more children, and their accompanying maintenance funding, became available.⁶³

As noted in Chap. 1, the Church of England Advisory Council for Empire Settlement had, in its pre-war organisational form, been involved in adult, family and juvenile migration. Although now constituted primarily as an advisory body on imperial migration matters under the chairmanship of the former Governor-General of Canada, the Earl of Bessborough, it now began to involve itself in child migration.⁶⁴ The first children emigrated under the Council's auspices were sent to the Swan Homes in Western Australia in response to a nomination from the Secretary for Anglican Orphanages for the Diocese of Perth.⁶⁵ Again, however, the initial numbers sent through the Council's work were minimal compared to the Commonwealth Government's ambitions, with only 67 children sailing between the autumn of 1947 and the end of 1949.⁶⁶ The Salvation Army and Presbyterian Church also successfully submitted nominations to receive 40 and 25 child migrants respectively, but no children had been sent under either of these nominations by the end of 1949.

Another new organisation to enter this field after the end of the war was the Over-Seas League.⁶⁷ Its newly appointed honorary migration secretary, Cyril Bavin, had a long-standing interest in juvenile migration through his work with the YMCA and been an active exponent of the group nomination system for immigration to Australia which had given greater opportunities for churches and voluntary organisations to involve

⁶³ See Beilby to Armstrong 9th Oct 1947; Coles to Calwell with enclosure, 28th October 1948, Calwell to Coles, 9th November 1948, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/24. Correspondence and documents on this file also describe the process through which Northcote was able to negotiate capital funding for renovations and improvements to the Bacchus Marsh farm school but was unable to proceed with this work because it was unable to provide the match-funding in conjunction with the funding offered by the Commonwealth and State Governments.

⁶⁴ Lynch, 'The Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement'.

⁶⁵ See correspondence and documents on TNA: DO35/3388 and NAA.C: K403, W59/114. See also documents and correspondence relating to the approval of the Clarendon Children's Home in Australia in 1948, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/10.

⁶⁶ See also the co-authored letter to *The Times*, 18th May 1950, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher and the Earl of Bessborough, appealing for funds for the Council and emphasising its child migration work (copy held on TNA: DO35/3389).

⁶⁷ On the League's wider history, see Adele Smith, *The Royal Overseas League: From Empire into Commonwealth, A History of the First 100 Years*, London: IB Tauris, 2010. An organisational history celebrating the League's centenary, this book makes no reference to its involvement in child migration.

themselves in assisted migration work.⁶⁸ Bavin also served, during the war, as the YMCA's representative on the Children's Overseas Reception Board before taking on his honorary position with the Over-Seas League. In February 1948, officials from London County Council sought an interview with Bavin after the League had publicly advertised a scheme by which children would be emigrated to Australia for adoption.⁶⁹ Bavin described a scheme in which the League collected both the names of prospective adopters in Australia and the names of children being put forward for adoption by families in the United Kingdom. Prospective adopters were, Bavin claimed, vetted by the Australian Government. In addition to undertaking the usual selection and medical interviews at Australia House, children emigrated in this way also required licences from the Bow Street Magistrates Court under the terms of s.11 of the 1939 Adoption of Children (Regulation) Act before leaving the country. The costs of their passage to Australia were shared between the Australian Government and the child's new adopters. As this scheme did not receive any funding under the terms of the Empire Settlement Act, no notification of it appeared to have been given to the Commonwealth Relations Office, and the UK Government had no formal role in relation to it at all. Compared to other nascent post-war child migration schemes, the League appeared more successful in sending larger numbers—with Bavin claiming that 130 children had been sent since September 1947. The unease that London County Council officials felt about Bavin's broad outline of the scheme was soon compounded by information received by its Education Officer's Department about two boys recruited for emigration to Australia by the League who were judged by the Council to have difficulties that might make their adoption placement likely to break down.⁷⁰ These concerns were passed on by the Council's Education Officer to the Children's Department in the Home Office.⁷¹

An element of mystery surrounds this work, however. The Over-Seas League submitted formal proposals the kind of scheme described by Bavin for approval by the Australian Commonwealth Government Department

⁶⁸ Bavin also held an honorary position, apparently for a relatively short time, as a member of the Church of England Advisory Council on Empire Settlement, when it was established in 1937, see *Report of the Church of England Advisory Council for Empire Settlement for the year 1st September 1937 to 31st August 1938*, CERC: CECES-2-CA618.

⁶⁹ See Interview with Mr Bavin, 5th February 1948, TNA: MH102/1560.

⁷⁰ See Mann to Cram, 19th March 1948, TNA: MH102/1560.

⁷¹ Lowndes to Lyon, 23rd March 1948, TNA: MH102/1560.

of Immigration in July 1948. These were rejected by a conference of Commonwealth and State officials the following month because the League's proposals did not allow face-to-face contact between children and adopters prior to the adoption, did not enable sufficient transfer of records to relevant State authorities and did not allow for a probationary period in which the child would live with their new adoptive family before their adoption was finalised. Furthermore, the League was judged to have an insufficient organisational presence in Australia to support adoption placements that were in difficulty or had broken down, with children no longer cared for under failed adoption placements then becoming an additional demand on State Child Welfare departments.⁷²

The refusal of this proposal by the Commonwealth Government raises questions about the basis on which the League had apparently already sent at least 130 children to Australia before its proposal had been sent to Australian authorities. The League also appears to have continued this practice to some extent after the official refusal of its scheme.⁷³ One possibility is that, given Bavin's prior association with the Children's Overseas Reception Board, these children were classified as returning to Australia to households in which they had previously been placed during the war through the Board's work. Bavin certainly later claimed that all the children sent to households in Australia were returning CORB evacuees, something for which the Australian Commonwealth Government had given its approval.⁷⁴ However, both the case of the two boys noted by London County Council Education officials and Bavin's account of a more widely publicised-scheme suggested that even if some of those children being sent to Australia by the League were returning CORB evacuees, certainly not all were.

There are some other indications that 'CORB status' may have been applied to children being sent to Australia in order to facilitate their emigration. In June 1949, a State immigration official for New South Wales

⁷²Proceedings of conference of Commonwealth and State Immigration Officials, 26/27th August 1948, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717. Whilst the League's later child migration scheme to New Zealand involved the placement of children in foster homes, and only rarely full adoption, their proposed scheme to Australia therefore appears to have involved full adoption immediately on the child's arrival in Australia.

⁷³See Over-Seas League, 'Statement of Our Migration Activities', TNA: DO35/6377, in which Bavin recorded that the League had sent 194 children to Australia between August 1947 and the end of 1949.

⁷⁴Royal Over-Seas League, 'Statement of Our Migration Activities', TNA: DO35/6377.

wrote to Noel Lamidey, the Chief Migration Officer at Australia House, to ask about a group of seven children about to arrive on the *SS Mooltan* who were marked on the shipping list as a CORB children's party despite the fact that 'very few of these children, if any, were originally members of the CORB party evacuated to Australia'.⁷⁵ In his reply the following month,⁷⁶ Mr Lamidey commented that:

The Overseas League in London has taken an interest in CORB children who wish to return to Australia and this arrangement has worked satisfactorily particularly as the League is in a position to provide the children with entertainment at the various ports of call. Usually however, there are insufficient children to make the formation of a separate party and the appointment of escorts worth-while. For this reason, therefore, approved children who require the services of an escort have been included in the party.

Noting that some nominators in Australia (presumably individuals rather than organisations) would find the process of making shipping arrangements for children they were due to receive difficult, Lamidey commented that 'various voluntary bodies have proved most helpful in this connection' and states that 'the Overseas League, whilst not an approved organisation for the reception of children in Australia, is nevertheless active in the migration field and it would perhaps be unwise to discourage their efforts'. The implication of this letter was that the League, with the support of immigration officials at Australia House, was using the status of returning CORB evacuees as an administrative mechanism to enable the emigration of children for whom arrangements of securing berths or finding escorts might otherwise be difficult. Later that year, around the time that the League's use of this system appears to have ended, Sir Tasman Heyes wrote to Noel Lamidey indicating that he had become aware of CORB status being applied to two juvenile migrants with no actual connection to the war-time scheme and that this practice should end, with child and juvenile migrants only being sent under the actual names of their approved sending organisations.⁷⁷ Whilst the failure of the Over-Seas League to retain any administrative records about its post-war child migration activities makes it difficult to clarify in any more detail how their migration of children to Australian households operated,

⁷⁵ Best to Chief Migration Officer, 2nd June 1949, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

⁷⁶ Lamidey to Wall, 5th July 1949, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

⁷⁷ See Heyes to Chief Migration Officer, 1st November 1949, NAA.C: A446, 1960/66717.

it therefore appears that Bavin had found an administrative process through which he could arrange the emigration of children to Australia without the League being formally approved as a child migration organisation by the UK or Australian Commonwealth Governments.⁷⁸

THE CATHOLIC CHILD MIGRATION PARTIES OF AUTUMN 1947

The most ambitious post-war plans for child migration were developed by Catholic authorities in Australia. In April 1945, the Bishop of Geraldton wrote to the Commonwealth Prime Minister, John Curtin, to request that the nomination for 50 girls to be sent to Nazareth House, which had been suspended at the start of the war, be re-opened along with a new proposal for a further 50 boys to be sent to Tardun.⁷⁹ Some British child migrants were still living at Tardun at that point. Although they were no longer eligible for UK Government maintenance funding, their continued presence at the farm school meant that the Christian Brothers were still eligible for receiving UK Government funding towards the interest payments of their overdraft for Tardun.⁸⁰ John Dedman, as acting Prime Minister, replied that as no formal arrangements for assisted passages had yet been agreed with the UK Government, no action could be taken on

⁷⁸ On this see also Bass to Heyes, 9th August 1949, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50, in which approval of the migration of children under a group nomination put forward by the United Protestant Association was refused by the UK Government on the grounds that the Overseas League was not considered a suitable for approval as a sending organisation from the UK. The League continued, unsuccessfully, to press for Australian authorities to accept a scheme analogous to the League's arrangements with the New Zealand Government, see Letter from Henderson, *Daily Telegraph*, 20th February 1951, copy held on TNA: MH102:2037).

⁷⁹ Gummer to Curtin, 11th April 1945, NAA.C: A461/M349/1/7.

⁸⁰ The continued presence of British child migrants at Tardun had been helped by the transfer of 20 boys from Clontarf in January 1945 (see Wiseman to Quirke, 16th February 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/2). This continued to be the case in 1946, when the Brothers were still continuing to claim UK Government payments towards overdraft interest at Tardun for 15 boys still resident there who were over the age of 16 (see 'British Migrants Resident', 1st October 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M1020/2). This financial arrangement appears to have created an incentive for the Brothers to maintain British child migrants at Tardun until new ones could be received from 1947, in order to continue this income stream.

this request for the time being, but that the Bishop should raise the matter again in six months' time.⁸¹

With the Commonwealth Government's proposal for a government-managed scheme receiving further publicity, these plans were significantly expanded. The prospect of children being received in State-run hostels and cottage homes may also have had a galvanising effect on Catholic authorities anxious about the loss of children to Catholic institutions. Correspondence between the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and the United Protestant Association around the same time suggests that the issue of large numbers of war orphans being admitted to State-run rather than denominational homes was not only a matter of concern for the Catholic Church.⁸² In September 1945, Canon Craven informed the Dominions Office that Redmond Prendiville, the Archbishop of Perth, had written to Bernard Griffin, now Archbishop of Westminster, to request the resumption of child migration to Catholic institutions in Western Australia as soon as possible, with a view to receiving 2500 children over the next 18 months.⁸³ In response, Griffin had asked the Catholic Child Welfare Council to give this matter urgent consideration at its annual meeting in October.

The previous December, the Dominions Office had sent Craven a copy of the appendix from Garnett's report on Christian Brothers' institutions in Craven's capacity as a representative of the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement.⁸⁴ Garnett's views about Castledare were also passed on to Archbishop Prendiville, who had written back to Garnett to say that he had conducted 'exhaustive enquiries' about conditions there and was now satisfied that these were now acceptable.⁸⁵ Craven subsequently met with Ronald Wiseman at the Dominions Office in February 1945 to

⁸¹ Dedman to Gummer, 2nd May 1945, NAA.C: A461, M349/1/7.

⁸² See Agst to Nutt, 12th February 1945, Nutt to Agst, 26th March 1945, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50.

⁸³ See Craven to Wiseman, 21st September 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2. Immigration was a significant source of growth for the Catholic population of Western Australia in the inter- and early post-war periods, with census data in 1954 and 1961 showing around 30% of all Catholics in Western Australia having been born overseas (see D.F. Bourke, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Australia, 1829–1979*, Perth: Archdiocese of Perth, 1978, p. 251).

⁸⁴ Wiseman to Craven, 14th December 1944, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2.

⁸⁵ Prendiville to Garnett, 1st December 1944; see also assurances from Br Quirke that conditions at Tardun would be improved following the imminent return of Clontarf to the Brothers' use, Quirke to Garnett, 29th November 1944, DO35/1139/M1126/1.

discuss the criticisms that Garnett had made in relation to the Brothers' work.⁸⁶ Craven told Wiseman that it had always been the intention that the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement would send representatives to Western Australia to inspect the Brothers' institutions directly, but that this had been interrupted by the war. Craven was noted as saying that the Council was dissatisfied with conditions at the Brothers' institutions—particularly at Castledare and Tardun—and would not allow any further children to be migrated there until such an inspection had taken place and any shortcomings rectified. In response to Garnett's observation about boys being retained at Tardun to the age of 18 without receiving meaningful training or wages, Craven reportedly commented that 'he was quite aware that Father Conlon required watching and that it was necessary to see that the Christian Brothers did not try to absorb the children into their own Institutions, rather than allow them to choose their own vocation'. Despite these cautionary observations about the Brothers' work, Craven asked Wiseman if there were any likely prospects of opportunities to send child migrants to New Zealand, as there were likely to be more children available for emigration through the Council than could be accommodated at Brothers' institutions in Western Australia alone. The emigration of children to Canada, Craven said, was proving unsatisfactory as child migrants were subsequently able to save enough for return journeys to Britain whereupon they 'drifted back to their old surroundings and all the care spent on their training was lost'. New Zealand, like Australia, appeared to Craven to be an attractive destination for child migrants as it was so much further away.

This conversation provided the context for Craven's discussion with Wiseman in September 1945 about Prendiville's proposals for the immigration of 2500 children. Craven was cautious about Prendiville's suggestion, writing to Wiseman that 'it is quite easy to talk in figures of this size ... but as you well know, in practice such migration is a very difficult and delicate matter involving heavy responsibilities for those who have it in their power to arrange such migration'.⁸⁷ Whilst emphasising that the key matter to be borne in mind was 'the interests of the children themselves', Craven also sought to establish whether the Dominions Office would support the resumption of migration to Christian Brothers' institutions, whether training provided in Australia would be flexible to meet the

⁸⁶ Note by Wiseman, 13th February 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/1.

⁸⁷ Craven to Wiseman, 21st September 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2.

interests of children, and whether Government funding and shipping were likely to become available.

Wiseman sent a non-committal response to Craven about these questions regarding future policy. It was clear, however, that subject to agreements on assisted migration being reached with the Australian Government, the Dominions Office were in principle willing to support future schemes if it judged that arrangements for the care, education, training and after-care of child migrants would be suitable.⁸⁸ In response to an enquiry from the Dominions Office about his views on Prendiville's proposals, Walter Garnett replied that if more children were to be sent to the Brothers' institutions they should only be sent initially to Clontarf until their primary education was complete before being sent either to Bindoon (for trades training) or Tardun (if they had particular interests in agricultural work).⁸⁹ Castledare, Garnett said, should not be used at all, despite Prendiville's assurances about improved conditions there. Although there was some variety in training available at the Brothers' institutions—compared to Fairbridge—Garnett commented that this was not broad enough to consider that education would be provided in ways tailored to the interests and ability of the individual child. Garnett had no concerns about girls being sent to Nazareth House, Geraldton. He was sceptical about the numbers of child migrants suggested by Prendiville, noting that Prendiville had suggested a much smaller capacity at the Brothers' institutions when Garnett had discussed this with him the previous autumn. Such expansion, Garnett noted, would only be feasible if other institutions were being used or it was being proposed that children be placed in private households. Both of those options would require further scrutiny, however, and Garnett agreed with the Dominions Office's view that child migration should resume only subject to conditions in receiving organisations being understood to be satisfactory. Wiseman conveyed these views in detail back to Canon Craven.⁹⁰

Shortly after this, the Catholic Child Welfare Council met to discuss Prendiville's proposal. After this meeting, Fr Denis Murphy, the Council's

⁸⁸ See Telegram Dominions Office to Acting High Commissioner, 4th October 1945, and Wiseman to Craven, 6th October 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2.

⁸⁹ Telegram UK High Commission to Dominions Office, 15th October 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2. Although the Dominions Office later described this communication to Craven as expressing the views of the acting UK High Commissioner, Walter Hankinson, the content of the telegram itself seems to clearly to have been authored by Garnett.

⁹⁰ Wiseman to Craven, 18th October 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2.

Secretary, wrote to Ronald Wiseman explaining that as the Council had a number of new members who would benefit from an up-to-date evaluation of institutional conditions in Australia, it would be helpful if the Dominions Office would give permission for the Appendix of Garnett's report previously sent to Craven to be circulated to all the Council's members.⁹¹ Wiseman agreed on the condition that both the individual institutions named in the Appendix and the Christian Brothers as the receiving organisation be anonymised.⁹²

Early in the following spring, Br Conlon began corresponding with Arthur Calwell to ask how close assisted migration agreements were to being reached between the Commonwealth and UK Governments and notifying Calwell of his intention to recruit child migrants from Britain from the following May.⁹³ Conlon also reported his work in visiting Australian dioceses whose bishops and representatives were said by him to have a keen interest in supporting the Commonwealth's ambitious plans for adult and child immigration.⁹⁴ Calwell, who had been educated by the Christian Brothers, commented later in life that he owed everything, after his parents, to the Brothers and liked to keep in touch with them.⁹⁵ Whilst Calwell operated within the constraints of his ministerial role, he also took the trouble to correspond with senior figures in the Brothers on comparatively minor administrative issues that he would not write to officials in other voluntary organisations about.⁹⁶ Calwell also actively encouraged the Catholic Church in Australia to create administrative structures to support Catholic immigration, leading in the spring of 1947 to the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee by the Australian Catholic Episcopal

⁹¹ Murphy to Wiseman, 29th October 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2.

⁹² Wiseman to Murphy, 10th November 1945, TNA: DO35/1139/M1126/2.

⁹³ Conlon to Calwell, 26th January 1946, NAA.C: A445/133/2/8.

⁹⁴ Conlon to Calwell, 19th February 1946, NAA.C: A445/133/2/8.

⁹⁵ Colm Kiernan, *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1978), p. 17.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Memo to Heyes, 28th April 1948, which notes a telephone call that afternoon from Fr Stinson about on-going problems with a delayed payment to the Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association of the per capita Commonwealth equipment allowance for child migrants and records that the Minister (Calwell) is 'anxious that you have this matter attended to', NAA.C: A436, 1950/5/5597; also Quirke to Calwell, 24th May 1947, Calwell to Quirke, 29th May 1947, and Calwell to Quirke, 11th June 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8, about the purchase of a hut for use as a dining room at Tardun.

Conference.⁹⁷ In his correspondence with Conlon, Calwell was keen to facilitate his work both by providing letters of introduction to officials in London as well as arranging Conlon's shipping.⁹⁸ Whether or not Calwell was already clear by February 1946 that the Commonwealth plan of receiving 50,000 war orphans in State-run cottage homes and hostels was unlikely to be viable, his support for Conlon's work suggested both a pragmatic willingness to make use of voluntary organisations if they could deliver child migrants as well as a degree of partiality towards the Brothers.⁹⁹ In a charged sectarian atmosphere in which some Australian Protestant groups regarded with suspicion both Catholic representation within the Labor Party and the prospect of increasing numbers of Catholic migrants with questionable loyalty to the British Empire,¹⁰⁰ the work of Calwell's Department was also carefully picked over for any signs of Catholic bias. Questions about favouritism to the Catholic Church in immigration matters—often motivated more by sectarian paranoia than substantial evidence—were raised both in the Australian House of Representatives and private correspondence with immigration officials.¹⁰¹ Whilst Calwell's natural affinities were with Catholic organisations, such scrutiny created greater pressure for him publicly to display an even-handed approach, and strong rebuttals of Catholic bias were made both by him and other Government officials.¹⁰²

Conlon arrived in London in May 1946, with Justin Symonds, the co-adjutor Archbishop of Melbourne, who was undertaking a wider tour of Europe on behalf of the Australian Catholic Hierarchy to assess the

⁹⁷ Frank Meacham, *The Church and Migrants, 1946–1987* (Haberfield: St Joan of Arc Press, 1991), pp. 18–23.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Calwell to Conlon, 5th February 1946, Calwell to Conlon, 8th February 1946, Calwell to Conlon, 21st February 1946, NAA.C: A445/133/2/8.

⁹⁹ Calwell certainly alerted Simonds and Conlon to the decision of the Premier's Conference more quickly than the United Protestant Association (see Calwell to Agst, 13th December 1946, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50).

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, United Protestant Association Pamphlet 1944/45, McArthur to Peters, 23rd November 1945, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Agst to Chifley, 26th March 1946, Agst to Chifley, 19th June 1946, Stevens to Calwell, House of Representatives, Hansard, 18th July 1946, 15th August 1946, Agst to Beasley, 11th December 1946, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50.

¹⁰² See, for example, Beasley to Agst, 20th December 1946, Beasley to Calwell, 20th December 1946, Heyes to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 6th May 1947, Calwell to Chifley, 4th June 1947, Heyes to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 2nd December 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/50.

potential for future child and adult immigration.¹⁰³ In one press interview, Simonds was reported as saying that he felt that child migrants had the greatest potential as ‘they soon respond to a new environment and forget the old, which is most necessary for the little innocent victims of the war’.¹⁰⁴ Soon after his arrival, Conlon called upon the Dominions Office to present his letter of introduction from Calwell and inform them of his intention to begin to recruiting Catholic children for emigration. In a meeting with W.G. Head (who had recently replaced Robert Wiseman as Assistant Secretary with responsibility for overseas settlement)¹⁰⁵ and R.L. Dixon, Conlon set out plans for a national Catholic child migration scheme in which 5000 children would be received mainly in residential schools run by religious orders across Australia and sought clarification on whether the Dominions Office would fund this in a comparable way to the pre-war parties to Western Australia.¹⁰⁶ No further discussion had taken place about plans for Catholic child migration since Wiseman’s correspondence with Murphy and Craven six months’ previously. As a consequence, the two civil servants, who had relatively little experience with previous child migration work, were somewhat surprised to be presented with this plan by Conlon without any forewarning by any Catholic officials in Britain. Head and Dixon were non-committal about the availability of funding and shipping, and in the absence of any clear policy framework to support Conlon’s plan, recommended that he not be ‘too hasty’ in initiating any selection of children for migration.¹⁰⁷ They also encouraged him to make contact with Craven, as a representative of the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement, so that Conlon could work with a British organisation known to them. Having been made aware of this meeting by Head, Walter Garnett again expressed scepticism about the capacity either of the United Kingdom to provide, or Catholic institutions to receive, the numbers of children envisaged by Conlon. He also repeated his view that

¹⁰³ Meacham, *The Church and Migrants*, pp. 7–22.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Churchman to Help Europe’s Children’, *British Australian and New Zealand Weekly*, 25th May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹⁰⁵ Head to Kirkpatrick, 8th May 1946, TNA: DO35/1138/M996.1.

¹⁰⁶ Notes of Discussion at Dominions Office, 9th May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹⁰⁷ Head’s caution was also motivated by him having read the correspondence between the Dominions Office and UK High Commission about the Christian Brothers and child migration in preparation for this meeting with Conlon (see Head to Garnett, 11th May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1).

proper checks would need to be made about the conditions into which these children were being received, writing:

It is all very well to talk loosely of Catholic convent boarding schools in all parts of Australia, but these schools vary considerably. Some of them are in the back of beyond and what would be the quality of the care and education the children would receive is a matter which would require investigation. I am not in favour of introducing children into schools over which it would be impossible to maintain any general supervision; nor am I in favour of placing children in private homes unless there is a properly supervised Government scheme (as there is in Canada) to keep such placements under constant scrutiny.¹⁰⁸

Garnett also confirmed with Head, after consulting with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, that his understanding was that Conlon's visit was primarily an exploratory mission to establish the numbers of children who might be available for emigration. Whilst the Commonwealth Government was keen in principle to support child migration, he reported, no firm proposals along the lines described by Conlon had been submitted to it and further checks on conditions for child migrants would be needed before any such scheme could be approved.¹⁰⁹

Whilst it appeared to British civil servants that little was likely to develop in the near future from Conlon's visit to the United Kingdom, Conlon continued to work towards the resumption of Catholic child migration. On 21st May, Conlon and Simonds sent Calwell a four-page proposal for 5000 Catholic children recruited through the Commonwealth Government's child migration scheme to be placed with Catholic residential schools and institutions across the 23 Catholic dioceses in Australia.¹¹⁰ Up to 300 of these children, they suggested, could be placed in private households although the emphasis of these placements on training children for future work (e.g., in training girls to be domestic servants) marked them out as significantly different to the understanding of foster care in the Curtis report. Such support for the Government's child migration plans would, they argued, only be possible with significant capital funding support from the Government to expand institutions'

¹⁰⁸ Garnett to Head, 22nd May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹⁰⁹ Garnett to Head, 7th June 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹¹⁰ Simonds and Conlon to Calwell, 21st May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

capacity to absorb these children as well as adequate funding for maintenance and outfitting costs. Calwell eventually gave a full reply, following the Premiers' Conference and meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee, stating that whilst he would be 'glad to co-operate and assist in every way within my power', any form of assistance from the Commonwealth Government would have to be set at the same level for all voluntary organisations.¹¹¹ Whilst setting out the range of financial support that could be offered by the Commonwealth and State Governments, Calwell noted that Commonwealth funding was not currently available for outfitting costs for child migrants, but noted that sending organisations should still recognise that the emigration of children in their care would still relieve them 'of a considerable financial liability in respect of subsequent maintenance once they sent their children to Australia'.

Simonds and Conlon also met with Craven and Archbishop Griffin at the end of May, at which Griffin agreed to set up an urgent, extraordinary meeting of the Catholic Child Welfare Council within two weeks to discuss their child migration proposals.¹¹² The urgency and comparative secrecy of this meeting—whose minutes were unusually for the Council marked as 'Strictly Confidential'—appears to have reflected a wish to ensure that Catholic child migration arrangements could be made as expeditiously as possible to ensure that Catholic children were emigrated through these rather than through other non-Catholic bodies whose planning was not yet as advanced.¹¹³ Although some members of the Council expressed concern at these migration proposals, given the anonymised version of Garnett's report they had previously received, Craven reassured them that any problems with the Brothers' institutions had mainly only occurred because of war-time conditions. Whilst true of the over-crowding at Tardun following the requisitioning of Clontarf by the Royal Australian Air Force, this was a less accurate assessment of the problems that Garnett had noted about the retention of boys' at Brothers' institutions after school-leaving age without pay or problems with staffing

¹¹¹ Calwell to Simonds, 15th September 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹¹² Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Hearings*, transcript of Day 15, 17th July 2017, pp. 151–53.

¹¹³ A similar concern to avoid dilution of children's Catholicism through contact with non-Catholic organisations may also have underpinned Conlon's and Simond's suggestion that Catholic child migrants be sent on separately chartered ships or be kept segregated from other child migrants if sent on the same ship (Simonds and Conlon to Calwell, 21st May 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1).

and conditions at Castledare. With Griffin's support, the Council agreed to co-operate with Conlon's work on the basis that he would only recruit children through the relevant Catholic child rescue administrator for each diocese and not by direct approaches to residential institutions run by religious orders as Conlon had done before the war.¹¹⁴

It is unclear whether Conlon complied with this request. Although Conlon had, by October 1946, reportedly identified 260 children for emigration by agreement with diocesan officials, the residential institutions from which these children were being sent bore little relation to the institutions from which children were eventually sent the following autumn.¹¹⁵ Conlon's by-passing of diocesan officials remained a matter of complaint from the Catholic Child Welfare Council to subsequent representatives of the Australian Catholic Church involved in the administration of assisted migration.¹¹⁶

Although the Dominions Office were made aware of the Premiers' Conference agreement about child migration by mid-September,¹¹⁷ they remained unaware of Conlon's activities until Conlon contacted Head again in early November to see if the UK Government would contribute to costs not covered by the Commonwealth Government.¹¹⁸ Even then Conlon did not discuss the work he had done by then in any detail, nor confirm whether he had followed the Dominions Office's request that he work in conjunction with the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement. After being notified of this meeting, Garnett advised that if any plans were to be implemented to send children to Catholic institutions in Australia, prior notification of these should be given so that they could be visited and approved for this work by both Commonwealth and State Governments and someone on behalf of the UK Government.¹¹⁹ Garnett

¹¹⁴Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Hearings*, transcript of Day 15, 17th July 2017, pp. 160–161.

¹¹⁵See shipping lists for the 1947 migration parties held on NAA: A436, 1950/5/5597.

¹¹⁶Western Australia Select Committee into Child Migration, *Interim Report*, p. 39.

¹¹⁷Hankinson to Addison, 10th September 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹¹⁸Head to Garnett with enclosure, 26th November 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1.

¹¹⁹Garnett to Head, 13th December 1946, TNA: DO35/1140/M1131/1; Garnett also contacted the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to indicate that someone should undertake an inspection on behalf of the UK Government to approve institutions prior to them receiving child migrants, with subsequent supervision responsibilities reverting to State officials under the devolved guardianship arrangements of the 1946 Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act, Garnett to Nutt, 5th December 1946, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

also re-iterated his view about Castledare as an example of an institution unfit to receive child migrants,¹²⁰ and added his concern that the State official who had visited it with him—McAdam—was sympathetic to the Catholic ethos of the institution and could see no problems with it at all.

In January 1947, Canon Craven visited the Dominions Office to explain that Conlon had been in touch with him to discuss his plans for child migration but that the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement could not proceed with this until they were satisfied with conditions in the Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia. Until a UK representative of the Council had gone to Australia to inspect these institutions, Craven reportedly said that Conlon could not be advised to undertake any 'energetic action' to arrange for children's migration for the time being. Conlon clearly was engaged in 'energetic action' to make arrangements for children's migration by that stage, however, as he had already written to Calwell the previous month expressing concern that shipping arrangements should be made as soon as possible for the children he had provisionally selected.¹²¹ Whilst initially indicating that these child migrants would be given urgent priority when shipping berths became available, Calwell subsequently wrote to Conlon to confirm that inspections and approvals of receiving institutions would need to take place before nominations for these children could be agreed and that the lack of available shipping berths made urgent action difficult.¹²² However, it subsequently transpired that the nominations from the Catholic Episcopal Migration and Welfare Association (CEMWA)¹²³ for 340 children to be sent to Catholic institutions in Western Australia were approved by State officials and sent by them to Australia House in London for final allocation of those places to selected children without those inspections having taken

¹²⁰ See also this point about the unsuitability of Castledare made in contact between the UK High Commission and Commonwealth Department of Immigration in.

¹²¹ Referred to in Heyes to Under-Secretary for Lands and Immigration, 8th April 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8. The first berths for migrants travelling under assisted passages agreements between the UK and Australian Commonwealth Governments were to become available on ships sailing from March 1947.

¹²² Calwell to Conlon, 23rd January 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹²³ A body established under the authority of the Archbishop of Perth whose responsibilities included the oversight of Catholic immigration into Western Australia, including custodianship of children under the terms of the 1946 Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act.

place.¹²⁴ On becoming aware of this, Garnett asked Sir Tasman Heyes, Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to arrange for inspections to take place.

When these inspections were undertaken by State officials in May, significant shortcomings were identified in a number of the receiving institutions that the CEMWA had proposed.¹²⁵ Clontarf—which Garnett had previously recommended serve as the initial reception centre—already had 135 boys in residence with a reported capacity for only 25 more despite CEMWA having asked for 50 boys to be sent there. Accommodation at Clontarf was found to be over-crowded, dirty, spartan and in need of widespread repairs. With no female staff, and no prospect of this institution offering anything like a ‘homely’ atmosphere, immigration officials concluded that it was not in an appropriate state to receive any British child migrants. Although conditions at Castledare were said to have improved considerably over the past year or two,¹²⁶ accommodation was still not entirely satisfactory. Although the inspectors judged that the 30 requested child migrants could be accommodated there, it was recommended that they only be introduced gradually in groups of six to ten to make this process manageable. Although no inspection visit was undertaken to Nazareth House, Geraldton, another recent child welfare inspection had indicated that dormitory space originally built there for child migrants had been occupied during the war by elderly residents, with the institution having become the main reception centre for elderly men and

¹²⁴ See Garnett to Dixon, 9th May 1947, TNA: DO35/3386; Heyes to Chief Migration Officer, 5th June 1947, Wheeler to Heyes, 5th June 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8. The fact that the Chief Migration Officer for Western Australia had forwarded this nomination directly to Australia House for action without these inspections taking place suggests either a lack of understanding of the process that had been set out by Calwell earlier that year or an attempt to expedite these migrations without these inspections taking place. As with other group nominations, this nomination was given an identifying code number (in this case, WG3) against which individual children selected and approved for this nomination would be classified.

¹²⁵ See Gratwick to Heyes with enclosure, 20th May 1947, Gratwick to Heyes with enclosure, 26th May 1947, Smith to Heyes, 26th May 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8; a copy of the report on Bindoon is included in Garnett to Dixon with enclosures, 12th June 1947, held on TNA: DO35/3386, DO35/3389 and MH102/1879.

¹²⁶ Castledare evidently had a longer history of difficulties in maintaining appropriate standards of care, with pre-war reports also referring to concerns about lack of female staffing, poor physical care of children and lack of suitable play space, see correspondence and other documents on WASR: 1031/AN/145/1/366/37.

women in need of residential care for that area. In the absence of new accommodation, there was no capacity for the 50 proposed child migrants to be housed there and approval for this was therefore withdrawn. Whilst the CEMWA had requested that 100 boys be sent to Bindoon including boys under school-leaving age, inspectors found that it currently had no school facilities and recommended that this number be reduced to 50 and restricted to boys aged 15 and over who had already completed primary education. This restriction was also recommended on the grounds that a new block of buildings (including dormitories) was still under construction mainly by a small number of boy trainees and was unlikely to be completed in the near future. Only Tardun and St Joseph's Orphanage, Subiaco (run by the Sisters of Mercy), received unqualified recommendations, although again in these cases, it was advised that they be sent children only in small parties of 10–15 over the next year.

On the basis of these recommendations, Heyes advised immigration officials at Australia House in London that the total number of child migrants to be accepted under CEMWA's original nomination would be reduced from 340 to 175, with it being acceptable for a 'token booking' of 45 children to be sent to these institutions in the next few months. Conlon's original plan of sending all 340 children in one shipping was regarded as entirely impractical.¹²⁷ Calwell wrote to Conlon notifying him of this reduction and indicating that he hoped to meet Conlon when he travelled to London later in June, commenting 'I then hope to renew old friendships and shall be looking forward to discussing with you in person some of our mutual problems, which are sometimes difficult to explain by correspondence'.¹²⁸ After being sent copies of the inspection reports, and notified of the decision to reduce the numbers of children being sent, Garnett commented that it was very clear that State authorities had approved the original nominations without having undertaken proper inspections and that he remained sceptical that Castledare could

¹²⁷ Heyes to Chief Migration Officer, 5th June 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8. The recommendation of only sending limited numbers of child migrants on each shipping was also reinforced by Austin Anderson, a director of the Orient Line shipping company, in a meeting with C.W. Dixon from the Dominions Office, see copy of minute, 6th May 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹²⁸ Calwell to Conlon, 11th June 1945, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8. See also Memorandum by Maxwell, 26th June 1947, TNA: MH102/1553, which notes that the Dominions Office had informed the Home Office that Calwell was coming to London to speed up assisted migration, including the migration of around 1000 children.

accommodate more than 70 children.¹²⁹ Without a satisfactory follow-up report on Castledare to be submitted in six months' time, Garnett indicated that he would not recommend that the UK Government sanction the sending of any children to Castledare.¹³⁰ He also forwarded the critical reports on to the Dominions Office in order to head off any attempt by Conlon to have these reductions revised.¹³¹

This decision set in motion a number of actions by the Catholic organisations involved to attempt to reverse this reduction—efforts supported by Western Australian immigration officials. Following the purchase of several pre-fabricated buildings previously owned by the Royal Australian Air Force as accommodation for girls at Nazareth House, Geraldton, State officials recommended that the original nomination of 50 girls to be sent there be restored.¹³² On arrival in London on 28th June, Calwell had a series of meetings—including with Clement Attlee and other members of the Labour Cabinet—intended both to encourage emigration to Australia and to make arrangements for increasing the availability of shipping berths for migrants.¹³³ Through these meetings he succeeded in securing the use of the SS *Ormonde* as a migrant ship to Australia, as well as sailings of the SS *Asturias*.¹³⁴ Calwell also met with Conlon who requested that the original nomination for 340 child migrants be fully restored.¹³⁵ Whilst still in London, Calwell received notification from the Archbishop of Perth that following fresh inspections of Clontarf and Bindoon, the State and Commonwealth immigration officials would be recommending the re-instatement of the full quota of 340 child

¹²⁹ Garnett to Wheeler 9th June 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8; Garnett to Dixon, 12th June 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹³⁰ On this, see also Garnett to Dixon, 9th May 1947, TNA: DO35/3386, in which Garnett indicates that the UK Government would need to be satisfied that conditions at Castledare were now 'vastly different' to those he observed in 1944 for it to be acceptable to send children there.

¹³¹ Garnett to Dixon, 12th June 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹³² Smith to Heyes 11th June 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

¹³³ Colm Kiernan, *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography* (West Melbourne: Nelson, 1978), pp. 126–28; Mary Elizabeth Calwell, *I am Bound to Be True: The Life and Legacy of Arthur A. Calwell* (Preston, Vic.: Mosaic Press, 2012), pp. 64–65.

¹³⁴ Colm Kiernan, *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1978), pp. 1126–9.

¹³⁵ Referred to in Garnett to Dixon, 21st July 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

migrants.¹³⁶ This change of mind had resulted from the acquisition of a new building at Clontarf and the promise of £5000 from the Archbishop of Perth for further renovations, as well as the planned transfer of teachers and preparation of new classrooms and dormitories at Bindoon.¹³⁷ The fact that Calwell evidently supported this request indicates a willingness on his part to give a greater priority to child migration than might have been expected at the time given the more urgent need for adult immigrants with specific labour skills.¹³⁸

Garnett gave his support to these approvals, subject to an official from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration visiting Castledare to confirm its suitability.¹³⁹ This appears to have come in the form of verbal assurances that he received from Reuben Wheeler and there is no indication of any written report being provided despite the Dominions Office making a follow-up request for this in early August given the imminent departure of the first planned party of child migrants at the end of that month.¹⁴⁰ In the absence of such a report, there appears to have been some confusion amongst civil servants in London about the exact status of Castledare as an approved institution, and the Home Office Children's Department erroneously believed that there was no intention to include Castledare as a receiving institution for the time being.¹⁴¹ A note on the Dominions Office file for this correspondence also commented that nothing had been heard from Canon Craven since his visit to the Dominions Office at the start of the year.¹⁴² Given Craven's repeated comments about the need for Catholic representatives in the United Kingdom to make an independent inspection of institutions in Western Australia before sending any more children, the note recorded that it would be worth contacting him to assure him that the UK Government was now prepared to support the resumption of migration to these institutions based on the revised reports on them that it had received that summer. The fact, however, that arrangements for these children's

¹³⁶ Cablegrams Gratwick to Armstrong, 9th July 1947, Armstrong to Calwell, 11th July 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

¹³⁷ Gratwick to Nutt with enclosure, received 16th July 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Addison to Bessborough, 27th June 1947, TNA: DO35/3389.

¹³⁹ Garnett to Dixon, 21st July 1947, TNA: DO35/3386; also note on Peter to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 11th July 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

¹⁴⁰ Dixon to Garnett, 7th August 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹⁴¹ Note by Maxwell, 21st August 1947, TNA: MH102/1879.

¹⁴² Note to C.W. Dixon, 29th July 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

migration by the Catholic organisations involved were well-advanced by then indicates, however, that the Catholic officials involved had already decided to send children to those institutions without such inspections having been made.

On the 29th August, the SS *Asturias* left Southampton with 146 children sailing under this group nomination, arriving just under a month later at the port of Fremantle in Western Australia as part of a larger group of over a thousand assisted migrants from the United Kingdom.¹⁴³ On arrival they were welcomed by the Premier of Western Australia, Archbishop Prendiville and two Western Australian senators representing the Commonwealth Government, with newspaper headlines inaccurately describing them as 'war orphans'.¹⁴⁴ A further 88 children under this nomination arrived at Fremantle on the SS *Ormonde* on 7th November, and another 100 on the SS *Asturias* on 10th December. Of the 334 children sent in total to Catholic institutions in Western Australia on those three sailings, 257 had been sent from institutions run by, or associated with, the Sisters of Nazareth. Each of the arrival parties continued to be marked by press coverage and messages of welcome from politicians.¹⁴⁵ Despite the recommendations of sending child migrants in small groups to ease their assimilation into receiving institutions, virtually the whole of the group nomination raised by the CEMWA arrived in Western Australia over a period of just over ten weeks.

The demographics and distribution of these children demonstrated a lack of detailed monitoring by UK officials. Although Castledare had been meant to receive no more than 30 boys, in the event it received 52 because Conlon had recruited a larger than expected number of younger boys who could not be sent to any of the Brothers' other institutions.¹⁴⁶ Although

¹⁴³ Shipping lists for children sent under this WG3 nomination in the autumn of 1947, including sending and receiving institutions, are held on NAA.C: A436, 1950/5/5597.

¹⁴⁴ 'Warm Welcome for War Orphans – Big Contingent Arrives Tomorrow', *Sunday Times*, 21st September 1947, p. 6; 'War Orphans in Geraldton', *The Daily News*, 24th September 1947, p. 5; 'New Little Australians – Arrival of Orphan Children', *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 25th September 1947, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ 'Ormonde Due Today – Passengers for W.A. Total 102', *The West Australian*, 7th November 1947, p. 11; 'Thousand Migrants – Many Children Arrive By the Ormonde', *The West Australian*, 8th November 1947, p. 11. 'Big intake of Migrants – Asturias to Disembark over 1,600', *The West Australian*, 8th December 1947, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ See shipping lists in NAA.C: A436, 1950/5/5597; also Assistant Under Secretary for Lands and Immigration to Heyes, 12th November 1947, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

Garnett had previously stated that boys should only be sent to Castledare if aged seven or over, 32 of the child migrants sent there that autumn were aged six or under.¹⁴⁷ A similar gap in oversight occurred in relation to Nazareth House, Geraldton. Although the 52 girls sent there only slightly exceeded the agreed quota of 50, the decision by State immigration officials to allow this quota to be re-instated after the acquisition of buildings to accommodate them did not appear to have been communicated to the UK High Commission.¹⁴⁸ Although Garnett supported the re-instatement of the CEMWA's request for 340 child migrants, his correspondence about this with the Dominions Office implies that he thought that this number had been raised again because of more positive reports about Christian Brothers' institutions.¹⁴⁹ The issue of whether girls should have been sent to Nazareth House, Geraldton whilst elderly residents were still accommodated there appears to have been forgotten by Garnett. It was only in 1949 that the UK High Commission raised a query with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration as to why girls had been sent to Nazareth House, Geraldton when it had no record of having given its approval to the institution or any information as to whether elderly residents had indeed been moved to another institution.¹⁵⁰ In response to this, the Commonwealth Migration Officer for Western Australia indicated that the girls had been sent there because the original suspension had 'seriously embarrassed' the Catholic authorities given that girls from the United Kingdom had apparently already been selected and were ready for shipping when the suspension was made. In view of this, it had been felt that although the continued presence of elderly residents at Nazareth House, Geraldton was not ideal, the provision of alternative accommodation for the child migrants through the buildings purchased from the Royal Australian Air Force represented an adequate compromise.¹⁵¹ The

¹⁴⁷ Compare Garnett to Dixon, 12th June 1947, TNA: DO35/3386 with ages of children on shipping lists at NAA.C: A436, 1950/5/5597.

¹⁴⁸ Garnett comments (in Garnett to Dixon, 12th June 1947, TNA: DO35/3386) that no girls could be sent to Nazareth House, Geraldton until alternative accommodation had been found for the elderly residents there and there is no archival record of him subsequently being notified of the plan to accommodate both children and elderly residents in different buildings at the same site.

¹⁴⁹ Garnett to Dixon, 21st July 1947, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹⁵⁰ See Nutt to Smith, 25th February 1949, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/47.

¹⁵¹ Denney to Under-Secretary for Lands and Immigration, 21st March 1949, TNA: MH102/1889.

need for consultation with the UK High Commission about this appears to have been overlooked. With elderly residents continuing to be admitted to the institution during that year, State officials eventually took the view that re-housing them would be impractical and the Commonwealth Relations Office gave retrospective approval for child migrants' admission to Nazareth House, Geraldton without any consultation with the Home Office.¹⁵²

Problems with monitoring the profile and destination of child migrants sent to Western Australia in the autumn of 1947 was not restricted to the Catholic institutions. In May 1948, Garnett spotted that six of the children sent to the Swan Homes the previous autumn had been girls despite State officials previously reporting that there was no available accommodation for them and the group nomination being restricted to boys only.¹⁵³ The fact that immigration officials at Australia House were clearly aware of the restrictions of this group nomination,¹⁵⁴ yet still allowed girls to be sent under it, further suggests both that some latitude was being exercised in terms of children emigrated under these nominations and that no effective monitoring of this was being undertaken by the Commonwealth Relations Office. There is no record on file of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration's response to Garnett's query about how these girls were allowed to be sent.

The implications of the decision to allow child migrants to these Western Australian institutions on the basis of assurances about future improvements, and without sufficient oversight from the UK High Commission, were to become clear in the months after their arrival. When Western Australian State inspectors visited Bindoon on 19th January 1948, they found 'large numbers of the boys of all ages at work on and

¹⁵² See Report on Inspection of Nazareth House, Geraldton, 24th November 1949, NAA.C: PP6/1, 1949/H/1165; internal minute, 23rd November 1950 and internal minute, 24th October 1953, TNA, MH102/1882. When the Home Office received a copy of a summary report on developments at Nazareth House, Geraldton, it concurred that the presence of elderly residents in an institution for child migrants was 'undesirable' but no action was taken to prevent any further children being sent there (MacGregor to Palmer, 15th January 1951, TNA: MH102/1882).

¹⁵³ See Garnett to Ordish, 5th May 1948, NAA.C: K403, W59/114; also Smith to Heyes, 26th May 1947, with enclosures, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8, which reported both the lack of accommodation for girls and the restriction of the group nomination to boys.

¹⁵⁴ See Nulty to Dixon, with enclosure, 22nd August 1947, on both TNA: MH102/1556 and DO35/3389.

about the building', some of whom were undertaking physically arduous activities in the heat including quarrying stone and digging holes. Although the Superior in charge, Br McGee, claimed that boys under school-leaving age only participated in such activities on a voluntary basis, it was also acknowledged that those who had worked the hardest in these tasks were given priority when children were selected to play in, or watch, cricket matches away from Bindoon. Dormitories, although adequate, were spartan and lacked any sense of homeliness. No school desks or equipment had yet been delivered, and the recreation room was bare with no play materials and little evidence of use. Some boys over school-leaving age, and counted as trainees, were found to be receiving no wages and the level of domestic staff appeared inadequate.

State officials were sufficiently concerned about these conditions to convene a special meeting to address each of these points with Catholic representatives. When Garnett was sent the reports and correspondence relating to this, he forwarded these on to Cyril Costley-White, an Assistant Secretary in the Commonwealth Relations Office, regarding them as reassuring evidence that the child welfare officials were actively addressing any problems found in residential institutions to which child migrants were being sent.¹⁵⁵ However when another inspection visit took place in April 1948, the boys were found not to be in school again (reportedly because two Brothers were temporarily away from the institution) although some evidence of work was found in their school books.¹⁵⁶ The new Principal, Br Keaney, promised inspectors that their education would not be neglected and said that if inspectors refrained from 'pin pricking criticism' and allowed him to have a 'fair go', then the institutions could be brought up to a good standard.

Reliance on boys' labour to develop the uncompleted buildings at Bindoon was to continue, however. A conference of State officials in the autumn of 1949 noted continued evidence at both Bindoon and Tardun of 'boys working [and] not receiving proper education, also that some boys acting improperly indicating insufficient control'. It was noted that 'If British authorities were aware of conditions may create uneasiness and probably cessation of selection of children under the scheme'.¹⁵⁷ The use of child migrants to undertake this labour whilst they were still in receipt

¹⁵⁵ Garnett to Costley-White, 9th June 1948, TNA: DO35/3386.

¹⁵⁶ Report on Bindoon, 9th April 1948, NAA.C: K403, W1959/88.

¹⁵⁷ Minute on conference, 20th October 1949, NAA.C: K403, W1959/88.

of UK Government maintenance funding intended to enable them to receive education or training was recognised to be 'a very delicate one'.¹⁵⁸ Following positive educational and inspection reports, however, no further action was taken in relation to this and the UK High Commission was not notified of these concerns.¹⁵⁹ Whilst the evaluations from later inspections varied, the reliance on boys' labour for building work and slow progress on required improvements to dormitories and bathrooms continued to be noted.¹⁶⁰ Similar problems occurred to Clontarf where problems associated with lack of renovation at the site continued to be noted by inspectors until the summer of 1951.¹⁶¹

Conditions for the young child migrants arriving at Castledare were particularly poor. On 9th July 1948 an unannounced inspection visit by child welfare and immigration officials recorded that:

Floors stained under the beds by liquid, which undoubtedly was urine which had dropped there through continually saturated mattresses. In several instances there was still a quantity of urine on the floor which had not soaked away and no effort had been made to mop it up... Many of the wire mattresses of these beds showed a rusty tarnish on the area of contact with urine sodden bed mattress. The mattresses were themselves in a deplorable state. For instance, one appeared to have been thrown out to dry after continual bed wetting and the dirt had become impregnated on the urine affected area. The mattress covering, in practically all cases was grimy and dirty. The mattresses themselves were torn, and in [one] cubicle... the mattress was nearly torn in half, exposing a mass of brown fibre filling. In this case the Manager, Brother McGee, admitted that a boy was using this bed ... The blankets inspected were miserably thin ... Two and three blankets to a bed are totally inadequate both in quantity and quality to provide necessary warmth for children of tender years sleeping on these verandahs subject to chill conditions of winter.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Memorandum from Ordish, 21st October 1949, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/8.

¹⁵⁹ See Report on Bindoon, 3rd August 1950, NAA.C: K403, W1959/88.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, inspection reports by Denney and Bartley, and by Fogarty, 6th July 1950, NAA.C: K403, W1959/88.

¹⁶¹ See, for example, inspection reports by Bartley, 12th May 1950, and Alexander, 2nd August 1951, NAA.C: K403, W1959/96.

¹⁶² Inspection report by McMinn, Denney, Roberts and Paddon, 9th July 1948, NAA.C: A445, 133/2/47.

The schoolrooms at Castledare were, the inspectors noted, over-crowded, and in the only recreation room, which was the only place with heating, the fireplace was blocked off with staging. In addition to the poor physical condition of the home, the staffing was wholly inadequate in numbers and personnel given that ‘Castledare is catering for children who are still little more than babies, who need love, affection, care and attention which a child of such age would get from a mother’. The unhealthy environment of the home, numbers of children accommodated there and lack of regular medical checks posed a significant risk of epidemics, including the threat of a possible spread of polio. ‘Lacking proper facilities, care, attention and opportunity what will be the reaction’, the inspectors asked, ‘on their citizenship value’? There is no indication that a copy of this report was forwarded on to Garnett. Although improvements were made to the dormitories at Castledare later that autumn, inadequate staffing, over-crowding and insufficient teaching space continued to be a source of criticism in inspection reports for another five years.¹⁶³ Poor staffing and inadequate supervision compounded the fact that Br Murphy, since recognised as one of the most prolific sexual offenders within the Christian Brothers in Western Australia, was on the staff of Castledare from 1944 to 1954.¹⁶⁴ Levels of staffing at Castledare were to remain fairly consistent for the next ten years with the Home Office eventually questioning in 1957 whether the inadequate staffing levels in an institution accommodating younger children meant that Castledare should possibly have its status as an institution approved by the UK Government withdrawn.¹⁶⁵ As was to prove to be the case in many other instances as well, however, these Home Office concerns were not pressed to the point of decisive action and in the face of assurances about further staff appointments, the approval of Castledare was maintained.

The failure of oversight of these Catholic migration parties in 1947 by UK authorities was starkly demonstrated in the unsanctioned numbers of young children being sent to an over-crowded, impersonal institution at Castledare, shivering at night in urine-soaked bed clothes and mattresses

¹⁶³ See, for example, Heyes to Secretary, Child Welfare Department, 9th February 1953; Heyes to Commissioner for Malta, 19th January 1945, NAA: K403, W1959/89.

¹⁶⁴ See Coldrey, *The Scheme*, p. 463; *Report of Case Study No.11 Congregation of Christian Brothers in Western Australia* (Canberra: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2014).

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Johnson to Fraser, 4th August 1957, TNA: DO35/10247.

and at risk of serious sexual assault. Boys were also sent under the agreed age limit for Bindoon as well, one of whom has since reported being targeted for sustained sexual abuse by a number of Brothers there.¹⁶⁶ However, the lack of readiness of Clontarf and Bindoon to receive the children sent to them in the autumn of 1947, and the transfer of girls to Nazareth House, Geraldton and the Swan Homes in Perth without UK Government approval were also indicative of a broader failure in monitoring the placement and welfare of those children.

COMPLEX ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS: FAILURE, SOCIAL IMAGINARIES AND TRUST

This failure in oversight occurred at the intersection of different organisational interests and capacities. After the politically sensitive decision to suspend the original Labor Government plan quickly to secure 50,000 'war orphans', the parties of child migrants who began to arrive in Australia from Britain 1947 were a politically helpful indication of Calwell's, and Labor's, continued commitment to securing Australia's interests through the expansion of its population.¹⁶⁷ As newspaper coverage showed during the autumn of 1947, the arrival of these children for Catholic institutions in Western Australia was woven into a political narrative about Calwell's success in making Australia the most attractive destination for imperial migration.¹⁶⁸ Calwell's active role in ensuring that child migration was given a high priority could also be understood as an attempt on his part to achieve some measure of success for a policy to which his personal political reputation had become attached. For Catholic organisations in Australia, the arrival of these children marked an opportunity for the growth of the wider Catholic population as well as a means of ensuring that child migrants would be housed in denominational institutions rather than the State-run homes originally envisaged in Chifley's scheme. For Catholic organisations in the United Kingdom, it offered the possibility of creating space in their residential homes to allow new admissions as well as sending children from family backgrounds

¹⁶⁶ See evidence from witness FWS, *Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry*, Transcript of Day 179.

¹⁶⁷ On Calwell's obvious sensitivity about numerical targets for immigration, see Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, pp. 107–10.

¹⁶⁸ A similar narrative of success later in Calwell's tenure as Minister is also evident in Statement by the Minister of Immigration, 25th February 1949, TNA: DO35/3370.

judged undesirable to places far away in which they could be offered new lives under Catholic formation. For the Commonwealth Relations Office, it formed a continuation of the well-established policy of sending children overseas as part of imperial migration intended to reinforce the cultural bonds of the Commonwealth and, given reasonable standards of care and training, provide children with good opportunities for their futures.

Alongside each of these interests, there were various forms of organisational limitation. The sheer scale of the Australian land mass meant that, apart from any political considerations of the relationship between Commonwealth and State Governments, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration was largely dependent on the knowledge and actions of State officials for the oversight and delivery of this work. Catholic organisations in the United Kingdom had little direct experience of the institutions in Western Australia to which children were being sent and, where concern was expressed about standards, this proved less influential than the willingness to participate in a shared project with their religious counter-parts in Australia. For the Commonwealth Relations Office, there was similarly little direct knowledge of conditions in Australian institutions and a reliance instead on information provided by Australian authorities and through the UK High Commission. Given that staff at the UK High Commission in Canberra had not undertaken any direct inspections of institutions that were about to receive British child migrants since Garnett's visit to some of them in 1944, the information about these institutions available to the Commonwealth Relations Office was even more limited than it might have been.¹⁶⁹ The limited oversight performed by staff at the UK High Commission also meant that the sending of girls to Nazareth House, Geraldton or the Swan Homes in Perth despite lack of approval for this from the UK Government were not isolated incidents. In September 1949, Harry Bass wrote from the UK High Commission to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to check if there were any other institutions to which child migrants had been sent of which it was not aware or had not given its approval and received

¹⁶⁹ See, for example, Telegram UK High Commission to Commonwealth Relations Office, 13th August 1947, TNA: DO35/3379, confirming that no recent visits had taken place by the Commission's staff to Barnardo's institutions in New South Wales, but that 'previous experience of Barnardo's justifies every confidence that their reception and settlement arrangements will be satisfactory'. The only reports received by the UK High Commission about institutions to which child migrants were sent in 1947 related to Catholic institutions and the Swan Homes in Western Australia.

confirmation that there were no other such cases.¹⁷⁰ In 1951, however, it was discovered that British boys had been sent to the Church of England Padbury farm school in Stoneville, Western Australia, when the Swan Homes had insufficient accommodation for child migrants, despite Padbury not having gone through any approval process.¹⁷¹ The following year, it was also found that Dr Barnardo's Homes had placed child migrants at its residential home at Normanhurst in New South Wales, again without this having been an approved institution.¹⁷² In both cases, the receiving organisation appeared to have assumed that approval of other institutions that they ran by the UK Government automatically extended to all residential institutions under their control. Whilst the fact that such non-approved placements were discovered could be seen as indicating that some degree of oversight was working, such placements tended to create pressures for the post-hoc approval of institutions such as Nazareth House, Geraldton and the Padbury farm school which might not have otherwise been approved had they not already been in receipt of child migrants.

In the wider context of these organisational interests and limitations, Walter Garnett played a focal role in the failure of oversight by the UK Government of these initial post-war parties of Catholic child migrants. This observation is not made so much to attribute blame to Garnett as to focus on the conditions under which an individual's policy judgements can carry particular influence and the processes through which significant errors of judgement can occur.

Garnett's role in decision-making and oversight in relation to these Catholic migration parties was notable not only because of the reliance of Commonwealth Relations Office staff on his views and advice, but because of the stark contrast between his previous emphasis on the need for appropriate standards and supervision in receiving institutions and the realities experienced by many of those children on arrival. His individual influence arose both out of his organisational context—in a governmental office specifically tasked with mediating between the UK and Commonwealth Governments—and his personal biography. His experience of dealing with matters relating to child migration since his participation in the 1924 Bondfield delegation marked him as having far greater expertise in this

¹⁷⁰ Bass to Ordish, 27th September 1949, NAA.C: A445/133/2/24.

¹⁷¹ Report on Padbury's Boys' Farm School, 4th December 1951, NAA: PP6/1, 1949/H/1145.

¹⁷² Dixon to Oates 3rd November 1952, TNA: MH102/1895.

field than the civil servants who had taken on responsibility for this in the Commonwealth Relations Office following the retirement of Ronald Wiseman. The practical necessities of relying on Garnett's judgements as the UK Government's 'man on the ground' in Australia was therefore reinforced by the sense that policy decisions could only sensibly be made in London on the basis of his more experienced advice. The absence of any maintenance agreement between the Commonwealth Relations Office and a representative Catholic sending organisation—which was not finalised until March 1949 when an agreement was finally signed between the UK Government and the London office of the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee¹⁷³—meant that the Commonwealth Relations Office had no administrative mechanism in place to check the ages or institutional destinations of those child migrants. In the absence of such an administrative check, reliance on Garnett's views and knowledge became even stronger.

Given the influence that Garnett had over the Commonwealth Relations Office's decisions about the approval of receiving institutions in Australia, the process through which he came to accept the proposed migration of 340 children to Catholic institutions in Western Australia was to have a profound effect on many of those children's lives. His understanding of those receiving institutions was inevitably limited by the sheer physical distance—more than 2000 miles—between his Canberra office and Western Australia. What direct knowledge he did have, based on single visits three years before, strongly shaped his perceptions. He continued to maintain through the autumn of 1946 that Nazareth House, Geraldton was an eminently well-equipped and suitable institution without knowing that elderly residents had been occupying the accommodation built for child migrants. Similarly, his experience of Castledare as an over-crowded, under-staffed institution not designed for the reception of young children persisted, despite the attempt by the Archbishop of Perth to persuade him otherwise.

In the absence of more up-to-date direct experience of these institutions, and there being little prospect of his called-for inspection of these institutions by a representative of the UK High Commission, Garnett relied instead on his broader assumptions about the organisational structures with which he was dealing. Although Garnett had argued at the

¹⁷³See agreement between UK Government and Australian Catholic Immigration Committee, 7th March 1949, TNA: DO35/3385.

Commonwealth inter-departmental sub-committee on child migration that voluntary and religious organisations were more likely to do their work well because of their ethos of vocation and altruism, he was clearly unwilling in practice simply to accept that the proposed Catholic migration scheme was a positive initiative. Garnett was far more prepared, however, to believe that a system of inspections by State officials, and State-based Commonwealth Migration Officers, could offer a sufficient safeguard for this work. His evident unhappiness at the failure of State officials to undertake appropriate inspections before CEMWA's initial application for 340 child migrants was approved, and his satisfaction at records of State officials quickly following up concerns at Bindoon indicated his more fundamental belief that such government inspections would be sufficient if undertaken properly. He was clearly aware that such systems were not infallible—as his experience of McAdam's endorsement of Castledare had shown him in 1944—but on balance regarded the general system of inspections by Australian officials as the best that could be done to ensure child migrants' welfare. His broad trust in the capacity of government systems to protect the welfare of children therefore compensated to some extent for any lack of detailed information. There is no indication that he pressed for any urgent inspections to be undertaken at Castledare after children's arrival there, despite his long-standing concerns about that institution. Instead the existence of a system of inspection functioned more as a proxy of care, providing a more general assurance of protection for children rather than a very regular source of information. A broad confidence in the safeguards offered by this governmental system may have created a context for Garnett's failure to establish the ages, numbers and institutional destinations of the Catholic child migrants who arrived in Western Australia in 1947 or to ask more searching questions about CEMWA's fitness as a custodian organisation for child migrants despite the fact that it had requested children be sent to institutions that inspectors had found to be substantially unsuitable or ill-equipped.

In this regard, similarities can be seen in Garnett's trust in Australian governmental systems—based on his broad sense of collaboration with Australian civil servants and the principle of respecting Australian autonomy—and the willingness of Catholic officials in Britain to support the migration of children to receiving institutions they recognised as sharing a common religious mission. Both reflect different social imaginaries, a mapping out of the social world around notions of affinity and identification with larger social institutions. Such imaginaries create a

sense of shared meaning and purpose with particular groups and social bonds assumed to be, if certainly not infallible, then broadly reliable and worth maintaining. They provide social actors with the means for understanding and judging how to act in worlds that they know to be imperfect and through their actions, people continually reinforce or refine the social imaginaries through which they live their lives. Trust is not therefore simply a passive stance of accepting some social relationships as being particularly valuable or reliable. Rather, the act of trusting is an important means through which a sense of social bond with others is reinforced and renewed.

The recursive reproduction of such social bonds through acts of trust had particular significance for initiatives such as the child migration programmes in which monitoring of children's welfare by British officials was primarily reliant on written reports by other people. Overtly challenging the adequacy of these reports with Australian authorities could carry connotations of mistrust and bad faith which British officials wished to avoid. As coming chapters will demonstrate, British officials typically took the view that such confrontational interventions would have little practical benefit and that it was preferable to maintain bonds with Australian authorities whilst trying to work gradually through these relationships to improve standards for child migrants.

In a religious context, such acts of trust function as a way of maintaining an active sense of shared religious belonging and can acquire the aura of a religious virtue or duty. In the context of governmental administration, acts of trust within the same department can reinforce a sense of shared departmental purpose and identity in the context of periodic conflicts and competition with other government bodies over status, power and the control of resources. Acts of trust across governmental departments are a necessary means through which shared identities and a sense of purpose are forged, enabling projects of governance to be possible across complex governmental structures. If Garnett was not prepared to accept the assurances of the Archbishop of Perth about improvements at Castledare in 1944, two and a half years later he was apparently willing to accept verbal assurances from Reuben Wheeler, at the Commonwealth Department of Immigration instead.¹⁷⁴ In doing so, Garnett not only

¹⁷⁴The fact that these assurances may have come directly from Reuben Wheeler, who had recently been in Western Australia, and with whom Garnett had previously worked, may have added to Garnett's trust in them.

acted out from his sense of shared social bonds with other Commonwealth administrators, but in accepting these assurances also performed his role in a way that reinforced those bonds. The policy and organisational delivery of post-war child migration to Australia was thus enabled through different organisational imaginaries which made the migration of children from Britain to institutions several thousand miles away seem meaningful, or at least tolerable, and which served to sustain different forms of organisational identity, bond and loyalty.

THE HOME OFFICE AND CHILD MIGRATION AFTER CURTIS

The Curtis report, and the Cabinet's decision in the spring of 1947 to make the Home Office the lead department for children's out-of-home care in England and Wales, created a significant shift in the administrative structures for child migration within the UK Government. Until 1947 policy and operational decisions about child migration had been almost entirely conducted within the Dominions Office, in discussion with the UK High Commission in Canberra or the Treasury (where decisions had financial implications for government spending). By the summer of 1947, officials and ministers within the Commonwealth Relations Office were increasingly conscious both of the recommendations of the Curtis report in relation to the resumption of child migration and of the need for the Home Office to be satisfied with arrangements for child migrants' care overseas.¹⁷⁵ From this point on, the already complex administrative systems operating between the Commonwealth Relations Office, UK High Commission, and Commonwealth and State Governments in Australia now had to involve the Home Office as well as the Scottish Home Department (for children emigrated from Scotland).¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ See Dixon to Costley-White, 6th August 1947, TNA: DO35/3389; also minute of meeting with Commonwealth Relations Office, 20th August 1947, TNA: MH102/1553. Awareness of the Curtis recommendations for child migration is also evident in note, 24th October 1946. And Head to Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, 2nd November 1946, TNA: MH102/1549, when the Dominions Office made a general response to a proposed child migration scheme from the South African Government.

¹⁷⁶ On the comparative lack of involvement of the government in Northern Ireland, see Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry, *Final Report*, Chapter 2, paras 42–65. The role of the Scottish Home Department was constrained by the assumption of civil servants in London that voluntary societies emigrating children from Scotland fell under their responsibility if those organisations had their headquarters in England and Wales. As a consequence, whilst

The Home Office had, as noted in Chap. 2, already become involved in discussions with the Dominions Office and the Fairbridge Society by the end of 1945 about the tensions between the Fairbridge organisations in London and Western Australia. After a further meeting between representatives of Fairbridge's London office, the Dominions Office and the Home Office in January 1946, it was agreed that the two government departments would produce a memorandum setting out their views on how this might best be resolved.¹⁷⁷ Agreed by the summer, this memorandum stated that whilst the Fairbridge organisation in London had the right to be informed about standards at Fairbridge farm schools in Australia, and to be assured that these reflected 'up-to-date' understandings of child-care, the powers and responsibility to ensure that these standards were maintained should ultimately reside with appropriate State authorities in Australia. As an internal note on this memorandum in the Dominions Office put it, 'the Dominions Office will not underwrite the London Society's authority in this matter and it is impelled further to suggest that Fairbridge act in line with the larger politic—that of self-government for the Dominions'.¹⁷⁸ This position was strongly endorsed by Walter Garnett, reflecting both his confidence in the ability of State authorities to fulfil these responsibilities and his view that close management of Australian institutions could not be successfully achieved by Fairbridge administrators and committee members some 12,000 miles away back in London.¹⁷⁹ The memorandum also included what was to prove to be a highly significant move away from the principle of representatives from the UK High Commission undertaking annual visits to check on conditions at institutions receiving child migrants. Whilst the UK High Commissioner in Australia was also said to have the 'right to satisfy themselves by inspection if necessary, that proper standards of training and education

the Scottish Home Department was consulted by civil servants in London on more general policy matters such as the drafting of s.33 regulations under the 1948 Children Act, the only approved voluntary society considered to fall primarily under the responsibility of the Scottish Home Department was the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service.

¹⁷⁷ Substantial documentation relating to the drafting of this memorandum and subsequent discussions about the revision of the Fairbridge Society's articles of association is held on TNA: DO35/1139/M1102/2, DO35/1139/M1118/1, DO35.1139.M1118.2, DO35/3395, DO35/3396, and DO35/3402.

¹⁷⁸ Note on the Memorandum of the Dominions Office, 2nd August 1946, TNA: DO35/1139/M1118/1.

¹⁷⁹ Garnett to Head, 8th November 1946, TNA: DO35/1139/M1118/1, also Garnett to Costley-White, 4th November 1947, TNA: DO35/3402.

were being maintained; ... the main task of supervision with a view to ensuring the maintenance of such standards ... would devolve on the State Government'. Direct visits by representatives of the UK High Commission in Canberra were therefore to be the exception rather than a regular feature of British oversight of these schemes, with faith placed instead in the capacity to State authorities to discharge these responsibilities.

Whilst claiming to be broadly happy with this approach, Fairbridge's London officials still felt that more could be done to ensure that it had more control over operations in Australia.¹⁸⁰ A process began of redrafting the charity's articles of association in an attempt to circumvent challenges posed by the incorporation of the Australian farm schools as autonomous entities. To secure agreement for this, a Fairbridge delegation led by Sir Charles Hambro made arrangements to visit Australia in October 1947 to engage in face-to-face negotiations with the Australian committees. In preparation for this, meetings were held with staff in the Home Office's Children's Department in order to produce a document about appropriate standards for child migrants which could help to strengthen the London delegation's position. By the time these meetings took place, officials in the Children's Department were already increasingly aware of the need to develop a wider policy position in relation to child migration, having been approached by Br Conlon, Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Church of England Advisory Council for Empire Settlement, Australia House (about possible migration to area schools in Tasmania) and the Save the Children Fund with various queries and requests relating to the resumption of child migration.¹⁸¹

In response to these approaches, the Home Office Children's Department had already begun to think about its more general policy

¹⁸⁰ Fairbridge Farm Schools in Australia, 14th August 1946, TNA: DO35/1139/M1118/1.

¹⁸¹ Note by Maxwell, 28th May 1947, TNA: MH102/1892 (which states that that children originally proposed for migration by Barnardo's would not have been accepted by the Home Office as parents would not consent and more information about their home circumstances was required)—see also other policy changes suggested to Barnardo's by the Home Office at note by Maxwell, 18th June 1948, TNA: MH102/1892. Also Maxwell to Dixon, 19th July 1947, TNA: DO35/3389; note by Maxwell, 24th July 1947, TNA: MH102/1553; also notes and correspondence on TNA: MH102/1551, MH102/1552, MH102/1554, MH102/1555. The Home Office were originally approached about Secretary of State consent for a boy's migration under the CEMWA nomination in November 1946, but seem to have had little information about arrangements for this until their meeting with Conlon the following summer (see correspondence on TNA: MH102/1550).

position in relation to child migration. Although its direct knowledge of conditions and operational practices in Australia was limited,¹⁸² it had already received a highly critical report of both standards of care at the Middlemore Homes in Birmingham and of selection and preparation of children being sent from there.¹⁸³ In an initial policy memorandum drafted by Janette Maxwell in June 1947, it was suggested that an over-arching Home Office policy of encouraging or discouraging child migration was unlikely to be of practical use as the Home Office only had any powers to influence the possible migration of children under ‘fit person’ orders or, when the Children Bill was passed into law, children under the care of local authorities.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, given the growing number of approaches being made to the Home Office either on matters of general policy, or for children requiring Secretary of State consent for their migration, it was suggested that a broad view of the relative benefits or risks of child migration should be developed. Whilst Maxwell noted that the Dominions had the potential to offer child migrants significant future opportunities, their ability to realise these would often be limited if they were sent to isolated residential institutions, as Garnett’s 1944 report had shown. Although more general policy objections could be raised against child migration—in terms of the need for Britain to retain its young population against the demographic trends of an ageing and declining population—the priority should be ‘to consider each child’s particular position without undue regard for national and wider considerations’. As a general rule, emigration could be appropriate for a child with no family and no childhood prospects other than remaining in institutional care (although as her senior, Mary Rosling, noted in the margins, this was precisely the kind of child who should be boarded out). Such children were unlikely to be able to have a well-informed view of the implications of their emigration,

¹⁸² See, for example, the incorrect assumption that there was a Child Welfare department within the Australian Commonwealth Government (note by Maxwell, 24th July 1947) and the lack of awareness of ‘bulk’ migration parties before the war and (memorandum by Maxwell, 26th June 1947), both TNA: MH102/1553. The Maxwell memorandum also notes that staff at Australia House had informed them that the homes to which children were to be sent under the CEMWA nomination were ‘particularly good’ and had ‘the best reputation in Western Australia’.

¹⁸³ See ‘Middlemore Homes’, 26th June 1947, TNA: MH102/1553. A more positive account of conditions at Middlemore following a change of management was given to the Home Office by Vera Grenfell later that year (note by Maxwell, 27th October 1947, TNA: MH102/1591).

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum by Maxwell, 26th June 1947, TNA: MH102/1553.

however, given the likelihood that they had been presented with a 'highly glamourized' view of life in Australia. If a child had any family members or relatives with whom there was any chance at all of them returning or being boarded out with, then, Maxwell argued, their emigration should be actively discouraged.¹⁸⁵ Just as the Curtis report had suggested, decisions about a child's welfare needed to be based not only on purely material considerations—such as whether material standards in Australian institutions were better than a child's prospective home life in Britain—but on the importance of their emotional care and continued contact where possible with family members. Particular caution should be exercised in the emigration of very young children who had only been committed to care in this country for a short time, and for whom any decision about their emigration would best be delayed for some years. In summary, Maxwell concluded, 'we should tend to be anti-emigration expect where we can be fully satisfied that the child can only gain by it'. It is, after all, an irrevocable decision. 'Once done it can only, with the utmost difficulty, be undone'.

This policy position was developed further after members of the proposed Fairbridge delegation to Australia met with Mary Rosling at the Home Office in July and found her to be more supportive of their wish to have greater control over operations in Australia than her predecessor, Miss Wall.¹⁸⁶ In response to a request from the Fairbridge delegation, Rosling agreed to produce a memorandum setting out the policy direction for children's out-of-home care in the United Kingdom which the Home Office would expect to see reflected in standards of overseas organisations receiving child migrants.¹⁸⁷ The production of this memorandum was also discussed at a meeting between Janette Maxwell and Cyril Costley-White and R.L. Dixon in the Commonwealth Relations Office, convened to discuss the views of the two departments in relation to child migration. Maxwell later noted differences between their positions in which 'we [the Home Office] tend to discourage in favour of boarding out or more family care in this country, while they [the Commonwealth Relations Office] encourage without giving much attention to the individual children

¹⁸⁵ On the implementation of this policy, see Maxwell to Lucette, 13th August 1947, TNA: MH102/1892 on the refusal of approval for emigration for three girls put forward by Barnardo's on grounds that some possibility remained that they might be able to return home to the care of their mother.

¹⁸⁶ Meeting at Home Office, 17th July 1947, TNA: MH102/1403.

¹⁸⁷ Note by Maxwell, (exact date obscured) August 1947, TNA: MH102/1403.

involved'.¹⁸⁸ Maxwell was also told about the work of Walter Garnett at the UK High Commission, who was said to investigate 'every home to which it is proposed to send children' and who, despite having little knowledge of child-care standards in the United Kingdom, was described as having a long experience with receiving institutions in Australia. Costley-White and Dixon raised no objections to the Home Office providing the Fairbridge delegation being provided with a memorandum and, when Maxwell offered to make a copy of this available to Garnett on the basis it might help him in judging the suitability of proposed receiving institutions, diplomatically replied that he would certainly 'appreciate such a note'. The meeting also led to the Commonwealth Relations Office sharing with the Home Office the reports it had received about Christian Brothers' institutions in Western Australia. A week after the first party of children had left for Western Australia on the SS *Asturias*, Mary Rosling noted on the Home Office file containing the reports that she did not 'feel entirely reassured about these places'.¹⁸⁹

In September, Rosling's memorandum was sent to the Fairbridge delegation in draft form for their comments, with Harry Logan, the London Society's new Acting General Secretary replying that they were delighted with it and believed that it could not 'fail to have the utmost influence on the success of our visit'.¹⁹⁰ Suggested changes from Fairbridge added greater caution to the passing on of a child's case history unless the Principal at the receiving institutions was judged to be capable of making appropriate use of it and these were incorporated into Rosling's text. A copy was then sent to the Commonwealth Relations Office for Garnett, forwarded on to him by Costley-White with a cover letter explaining both the memorandum's wider policy context in the wake of the Curtis report and its origins in the July meeting between Fairbridge and Mary Rosling at which it was noted the Commonwealth Relations Office was 'not represented'.¹⁹¹ Costley-White suggested that Garnett circulate this to relevant Commonwealth and State contacts before the Fairbridge delegation

¹⁸⁸ Minute on meeting with Commonwealth Relations Office, 20th August 1947, TNA: MH102/1553.

¹⁸⁹ Note by Rosling, 4th September 1947, TNA: MH102/1879.

¹⁹⁰ Rosling to Logan, 15th September 1947 with enclosure, Logan to Rosling with enclosure, 16th September 1947, TNA: MH102/1403.

¹⁹¹ Costley-White to Garnett, 2nd October 1947, TNA: MH102/1403.

arrived so that it could be made clear that the memorandum represented the current view of the Home Office rather than the settled position of the UK Government and Charles Hambro would not be able to claim to be the bearer of Government 'instructions' from the United Kingdom.¹⁹²

The final text of Rosling's memorandum began by directly quoting from the Curtis report about the key principles that should underpin children's out-of-home care: 'affection and personal interest... respect for his [sic] personality and regard for his self-esteem ... stability ... opportunity of making the best of his ability and aptitudes ... [and] a share in the common life of a small group of people in a homely environment'.¹⁹³ Given the importance of these principles it was said that it 'would be difficult to justify' the emigration of children to receiving organisations who failed to implement them. Somewhat diluting the particular wording of paragraph 515 of the Curtis report, the memorandum stated that child migrants should receive care and opportunities overseas that would be as good as if that child had remained in the United Kingdom. To this end, some continued involvement by sending organisations was essential and the Home Office would not 'regard with equanimity any scheme of emigration in which the care of the child passed entirely out of the hands of the parent organisation in this country'. Such on-going responsibility was necessary both for monitoring the care of children already sent and to ensure that conditions were appropriate for any children emigrated in the future. This should also involve the 'parent organisation' in setting the general policy for the care and training of children in overseas institutions. A liaison officer—an idea originally proposed to the Home Office by Fairbridge—should be appointed to ensure effective communication between the sending and receiving bodies. Staff should be carefully selected to ensure that they were able to offer care along the lines of the Curtis principles. Selection decisions should involve an experienced social worker, assess the impact of emigration on any continued family bonds and be made entirely on whether emigration was in the 'best interests of any particular child'. Residential homes should operate on the basis of care in small groups, provide opportunities where possible for engaging with the local community and provide children with experience of building up their own

¹⁹² See also Garnett to Heyes, 18th October 1947, NAA.C: K403, W59/63.

¹⁹³ Emigration of Children Who Have Been Deprived of a Normal Home Life, no date, copies held on both TNA: MH102/1558 and NAA.C: K403, W59/63.

possessions and managing pocket money. Education should take place in local schools or, if provided in residential institutions, be equivalent to standards in local schools, with children able to develop academically according to their particular ability and interests. Effective after-care from a trained worker should be provided. Holiday placements with local families through an ‘aunts and uncles scheme’ should be arranged where possible. Where new accommodation for child migrants was being considered, care should be taken with thinking about the whole needs of the child—not just the material standard of their accommodation. However beautiful an isolated rural location might be, it would always be preferable to find sites that would enable children quickly to integrate with local communities both through their schooling and through other informal activities.¹⁹⁴

Garnett’s response to the memorandum—which was later passed back to the Home Office—was tetchy.¹⁹⁵ ‘The Home Office’, he wrote, ‘in preparing this memorandum appear to have been very largely guided by the views of the Fairbridge Society, by whom indeed the memorandum might well have been written’. Indeed many of its proposals for control of operations in Australia by ‘parent organisations’ in the United Kingdom reflected ideas that the Fairbridge Society in London had already discussed in meetings with the Commonwealth Relations Office. Aside from the issue of control of Australian operations from the United Kingdom, Garnett wrote that the other general principles set out Rosling’s memorandum re-stated points that he had already made in his 1944 report. Any inference that Australian authorities needed to be educated on these points drew a defensive and, given his knowledge of problems at receiving institutions during the war, inaccurate response from him. ‘In general’, Garnett wrote, ‘standards of care and aftercare of children brought to Australia by voluntary organisations have in the past been satisfactory and well up to the standard now laid down in the Curtis Committee’s report as a result of the deficiencies found in existing arrangements for the care of underprivileged children in the United Kingdom. It must not however be assumed that the standard of care which is to be obtained in the future in

¹⁹⁴ Rosling’s understanding of the importance of these standards for child migrants was reinforced by an account given to her in December 1947 of previous failures to maintain them at Pinjarra by a former Fairbridge employee (see notes and correspondence in TNA: MH102/1557).

¹⁹⁵ Garnett to Costley-White, 17th November 1947, TNA: MH102/1403.

the United Kingdom has not hitherto obtained in connection with child migration schemes in Australia and I should deprecate any suggestion of this nature'. If anything, Garnett added, standards of care were not just as good in Australia as in the United Kingdom, but in some cases better and one of the main lessons of the Curtis report was how uneven standards of care remained in Britain. Rosling's memorandum, he claimed, reflected insufficient knowledge of the differences between the various organisations involved in sending children to Australia, and in the case of the Fairbridge Society, failed to establish why the London office had an inherent right to control local bodies in Australia 'who do all the work and have to cope with the problems on the spot'. 'I trust', Garnett concluded, 'that the Mission will exercise discretion in showing this memorandum to the local bodies'. Whilst the principles set out in it were reasonable and, he claimed, already generally accepted by receiving institutions, the inference of being lectured about these standards was something that 'those who have devoted many years to this problem on the spot might not take ... very kindly'.

To the surprise of officials in the UK High Commission and Commonwealth Relations Office, the Fairbridge delegation was successful in its negotiations with the Fairbridge committees in Australia about the revision of the Society's articles of association to make it a more integrated organisation.¹⁹⁶ The Australian bodies agreed to give up their autonomous status and to become part of a single new incorporated body that would include the London Society and all the overseas farm schools. A number of figures associated with past conflicts—including Gordon Green—retired, resigned or agreed to allow limits on their future influence.¹⁹⁷ The London office was given the power to appoint Principals at the farm schools and to nominate a certain number of members on newly constituted Boards of Governors, but with day-to-day operational issues left to local management overseas. All constituent parts of this new organisation agreed to adhere to a common ethos in terms of providing care attentive to the needs of the child.

¹⁹⁶The Fairbridge Society: Documents to Accompany 1947 Revision of Memorandum and Articles of Association, TNA: DO35/3396; Garnett to Costley-White, 10th December 1947, TNA: DO35/3402; Fairbridge Farm School Act, 1948 allowing land and assets of the Pinjarra farm school to be vested in the new over-arching body, TNA: DO35/3402.

¹⁹⁷See Green's retirement announced in 'Fairbridge Farm School', *The Times*, 27th April 1948, TNA: DO35/3395; Stowe's resignation as Secretary of the Western Australian Committee in Stowe to Joyner, 25th November 1947, DO35/3402.

Whilst Sir Charles Hambro and other senior figures in Fairbridge in the United Kingdom could feel satisfied in achieving new arrangements for the governance of overseas farm schools, this process had been a divisive one for relationships within the UK Government. The decision by Hambro to court the Home Office's support for its attempt to gain greater powers in Australia, given the long resistance to this from civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office, was a strategically effective manoeuvre of playing off the influence of one government department off over another. By emphasising the influence of the Home Office over future child migration policy—with the Fairbridge delegation reportedly telling the Perth Committee that the Home Office was now the lead department on this¹⁹⁸—it became easier to create an impression that the further supply of children for Australian farm schools was dependent on compliance with Rosling's memorandum.

By allying itself with Fairbridge's London Society, however, the Home Office Children's Department was now perceived by officials in the Commonwealth Relations Office and UK High Commission as insufficiently sensitive to the principle of the autonomy of the Dominions and to the political complexities of managing relationships with organisations overseas that had to be understood as the equals of their counter-parts back in Britain. Senior civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office such as Sir Charles Dixon and Cyril Costley-White, as well as Garnett in Canberra, had by then a long history of immersion in this culture and from their perspective the Children's Department's intervention on behalf of Fairbridge was ill-informed, clumsy and risked provoking adverse reaction in Australia. From the perspective of the Children's Department, for whom staff such as Rosling and Maxwell were enthused by the new policy framework for children's out-of-home care ushered in by the Curtis report, it was important to introduce new ways of thinking about child migration to established practices which seemed not attentive enough to the needs of the individual child. If the Children's Department's intervention appeared patronising to Garnett, for Maxwell and Rosling, it was a necessary part of their departmental mission to try to ensure that the 'reforming spirit'¹⁹⁹ of the Curtis report was working its way through all

¹⁹⁸ Telegram Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commission, 27th November 1947, TNA: DO35/3402.

¹⁹⁹ A phrase that Maxwell reportedly used in her meeting with Costley-White and R.L. Dixon, Minute on meeting with Commonwealth Relations Office, 20th August 1947, TNA: MH102/1553.

forms of children's out-of-home care. The process of finding an accommodation between these contrasting departmental positions was to shape the UK Government's approach to the management of child migration programmes in the coming years.

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From Regulation to Moral Persuasion: Child Migration Policy and the Home Office Children's Department, 1948–1954

Following the first wave of British child migrants to arrive in Australia in the autumn of 1947, and the evident hope of the Commonwealth Government for more to follow them, voluntary organisations and religious orders in Australia became increasingly active in attempts to involve themselves in this work. In 1947, 11 residential institutions across Australia had been accepted as receiving institutions for British child migrants. By the spring of 1952, this number had increased to 40.¹

At the same time, in the United Kingdom, the resumption of child migration was coming under increased scrutiny from some professional and voluntary associations. As noted in Chap. 2, a few individuals had made private, critical comments about receiving institutions for child migrants in Australia in the pre-war years. However, the post-war period saw a noticeable growth in organisations directly contacting the UK Government and using other public means to express concern about child migration, reflecting a critical re-evaluation of this work in the light of recent experience of war-time child evacuation and the approach to child-care endorsed by the Curtis report.

In June 1945, following press coverage of the planned Australian resumption of child migration, the Provisional National Council for Mental Health became the first organisation to submit a memorandum to

¹ *Child Migration to Australia: Report by John Moss, CBE* (London: HMSO, 1953), Appendix 1.

the Dominions Office, setting out what it considered to be appropriate standards for this.² Assuming, incorrectly, that migration schemes would operate on the basis of child migrants being placed in foster homes in Australia, the memorandum suggested key measures that would need to be in place for the setting up and monitoring of such placements. It also outlined need for sending organisations in the United Kingdom to have some administrative systems through which contact could be maintained between child migrants and any parents or other relatives they still had at home.

More co-ordinated public criticism of child migration also began to develop. In May 1947, The Liberal Party Organisation Committee on the Curtis Report published *Nobody's Children: A Report on the Care of Children Deprived of Normal Home-Lives*.³ Part summary and part commentary on the Curtis report, *Nobody's Children* accepted the view of the Curtis Committee that emigration might be appropriate for some children under particular circumstances. However, it claimed that 'deplorable notions of child care' still persisted in some organisations involved in sending and receiving child migrants, and argued that no child should be emigrated if they had parents able to make reasonable provision for them in this country. It condemned attempts to tempt parents into consenting to their child's emigration on the basis of unrealistically optimistic pictures of the life that might be possible for them overseas and argued that no child should be allowed to emigrate unless it were in their individual interests and that good standards of care, staffing and training would be provided.⁴ Children sent overseas should have contact with someone equivalent to a Children's Officer and contact with family remaining in the United Kingdom should be supported. On the basis of concerns that old attitudes might still prevail in child migration work, *Nobody's Children* recommended that an inter-governmental inquiry be set up specifically to consider the placement of child migrants in work, the after-care provided to them and the management of compulsory savings schemes for child migrants by

² Niemeyer to Dixon with enclosure, 12th June 1945, TNA: DO35/1133/M803/41

³ A copy of this report is available in TNA: MH102/1562.

⁴ Critical reference is made to the opening up of a new recruitment office by one child migration organisation in the North-East of England apparently anticipating an economic down-turn in the region. This probably refers to the expansion of the Fairbridge Society's work in Newcastle.

receiving organisations.⁵ On the basis of the report, the Women's Liberal Federation wrote to the Home Secretary to inform him that it had passed a motion calling for an inter-governmental commission of enquiry to 'examine the whole system of the emigration of deprived children to British Dominions and overseas'.⁶ This call was also endorsed by the Young Women's Christian Association of Great Britain, as well as by MPs in House of Commons debates during the passage of the Children Bill.⁷ It found support too from the British Federation of Social Workers, whose President, Chair and Secretary wrote to the letters page of *The Times* commenting that they had 'reason to think that the practices of the various agencies for the migration of children oversea vary and that their methods of selection of children, their welfare, education, training and after care in the receiving countries are not always of a sufficiently high standard'.⁸ The Federation also published a pamphlet recommending that, in future, all sending organisations select children through formal selection committees involving professional social workers, that care should be taken to ensure that emigration was always in the best interests of the individual child and stating that 'it should be borne in mind that it is a very serious matter to break a child's home ties, however slender they may be'.⁹ Doubt about the value of child migration was also expressed more widely in Parliamentary debates on the proposed Children Bill, with MPs including Somerville Hastings (the former Curtis Committee member) expressing reservations about the emigration of any unaccompanied children under school leaving age.¹⁰

Such criticisms were made at a time in which it was generally assumed that the passing of the 1948 Children Act would make possible not only

⁵The fact that the report identified these as specific concerns suggests that it may have been aware of criticisms of Fairbridge's Pinjarra farm school made by Miss Tempe Woods, of which Fairbridge and the Dominions Office were also aware (see Green to Wiseman with enclosures, 21st April 1944, and Tempe Woods to Wiseman with enclosures, 5th April 1945, TNA: DO35/1138/M1007/1/2).

⁶Women's Liberal Federation to Chuter Ede, 27th April 1948, TNA: MH102/1562, pp.9-10 on available copy.

⁷Curwen to Chuter Ede, 11th May 1948, TNA: MH102/1562, p.8 on available copy; *House of Commons, Hansard*, 7th May 1948, c.1646/47; 28th June, 1948, c.1860/61.

⁸*The Times*, 24th March 1948, p.5.

⁹*Child Migration: Importance of Careful Selection*, British Federation of Social Workers, June 1948, copy held on TNA: MH102/1562.

¹⁰See *House of Commons, Hansard*, 7th May 1948, cc.1627, 1645-6, 1653, 1682/3; 28th June 1948, c.1861.

checks on the emigration of children from the care of local authorities (by requiring Secretary of State consent for each case) but would also lead to the introduction of regulations to control the child migration activities of voluntary organisations.¹¹ Indeed a specific assurance had been given in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Jowitt, that regulation of voluntary organisations would be introduced through the provisions of the Act following representations on behalf of the Fairbridge Society that regulations reflecting the Curtis report should be implemented to ensure that the work of any voluntary organisation undertaking child migration work should be ‘brought up to the mark’.¹² Whilst civil servants in the Home Office may have shared some of the reservations expressed about past practice in child migration work, any concern about its post-war resumption was tempered by a confidence that better standards could be enforced through these soon-to-be introduced regulations. In a letter to the Commonwealth Relations Office about the calls for an inter-governmental commission of enquiry, Mary Rosling wrote that the Home Office would not support such an initiative because it was already actively in touch with sending organisations to clarify their working methods and that the 1948 Children Act gave adequate powers to the Secretary of State to ensure proper standards were maintained in the future.¹³ Although Rosling remained open to the possible value of a later investigation of post-war standards for child migration, she argued to undertake a major inquiry at the present time might serve only to publicise past bad practices and discourage people from thinking about the emigration of children who might genuinely benefit from it.

Such optimism proved ill-placed, however. This chapter examines how attempts to introduce regulations for the child migration work of voluntary organisations under s.33 of the 1948 Children Act failed, with the Home Office eventually deciding in 1954 not to introduce regulations which it had taken nearly five years to develop. In the absence of regulations during this period, the Home Office prevaricated over the extent to which it wished to enforce suitable standards for residential institutions in Australia that had applied to receive child migrants. Whilst making the Commonwealth Relations Office and Australian Commonwealth Government aware of broad standards that it hoped to be achieved, in

¹¹ See, for example, *House of Lords, Hansard*, 9th March 1948, cc.607/608.

¹² *House of Lords, Hansard*, 13th April 1948, cc.36-7.

¹³ Rosling to Cox, 28th September 1948, TNA: MH102/1562.

practice the Home Office ultimately failed to insist on these when it came to specific decisions about the approval of particular organisations or receiving institutions. Combined with continued pressure from the Australian Commonwealth Government for more child migrants to be sent from the United Kingdom, these failures meant that post-war child migration expanded without the effective safeguards in place which were anticipated with the passing of the 1948 Act.

BUREAUCRATIC DRAG AND THE SLOW PROCESS OF DRAFTING THE S.33 REGULATIONS

Despite the pressures of its new role as the lead department for children's out-of-home care, the Home Office Children's Department identified the drafting of regulations for child migration work by voluntary organisations as one of its early priorities.¹⁴ The process was to be conducted in consultation with the Home Office's new Advisory Council on Child Care, whose creation had been recommended by the Curtis report and made part of the 1948 Act. Membership of the Council included specialists in child health, psychiatry, those representing the experience and interests of local authorities and voluntary organisations and other individuals, including Lady Allen of Hurtwood and Leila Rendel, the founder of the Caldecott Community.

At its first meeting on 19th January 1949, the Advisory Council began its discussion of how to approach the drafting of these regulations.¹⁵ John Ross, Assistant Under-Secretary at the Home Office and head of the Children's Department, opened by explaining that the Home Office hoped as soon as possible to introduce regulations which could ensure that children emigrated by voluntary organisations would receive care comparable to what was expected in Britain, be helped to assimilate quickly into their new country and be offered training that would prepare them for a wide range of employment appropriate to their abilities. This would, Ross hoped, be achieved whilst avoiding creating regulations which would be impossible to enforce in practice. After hearing from a Council member,

¹⁴See outline agenda for the first meeting of the Advisory Council, drafted December 1948, TNA: MH102/1503, pp.17-18; also reference to this as a priority in the Advisory Council's initial work in 'A happy job in Room 101', *Daily Herald*, 20th January 1949, copy held on TNA: MH102/1761.

¹⁵Minutes of first meeting of Advisory Council, 19th January 1949, TNA: MH102/1761.

Mr Kirkpatrick, who served as General Superintendent of Dr Barnardo's Homes, about Barnardo's experience of this work, the Council decided that it needed more information about voluntary organisations' working methods in this field and asked the Home Office to obtain this on their behalf.

The Children's Department began collating this information the following month, contacting the seven voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom known to the Commonwealth Relations Office to be involved in child migration.¹⁶ Mr Prestige, the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Division of the Children's Department overseeing the child-care work of voluntary organisations,¹⁷ questioned whether the Council needed to generate this additional work and would be better confining itself to recommending broad principles that the regulations should follow. However, John Ross replied that it was better on balance for the Department to provide such memoranda for the Council to set out its own understanding of issues and 'even to suggest the advice that the committee might give'.¹⁸

A memorandum summarising this information was initially written up by a more junior member of staff in the Children's Department.¹⁹ This draft presented a generally positive view of current practice and did not suggest any areas of immediate concern. Organisations were generally said to engage in careful selection of children, informed by full case histories and medical reports. Parental consent was also said to be obtained for each child migrant by six of the organisations, with written copies of parental consent now being said to be required as an attachment to children's

¹⁶ See notes, correspondence and memoranda at TNA: MH102/2328. The organisations contacted by the Home Office were the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement, Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Big Brother Movement (which specialised in juvenile migration), the Catholic Council for British Overseas Settlement, the Fairbridge Society, the Southern Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College and the Northcote Trust.

¹⁷ The Children's Department, at this time, was structured into four Divisions, each overseen by an Assistant Secretary: D1 (covering approved schools and remand homes), D2 (covering the juvenile court system and juvenile delinquency more generally), D3 (led by Mary Rosling, which dealt with local authorities and the Central Training Council in Child Care) and D4 (led by Prestige, which was responsible for the overseeing the work of voluntary organisations, child migration and liaison with the Advisory Council on Child Care), in addition to the Children's Department Inspectorate (see Note accompanying the notice of the meeting of the Council to be held on 25th April 1951, TNA: MH102/1781).

¹⁸ See notes 3rd and 4th February, 1949, TNA: MH102/2328.

¹⁹ 'Emigration of Children', TNA: MH102/2328.

immigration applications by officials at Australia House in London. Organisations were also understood to have systems of three or six monthly monitoring reports sent for each child back to parents/guardians, local authorities or other organisations who had sponsored the child's emigration, or to have regular reports sent from the receiving institutions back to the sending organisation.

The overall impression given in this initial memorandum was much better than the reality of some organisations' work since the resumption of child migration in 1947, reflecting a perhaps unsurprising attempt by voluntary organisations to present as positive an image of their work as possible to government officials.²⁰ The text of the final memorandum that the Children's Department eventually submitted for discussion by the Advisory Council for its monthly meeting in March 1949 struck a more critical tone, however, reflecting John Ross's view that the Department should seek to steer and not simply inform the Council's discussions.²¹ A number of clear underpinning principles for future regulations were clearly set out, reflecting Mary Rosling's memorandum that had previously been circulated in the autumn of 1947. Voluntary organisations involved in child migration should be financially sound, adequately staffed and capable of continued supervision of children they had sent overseas. Selection should be made carefully on the basis of complete educational, family and medical histories of the child; a report of a home visit to parents or guardians; and an interview with the child themselves in which the implications of emigration were clearly explained to them. A trained social worker should also be involved in selection decisions. Care should be taken to ensure a child's proper consent was obtained, and where a child was too young to give meaningful consent, other safeguards should be in place. A period of pre-emigration training should be given to prepare the child for life overseas. Organisations should ensure that the care, training and social integration of child migrants overseas 'should be as high as that aimed at in this country', in other words compliant with the standards of the Curtis report. Children who did not settle or progress well should be subject to a process of independent review which could determine whether it might be in their best interests to return to the United Kingdom.

²⁰ See, for example, systemic failures in Catholic and Anglican child migration schemes in Lynch, 'The Church of England Advisory Council', and Lynch 'Catholic child migration'.

²¹ 'Note by the Home Office on questions for consideration in connection with the emigration of children', TNA: MH102/1763.

Whilst the memorandum noted variations in standards between voluntary organisations, it was clear that significant improvements needed to be made more generally. Particular areas for attention included making selection processes more rigorous, changing institutional accommodation overseas to make it more in line with Curtis standards of smaller residential units housing children of mixed age and gender, improving the range of education and training for child migrants and ensuring regular after-care visits of children by trained workers after they had left institutional care. Other areas identified for future improvement included the need to ensure that proper case records were sent with child migrants to heads of receiving institutions so that they had appropriate information to provide individual care, the appointment of liaison officers to ensure effective communication between sending and receiving bodies and sending organisations taking on the responsibility for seeing that appropriate managerial appointments were made in receiving institutions. Whilst showing that the Home Office was developing a better understanding of sending organisations' practices than it had two years before, the memorandum still reflected some continued gaps in understanding. Its suggestion of greater administrative control of overseas receiving institutions by sending bodies, for example in areas such as the appointment of senior staff and provision of training for residential workers, better fitted organisations such as the Fairbridge Society or Dr Barnardo's Homes who were working with affiliated parts of their own organisation overseas. It was far less relevant, as was to become clearer in coming years, to religious organisations such as the Catholic Child Welfare Council or Church of England Advisory Council which sent children to institutions run by religious orders or other diocesan bodies over which they had no formal control at all.

The Advisory Council's discussion of this memorandum was, however, crowded out by other businesses, in particular the development of a national system of reception centres recommended by the Curtis report to assess and provide initial interventions for children needing out-of-home care. As a consequence, the Children's Department's memorandum had still not been properly discussed by the Council's meeting in June, when a member of the Council, Philip Dingle, apparently impatient with progress on this issue, tabled his own proposals.²² These included the compulsory registration of all voluntary organisations emigrating children with the

²²Paper by Mr Dingle, Town Clerk of Manchester, on regulations controlling emigration by voluntary organisations, TNA: MH102/1765.

Secretary of State (with approval only given to well-managed and resourced organisations), the prohibition of advertising to raise funds for child migration, a requirement for voluntary organisations only to be able to send a child overseas with the consent of that child's local authority and the development of a national register to record all child migrants. Dingle's scepticism about current standards in child migration work was also reflected in his suggestion that 'even more drastic regulations' might be needed to be set in place as soon as possible to protect children until more detailed, final regulations were eventually drawn up. Dingle's views elicited a more cautious response from John Ross, who suggested that the terms of the 1948 Children Act did not give the Secretary of State power to prohibit all child migration, or to make decisions about the cases of individual children whom voluntary organisations wished to emigrate, but only to give approval to an organisation's general policies and procedures without which that organisation would not be able to send children overseas.²³

The Children's Department's memorandum finally received a full discussion at the Council's meeting in July 1949,²⁴ where its principles and concerns were generally endorsed. Members of the Council expressed particular concern about child migrants being sent to foster placements or residential institutions in isolated areas where monitoring of their welfare might be difficult and opportunities for engagement with the local community limited. Rather than sending children to such places, the Council took the view that voluntary organisations should be encouraged to develop scattered homes in urban areas, unwittingly reflecting the model initially proposed in Ben Chifley's 'war orphans' scheme.

Following the Council's broad endorsement of the principles for regulations suggested by the Children's Department, John Ross indicated that another memorandum would be prepared in due course where the Council would be invited to consider how these would be developed into specific regulations. Whilst the initial urgency of this task might have suggested that this matter would return to the Council soon, two and a half years elapsed before these draft regulations were presented to it. Part of this delay was caused by time taken for the Home Office to produce a

²³ Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Advisory Council, 15th June 1949, TNA: MH102/1765.

²⁴ Minutes of the sixth meeting of the Advisory Council, 6th July 1949, TNA: MH102/1766.

copy of draft regulations—first filed on 5th October 1950—which were believed to be ready for sending out for consultation.²⁵ It was then not until the end of December that the Children’s Department wrote to the Commonwealth Relations Office for their views, asking that these be returned as soon as possible so that the draft regulations could be presented to the Advisory Council early in the New Year.²⁶ As the Secretary of State for Scotland had responsibility, under the 1948 Children Act, for children emigrated from Scotland the Scottish Home Department was also contacted for its views on the draft to ensure that common regulations could be developed across England, Wales and Scotland.²⁷ In April 1951, nearly four months after receiving the draft regulations, the Commonwealth Relations Office forwarded them on to Walter Garnett at the UK High Commission in Canberra for comments from both him and the Australian Commonwealth Government.²⁸ A June deadline for feedback from Australia was requested by the Commonwealth Relations Office as they informed Garnett that the Home Office hoped to introduce these regulations early in the following year.

Whilst the consultation process for the draft regulations continued to drag on, new pressure for their introduction came with the publication of a major report, *Child Emigration*, by the influential Women’s Group on Public Welfare.²⁹ Having previously produced widely read reports on other aspects of child welfare³⁰, the Women’s Group on Public Welfare convened a sub-committee in 1948 to review current practices of child migration organisations with the specific intention of producing recommendations that would inform future regulation of this work. Involving representatives of the National Association for Mental Health, the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, the Women’s Liberal Federation, the Family Welfare Association, the YWCA and the British Federation of Social Workers, the report was published in conjunction with the National Council of Social Service, marking it as a substantial evaluation of child

²⁵ Proposals for regulations under section 33(1) and (2) of the Children Act, 1948, provisional draft, 5th October 1950, TNA: MH102/2038.

²⁶ Prestige to Gibson, 30th December 1950, TNA: MH102/2038.

²⁷ Prestige to Rowe, 4th January 1951, TNA: MH102/2038.

²⁸ Sedgwick to Garnett, 24th April 1951, TNA: MH102/2038.

²⁹ *Child Emigration*, Report by the Women’s Group on Public Welfare, London: National Council of Social Service, 1951.

³⁰ *Our Towns: A Close Up*, London: Oxford University Press, 1943; *The Neglected Child and His Family*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

migration work by a number of key voluntary organisations. The fact that three of the organisations represented on the sub-committee for this report had been involved in the unsuccessful attempt to call for an inter-governmental inquiry into child migration further suggested that this report was attempting to provide the public review of this work which the UK Government had refused to undertake.

Whilst the authors of the report did not visit any of the countries to which child migrants were sent, they sought to build as detailed a picture through eliciting information from some child migration organisations. Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Fairbridge Society and the Northcote Trust were noted as being particularly helpful in terms of giving access to their written records, although it appears that (at least in the case of the Fairbridge Society) access to recent case material consisted of three case study summaries being sent to the report committee rather than them undertaking any direct or extensive review of the sending organisations' records.³¹ The writers did obtain access to information held by Fairbridge and Dr Barnardo's Homes for children emigrated to Australia between 1920 and 1929 in order to establish what jobs they were able to take up after completing their overseas training.³² An attempt to access case records held by the National Children's Home was refused by the charity's Vice-Principal.³³ A number of social service organisations in countries to which British child migrants were sent also provided written responses to questions about their overall impressions of child migration work. Detailed work was also done to try to understand the legal and policy context of this work. After examining case records in an attempt to understand the routes through which child migrants came to be sent overseas, the report went on to consider current practice in sending relevant information about children on to receiving institutions, pre-emigration training, the conditions into which child migrants were received, and the current standards of education, training and after-care.

Given the second-hand and partly out-of-date knowledge on which the report drew, the report added little to what was already known in the Home Office about child migration to Australia (although it did provide

³¹ Assistant Secretary to Wimperis, 3rd November 1949, ULSCA(F): D296/H6/2/37, enclosing three case histories, two of which made up the nine cases referred to in the final text of the report.

³² See Ponsonby to Logan, 23rd June 1949, ULSCA(F): D296/H6/2/37. Analysis of this material was presented in *Child Emigration*, pp.52-54.

³³ Memorandum for Mr Irwin, 10th September 1949, ULSCA(F): D296/H6/2/37.

greater insight into post-war child migration to New Zealand in which the UK Government had no formal involvement). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the prevalence of Curtis standards in framing post-war discussions of child-care standards, there was also little in the report's 38 recommendations that differed from the standards already advocated in the memorandum presented to the Home Office Advisory Council on Child Care by the Children's Department two years before. However, given that discussions of the draft s.33 regulations had, up to that point, taken place privately within Government, the publication of the Women's Group on Public Welfare's report was seen as potentially shaping the public reception for any proposals about the content of the s.33 regulations. Writing to the Commonwealth Relations Office in July 1951 to chase up their feedback on the draft regulations, Prestige also noted that the publication of the report had also made voluntary organisations involved in child migration 'restive' and 'very anxious to know what we propose to do about some of the recommendations made in the report'.³⁴

Recognising the potential risks of greater Government regulation of their work, voluntary organisations involved in child migration liaised with each other to form a new body, the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, which would share information between its constituent members and try to present a common front in representing their views to policy-makers.³⁵ In the words of Cyril Bavin, who chaired the meeting at which the decision to form the Council was agreed, it should be a source of pride for all those involved that they had come together 'so that—with one voice—a reply might be made to those who would seek to

³⁴ Prestige to Gibson, 17th July 1951, TNA: MH102/2038. The Fairbridge Society, if not other voluntary organisations, had been sent a pre-publication draft of the report by the Women's Group on Public Welfare during the autumn of 1950 to correct any factual inaccuracies in the text, and so there may well have been some awareness of the report's recommendations prior to its publication in spring 1951. In addition to providing the report's writers with access to case records, the Fairbridge Society also provided photographs for reproduction as illustrations in the report (see Vaughan to Ponsonby, 17th July 1950, and Homer to Vaughan, 30th November 1950 and 18th December 1950, ULSCA(F): D296/H6/2/37).

³⁵ The formation of the Council was also supported by Prestige who saw it as a potential means for voluntary organisations to liaise on improving standards and potentially collaborate in using overseas staff for monitoring the welfare of child migrants (note by Prestige, 14th November, 1950, TNA: MH102:2037).

obstruct child emigration'.³⁶ Meeting formally for the first time in March 1951, constituent members of the Council were the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee, the Catholic Child Welfare Council, Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Big Brother Movement, the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service, the Fairbridge Society, Middlemore Emigration Homes, the National Children's Home, the Northcote Trust, the Over-Seas League, the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College and the YMCA.³⁷

An early focus of the Council's meetings was to formulate a common response to recommendations set out in the Women's Group on Public Welfare report—as well as discussions of how best to respond to what was regarded as sensationalist coverage of the treatment of child migrants in one newspaper in the wake of the report's publication.³⁸ The Council was also given early informal assurances by the Home Office that it would be consulted about the draft s.33 regulations before they were finalised, and was led to understand (via the Fairbridge Society), that although the Home Office would take some notice of the Women's Group on Public Welfare's report, they 'did not seem unduly worried about it'.³⁹ This assurance reflected an internal Home Office memorandum which analysed recommendations from the report and concluded that there were either already included within their draft regulations, beyond the powers of the Government or the Children Act, or impractical.⁴⁰ The Conservative Home Secretary, David Maxwell Fyfe, later rejected a request from the Women's Group on Public Welfare for him to meet with a delegation from the Group to discuss the draft s.33 regulations on the basis that their report had already been sufficiently taken into account in this process.⁴¹

In August 1951, the Home Office finally received comments on proposed regulations from Walter Garnett and Tasman Heyes, via the

³⁶Note on meeting on 30th January 1951 at the invitation of Sir Charles Hambro to discuss the formation of an association of voluntary bodies concerned with child emigration, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1.

³⁷Minutes of meeting of 6th March 1951, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1.

³⁸Minutes of emergency meeting, 19th March 1951, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1.

³⁹Minutes of meeting, 3rd April 1951, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1.

⁴⁰See Memorandum on Child Emigration, Report of a Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare, 12th April 1951, TNA: MH102/2038.

⁴¹This request and refusal occurred in February 1952, see correspondence on TNA: MH102/2045.

Commonwealth Relations Office.⁴² Comments from both were defensive, with the potential new regulations regarded as an unnecessary layer of administration for a system which, Heyes and Garnett argued, was regarded by the UK High Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration as ‘highly organised’. The suggestion that the Secretary of State might need to be provided with information by sending organisations about standards of care in receiving institutions would, they observed, duplicate the independent information already provided by State Government officials which was shared (after passing through the Commonwealth Government and UK High Commission) with the Home Office by the Commonwealth Relations Office. This information was already, Garnett noted, being produced in accordance with standards suggested by the Home Office, and would be more accurate than that given by sending organisations whom—Garnett noted—might only be recruiting agencies for overseas organisations and not have detailed or up-to-date knowledge of conditions at overseas institutions. Concern was also noted by Garnett and Heyes that the addition of any further requirements through these regulations might have the effect of seriously disrupting child migration work. Heyes, in particular, was unhappy at any suggestion that sending organisations’ selection committees for child migrants might contain members who were generally opposed in principle to child migration and who could stifle that organisation’s work in this field altogether. Garnett also gave a clear hint that any greater role for other Government departments back in the United Kingdom had the potential to upset the ‘very close and friendly’ contact that the UK High Commission had with receiving organisations, State officials and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration. Child migration, Garnett implied, was better managed through these informal, ad hoc contacts, than through a regulatory system which would alter the dynamics of these relationships without any significant additional benefit. The Home Office was eventually to come to a similar view.

Following an initial meeting at the Home Office between Prestige and a delegation from the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration in July, the Children’s Department also formally sent a copy of their draft regulations to the Council at the end of August.⁴³ In the July

⁴² Gibson to Prestige with enclosure, 7th August 1951, TNA: MH102/2038.

⁴³ Minutes of meeting, 6th June 1951, and Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, delegation to Home Office, 11th July 1951, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1; note by Savidge, 27th August 1951, TNA: MH102/2038.

meeting, the Council's delegation raised concerns about some of the recommendations in the Women's Group on Public Welfare report. Both Cyril Bavin (on behalf of the Over-Seas League) and Enid Jones (representing the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement) demurred against the proposal for children to be given pre-emigration training in the United Kingdom. Bavin objected that such an initiative was unnecessary for children being sent to private households overseas, with Jones complaining that her Advisory Council would be unable to meet the costs of such a requirement given that it had no reception centre at which such training could be provided. Fr William Nicol, on behalf of the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee, also complained that any regulation requiring child migrants to be housed in smaller residential units overseas would be highly problematic for the religious orders involved in this work. In response, Prestige again gave broad assurances that draft regulations would not be introduced in the very near future and that a further opportunity would be given to the Council's members to comment on them.

After being sent the draft regulations, the Council subsequently gave their formal written response to the Home Office in the following November, indicating their broad support for them.⁴⁴ It accepted the principle of convening selection committees to review the cases of individual children, informed by relevant case histories provided by an experienced worker based on interviews with both the child and their parent or guardian. Where necessary a specialist psychological report should also be provided. The Council regarded it as an 'accepted fact' that no child would be selected for emigration without the consent of their parent or guardian. The need to ensure the effects of emigration were understood both by the child and their family members was accepted as was the need to avoid breaking any significant emotional connection that the child still had with relatives who remained in the United Kingdom. The Council noted that overseas receiving institutions were already subject to approval processes and accepted the need to use suitable staff but without making any commitment on standards of training that should be expected. It also gave much stronger weight than the draft regulations to the principle that 'religion should play a vital part in the child's life, with every facility being given to the child to be brought up in its own faith', and argued that

⁴⁴Hall to Under-Secretary of State, 9th November 1951, TNA: MH102/1784.

‘members of staff should, by example, as well as precept, be fitted to undertake this obligation’. An attempt by Fr Nicol to include an insistence in this letter that children be placed in institutions with staff of the same religious denomination was rejected by other members of the Council as potentially unworkable.⁴⁵ The Council concurred with the expectation that sending organisations should remain well-informed about children they had sent overseas, noting that ‘regular and comprehensive reports on the progress of each child should be sent to the Emigration Society concerned’. Areas in which the Council expressed less enthusiasm for regulation were any age requirements for child migrants—as the Council claimed that their members had successfully placed children overseas of all ages in accordance with their needs—and any requirement for extended pre-migration training for children which the Council argued would only needlessly unsettle children as they waited to go overseas.

Whilst its formal response to the Home Office suggested a general unanimity in views and standards across the Council’s constituent members, the reality was more varied. Despite endorsing the principle of selection by committee and the need to ensure parental consent, there is little evidence that children emigrated by the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee or Catholic Child Welfare Council before or after 1951 often experienced such standards. The majority of children sent from institutions run by the Sisters of Nazareth, for example, had consent signatures on their LEM3 migration application forms signed by the Mother Superiors in charge of those institutions rather than parents or other guardians.⁴⁶ In many cases, Catholic child migrants were selected by direct approach by Australian Catholic administrators—Br Conlon, Fr Nicol and Fr Stinson—in liaison with individual heads of institutions run by religious orders with no formal selection committee convened or case papers for review produced. The practice of sending children’s case records with them overseas was not usually adhered to by Catholic sending organisations nor, generally, by the Church of England Advisory Council on Empire Settlement. These organisations, as well as the Over-Seas League, also failed to establish any consistent monitoring of children emigrated under their auspices.

Given that Canon Flint (of the Catholic Child Welfare Council), Cyril Bavin and Enid Jones made up half of the six members of the Council’s

⁴⁵ Minutes of meeting, 16th October 1951, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1.

⁴⁶ Copies of LEM3 forms are held at NAA: MP210/2, MP765/1 and PP93/10.

sub-committee convened to discuss the Council's formal response to the draft s.33 regulations, a clear gap existed between the principles that were espoused on behalf of the Council and the practice of at least some of its constituent members. Although Bavin, Jones, Flint and Nicol objected in the Council meetings to some specific elements of the Women's Group on Public Welfare recommendations and the Home Office draft s.33 regulations, the gap between their organisations' practices and the principles being discussed were never fully disclosed. Gaps between their practices and the principles they supported during the Council's discussions were nevertheless obvious to at least some other members of the Council. At a later meeting of the Home Office Advisory Council on Child Care, the new General Superintendent of Dr Barnardo's Homes, Mr E.H. Lucette, commented that the views expressed by the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration did not reflect the actual policies of all of its constituent members, in part because of the diverse aims and structures of the organisations involved. This gap between the principles that some voluntary organisations were prepared to endorse in contact with the Home Office and their actual practices can be seen as a reflection of the threat that they perceived s.33 regulations might entail for their work. In later discussions of these draft regulations at the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, representatives of some of these organisations were increasingly explicit about how they viewed this. Fr Nicol commented that they would 'limit the activities of the Voluntary organisations and the Authorities concerned failed to appreciate that the organisations were only interested in emigration with a view to giving children a chance in life which would not otherwise be available to them'. His Committee, Nicol continued, 'would be reluctant to carry on with their child emigration activities if they were bound by such regulations'. Cyril Bavin expressed the view that 'the introduction of further regulations might cause the New Zealand Government to abandon child emigration altogether'. Canon Flint added, rather dismissively, that 'the regulations merely followed on from the Curtis Committee's report and... there was a general feeling against child emigration by the "powers that be"'.⁴⁷ In the context of this perceived threat, organisations who recognised that their practice fell short of the requirements of likely regulations sought to avoid drawing the Home Office's attention to this, possibly in the belief that if the Home Office became aware of them, s.33 regulations might be

⁴⁷ Minutes of meeting, 8th July 1952, ULSCA.F:H6/1/2/1

introduced more quickly and more strictly. Instead, the safer course seemed to be to continue broadly to support Home Office standards in principle, whilst hoping that regulation of their work based on these would not come too soon.

Alongside this consultation process, the Home Office had also been receiving legal advice throughout 1951 about the scope and content of any proposed regulations. One view given in response from a Government legal officer was that the very language used in s.33 of the 1948 Children Act showed the ‘characteristic woolliness of compromises’ over the kind of powers to be allowed to the Secretary of State. Whilst the Secretary of State’s powers were inevitably limited to those which could be enforced through British courts—which constrained the degree of control that could be exercised over organisations based overseas—the specific language used in s.33 of the Act also added further constraints. By empowering the Secretary of State to control only the ‘arrangements’ of voluntary societies, this meant that regulations could only control the stated policies and working practices of voluntary organisations, but not have any powers over failure to adhere to those standards once a child was no longer in the care of that sending organisation.⁴⁸ As a result the legal drafting of the regulations continued to pose considerable difficulties in terms of what could, and could not, be introduced through the s.33 regulations in terms of the on-going treatment of a child after leaving the care of the sending organisation. Even those sending organisations who sent children to institutions which were they ran overseas might not be held responsible by a British court for breaches of s.33 regulations if they had acted in accordance with the laws of the receiving country.⁴⁹ Another set of legal advice suggested that whilst it would be *intra vires* for the Secretary of State to introduce regulations relating to ensuring that suitable arrangements were made for the care of a child overseas, it would be *ultra vires* to require that a voluntary organisation based overseas produce regular reports on that

⁴⁸ Note by Shelley, 13th February 1951, TNA: MH102/2040.

⁴⁹ See note 26th February 1951, TNA: MH102/2040, which also recognises the difficulty in establishing what could, and could not, be regulated in terms of work by voluntary organisations relating to the care of children overseas. This view appears to have been expressed particularly in relation to requirements of sending organisations to repatriate children who did not settle overseas, where the ability of voluntary organisations to do this would necessarily be constrained by the laws of the country to which the child had been sent.

child's progress.⁵⁰ Despite these apparent impediments, the Home Office Children's Department continued to work on the draft regulations, even including clauses which this legal advice appeared to rule out as being beyond either the scope of the legislation or the powers of the UK Government in relation to overseas organisations. Internal disagreements continued within the Home Office as well as to whether the s.33 regulations should be phrased in a minimal form—requiring sending organisations to provide the Secretary of State with information described in more detailed in an accompanying memorandum—or whether the regulations should try to circumscribe voluntary organisations' work in more detailed ways.⁵¹

As a result of this protracted drafting and consultation process, the Home Office Advisory Council on Child Care was only given a draft of the proposed s.33 regulations for discussion at its 23rd meeting in January 1952 and completed its discussion of them at its next meeting the following month.⁵² The draft regulations submitted to the Advisory Council by the Children's Department consisted of 15 clauses covering details of policies to be provided for approval by the Secretary of State by sending organisations regarding the selection, preparation and post-emigration care of children, and the need for annual statements by sending organisations about child migration work they had undertaken in the past year. Other clauses gave powers to the Secretary of State to prohibit the emigration of individual children under the age of five or in cases where a child had decided that they no longer wished to emigrate, set out standards expected of selection committees and made a requirement for children emigrated by organisations to be gathered together in advance to get to know others in their migration party and be prepared for life overseas. Requirements were also set out for good practice for escorting children during their voyage, transferring any relevant information on children to their receiving organisation, ensuring annual post-emigration reports were

⁵⁰Note by Harvey, 18th January 1951, TNA: MH102/2040. Earlier advice had also suggested that the wording of s.33(2) of the 1948 Act, was 'inept for ensuring continued supervision by the exporter, where—as I understand is normally the case—the importing country has "suitable arrangements" with which the S. of S. is "able" to be "satisfied"', note by Shelley, 7th January 1950, TNA: MH102/2040, pp.10-11 on available copy.

⁵¹Note by Prestige, 6th January 1952, MH102/2047.

⁵²Minutes of the 23rd meeting of the Advisory Council, 24th January 1952, TNA: MH102/1784; Minutes of 24th meeting of Advisory Council, 21st February, 1952, TNA: MH102/2047.

made on each child's welfare and allow penalties to be introduced in relation to specific regulations. The Advisory Council largely endorsed this draft, suggesting only that voluntary organisations not be allowed to emigrate children against the advice of their selection committees, that the regulations made stronger references to the use of trained workers and that the first post-migration report on a child be received within six months of their first arrival. The Home Office agreed to provide the Advisory Council with a revised draft in the light of their suggestions, also taking into account further consultations with Government legal officers.

STALLED REGULATION: POLICY DECISIONS AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF STATE POWER

Work on the regulations progressed slowly in the coming months. By July 1952, a revised draft was sent to the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration for their further comments. Despite the reservation of some members that the regulations could completely curtail their organisation's involvement in this work, the Council's official response was to accept this draft subject to an amendment that a prospective child migrant would need to be interviewed by just one member of the selection committee and not by the whole committee.⁵³ In correspondence with the Scottish Home Department, an official in the Home Office Children's Department expressed surprise that the Council had not resisted these regulations more strenuously—'perhaps because they had expected more drastic proposals'.⁵⁴ After sending a representative to meet with the Council in October, the Children's Department agreed to accept the Council's amendment about the interviewing of children.⁵⁵ Further delays occurred as fresh legal advice was sought on the revised draft. After being chased by the Scottish Home Department about progress with the drafting, a Children's Department official replied in January 1953 that the Home Office had 'just received a tentative first draft from our Legal Adviser which it is clear will need a good deal of tinkering' and that 'it may therefore be some little time before we can let you have a copy which will

⁵³ Minutes of the meeting, 8th July 1952, ULSCA.F: H6/1/2/1.

⁵⁴ Hall to Boys-Smith, 11th July 1952, TNA: MH102/2043.

⁵⁵ Notes dated 27th October 1952, and Notes of meeting with Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, 23rd October 1952, TNA: MH102/2043

represent anything approaching final form'.⁵⁶ One cause of delay appears to have been the slowness of John Ross in dealing with this issue when it came back to his desk—with Ross only replying in February 1953 to a note from Prestige written more than a year before.⁵⁷ Drafting of the regulations continued through 1953, competing for staff time with the need to draw up regulations for the boarding out of children in England and Wales. In October, the Commonwealth Relations Office eventually added its voice to those asking when the regulations would finally be introduced. In a letter to R.L. Dixon in November, John Ross re-iterated that other demands on the Home Office Advisory Council's time had prevented the revised regulations being put before them again and that whilst the regulations had nearly been finalised, the Advisory Council's view would be sought on whether it would be worthwhile introducing these regulations at all in the near future.⁵⁸ With no prospect of time being found on the Advisory Council's agenda for discussion of the regulations until the following spring, progress was further delayed.

A final draft of the regulations was eventually completed on 16th March 1954.⁵⁹ Consisting of 16 clauses, these regulations specified that a child could not normally be emigrated under the age of seven, without their consent, without having been interviewed by and recommended for emigration by a selection committee or without the consent of their parents or guardian (unless it was not practical to obtain this). Exceptions to this were only to be allowed for individual children with the approval of the relevant Secretary of State. Details were given of how selection committees should operate—and the case reports needed for them to make their decisions. Transfer of relevant information about each individual child to the receiving organisation was made a requirement. Annual welfare and progress reports were to be made on each child after their arrival overseas. A description was given of the information that sending organisations needed to provide about their working methods and standards of care and training overseas to the Secretary of State for approval, with organisations unable to continue their work until such time as the Secretary of State was satisfied with their arrangements. Sending organisations were also required

⁵⁶ Oates to Martin, 16th January 1953, ED11/306.

⁵⁷ Note by Ross, 7th February 1953, TNA: MH102/2047.

⁵⁸ Ross to Dixon, 4th November 1953, TNA: MH102/2047.

⁵⁹ Statutory instruments, Child and Young Persons, The Emigration of Children Regulations, MH102/2047.

to keep a register of the details of all children they had emigrated, as well as provide annual reports of their migration work to the Secretary of State. Finally, a requirement was introduced that sending organisations should make any records referred to in the regulations available to inspectors acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, thus bringing their work under a comparable system of inspection to other forms of out-of-home care for children undertaken by voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom.

This final draft very much reflected the view that the 1948 Children Act primarily empowered the relevant Secretary of State to make regulations in relation to sending organisation's 'arrangements', rather than any more direct forms of control. Focusing primarily on types of documentation and information required from sending organisations, this final version drew little enthusiasm from the Government legal officer who reviewed it, commenting 'I have no love or amour proper for this brain child. The enacting provisions are ... thin and vague ... [I]t appears to me that the main result of the Regulations would be merely to increase the paperwork of the voluntary organisations and the Home Office'.⁶⁰ Uncertainty about the value of the regulations continued to be expressed within the Children's Department, although Prestige noted that even the limited requirements about the constitution of selection committees would be helpful. As he noted, in his experience some emigration societies tended to operate 'selection committees' consisting of a single worker and that it would be helpful to move away from 'leaving a decision of much moment in relation to the child's whole future in the hands of a single person'.⁶¹ Despite this, though, Prestige concurred with the most recent Government legal advice that the value of introducing these regulations was unclear and suggested that it might be better not to bring them again before the Advisory Council for the time being as 'some members will no doubt press for the Regulations to be made'. It would be better, he suggested, to lay the regulations by until the Children's Department was pressed further on them. The following day, on 30th June 1954, John Ross noted his agreement with the simple note 'Lay by, as above'. Five and a half years after the Home Office Advisory Council first considered the issue, the Children's Department had eventually decided quietly to shelve the draft s.33 regulations and take no further action on them.

⁶⁰ Note by H. Wollaston, 17th March 1954, TNA: MH102/2047.

⁶¹ Note by Prestige, 29th June 1954, TNA: MH102/2047.

The stalled process of producing these regulations—once imagined by Mary Rosling and John Ross as the necessary basis on which future good practice in child migration could be assured—reflected the complex organisational processes operating both within and between the Government and voluntary organisations. In part, the slow pace of progress in producing the regulations reflected limitations in the capacity of the Children’s Department as it adjusted to its new central role in the oversight of children’s out-of-home care in England and Wales. Although the drafting of regulations for child migration had initially been given a high priority by the Children’s Department in the wake of calls for an inter-governmental inquiry, other pressures soon crowded in. The numbers of children affected by the prospect of emigration were a small fraction of those remaining in different forms of out-of-home care in the United Kingdom, for whom the development of children’s reception centres, boarding out regulations and principles for better forms of institutional care were more pressing issues. Whilst these pressures (and the need to put the regulations out for consultation) doubtless contributed to the slow progress in the drafting of the s.33 regulations, there were also inherent problems in this task. The phrasing of s.33 of the 1948 Children had left it unclear as to the precise extent of the powers allowed to the Secretary of State under it, and any attempt to regulate the work of overseas organisations who did not fall under the authority of British courts was clearly problematic. If the problems with Molong, Pinjarra and Northcote since the 1930s had demonstrated the challenges of organisational governance of transnational welfare initiatives, the process of drafting the s.33 regulations had shown the additional challenges of developing an adequate regulatory system for this by the UK Government. The slow pace of progress in developing these regulations appears to have reflected not simply the pressures of alternative demands, but a waning belief about the viability of this project amongst Home Office staff. Yet alongside this growing disillusionment remained a desire to retain control of this process. The use of the Advisory Council on Child Care was carefully managed throughout, with the intention that its work did not generate outcomes that the management of the Children’s Department considered undesirable. Relations with voluntary organisations were also carefully handled, with Prestige assuring members of the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration that regulations would not be introduced in a way that was confrontational or inattentive to their concerns.

If the process of drafting these regulations was a deliberate deferral of the use of power by the Home Office, the prospect of regulations elicited very different responses amongst the voluntary organisations who expected to be affected by them. Although consolidated into a single representative body to express their views to Government, in reality the constituent members of the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration were diverse in their aims, structures and resources and as a consequence perceived the prospect of regulation in quite different ways. For organisations such as Dr Barnardo's Homes, Fairbridge and the Northcote Trust, who had not always had very satisfactory experiences of their affiliated receiving institutions in Australia, the introduction of s.33 regulations had the potential to be a mechanism through which they could exert greater administrative or moral authority over them. Delays to the introduction of the regulations were also perceived as dampening interest in the option of child migration for local authorities who felt unclear on what basis this work might proceed in the future.⁶² For organisations such as the Over-Seas League and the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement, whose child migration work was largely managed by a single person, the regulations threatened an onerous new administrative burden which they would struggle to meet. For Catholic organisations, tighter regulation risked bringing an end to the more ad hoc culture through which they managed children's emigration. Despite very different organisational perceptions, these voluntary organisations took care to present a positive face to Government. Sometimes this was because they saw the broad direction of policy as genuinely constructive, or aspired to meet it in principle whilst failing to do so in practice—or because they sought to conceal the gap between espoused policy and actual practice to protect their interest in continuing this work with as minimal regulatory interference as possible.

The episode of the stalled drafting of the s.33 regulations also demonstrated how the exercise of statutory power could be perceived very differently by those inside and outside the machinery of Government. For those within the Home Office, their understanding of their power was framed in terms of its legal and practical constraints. What did the terms of the 1948 Children Act specifically empower them to be able to do and what legal constraints effected the regulation of children's care and training overseas? Similarly, within these legal constraints, what would be

⁶² See Wheeler to Moss, 29th April 1952, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8.

the practical effects of any regulations that were introduced, and would their benefits outweigh the additional administrative burden they would create? In this sense, civil servants within the Home Office understood their statutory power in this situation as much in terms of its limits and costs as its potential for safeguarding children.

By contrast, the voluntary organisations who would be affected by these regulations were far more conscious about the potential of the regulations to restrict their work—particularly in the case of those organisations who, for varying reasons, were unlikely to adhere to expected standards. From this perspective, the regulations were perceived far more in terms of their powers of constraint than their limits.

As a consequence of these different perspectives, the decision within the Children's Department to hold the draft regulations back was made in the context of very different assessments of their efficacy by civil servants and voluntary organisations. The anxiety of some voluntary organisations about the prospect of the introduction of these regulations was better grounded in reality than the diffidence of the civil servants. The requirement in the regulations for the constitution of formal selection committees drawing on written case reports would have involved significant changes to the emigration practices of the Sisters of Nazareth, the Australian Catholic Immigration Committee, the Catholic Child Welfare Council and the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement. Systemic failures by these Catholic organisations and the Church of England Advisory Council to send family and medical histories of individual child migrants would also have become a breach of these regulations, as would the failure of these organisations (as well as the Over-Seas League) to provide regular post-emigration reports on children sent overseas. As Flint and Bavin told the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, the introduction even of these relatively limited regulations would probably have meant that their organisations' involvement in this work would have ceased. When, as will be discussed further in the next chapter, a more informal regulatory system was finally introduced by the UK Government in 1957, this coincided with Catholic organisations almost entirely ending their child migration activities. The child migration work of the Over-Seas League ended in 1956 following the death of Cyril Bavin—reflecting its reliance on him as a single administrator—but it is difficult to imagine that it could have continued beyond the introduction of the new informal regulations in 1957. The Church of England Advisory Council did try to continue its

work after this, only for it to be strongly censured by Home Office inspectors who discovered the poor standards of its administration and record-keeping when undertaking a direct inspection visit to its office in 1958.

Whilst the decision by the Children's Department not to pursue the introduction of the s.33 regulations might appear to have been grounded in a simple lack of knowledge of cases where voluntary organisations were failing to adhere to these standards, the reality was more complex. This point is illustrated by discussions within the Home Office about the proposed approval of the Over-Seas League as a recognised sending organisation for child migrants. By 1953, there had been on-going problems with the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service failing to provide sufficient numbers of boys to be sent to Dhurringile. Turning to contacts with Cyril Bavin that had been developed with the emigration of children to the Burnside Homes in the inter-war period, Presbyterian authorities proposed to the Commonwealth Government that the Over-Seas League be allowed to recruit children for Dhurringile from England and Wales.⁶³ The Commonwealth Department of Immigration expressed caution about this proposal as it was already aware, from previous correspondence with the UK High Commission in Canberra, that the UK Government did not consider the Over-Seas League to be a suitable sending organisation because it lacked adequate resources both for the appropriate selection of child migrants and their post-emigration monitoring.⁶⁴ Under pressure from Presbyterian authorities, and conscious of the Commonwealth Government funding already spent on enabling Dhurringile to open, Tasman Heyes wrote again to the UK High Commission in July 1953, asking that the current refusal to approve the League as a child migration organisation be reversed.⁶⁵ In making the case for this, Heyes noted both that the League was in no worse a position to manage children's migration than the Church of England Advisory Council—which had similarly limited administrative resources—and the substantial investment that the Australian authorities had already made in making the 'fine' scheme at Dhurringile available for British children.

After receiving notice of Heyes' request from the Commonwealth Relations Office, an internal debate began within the Home Office Children's Department about how best to respond. Views ranged from

⁶³ Challinor to Heyes, 8th July 1953, National Archives of Australia, A445, 133/2/106.

⁶⁴ Castle to Assistant Secretary, National Archives of Australia, A445, 133/2/106.

⁶⁵ See Crook to Dixon with enclosures, 29th July 1953, TNA: MH102/2049.

the suggestion that the League might be allowed to advertise the Dhurringile scheme if another approved organisation undertook the selection to a stronger position of simply telling the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and the League that this arrangement was not acceptable because the League would not be able to meet required standards.⁶⁶ Ultimately, Prestige found a compromise which would avoid any overt confrontation. In a note on 9th September 1953 he observed that the League was already well aware of the content of the current draft of the s.33 regulations through Bavin's involvement in the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration.⁶⁷ On that basis, he recommended that the League be approved as a sending organisation given that Bavin understood the standards for selection and post-migration monitoring that would be required when the s.33 regulations were introduced. Either the League would have to start complying with those standards—in which case the UK Government could have no objections to their involvement in this work—or the League would have to stop its work as soon as the regulations were introduced. Whilst this might have appeared a well-crafted compromise when it was imagined that the regulations were about to be introduced, it fell apart nine months later, when Prestige agreed that, on balance, it was better for the regulations to be held back. By then, the Over-Seas League had already been approved as a sending organisation on the basis of Prestige's suggestion and had started to send children to Dhurringile without any evidence of it adhering to the standards required if the s.33 regulations had been introduced. In one case, the LEM3 form for a boy in local authority care who was sent to Dhurringile by the League in August 1954 shows that the necessary consent from the Secretary of State to his migration was not obtained under s.17 of the 1948 Children Act.⁶⁸ This individual later provided the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse with a harrowing account of sustained sexual and physical abuse he experienced there.⁶⁹

It seems unlikely that when Prestige agreed the deferral of the s.33 regulations in June 1954 he had entirely forgotten his earlier recommendation about the League based on the view that these regulations were

⁶⁶ See notes 6th August, 11th August and 1st September 1953, TNA: MH102/2049.

⁶⁷ Note by Prestige, 9th September 1953, TNA: MH102/2049.

⁶⁸ See NAA: PP93/10, 450.

⁶⁹ Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Child Migration Programmes Investigation, Day 4 transcript, 2nd March 2017, p.4.

about to be introduced. The fact that he had also referred in an earlier departmental note to more than one organisation operating selection committees consisting of a single individual also indicated that Prestige knew that the League was not an isolated case in terms of failing to adhere to expected standards. Given such knowledge, the decision to withhold the regulations seems to have been made not in the belief that all sending organisations were conducting their work to expected standards but more on the basis of a balancing of costs and risks. The Children's Department understood that the introduction of these regulations might well stop the child migration work of an organisation like the League. But the scale of the League's work was small, and the value of bringing it to an end had to be weighed against other factors such as the administrative burden the regulations would cause more generally not only for all voluntary organisations involved in this work but the Children's Department too.⁷⁰ The judgements made by Prestige in this period exemplified how a civil servant could, at times, regard their powers as too limited to be useful and also, in some contexts, recognise that whilst their powers might have some efficacy, their use would create more difficulties than benefits. The failure to introduce regulations in this case was not simply an exercise in recognising the limits of government but in coming to a view on how much risk and imperfection could be tolerated in children's care.

LIMITED OVERSIGHT AND THE ROUTE TO THE MOSS REPORT

Another factor also played a significant role in shaping views within the Home Office about the balance of these risks in relation to the s.33 regulations. In 1953, an unofficial report was published about standards of care for child migrants in Australia by John Moss, which provided a broadly positive assessment of this work and gave sufficient assurance to the Home Office for John Ross to feel that the need for the introduction

⁷⁰ Concern about administrative burden on the Home Office were also a grounds for its lack of enthusiasm for John Ross's later recommendation that the emigration of all unaccompanied children be subject to Secretary of State consent (see Chap. 6), as well as the Children's Department's rejection of the proposal by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Estimates that it review periodic submissions from all local authorities on why specific children in their care had not been boarded out (see Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p. 394).

of s.33 regulations might be less urgent than first thought.⁷¹ A later fact-finding mission to Australia, led by John Ross in the spring of 1956, was to return a far more damning view of many receiving institutions and the system of child migration as a whole than that presented by Moss. Until then, however, Moss's intervention played an important role in allaying some concerns about child migrants' experiences overseas.

Prior to Moss's report, the Home Office had little detailed knowledge of conditions at receiving institutions in Australia. Although Mary Rosling and Janette Maxwell had seen copies of inspection reports by State officials of institutions to which child migrants were sent to Western Australia in 1947, the Home Office was not routinely consulted about the approval of receiving institutions by the Commonwealth Relations Office until 1950. This lack of consultation became increasingly clear to the Home Office, and in a private departmental note in 1951, Miss Northover, a Principal Officer in the Children's Department, commented that several children's homes on the Commonwealth Relations Office's approved list for child migrants had received approval without any discussion with them.⁷² On hearing of an informal inspection visit of institutions receiving child migrants to be undertaken by Miss Harrison, an inspector working in the Scottish Home Department, who was undertaking a personal trip to Australia in the spring of 1950, Prestige wrote to the Scottish Home Department asking for a copy of her report when it was completed as the Home Office was 'very short of first hand information about the arrangements for the reception and welfare of children who emigrate'.⁷³

What information the Children's Department did receive was usually in the form of reports from State officials in Australia submitted in the context of applications for other receiving institutions to be added to those approved by the UK Government. Information in these was often sparse. As one Departmental official noted, information on the standard of child-care was limited and the reports were often written by Australian immigration officials with limited experience of children's out-of-home care.⁷⁴ The

⁷¹ See Ross to Dixon, 4th November 1953, TNA: MH102/2047.

⁷² Note by Northover, 27th March 1951, TNA: MH102/1889; see also lack of consultation with the Home Office on institutional approvals before 1950 acknowledged in *Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956*, TNA: DO35/4881, para 84.

⁷³ Prestige to Rowe, 20th September 1950, TNA: MH102/2335.

⁷⁴ Note by MacGregor, 13th June 1950, TNA: MH102/2032. Correspondence and notes on the same file show an attempt by the Home Office to get better information from Australian authorities on standards of care at institutions seeking approval for receiving child

Home Office was invited to give initial approval to a new wing to accommodate 150 female child migrants at Nazareth House, East Camberwell in Victoria in the autumn of 1950 before the construction work on this had been completed.⁷⁵ Earlier that autumn, a similar situation arose in which the Home Office was invited to indicate its approval for the Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, which, like Nazareth House, East Camberwell, had begun to be developed for the reception of child migrants with Australian Commonwealth capital funding before approval had been agreed with UK authorities. Given that no staff had even been appointed when the Home Office's approval was sought, its approval (and that of the Scottish Home Department) was made on the basis of more general assurances about the standards that would be maintained at Dhurringile in the future.⁷⁶ Similarly, in 1950, conditional approval had been given to the Riverview Training Farm run by the Salvation Army in Queensland on the basis that satisfactory reports would be received about the first party of child migrants to be sent there.⁷⁷ In 1952, despite no detailed information having been provided about conditions at Riverview, the Home Office accepted that unconditional approval for it as a receiving institution be granted.⁷⁸ Despite this limited information, concern remained in the Children's Department about the sensitivity of pushing for more detailed information if this was perceived by the Australian Commonwealth Government as calling its own judgement and recommendations into question.⁷⁹

Throughout these discussions, it was common for the reservations of staff in the Children's Department either not to be expressed strongly to the Commonwealth Relations Office (and through them to the UK High

migrants by producing a standard questionnaire. Whilst the Commonwealth Department of Immigration was not averse to providing more detailed information, State child welfare officers reportedly complained that this would entail too much work on their staff (see Garnett to Walsh Atkins, 30th November 1950, same file).

⁷⁵Note by Ratcliffe, 23rd November 1950, TNA: MH102/1882.

⁷⁶See Martin to MacGregor, 11th September 1950, NRS: ED11/386.

⁷⁷Bass to Wheeler, 27th March 1950, National Archives of Australia, J25, 1958/3052; Marjoribanks to Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Immigration, National Archives of Australia, J25, 1958/3052.

⁷⁸See Heyes to Longland, 15th October 1951; Smith to Heyes, 7th November 1951; Davey to Heyes, 5th February 1952, National Archives of Australia, J25, 1958/3052.

⁷⁹See note by Prestige, 15th June 1950, TNA: MH102/2032. John Ross, nevertheless, took the view at that point that if it would still be some time before s.33 regulations would be introduced, then better information should still be sought from Australian authorities.

Commission and Australian Commonwealth Government) or when expressed, not to be followed through by refusal to give approval to a particular institution. In the case of Nazareth House, East Camberwell, considerable reservations were privately expressed in notes within the Children's Department about the unsuitability of a large impersonal institution, run by a religious order with at best only a partial openness to current thinking on good child-care practice, in which the accommodation of child migrants in an institution also housing elderly residents appeared to be more about the management of overheads than best practice for the children.⁸⁰ However, whilst the Children's Department's initial response to the Commonwealth Relations Office indicated that the institutional accommodation to be provided at East Camberwell 'does not strike us favourably', the only issue on which change was initially pressed was that a wider age range of children might be considered to avoid the institutionalised nature of caring for large numbers of younger children of similar ages.⁸¹ This was subsequently extended to an attempt to ensure that any children sent to East Camberwell would have opportunities to engage with the local community (including attending local schools) and receive adequate after-care.⁸² Despite receiving far from complete assurances on these specific points, the Home Office did not object to final approval of Nazareth House, East Camberwell as a receiving institution in the autumn of 1951.⁸³

Between 1949 and 1953 it appears that the Home Office took the view that until the s.33 regulations were introduced it had no formal powers to intervene to prevent the approval of any receiving institutions in Australia and its comments on requests for approvals forwarded to it from the Commonwealth Relations Office could only be regarded as advisory.⁸⁴ Although the passing of the 1948 Children Act gave the Home Office

⁸⁰ See notes 23rd November, 1950; 25th November 1950; 5th December 1950; 3rd January 1951; 5th January 1951; and 8th January 1951, with John Ross initially his reading of these on 11th January 1951, TNA: MH102/1882.

⁸¹ MacGregor to Palmer, 25th November 1950, TNA: MH102/1882.

⁸² MacGregor to Palmer, 15th January 1951; Savidge to Palmer, 16th July 1951, TNA: MH102/1882.

⁸³ See Heyes to Crook, 22nd March 1951; Crook to Dixon, 28th September 1951, TNA: MH102/1882.

⁸⁴ See, for example, Notes of meeting on Emigration of Children, 28th June 1950, TNA: MH102/2032; MacGregor to Dixon, 4th August 1950, NRS: ED11-386; Chuter Ede to Mellish, 25th January 1951, TNA: MH102/1883.

greater moral authority as the lead Government department for children's out-of-home care, in the absence of s.33 regulations, the Home Office believed it had no formal veto over such approvals. Cautious comments from the Children's Department on approval requests passed on by the Commonwealth Relations Office also seem to have reflected a wider culture within the Department of often phrasing its criticisms to external stakeholders in very mild ways.⁸⁵

There were a small number of cases in which the Home Office were, at least for a time, willing to press its objections more strongly. When presented with the request for the approval of St John Bosco Boy's Town in Hobart, Tasmania, the Children's Department indicated that the institutional character of this home—whilst typical of many other Catholic children's homes—was exacerbated by an organisational culture in which boys were subject to a policy of continual monitoring for their moral discipline by the Salesian Brothers staffing it. The Children's Department appears to have accepted that initial placement of child migrants in overseas institutions (with a view to them later being boarded out) might well be preferable to the risks of placing children immediately with individual foster carers.⁸⁶ However, its staff evidently had reservations more generally about whether the institutional character of large, congregate Catholic children's homes encouraged children's healthy social development, and the particularly controlling ethos of the Salesians was seen as going beyond what could be accepted for child migrants.⁸⁷ John Ross took the view that it would potentially place the UK Government in a very difficult position if this institution were approved at this stage, given that it would be deemed an unsuitable destination for child migrants as soon as the s.33 regulations were introduced.

The Home Office's objection faced a number of challenges from Fr Nicol (who complained that it ran contrary to the Government's acceptance of Salesian institutions in the United Kingdom), the Australian Commonwealth Government (who had already provisionally agreed a capital grant to enable St John Bosco Boys' Town to receive child migrants) and Walter Garnett (who complained that implied criticism of Catholic

⁸⁵ 'Inspectors are outspoken enough in their reports, written for Home Office consumption only. But when Home Office inspectors and administrators meet local authority representatives to discuss a particular problem ... which is worrying them, they become much less direct' (J.A.G. Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p.425).

⁸⁶ This view is noted, for example, in Note, ref: 942833/13(S), TNA: MH102/1883.

⁸⁷ On this, see also Memorandum, 26th February 1951, TNA: MH102/1883.

teaching methods would be perceived by some in Australia as an attack on the Catholic faith itself). Despite this, the Children's Department refused to retract its objections.⁸⁸ With this approval delayed, the Labour MP, Robert Mellish, privately contacted the Home Secretary, James Chuter Ede, on behalf of Catholic contacts of his to ask for an explanation for the Home Office's view. Chuter Ede sent a lengthy reply, noting that during the Parliamentary debates during the passage of the Children Bill, he had given assurances that consent to children's migration would in future be conditional on them receiving standards of care overseas comparable to those recommended in the Curtis report. Whilst not ruling out the possibility of child migrants being placed in institutional care overseas, or commenting on the suitability of Catholic institutional care in the United Kingdom, Chuter Ede argued that the particularly restrictive ethos of St John Bosco Boys' Town would make it particularly unsuitable for children trying to adjust to life in a new country and integrate into their local community.⁸⁹

Far from calming matters, Chuter Ede's response was passed from Mellish on to Fr Nicol who wrote a lengthy rebuttal and requested that no final decision be made until he had been able to consult on this matter with the Catholic Hierarchy of Australia. Evidently anxious about the wider implications for Catholic child migration of Home Office's intervention, Nicol also asked that any further action in finalising the s.33 regulations be delayed until the views of the Australian Catholic bishops were known. Forwarding Nicol's letter with a covering letter, Mellish asked Geoffrey de Freitas, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office, to meet a small delegation to discuss this matter further, noting that he would doubtless 'appreciate how Catholics regard this matter'.⁹⁰ This meeting was deferred, with de Freitas informing Mellish

⁸⁸ A summary of these discussions during 1950 is given in Memorandum, 27th November 1950, TNA: MH102/1883. R.H. Wheeler specifically raised the point about the Commonwealth Government funding for St John Bosco Boys' Town in a meeting with the Commonwealth Relations Office at which he commented that delay in approving an institution to which Commonwealth funding had already been given was an 'awkward one' (Note of meeting, 22nd August 1950, TNA: MH102/2032).

⁸⁹ Chuter Ede to Mellish, 25th January 1951, also Gibson to Prestige, 18th January 1951 (where the Commonwealth Relations gave its response to the Home Office's invitation to comment on a draft of this letter), TNA: MH102/1883.

⁹⁰ Mellish to de Freitas with enclosure, 16th February 1951, TNA: MH102/1883.

that Nicol should receive the views of the Australian Catholic bishops in advance.⁹¹

Two months later, in July 1951, Nicol replied, saying that the bishops had left these matters 'in my hands as their official representative and spokesman'. He also complained about delays with the approval of eight Catholic residential institutions, some of whom had been granted Commonwealth Government funding to enable them to receive child migrants and all of whom were struggling with problems of unfilled vacancies.⁹² When de Freitas met with Mellish and Nicol, though, de Freitas explained that in seven of these cases approval had been delayed only because requested information had not been provided from Australia, and no adequate response had still been given to concerns about the other remaining case of St John's Bosco Boys Town.⁹³ A further meeting was arranged between Fr Nicol and Prestige to address those concerns. Nicol argued that any failure to approve of this institution would logically have to be extended to all Catholic receiving institutions in Australia. Furthermore, the Home Office's concerns were based on a misunderstanding of the 'preventive system' of discipline practised by the Salesians which, Nicol claimed, was in practice no different to teachers normally watching over children in their care. Facing this challenge about the consistency of the Home Office's views, and given reassurances that the ethos of the Boys Town was no worse than many Catholic children's homes in the United Kingdom, Prestige relented. Indicating that the Home Office would now support the approval of this institution, Prestige added the consolatory note that Fr Nicol would soon be going to Australia and would doubtless 'convey to the Superior of St John Bosco Boys' Town the English conception of child care for immigrant children'.⁹⁴ The wider pattern of the Children's Department withdrawing its concerns about the

⁹¹ De Freitas to Mellish, 8th May 1951, TNA: MH102/1883.

⁹² Nicol to de Freitas, 4th July 1951, TNA: MH102/1883.

⁹³ Note of a meeting between Mr de Freitas, Mr Mellish and Fr Nicol, undated, TNA: MH102/1883.

⁹⁴ Note by Prestige, 13th August 1951; Savidge to Dixon, 16th August 1951, TNA: MH102/1883. John Moss also endorsed the use of St John Bosco Boys' Town on the basis that more female staff were likely to be added in some form in the future, but his letter arrived at the Home Office after the decision had already been made to accept its approval (see Moss to Ross, 10th October 1951, TNA: MH102/2041). John Ross forwarded it on to the Commonwealth Relations Office to show that it had endorsed the Home Office's position.

approval of specific institutions on the basis of limited information or under challenge from other organisations, was once again evident.

The Home Office's limited knowledge of institutional conditions in Australian institutions accommodating child migrants was compounded by the lack of independent inspections by British visitors. In 1950, Muriel Welsford, a Children's Welfare officer for the Women's Voluntary Services sent the Home Office brief notes on her impressions from visiting a small number of institutions in Australia as well as her conversations with contacts in New Zealand about child migration there. Her comments about the Australian institutions were wholly positive, with her only criticisms reserved for the Over-Seas League, whom she believed should open a reception centre in New Zealand for its child migrants. Children's Department notes on the file containing her report—and Prestige's response thanking Welsford for it—did not suggest that her observations were regarded as carrying any particular weight.⁹⁵ Although more hope seemed to have been placed in Miss Harrison's informal inspection visits to 18 institutions in Australia, which also took place during the summer of 1950, her eventual report was only three pages long, mostly containing a very general overview of organisational policies and systems and with no detailed information about individual institutions.⁹⁶

During that same summer, the Home Office was approached by John Moss, the retiring County Welfare officer for Kent County Council and former member of the Curtis Committee, who proposed making informal visits to Australian institutions accommodating child migrants whilst he was on holiday there. John Ross welcomed this as an opportunity for gaining more detailed information from a trusted British source.⁹⁷ Whilst Ross and Moss would have already been aware of each other through their involvement in national child-care policy work, contact between them may also have been further cemented by the fact that both were members of the same club—the Reform Club—in London.⁹⁸ Moss's proposal appealed not only because of his experience of wider debates on child-care practice in Britain—including his involvement in the Central Training Council in Child Care—but because he had previously undertaken what

⁹⁵ See notes and correspondence on TNA: MH102/2334.

⁹⁶ See report, notes and correspondence on TNA: MH102/2335.

⁹⁷ Memorandum from Ross to Prestige, 20th June 1950, TNA: MH102/2034.

⁹⁸ See, for example, Wheeler to Moss, 28th February 1952, ML: MLMSS/9025/Box12; Ross to Garnett and Wansbrough-Jones, 25th June 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

was seen as a valuable informal inspection of Fairbridge's Prince of Wales farm school in British Columbia whilst on a lecture tour of Canada.⁹⁹ The Commonwealth Relations Office expressed greater caution, fearing that such a visit by Moss soon after that undertaken by Harrison might elicit a negative reaction from Australian governmental and voluntary bodies who might object to 'overdoing the frequency of such tours of inspection'.¹⁰⁰ On this occasion, the Home Office chose to press its point, however, and the Commonwealth Relations Office agreed to contact the UK High Commission in Canberra to ask them to provide Moss with any required assistance for this.¹⁰¹ From this point on, what was originally envisaged by the Home Office as a low-key informal information-gathering exercise quickly gained momentum, not least through Moss's own description to others of having been commissioned by the Government to write a comprehensive report on conditions for child migrants in Australia.¹⁰² With planning for Moss's trip during the spring of 1951 coinciding with the Home Office continuing to raise concerns about the approval of St John's Bosco Boys' Town, relationships between the Home Office and Catholic authorities continued to be sensitive. When asked to co-operate with Moss's visit, Fr Nicol responded in a way which implied that his co-operation would be conditional on him being able to see reports by anyone undertaking semi-official inspections of Catholic institutions so that his organisation could offer its comments on them.¹⁰³ The Home Office also noted that they considered it a priority for Moss to visit Catholic institutions in Western Australia. They were, at the same time, conscious that focusing on Catholic institutions—of which their knowledge was particularly 'scanty'—could create an unfortunate impression that their attention was focused disproportionately on Catholic activities.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ See notes and memorandum on TNA: MH102/2332, in which it is noted that Moss's information should be borne in mind when the draft s.33 regulations were to be drawn up; also documents and correspondence on TNA: MH102/2253, including Ross to Moss, 16th July 1949, where Ross thanks him for his valuable insights. After his visit to Australia, Moss completed his visits to countries receiving child migrants funded under the Empire Settlement Act, by visiting the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College in January 1954, see notes and correspondence on TNA: MH102/1898.

¹⁰⁰ Walsh Atkins to Prestige, 11th August 1950, TNA: MH102/2034.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum to Ross, 5th October 1950: TNA: MH102/2034.

¹⁰² See Prestige to Gibson, 16th January 1951, TNA: MH102/2034.

¹⁰³ Nicol to Prestige, 7th February 1951, TNA: MH102/2034.

¹⁰⁴ Note by Prestige, 20th March 1951; Prestige to Gibson, 28th March 1951, TNA: MH102/2034.

Moss's nine month tour of Australia began in May 1951, and included briefing meetings with the UK High Commission, Commonwealth Department of Immigration and State officials on policy and operational practices, as well as visits to receiving institutions for child migrants in New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.¹⁰⁵ Moss himself described this mix of discussions with officials and institutional visits as comparable to his experience of serving on the Curtis Committee.¹⁰⁶ Far from being low key, however, Moss's visit attracted media coverage in both State and national press in Australia, and included him giving both local lectures and a talk on 'Australian and British Social Services' broadcast on Australian Broadcasting Commission radio in which he said that he hoped far more children in institutional homes in Britain would be emigrated to Australia.¹⁰⁷ The growing publicity for Moss's visit was something not at all intended by the Home Office and was to prove important in creating a context in which the Home Office ultimately had little choice in supporting the publication of his final report.

THE MOSS REPORT: FINDINGS AND INFLUENCE

By October 1951, Moss had prepared a detailed summary of his initial impressions based on conversations with officials, responses to a questionnaire which he had submitted to State bodies and receiving organisations, and notes from visits to institutions in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.¹⁰⁸ In general, he concluded, 'I believe the Homes in Australia are of good standard and that many British children deprived of a normal home life in the United Kingdom would ultimately have a better chance in this country'. Moss did raise areas of concern. Improvements could be made in pre-emigration preparation for children, the transfer of relevant information about individual children from sending to receiving institutions did not take place in many cases, and it was disappointing that more child migrants had not been placed out with foster parents (possibly

¹⁰⁵ Heyes to Calwell, 4th September 1951, ML: MLMSS/9025/Box 12.

¹⁰⁶ Moss to Ross, 13th June 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹⁰⁷ 'Britain wants families to aid child migrants', 5th October 1951, *The Mercury*, copy held on ML: MLMSS/9025/Box 12; Molesworth to Heyes, with enclosure, 6th March 1952, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8.

¹⁰⁸ Notes on discussion between Mr J. Moss and Mr R. U. Metcalfe, 24th and 25th October 1951, ML: MLMSS/9025/Box 12.

because of lack of available placements or the prospect of increased costs to State Child Welfare departments). More could also be done to ensure that child migrants were successfully assimilated into local families and communities. However, Moss also declared himself to be 'very much impressed by the thoroughness in which the interests of migrants are safeguarded under existing procedure' and (with a small number of exceptions) generally satisfied with standards in receiving institutions some of which were 'excellent and some very good'.

In contrast to the reports produced by Harrison and Welsford, which were less detailed and painted broad, positive pictures, Moss's observations seemed more credible to British authorities precisely because they combined endorsements of existing practices along with criticisms and recommendations for improvement. Comments on specific institutions that he had visited by October 1951 included a number of positive observations but also criticisms of institutions which provided too few opportunities for children to build outside contacts or offered poor standards of accommodation. Institutions in Queensland criticised by Moss included St George's Church of England Home, the Methodist Queen Alexandra Home for Children and Margaret Warr Home, and St Vincent's Roman Catholic Children's Home in Nudgee (which he described as 'the worst Roman Catholic Home I have seen in Australia'¹⁰⁹). He also criticised St Joseph's Roman Catholic Orphanage in Hobart, Tasmania, as well as the 'Dalmar' Methodist Home for Children in New South Wales. In the case of St Vincent's, Nudgee and St Joseph's in Hobart, and two Methodist homes in Brisbane which were about to request child migrants, Moss explicitly recommended that approval for them be withheld. In a separate letter to the UK High Commission, two months later, Moss also commented that he thought that standards of selection of children for Methodist children's homes in Australia were generally worse than any other organisation he had observed.¹¹⁰ Moss was also critical of some of the previous approvals of receiving institutions by the Australian Commonwealth Government and UK High Commission, noting both the speed with which some unsuitable Methodist homes had been approved (whilst approvals for more suitable institutions had taken

¹⁰⁹ Moss to Ross, 28th June 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹¹⁰ Moss to Crook, 10th December 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

longer), and also regretting the approval of another Anglican children's home in Queensland.¹¹¹

As he continued his institutional visits in Western Australia on his way back to Britain, Moss also began to send confidential interim reports to the UK High Commission which were then shared both with the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office in London, as well in at least some cases with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration.¹¹² Some of these contained specific criticisms which Moss felt needed to be addressed. On visiting the Anglican Swan Homes near Perth, Moss discovered that some boys sent by the Church of England Advisory Council had been transferred to the Padbury Boys' Training Farm outside the city despite it not having been formally approved as a receiving institution by the UK Government. Noting its basic accommodation, isolated location and reliance on boys resident there for the construction of the site and cultivation of the land, Moss observed that this was not an institution that for which approval would have been likely to have been granted.¹¹³ The Benmore Children's Home, run by the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia, which had the previous year received a positive report by Miss Harrison, was seen as unfit for receiving child migrants by Moss on the grounds of its poor management, understaffing and limited facilities.¹¹⁴ Whilst not as critical of conditions generally at Castledare, Moss recommended that no further child migrants be sent there until additional classroom space was built (unknowingly repeating concerns about overcrowded teaching space previously noted by State inspectors in their highly critical report on Castledare in July 1948).¹¹⁵

After visiting Pinjarra in December 1951, Moss produced a report in which he criticised the lack of fly-wiring to provide protection from mosquitoes in the cottage homes (noting that the Principal's house had this facility), the apparent institutional policy of boys not wearing shoes despite the obvious discomfort this caused to new arrivals, and the use of single sex cottages which meant that brothers and sisters could not be kept together. Organised activities outside school were limited, too few

¹¹¹ See Moss to Ross, 13th June 1951; Moss to Ross 27th July 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹¹² See, for example, Crook to Metcalfe, 8th May 1952, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8.

¹¹³ 'Report on Padbury's Boys' Farm School', 4th December 1951, NAA: PP6/1, 1949/H/1145.

¹¹⁴ Note by Miss Harrison, 17th September 1951, NRS: ED11/306; Reports on Benmore and Burnbrae, 8th February 1952, TNA: MH102/1889.

¹¹⁵ Report on Castledare; Moss to Crook, 10th December 1951, NAA: K403, W1959/89.

opportunities were available to enable children to make contacts with outside families and the holiday camp to which children were moved during the long summer vacation was primitive and probably unsanitary. Noting the institution's difficulty in finding suitable cottage mothers, Moss noted that Pinjarra seemed to have to take whoever it could in these roles and that some of those appointed were not suited to this role. Given these concerns, Moss noted, better supervision of the cottage mothers was needed to mitigate the inadequate attention that some of them gave to children in their care—thus unwittingly repeating the same recommendation that Walter Garnett had made in his report, to little effect, seven years before. Better care also needed to be paid to house mothers' practices in punishing children. More effective supervision of the cottage mothers was, Moss concluded, a matter requiring urgent attention if children's interests at Pinjarra were to be safeguarded.¹¹⁶

In the event, Moss's objections had little ultimate effect. The Home Office conceded to pressure from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to continue to allow boys under school age to go to Padbury and the Christian Brothers failed to honour a commitment to build the additional teaching space at Castledare for another two years, despite receiving more child migrants in the intervening period.¹¹⁷ After receiving a dismissive response from the Western Australia Department of Immigration about Moss's criticisms of Pinjarra—which included an observation that the State Child Welfare Department considered the existing staff perfectly adequate—children continued to be sent there with the hope that conditions might improve under the new Principal.¹¹⁸ However, despite the failure to follow through on his criticisms, Moss's willingness to make them—and in some cases recommend withholding of approval of specific institutions—lent greater credibility to his comments as an independent observer of the child migration system.

¹¹⁶ See Crook to Dixon with enclosure, 12th March 1952, TNA: DO35/3403.

¹¹⁷ On the eventual approval of Padbury, see notes and correspondence in NAA: PP6/1, 1949/H/1165 and TNA: MH102/1890; on the Castledare case, see notes and correspondence on NAA: K403, W1959/89.

¹¹⁸ Crook to Dixon, 26th June 1952 with enclosure, TNA: DO35/3403; also report by Bartley, 16th June 1953, NAA: K403/W1959/101 (note that a report from the Commonwealth Migration Officer for Western Australia which was more supportive of Moss's criticisms did not appear to have been passed on to the UK High Commission, see report by Membery, 22nd April 1952, same file).

Whilst the Home Office welcomed the more detailed insights that Moss provided them on individual institutions, staff in the Children's Department also had concerns about his work. Before Moss left for Australia, a dispute had arisen between the Fairbridge Society's London office and the New South Wales committee for Molong over the number of children that it was acceptable to have cared for by a single cottage mother—with the New South Wales committee wanting a higher number than the maximum of ten that the London office wished to implement. Moss had been specifically advised by Fairbridge's London office not to involve himself in this dispute whilst in Australia, but had reportedly ended up doing so by telling those at Molong that their aim of having only ten children cared for by a cottage mother was 'quite uneconomical' and that the UK Government could not expect to impose restrictions of this kind which it could not achieve in its own institutions back home.

Sir Charles Hambro subsequently wrote to John Ross to complain about Moss's intervention, noting that although Moss did not have any official status as a representative of the UK Government, his visit to Molong had the effect of reinforcing attempts by the local management at Molong to resist directions from London.¹¹⁹ A note within the Children's Department expressed bemusement that Moss could have said this—given it contradicted his previous known views on staff ratios—but also commented that his visit to Molong had certainly caused an unnecessary problem and that little was known by British civil servants about the specific itinerary he planned to take for the rest of his tour.¹²⁰ John Ross formally replied to Hambro, regretting the apparent misunderstanding that had arisen and confirming that the Home Office endorsed the attitude to staff-child ratios held by the Fairbridge Society's London office.¹²¹ On hearing about the dispute, though, Walter Garnett made his own contact with the New South Wales committee. The UK High Commission subsequently wrote to the Commonwealth Relations Office complaining that attempts to limit the number of children cared for by cottage mothers by UK authorities wishing to impose 'ideal conditions' on overseas institutions failed to appreciate the implications of such requests on these

¹¹⁹ Hambro to Ross, 23rd July 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²⁰ Note by Northover, 31st July 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²¹ Ross to Hambro, 2nd August 1951, TNA: MH102/2041. Moss later confirmed that his was indeed a misunderstanding and that the New South Wales committee had misrepresented his comments (see Moss to Ross, 14th August 1951, same file).

institutions' running costs or difficulties in recruiting staff. In the margins of a copy of this letter passed on to the Home Office,¹²² Prestige wrote 'Are the children or the expenses more important? The Australian approach is not encouraging!'. Elsewhere in the same file, Prestige added, 'the High Commission's Office seems to adopt automatically an attitude more Australian than that of the Australians'.¹²³ By contrast, the Commonwealth Relations Office wrote to Garnett expressing regret that the Home Office was only belatedly passing on copies of Moss's progress reports to them and that they were aware that Moss was not copying in the UK High Commission in to all of these.¹²⁴ This incident in relation to Molong demonstrated the continued sensitivities of administering trans-national child migration programmes, in which the wider conflicts of interests and concerns between the various governmental and voluntary organisations involved in this work could find themselves played out through anything that Moss said and did in Australia.

Moss's role as a semi-official rapporteur on conditions in Australia was further blurred by him speaking directly to representatives of some organisations in Australia about his views on whether specific institutions—or requests for particular ages of children—should be approved or not. In doing this, Moss inserted himself into policy discussions in which he had no formal place to be involved.¹²⁵ The Children's Department was aware of this from Moss's own periodic reports of his activities and did not discourage him from doing this.¹²⁶ The Commonwealth Relations Office were, however, far less happy about this, noting that any withholding of approvals for specific institutions in Australia could only take place through the usual formal process involving them and the UK High Commission once Moss's formal report had been submitted.¹²⁷ Tensions between the

¹²² Crook to Dixon, 20th August 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²³ Note by Prestige, 18th September 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²⁴ Gibson to Garnett, 8th October 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²⁵ See Moss to Ross, 28th June 1951; Moss to Bishop of Rockhampton, 27th July 1951, TNA: MH102/2041. In the latter of these, Moss comments that both he and his wife (who was accompanying him on the trip) felt 'very strongly' that it would not be appropriate to migrate some older children being proposed by the Church of England Advisory Council on Empire Settlement.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Moss to Ross, 30th July 1951; Ross to Moss, 13th August 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹²⁷ Gibson to Garnett, 8th October 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

Home Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office/UK High Commission in Canberra were, once again, being played out.

The ways in which these competing views collided in relation to Moss's work became clearer as he began the process of finalising his report. Although there was some anxiety within the Commonwealth Department of Immigration about whether Moss's eventual report might harm child migration work, the Departmental officials who had regular contact with him both during and after his trip felt sufficiently reassured about his views to press for the Department to write to the UK High Commission to encourage the UK Government to publish it.¹²⁸ Reuben Wheeler subsequently wrote directly to Moss to offer any assistance from the Commonwealth Government in expediting its publication, and Moss himself recognised that the Department of Immigration hoped to use his report to push for greater numbers of children to be sent.¹²⁹ Indeed contact between John Moss and Reuben Wheeler appears to have been sufficiently warm for an understanding to develop between them that Moss would actively support the recruitment of child migrants for particular institutions struggling with unfilled vacancies on his return to the United Kingdom.¹³⁰

Moss submitted the draft of his report to Sir Frank Newsam, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office, on 18th July 1952.¹³¹ Whilst identifying areas for improvement (including better care in selecting child migrants, more integration of children in local Australian communities and families, supervision of cottage mothers and greater sharing of relevant information on individual children by sending organisations), Moss also warmly endorsed child migration and recommended that the programme be extended further with more children recruited from the care

¹²⁸ See memorandum from Metcalfe to Ordish, 5th June 1952; Heyes to Crook, 13th June 1952, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8. After Moss had left Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration were clearly at pains to show that any concerns he had raised were being addressed before he came to write his final report (see, e.g., Wheeler to Moss, 18th June 1952; Wheeler to Moss, 24th July 1952 same file).

¹²⁹ Wheeler to Moss, 22nd January 1953, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8; see also Prestige to Dixon, 12th December 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Wheeler to Moss, 22nd April 1952; Wheeler to Moss, 5th September 1952; Moss to Wheeler, 24th September 1952, Moss to Wheeler, 10th November 1952, NAA.C: A446/133/3/8.

¹³¹ Moss to Newsam, 18th July 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

of local authorities.¹³² The Commonwealth Relations Office were delighted with this outcome when the draft report was shared with them, with R.L. Dixon writing in return that ‘the conclusion reached by Moss after his extensive tour should be gratifying to the Australian Authorities’ and that he hoped the report would be printed for wider readership.¹³³

The position for the Home Office was more complex, however. In a memorandum setting out possible ways of proceeding with Moss’s report,¹³⁴ John Ross noted that although the Home Office had agreed to meet the costs of Moss’s additional travelling and subsistence expenses (which had become more extensive than originally envisaged), his offer to undertake inspections of the child migration system had been accepted explicitly on the basis that it was ‘in no sense an official one’. It was not clear at the point that this agreement was initially made with Moss that he would even be making his comments in a formal report. The publicity given to his tour, however, meant that his review of the child migration system was well-known and his comments to the UK Government on this were much anticipated by governmental and voluntary organisations involved in this work. Whilst Ross recognised that the report would be of interest to organisations involved in child migration and so merited wider circulation, he also argued that it would be highly problematic if it were perceived that the Home Office were actively endorsing a policy of emigration for children in local authority care. Any publication would therefore require a clear disclaimer that it was an entirely independent piece of work and did not in any way represent the official view of the Home Office. Such caution should extend to the Home Office not sending copies of the report to local authorities or voluntary organisations—for fear that this would imply an endorsement of it—with the Children’s Department merely sending out a circular letter to them drawing their attention to the existence of the report if they wished to purchase their own copies.

The response by Sir Frank Newsam was even more cautious. Newsam suggested that it might be preferable not to publish the report in the United Kingdom at all, but to pass it on to the Australian Commonwealth

¹³² Note of a report made to the Secretary of State by John Moss, 1st August 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³³ Dixon to Taylor, 17th September 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁴ Child migration to Australia, report by John Moss: Note by the Children’s Department on publication, TNA: MH102/2046.

Government on the basis that they could publish it in Australia and make it available for sale in the United Kingdom if they wished to do so.¹³⁵ The Commonwealth Relations Office rebutted this proposal when it was presented to them, suggesting that neither their department nor the Australian Commonwealth Government would find it appropriate for Australian authorities to be asked to publish ‘a report of ours’.¹³⁶ Prestige noted that their response also seemed to imply that the Commonwealth Relations Office believed that the Home Office wanted to keep the report entirely confidential, which was not the case.¹³⁷ The eventual resolution proposed by John Ross was for the report to be printed by the HMSO as document independent of the UK Government, distributed by the Home Office to a limited number of interested parties and with others able to purchase their own copies. Whilst this provided a means of Moss’s report being brought into the public domain in a way that satisfied the different needs of the various governmental bodies concerned with child migration, it still faced a challenge from the HMSO as to why it was felt necessary for such a specialist report with little wider public interest to be published through them.¹³⁸ Using the Home Secretary’s authority, the Children’s Department insisted that it be published in this way, and the report—with its disclaimer that it was ‘an independent record of Mr Moss’s impressions and is not to be taken as expressing the views of the Home Office or of any Australian authority’—was eventually published in September 1953.¹³⁹ Limited publicity of its launch was sent to national press, and a circular with the same disclaimer posted to local authorities and the constituent members of the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration providing information of its availability for sale.¹⁴⁰

The publicity that Moss’s work received in the United Kingdom was not as great as he had personally hoped. On his return from Australia, none of the major national newspapers expressed any interest in publishing a letter from his about his tour. The only publications in which he was able to print articles about it were the periodical, *British Weekly*, in which Moss criticised Protestant churches for being insufficiently committed to

¹³⁵ Note by Newsam, 9th December 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁶ Gibson to Prestige, 27th December 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁷ Note by Prestige, 31st December 1952, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁸ Jefford to Clerk of Stationery, 19th May 1953, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹³⁹ *Child Migration to Australia: Report by John Moss*.

¹⁴⁰ Circular letter by John Ross, 3rd October 1953, TNA: MH102/2046.

supporting child migration, and the *County Councils Association Official Gazette*, in which Moss sought to encourage local authorities to make more use of child migration schemes.¹⁴¹ Two other newspapers picked up his comments encouraging local authorities to make more children in their care available for emigration, and the eventual release of his report in the autumn of 1953 did receive brief coverage in *The Times* and on national television news.¹⁴²

Its impact, however, was far greater on organisations which already had existing involvement or concerns about child migration programmes. Whilst irritated by his allegations of Protestant churches' lack of support for this work, the members of the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration were nevertheless very pleased with his broad endorsement of the value of child migration and hoped that this could be used to extend its members' work.¹⁴³ The fact that John Moss's tour—which was understood to be an entirely unofficial one when he first contacted members of the Council before leaving for Australia—appeared to have taken on a more official standing was also recognised as being potentially helpful to their cause.

The view of the Association of Social Workers of Great Britain (which had changed to this name from the British Federation of Social Workers in 1951) was far less positive. In a review of the Moss report in its quarterly periodical for spring 1954, the Association's Care of Children Committee noted the care with which Moss had gathered his information and the level of detail he had provided on policies and conditions in Australia.¹⁴⁴ However, whilst commending it as 'important source material for anyone interested in this subject', the review also observed that social workers

¹⁴¹ 'Migration of Children to Australia', *British Weekly*, no.3427, 17th July 1952; 'Child Emigration to Australia by John Moss', *County Councils Association Official Gazette*, no date, copies of both held on NAA.C: A446/133/3/8.

¹⁴² On coverage of his comments to local authorities, see minutes of meeting of Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration, ULSCA(F): H6/1/2/1; 'Child migration to Australia', *The Times*, 6th October 1953 and Extract from TV news bulletins for 5th October 1953, TNA: MH102/2046.

¹⁴³ See minutes of meetings on 30th April 1952, 28th May 1952 and 8th July 1952, ULSCA.F: H6/1/2/1. The Council had an early briefing about Moss's broadly positive impressions of how child migration schemes worked in Australia from Fr Nicol who had, by chance, travelled to the United Kingdom on the same ship on which Moss and his wife were returning.

¹⁴⁴ Review of 'Child migration to Australia, by John Moss', Association of Social Workers of Great Britain News, January-March 1954, copy held on ML: MLMSS9025/Box 12.

reading the report ‘will probably come to other conclusions than those reached by the author himself’. The overall impression gained of conditions in Australian institutions was, it noted, that approaches to child-care were less progressive than in the United Kingdom. In contrast to Australia, there was greater emphasis in Britain on caring for children in home-like environments or small groups within institutions, in maintaining their contacts with relatives with a view to them being able to return to family members’ homes where possible, and on enabling children in institutions to feel part of their local communities. Whilst these standards might not always be achieved in practice by Children’s Officers—particularly in relation to children with disabilities or challenging behaviour—the emphasis placed on them by Officers seemed much stronger than in many of the Australian institutions described by Moss.

Noel Lamidey, the Chief Migration Officer at Australia House in London, was alarmed that views expressed in this review were probably representative of local authority Children’s Officers and forwarded it on to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration back in Canberra. Tasman Heyes replied with a lengthy rebuttal of the Association’s criticisms.¹⁴⁵ Whilst lacking Moss’s direct experience of visiting these institutions, Heyes argued that the Association’s views were also wrong in important respects. As far as Heyes understood, child migrants were only sent from the United Kingdom in cases where parents no longer had an interest in the care of the child, whether because of illegitimacy or the breakdown of the family home. Whilst there was no doubt that care in a private household was preferable to that in an institution, Heyes noted that there were considerable risks in placing child migrants directly with long-term foster parents with whom they had not been able to have any previous contact at all. Institutions could provide a base from which a child migrants’ relationship with potential foster parents could be tested out, and even if no placement could be found, the institution could compensate for the lack of something resembling a family home.

Arguably the most important effect of Moss’s work, however, was on decision-making in the Home Office. Whilst uneasy about the way in which an unofficial information-gathering exercise had snowballed into a more quasi-official report, and unwilling to be seen to support Moss’s call for an expansion of child migration schemes, the Children’s Department

¹⁴⁵ Lamidey to Heyes, 14th June 1954, with enclosure; Heyes to Lamidey, 5th July 1954, ML: MLMSS9025/Box 12.

nevertheless treated his comments as the most substantial insights they had yet received on conditions in Australia. In a letter to the Commonwealth Relations Office in November 1953, John Ross noted that the 'reassuring nature of Moss's report on what he saw in Australia' was inclining the Children's Department to question the need to introduce their s.33 regulations in the near future. Whilst this might appear to have been an entirely passive approach by the Home Office, it is better understood as a judgement made on the basis of how its staff balanced their desired policy outcomes with their perceptions of the limits of their powers through statutory regulation. As noted earlier in this chapter, the Children's Department had become sceptical as to whether regulations were the most effective mechanism for safeguarding British child migrants in Australia. The limitations imposed by the phrasing of the 1948 Children Act, the limits of the UK Government's legal control of overseas organisations and the risk of unwanted administrative burdens, all made the introduction of the s.33 regulations a less appealing approach than it had previously appeared when the Children's Bill was under discussion. By contrast, the Moss report had shown another way in which policies and organisational practices in Australia might be influenced without the limitations or bad feeling associated with regulation. Whilst the public and organisational attention given to Moss's tour was not what the Home Office had originally wanted, an unintended consequence of this was that it placed a degree of moral pressure on Australian governmental and voluntary organisations to comply with Moss's recommendations for improvements if they were to continue this work. The fact that the Australian Commonwealth Department of Immigration generally saw Moss's recommendations as standards which organisations were already aware of and striving to achieve was seen in the Children's Department as evidence that it might be possible to nudge overseas organisations towards better practice through means other than regulation. On noting correspondence from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration about their response to Moss's recommendations, one Children's Department official commented that 'we are glad to see that many of them have had good results'.¹⁴⁶ By abandoning direct regulation of child migration in favour of trying to exert pressure for change through more advisory exchanges, the Children's Department adopted an approach to this field which already characterised its relationship with local authorities and voluntary societies more generally in the

¹⁴⁶Northover to Dixon, 16th June 1954, TNA: MH102/2046.

United Kingdom.¹⁴⁷ At home, the Children's Department sought to exert pressure for change in out-of-home care provided by local authorities and voluntary societies through advice and critiques provided through its inspectorate. Overseas, in relation to child migration, the Children's Department came to hope that this approach could be replicated through its interactions with Australian authorities and the UK High Commission, mediated through the Commonwealth Relations Office. The flaws in this strategy were, however, to become increasingly clear.

MOSS, THE CURTIS REPORT AND DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF A COMMON POLICY FRAMEWORK

Given what was subsequently to emerge from the fact-finding mission led by John Ross in the spring of 1956, one of the remarkable aspects of the history of post-war child migration is why John Moss gave such a broadly positive endorsement of child migration in his private notes and public report. Some personal factors were doubtless at play. Moss's correspondence suggests that his trip to Australia (which was also extended to New Zealand) was an enjoyable experience for him. Accompanied by his wife, his tour enabled them to see much of Australia, and alongside the respect shown to him by organisations keen to impress him as a semi-official representative of the UK Government, Moss's correspondence in this period also contains regular references to his enjoyment of the Australian climate.¹⁴⁸ His relationship with officials in the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, particularly Reuben Wheeler, also became very cordial with Wheeler increasingly perceiving him as someone willing to act in ways that would broadly help his Department. Moss's building up of his role suggests that, for him, this work was of national significance and constituted the culmination of his career. His perceptions of life in Australia therefore seem to have been shaped, at least in part, by his enjoyment of this role in a country that he liked. His work at Kent County Council—a local authority which had tended to make substantial use of voluntary homes for children in its care¹⁴⁹—also probably inclined him to view sympathetically similar uses of voluntary homes for child migrants in Australia.

¹⁴⁷ See Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p.424.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, Moss to Ross, 4th September 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹⁴⁹ Grier, 'A spirit of "friendly rivalry"?' , p.250.

More generally, though, Moss's evaluation of conditions for child migrants in Australia suggests the diverse ways in which people can operate within a broadly shared framework of policy standards. Moss did not contest any of the basic child-care principles underpinning the Curtis report—principles which were also shared by others, like the Association of Social Workers, who took a far more critical view of child migration than him. John Moss was able to make certain accommodations in accepting broad conditions that he observed in Australia whilst still accepting these principles. Conditions in Catholic children's homes in Australia might be institutionalised, but were generally no worse, he noted, than conditions he had observed in Catholic homes in the United Kingdom for the Curtis report.¹⁵⁰ If some children would still be growing up in such institutionalised conditions in the United Kingdom, there was no harm, Moss reasoned, in sending them overseas to similar kinds of institutions if their longer-term prospects in Australia would be better.¹⁵¹ Residential institutions in Australia might be less adequately staffed, and expect more in terms of children's labour for the running and maintenance of homes, but this reflected different 'prevailing conditions' in Australia rather than any evidence of neglect or ill-will on the part of receiving organisations.¹⁵² If one took the view, as Moss did, that there were wider benefits for a child growing up in Australia compared to post-war Britain, then such organisational limitations had to be accepted alongside that. Moss did not disagree that care for a child in something resembling a 'normal family home' was better than them growing up in an institution, but if institutions were a necessary stepping stone to safeguard child migrants on arrival in Australia before their eventual boarding out, then this again could be tolerated. Where Australian institutions failed in other ways to adhere to Curtis standards—such as children's lack of integration into local families and communities—Moss argued that these were areas in which improvements needed to be made. Gaps between Curtis standards and conditions for child migrants in Australia could either therefore be accepted, in the context of the wider benefits that emigration might give children, or narrowed through pressure for improved standards which Moss had assumed would be applied through the introduction of s.33 regulations. In contrast to Moss, the Association of Social Workers understood these same Curtis

¹⁵⁰ Moss to Ross, 13th June 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹⁵¹ Moss to Ross, 27th November 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

¹⁵² Moss to Ross, 13th June 1951, TNA: MH102/2041.

principles as more exacting limits. Regardless of the attractions of future prospects in Australia, if the emigration of a child caused him or her to weaken their bonds with other members of their family, involved placing them in the kind of institution that Curtis had deemed unacceptable or left them with significant challenges in assimilating into local communities, then this was not an acceptable policy—regardless of any imperfections of the care system still operating in the United Kingdom.

Similar complexities in the interpretation of Curtis principles were evident amongst staff in the Children’s Department. There was evident disquiet within the Department about the institutional character of many large, congregate Catholic children’s homes. But whilst it was recognised that such homes did not meet the ideals of the Curtis report, there was equally no enthusiasm at this point for wholesale refusal of approval to Catholic receiving institutions in Australia. The experience of the delayed approval of St John Bosco had demonstrated that even limited withholding of approvals could elicit strong responses from supporters of the Catholic Church. To push for a wider suspension of approval more generally for Catholic children’s homes in Australia would have been even more controversial given the perception that this would have constituted an attack on the basic principle of independent Catholic education. However, the degree of control of children that was understood to be in place with the Salesians’ policy of ‘preventive discipline’ was a threshold beyond which staff in the Home Office felt it was not possible to cross. Within the Children’s Department, Curtis principles therefore operated as ideals to which the failure to adhere could, in some situations, be tolerated as a practical necessity, and in other circumstances, be seen as a breach of fundamental standards which could not be accepted.

Whilst the standards for children’s out-of-home care set out in the Curtis report were very clear in principle, in practice such policy standards did not therefore necessarily operate as a rigid set of proscriptions. Rather they functioned as a framework of values and beliefs—a set of ideals—against which Home Office policy-makers, child-care professionals and many voluntary organisations made sense of their decisions and actions. Not all of those associated with child migration work had a strong affinity for all of the Curtis standards, which some negatively associated with the centralisation of care in the state and others saw as a secular assault on the primary importance of the religious formation of the child. But even amongst those who saw their work as upholding these principles, significant differences could occur in terms of how they were interpreted. The

ways in which these principles were used and understood in specific situations could be shaped by an individual's biography and role, the professional groups and organisations whom they trusted or felt emotionally connected with, and their aims, perceptions of their context and judgements about potential risks that might be faced. The decision within the Home Office Children's Department to withhold s.33 regulations did not, therefore, imply a lack of commitment to Curtis principles, but a particular set of judgements about how best to deploy them in the context of a trans-national welfare initiative in which there were inevitable imperfections, competing organisational interests and various limits on their statutory powers. As was to become clear, however, the Home Office's pursuit of a softer exercise of power in this instance was to have significant implications for the conditions in which many British child migrants grew up in Australia.

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‘If We Were Untrammelled by Precedent...’: Pursuing Gradual Reform in Child Migration, 1954–1961

With the Moss report endorsing the expansion of child migration, and the threat of tighter regulation through s.33 regulations dissipating, there were good grounds for voluntary organisations supporting child migration to feel more confident about the future. The rate of assisted child migration in the early 1950s had recovered to levels approaching those of the autumn of 1947, partly because of recruitment work done by Australian representatives of the Federal Catholic Immigration Committee, Fr Nicol and Fr Stinson, and partly because of a particularly high number of child migrants sent to Australia by the Fairbridge Society in 1950.¹ In 1954, there was no indication that the UK Government was likely to make any policy intervention that would hinder the continuation of child migration work, and the Fairbridge Society felt sufficiently confident to ask for an increase in the Government’s contribution to maintenance payments for child migrants so that it could build up sufficient capital to open new farm schools.² Although not particularly dramatic in scale, the Commonwealth Relations Office also estimated that the positive recommendations in the

¹ See Constantine, ‘The British Government’, pp. 126–7, 411 assisted child migrants had been sent to Australia in 1947. After a drop in numbers to 165 and 129 respectively for 1948 and 1949, recruitment increased with 388 children sent in 1950, only 161 in 1951, but 323 in 1952 and 305 in 1953.

² See notes and correspondence on TNA: DO35/6377.

Moss report might lead to between 200 and 300 more assisted child migrants being sent to Australia in 1954/1955 compared to other recent years.³

However, despite these positive signs for child migration at a policy level, there were increasing signs that child migration was not operating in practice as well as some of its supporters would have hoped. In the summer of 1954, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration asked Noel Lamidey to convey its frustration to the Commonwealth Relations Office at the rate of children being sent from the United Kingdom. At a meeting at the Commonwealth Relations Office Lamidey was recorded as saying that ‘the Commonwealth Government, who had sunk £400,000 in institutions for immigrant children, were dissatisfied with both the quantity and the quality of the children they were now getting’.⁴

This frustration had arisen in part in relation to the cohort of children sent by Catholic organisations in 1947, many of whom were judged not to be progressing well. This was, arguably, unsurprisingly given the very sparse information that had been sent with them about their previous backgrounds, educational standards or medical histories and the unwarranted assumption that transfer from large residential institutions in one country to another would be not disruptive for them.⁵ Despite 1882 child migrants arriving in Australia from the United Kingdom from autumn 1947 until the end of 1953, this fell considerably short of the numbers which the Commonwealth Department of Immigration believed could be sent, with Tasman Heyes claiming that it would not be unreasonable to expect Australia to receive 10% of the 125,000 children identified by the Curtis report as living outside a ‘normal family home’. As a minimum, Lamidey told the Commonwealth Relations Office in 1954, Australia should be receiving ‘a steady 600 child immigrants a year’, something that had never been achieved since assisted migration to Australia had resumed in 1947.⁶

There had also been some notable failures in recruitment for individual residential institutions to which the Australian Commonwealth and State Governments had made substantial capital grants. The Dhurringile

³ Memorandum Dixon to Costley-White, 25th March 1954, TNA: DO35/10253.

⁴ Memorandum to Dixon, 6th August 1954, TNA: DO35/10253. This Australian complaint was also noted in the 1954 *Interdepartmental Report on Migration Expenditure*, TNA: DO35/4877, part IV, para 5.

⁵ See Interdepartmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956, TNA: DO35/4881, para 71, which notes that the 1956 fact-finding mission received a number of complaints from receiving institutions about unsatisfactory selection of children sent, particularly in 1947.

⁶ Memorandum to Dixon, 6th August 1954, TNA: DO35/10253.

Rural Training Farm had been opened for child migrants by the Presbyterian Church in Victoria through a grant of A£23,562 from the Commonwealth and State Governments to cover two-thirds of the total building and refurbishment costs.⁷ Recruitment to Dhurringile through the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service proved slow, however, leading to the Commonwealth Government's successful efforts, discussed in the previous chapter, to pressure the UK Government into allowing the Over-Seas League to be recognised as a recruiting body for Dhurringile as well. Despite the League being allowed to undertake this work, however, available spaces at Dhurringile were never close to being filled.

An even more notable failure had occurred in relation to Nazareth House, at East Camberwell in Melbourne, which had received an A£90,000 capital grant to build a new wing alongside its existing accommodation for elderly residents to house and educate child migrants. This building work created space for 150 girls from the United Kingdom, but initial recruitment efforts by Fr Stinson to recruit girls specifically for East Camberwell in the spring and summer of 1953 had led to only 20 arrivals there by August 1953. Stinson later reported to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration that he had only managed to secure nominations for this many girls from the Sisters of Nazareth by threatening the order's Superior General in Hammersmith that this capital grant would have to be paid if the order did not make arrangements for more girls in their care in the United Kingdom to be emigrated there.⁸ The Commonwealth Government's dissatisfaction with this outcome arose not only from the scale of investment that had been made in East Camberwell, but also from the fact that this investment seems to have been made on the basis of specific assurances that sufficient numbers of child migrants would indeed be available.⁹ In the wake of disappointing recruitment for East Camberwell, Tasman Heyes wrote to the Federal Catholic Immigration

⁷ See, for example, Heyes to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 6th April 1950, NAA: A445, 133/2/25.

⁸ Report by Fr Stinson, 1st October 1953, NAA: A445, 133/2/124.

⁹ See Calwell to Agst, 2nd June 1948, NAA: A445, 133/2/50, in which Calwell replied to an enquiry from the United Protestant Association about possible Commonwealth Government capital funding which had made specific reference to the East Camberwell grant, saying that such grants had only been approved when 'both Commonwealth and State authorities [were] satisfied that a steady flow of child migrants was available from an assured source'.

Committee to say that current levels of Catholic child migration meant that the priority was now for filling existing vacancies in Catholic residential institutions rather than funding any further new building work.¹⁰ Such circumstances, Heyes emphasised, showed the need for ‘very close investigation’ of future funding requests. By spring 1954, the Commonwealth Relations Office estimated that of the 2000 places created to receive British child migrants in Australian residential institutions, probably just under a third remained unfilled.¹¹

In response to what they perceived as the disappointing flow of children from the United Kingdom, and the problems of voluntary organisations in even maintaining existing rates of child migration, the Australian Commonwealth Government resumed attempts in spring 1954 to get the Home Office to encourage local authorities to send more of the children in their care.¹² Whilst there were a small number of exceptions, the comparative lack of involvement of local authorities in child migration programmes was stark. The Home Office’s own statistical reporting showed that local authorities had, at the end of November 1952, responsibility for the care of 64,682 children in foster care as well as in residential homes run by themselves or by voluntary organisations. In the preceding 12 months, however, only 20 children had left local authority care through emigration.¹³ The picture was little different the following year with 65,309 children in local authority care at the end of November 1953, but only 41 children having left their care by emigration in the previous year.¹⁴ In total, the Home Office calculated that from the start of 1950 until June 1954, only 177 children had been sent from the care of local authorities.¹⁵ During this period, only three local authorities had allowed more than half

¹⁰ Heyes to Crennan, 22nd October 1953, NAA: A445, 133/2/124.

¹¹ Memorandum Dixon to Costley-White, 25th March 1954, TNA: DO35/10253, which estimated 600 unfilled vacancies for British child migrants in Australian institutions. The Commonwealth Relations Office later estimated that by November 1958, just under a thousand of the 1846 places for British child migrants in approved institutions in Australia were unfilled (Analysis of sailings under the auspices of the voluntary organisations, 1948–1958, same file).

¹² Lamidey to Newsam, 18th January 1954, TNA: DO35/10253.

¹³ See *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, November 1952*, cmd.8910, London: HMSO, 1953.

¹⁴ See *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, November 1953*, cmd.9145, London: HMSO, 1954.

¹⁵ See table on Consents to emigration of children in care of Local Authorities, TNA: MH102/2055.

a dozen children in their care to be sent overseas: Surrey County Council had given up 8 children, London County Council 14 and Cornwall County Council 28. Cornwall seemed to be an exceptional case because of its Children's Officer, Dorothy Watkin's previous association with the Fairbridge Society.¹⁶ These very small numbers of children were all the more striking given that the total number of children in local authority care had increased by 18% between 1949 and 1953.¹⁷

There was little enthusiasm for the Commonwealth Government's request in the Home Office. As had been the case with the Moss report, the Home Office Children's Department did not consider it appropriate for it to advocate the emigration of children in care as a matter of public policy and doubted that there would be much further interest in child migration amongst local authorities either.¹⁸ At the same time, the Home Office had no wish to appear obstructive to the Commonwealth Government's request and agreed to arrange a meeting between local authorities and immigration officials at Australia House on the basis that it would be much better for Australian officials to hear any objections to child migration directly from local authorities themselves rather than the Home Office or Commonwealth Relations Office having to act as the bearer of unwanted news. Clear lines of policy demarcation between the Home Office and Commonwealth Relations Office were also reinforced, with the former recognising that matters of emigration policy ultimately resided with the Commonwealth Relations Office, and the Commonwealth Relations Office agreeing that it could not by-pass the Home Office by trying to contact local authorities directly to encourage child migration.

With arrangements delayed by the replacement of Noel Lamidey as Chief Migration Officer at Australia House, this meeting between representatives of the County Council's Association and the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration (with staff from Australia House acting as observers) eventually took place in June 1955.¹⁹ Little

¹⁶For a professional autobiography by the Children's Officer for Cornwall which discusses this connection, see Dorothy Watkins, *Other People's Children: Adventures in Child Care* (Penzance: Patten Press, 1993).

¹⁷Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p. 390.

¹⁸Oates to Dixon, 19th March 1954; note by Costley-White, 3rd April 1954, TNA: DO35/10253.

¹⁹Notes of Meeting between the County Council's Association Representatives and Members of the C.V.O.C.E., 9th June 1955, copies held on both TNA: DO35/10253 and ULSCA.F: H6/1/2/2.

agreement arose from this. Representatives from the local authorities made it clear that they thought it was eminently unsuitable to consider the 40% of children in their care who were boarded out as possible candidates for emigration. Of the remaining 60% who were in residential care, most were either only in residential care on a temporary basis or had special needs which made them unsuitable for emigration. The remainder of physically and mentally able children in long-term residential care were, the local authorities argued, still needed in Britain given that the economy was running at near full employment. Furthermore, they noted that Moss's report had observed the need for more child migrants in residential institutions in Australia to be boarded out, and that even the receiving institutions based on grouped cottage homes were more institutionalised and less well-staffed than was increasingly the case in scattered homes in Britain. Responding on behalf of the migration societies, Mr Vaughan from the Fairbridge Society argued that emigration could protect children from exploitative relatives, had been supported by both the Curtis Committee and 1948 Children Act, and that his organisation was aware of cases where local authorities had failed to provide suitable interventions with problem families. An agreement was reached to circulate more information about the migration societies' work but, as a note on the Commonwealth Relations Office record of the meeting observed, whilst it might lead to local authorities having some greater understanding of migration societies' working methods, 'it will take a great deal to break down [their] prejudices about child migration'.²⁰ In practice, there was little or no change in the willingness of many local authority Children's Officers to change their views on this issue, and between March 1955 and March 1959, only 73 more children left the care of local authorities through emigration.²¹

²⁰Note by Johnson, 1st July 1955, TNA: DO35/10253; see also note by Hill. 11th August, 1955, TNA: MH102/2053, which records both this meeting and unsuccessful attempts by Australia House to make direct approaches to town clerks in Manchester and Birmingham who reportedly gave 'even more emphatic replies' in rejecting child migration.

²¹See *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, March 1956*, cmd.9881, London: HMSO, 1956; *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, March 1957*, cmd.411, London: HMSO, 1958; *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, March 1958*, cmd.632, London: HMSO, 1959; *Children in the Care of Local Authorities in England and Wales, March 1959*, cmd.914, London: HMSO, 1959.

From the mid-1950s, child migration to Australia began to dwindle as a result of the resistance of many local authorities, the difficulty of voluntary organisations in providing a continuing supply of children from their own care, and the decision by some sending organisations—particularly the Catholic Child Welfare Council—largely to withdraw from this work. Alongside this gradual decline, however, the most intensive post-war policy discussions about this work took place within the UK Government as the competing pressures of assisted migration and child-care policies became increasingly clear.

TOWARDS POLICY COMPROMISE: THE SYERS AND GARNER INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES ON MIGRATION POLICY

One of the significant factors to drive policy discussions of child migration through the 1950s was the cyclical process of reviewing the Empire Settlement Act, built into the Act's original requirement that it was subject to renewal every 15 years.²² With the Act's first renewal agreed in 1937, discussion began in the Commonwealth Relations Office in 1950 as to what its policy should be towards the renewal of both the Australian Assisted Passage Scheme (due to expire in March 1951) and the Empire Settlement Act (due to expire in May 1952). The Australian scheme was, at that point, the only major assisted migration agreement to have been made under the terms of the Act since the end of the war, and made up around 95% of spending authorised by the Act.²³

With questions about the renewal of the Australian scheme and the Act itself seen as closely connected, there was some scepticism within the Commonwealth Relations Office about renewing either. A memorandum prepared by Richard Sedgwick, the Assistant Under-Secretary in the Commonwealth Relations Office with responsibility for political and constitutional affairs, argued that there were a number of factors suggesting

²² On the complexity of political and social processes of decolonization in this period, including their relationship to the emergent welfare state, see, for example, Jordana Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation*; Sarah Stockwell, *The British End of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

²³ Assisted migration, memorandum by Sedgwick, 5th May 1950, TNA: DO35/3424. On political pressure within the House of Commons for continued support for imperial migration, see *House of Commons Hansard*, 13th June 1950, cc.48–105, copy held on TNA: DO35/3394.

their renewal was unnecessary.²⁴ The economic and demographic factors which had made assisted migration an appealing policy in the pre-war era were no longer present for an ageing British society nearing full employment which needed to retain its younger, working citizens. Assisted migration had primarily been taken up by industrial workers who would end up working in secondary industries in Australia rather than supporting primary production of food for export to the United Kingdom. Increased public spending in Britain on education and child welfare would also be wasted if its beneficiaries left the country before contributing back to the economy through their working lives. There was also little merit in the argument that assisted migration was needed to sustain the ‘British element’ of the population of Commonwealth countries. Canada and South Africa—whose British population was fast becoming a minority—were unable to establish assisted migration schemes with the United Kingdom for political reasons, and Australia and New Zealand—with whom such schemes had been set up—were already predominantly British. Perversely, then, the encouragement of British emigration to Australia and New Zealand through assisted migration thus directed British emigrants to Commonwealth countries where there was little strategic or political need for British citizens and away from countries where such need existed.

Whilst Sedgwick argued that there were no economic or immediate strategic grounds to justify the renewal of the Australian scheme or the Empire Settlement Act itself, he noted that political sensitivities around their closure would be far harder to manage. The UK High Commission had already warned that even simply placing a cap on the number of assisted passages to Australia would elicit ‘acute political controversy’ in Australia, be interpreted as a cooling of relations between the United Kingdom and Australia, and be used by the Australian Labor Party as grounds for attacking the new Liberal-Country Party coalition Government, led by Robert Menzies, for mis-managing Anglo-Australian relations.²⁵ There was also some sentimental attachment to the idea of

²⁴ See note by Sedgwick and Assisted migration, memorandum by Sedgwick, 5th May 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

²⁵ *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Migration Policy*, 12th December 1950, TNA: DO35/3424, para 14 also noted that the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Patrick Walker, had already had concern expressed to him by Robert Menzies and his Minister of Immigration, Harold Holt, that any weakening of the British commitment to assisted migration would both hamper Australian efforts to set up similar schemes with other countries in continental Europe and also harden Australian public opinion against much

imperial migration in the House of Commons and the House of Lords which could cause political problems at home as well. Such adverse political reaction could be managed however, Sedgwick argued, by presenting the expiry of the scheme and the Act in the context of wider measures to show that emigration to the Commonwealth was still supported by the British Government. The exception to these closures was the comparatively small amount spent on supporting the assisted migration of children, juveniles and single women through the work of voluntary organisations, about which Sedgwick observed 'the odium incurred by the withdrawal of our support would be out of all proportion to the saving'. The assisted migration of children did not have the same adverse economic implications as the emigration of people of working age, and the continuation of funding for such work by the Treasury could be presented as 'a token of our goodwill to Commonwealth migration', perhaps helping to make cuts to the assisted migration for adults more palatable.

Sedgwick's argument was supported by the Deputy Under-Secretary, Cecil Syers, and Labour's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Lord Holden, who was less enthusiastic about continuing to fund the migration work of voluntary organisations.²⁶ Leonard Walsh Atkins, head of the Commonwealth Relations Office General Department, was, however, unconvinced that giving up the potential levers over emigration provided by the Act was wise. Walsh Atkins pointed out that Australia's political investment in immigration—with the Commonwealth Minister of Immigration recently suggesting that they might over-pay for a British warship to compensate the UK Government for continued spending on assisted migration—meant that the political fall-out from any policy change would be considerable.²⁷ Furthermore, he noted, although majority white and non-white countries were now being incorporated into the shared body of the Commonwealth, there was a continuing need to preserve the strongest links with the old 'white Dominions'. 'We know what the hard core of [the Commonwealth] is', he commented, 'and also I think the necessity of keeping it hard'. A similar argument was also made by Walter Garnett, who agreed that whilst there

needed 'alien' immigration from Europe if this was not counter-balanced by comparable levels of immigration from Britain.

²⁶ See notes by Syers, 9th May 1950, and Lord Holden, 13th May 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

²⁷ Telegram, Walker to Syers, 28th August 1950; Memorandum by Walsh Atkins, 31th August 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

was no pressing economic case for assisted migration, there was a strategic need to recognise that ‘the United Kingdom must depend upon the strength of the Commonwealth, that a better distribution of the white population of the Commonwealth is an essential factor in building up its strength, and that State-aided migration assists this redistribution’.²⁸

Alongside these disagreements, a clear consensus was reached in the Commonwealth Relations Office that the sensitivity of any such policy decisions meant that it would be helpful for them to be aired fully in an inter-departmental committee, chaired by Syers, which could bring forward formal proposals. Sedgwick also argued that the increasing intransigence of the Home Office in laying down ‘a priori and dogmatic principles and conditions’ in relation to child migration, following the 1948 Children Act, was having ‘the effect of ruling out schemes regarded by the receiving Government as entirely satisfactory’, and that ‘if this goes on we shall be likely to come into collision both with the Australian State and Federal Governments and also with the churches and voluntary organisations affected’.²⁹ The inter-departmental committee, he suggested, could be a useful forum for ‘thrashing out this matter’. The committee should, he added in another note, explore ‘what steps should be taken to ensure a more satisfactory control over child migration than we have in the past possessed without involving the present intolerable and irritating delays in arriving at decisions on schemes’.³⁰

The committee’s confidential report was formally submitted for Government consideration on 12th December 1950.³¹ The committee agreed to the Commonwealth Government’s request not to make any changes to the existing assisted passage scheme until sensitive discussions between Australia and other countries over the creation of similar schemes had been concluded. An extension to this scheme to March 1952 was therefore recommended to provide time for further negotiations. It did not, however, reach a unanimous view on the renewal of the Empire Settlement Act, with representatives from the Commonwealth Relations Office, Home Office and the Treasury opposing its extension, representatives from the Ministry of Labour and National Service and the Ministry

²⁸ See Garnett to Sedgwick, with enclosure, 25th July 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

²⁹ Note by Sedgwick, 22nd June 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

³⁰ Note by Sedgwick, 1st September 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

³¹ *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Migration Policy*, 12th December 1950, TNA: DO35/3424.

of Transport supporting its continuation. Arguments made in favour of retaining the Act included its symbolic and practical value in maintaining a sense of shared bonds between Commonwealth countries, its strategic value for the Australian Commonwealth Government and the economic value of assisted migration to the British shipping industry. Arguments against included the economic and demographic arguments previously made by Sedgwick, the failure of governments other than in Australia to make use of the Act, and the growing economic prosperity of former Dominions through rising commodity prices which made them more able to bear the entire cost of assisted migration.

Despite disagreeing over the future of the Act, the Committee did, however, give its unanimous approval to the continuation of assisted child migration. With Prestige representing the Home Office on the Committee, the report concluded that as long as conditions in receiving institutions were satisfactory, child migrants were able to participate fully in Australian communities and they were provided with education and training suitable to their abilities, then assisted child migration have much to commend it. Reflecting Sedgwick's earlier point, the Committee also noted that 'continued participation by the United Kingdom Government in schemes of child migration would do something to counteract the unfavourable impression in Australia of a decision not to continue the Assisted Passage Agreement or Empire Settlement Acts'.³² Whilst the Committee recommended in principle that assisted child migration be continued, regardless of whether the Empire Settlement Act was renewed or not, it also noted Moss's pending visit to Australia and stated that a final decision of future policy should be made when there had been time to consider his report. Even if the Australian assisted passage scheme and the Empire Settlement Act were allowed to lapse, and no new funding agreements for child migration authorised, both the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office argued that the UK Government would be under a moral obligation to continue maintenance payments for existing child migrants until they reached school-leaving age.

In the absence of any determined move to end either the Australian assisted passage scheme or the Empire Settlement Act—and despite some strong disagreement within the Cabinet³³—both were continued beyond

³² *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Migration Policy*, 12th December 1950, TNA: DO35/3424, para 33(iii).

³³ See note by Costley-White, 2nd December 1954, TNA: DO35/10212.

1952. The Australian scheme was extended for another two years until 1954, and the Empire Settlement Act renewed until 1957. The short extension of the Australian scheme, and lack of any clear view on how to proceed with its longer-term renewal, led to the creation of another inter-departmental committee on migration expenditure in 1954, chaired by Sir Saville Garner, the Deputy Under-Secretary for Commonwealth Relations.³⁴ Its report rehearsed the same broad arguments—although in less detail—than the report of the inter-departmental committee on migration policy four years previously.³⁵ The committee found no strong economic case for the United Kingdom Government to continue funding assisted migration, and the principle of treating Australia as an ‘equal partner’ with the United Kingdom in the Commonwealth suggested that there was no strong grounds for Australia to expect a financial contribution to assisted migration from Britain when the primary economic benefits of such a scheme fell to Australia. However, as with the 1950 inter-departmental report, whilst the economic arguments for continuing to contribute to an assisted migration scheme to Australia were weak, the report noted that the ‘political case is overwhelming’.³⁶

In 1953, the UK Government has proposed to continue to reduce its contribution to this scheme from £500,000 to £150,000 per annum on grounds of wider economic pressures. This had already elicited a strong response from the Commonwealth Government which noted that any continued pulling back from substantial financial contributions would be regarded as ‘not in keeping with the real spirit of partnership which has existed hitherto’. In addition to an immediate adverse reaction in Australia to any attempt to end this scheme altogether, the Garner committee report noted that more serious longer-term risks would be a weakening of social and cultural bonds with Australia as the proportion of non-British immigrants to Australia increased. Lasting damage would also most likely be caused to the political relationship between the two countries which might cause ‘intangible results in a far wider sphere’. At this point, the ‘wider sphere’ for which Anglo-Australian relations were significant

³⁴ A short extension to the Australian assisted passage scheme to March 1955 was agreed to allow the inter-departmental committee time to meet and present its recommendations.

³⁵ *Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Expenditure Report*, 19th October 1954, TNA: DO35/4879 (drafts and other papers held on TNA: DO35/4877, DO35/10213-16).

³⁶ On this, see, for example, Memorandum from UK High Commissioner to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 20th August 1954, *Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Expenditure Report*, Appendix 2, TNA: DO35/4879.

included not just Australia's importance as a British trading partner, but the Commonwealth Government's willingness to allow nuclear testing to take place on its soil in the context of Britain's efforts to develop its independent nuclear weapons programme.³⁷ With complaints already reportedly being made in Australia that the United Kingdom did not regard Australia as a proper partner and even as 'expendable', the termination of the UK Government's financial contribution to assisted migration would have a symbolic significance far greater than its practical effects, leaving Australia more susceptible to American influence and a weaker strategic partner for Britain in the Far East.³⁸ Although the report's recommendation that the UK Government's financial contribution to the Australian assisted migration scheme remained capped at £150,000 would not be popular in Australia, it would be a sufficient gesture to take the matter 'out of politics' for the time being, and by renewing this arrangement until 1957, it was hoped that by then political opinion in Australia might be more sympathetic to British funding being withdrawn altogether.

As in 1950, the case for continuing assisted child migration seemed far more straightforward when judged primarily through the prism of the politics and economics of Commonwealth migration. Well-selected child migrants had, since the war years, been seen as a particularly attractive class of immigrant in Australian Commonwealth policy, reflected in the financial investment made by Commonwealth and State Governments into the creation of new vacancies in receiving institutions. With the UK Government's annual contribution to assisted child migration to Australia and the Rhodesia Fairbridge Memorial College in Southern Rhodesia totalling £43,600 at the time of the 1954 report,³⁹ such schemes had the political virtue of appealing to Australian political opinion and the

³⁷ See, for example, documents on file TNA: DEFE16/779. Staff at the UK High Commission, including Anthony Rouse, had been actively involving in negotiating arrangements for this nuclear testing programme between the UK and Commonwealth Governments. Arrangements about the Maralinga tests were at an advanced, and sensitive stage in the summer of 1956 (see, e.g., Rouse to Acting Secretary, 7th June 1956, same file), when the Ross Fact-Finding Mission's report was being discussed within the Commonwealth Relations Office.

³⁸ On the threat of growing American political and economic interest in building alliances with Australia, particularly given Australia's substantial natural resources, see, for example, Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, *House of Lords Hansard*, 17th November 1954, vol. 189, cols 1609–11.

³⁹ See *Interdepartmental Report on Migration Expenditure*, 1954, TNA: DO35/4879, part IV, para 3.

economic virtue of being comparatively cheap in relation to the costs of assisted adult and family migration.

Having turned to a policy of trying to influence standards of care for child migrants in Australia by persuasion rather than regulation, the Home Office used the 1954 report as another mechanism to press for further, incremental change.⁴⁰ The Children's Department was cautious—as it had been in relation to the Moss report—of being seen to have anything other than an impartial view of children migration given the statutory responsibility of the Home Secretary to arbitrate on individual children's cases under s.17 of the 1948 Children Act.⁴¹ However, the negative reaction to the Moss report from child-care professionals, as well as the evident unwillingness of local authorities to give over children for emigration for whom they had a statutory duty of care under the 1948 Act, gave the Children's Department stronger grounds for arguing that the future prospects for child migration were likely to be negligible without further reform.

Whilst having to assert its position more generally in the inter-departmental committee's meetings, the section of the committee's final report dealing with child migration was substantially shaped by input on the Home Office on the growing consensus about good practice in child-care following the Curtis report.⁴² This understanding of good practice was, it argued, not only increasingly prevalent in the United Kingdom but, with the publication of John Bowlby's report on *Maternal Care and Mental Health* for the World Health Organisation, a standard that was increasingly recognised internationally as well.⁴³ Whilst the voluntary sector accepted these ideas in principle, some voluntary organisations had struggled to achieve these in practice because of a lack of trained staff. As a consequence, whilst demand for children for adoption was greater than the supply of available children, some organisations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, were still retaining children in residential institutions because insufficient foster placements with Catholic families had been

⁴⁰ See note by Hill, 30th July 1954, TNA: MH102/2055.

⁴¹ See Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Expenditure, Emigration of "deprived" children, Note by the Home Office, para 6, TNA: MH102/2055.

⁴² See Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Expenditure, Emigration of "deprived" children, Note by the Home Office, and Supplementary note by the Home Office; Hill to Dixon, 22nd September 1954, TNA: MH102/2055.

⁴³ John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health: A Report Prepared on Behalf of the World Health Organization as a Contribution to the United Nations Programme for the Welfare of Homeless Children* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1951).

found—a matter which the report noted the Home Secretary had recently raised with Bernard Griffin, the Archbishop of Westminster. The marked trend, it was argued however, was for children to be placed in the care of local authorities—partly because of the expansion of their services and partly because of declining contributions to voluntary societies. As a consequence, between 1949 to 1953, the number of children in local authority care had risen from 55,525 to 65,309, whilst the number in the care of voluntary societies had fallen from 28,760 to 20,461.⁴⁴ With local authorities generally unwilling to send children in their care to residential institutions in Australia, and the Home Office objecting to the idea that children in residential institutions in the United Kingdom could easily be moved to comparable institutions in Australia given that it was precisely such children who relied on the fragile networks of care they had with local communities and other relatives in Britain, child migration seemed to have little future unless standards were reformed.

Whilst the Home Office's contribution to the report appeared to be setting the scene for a much stronger policy intervention on standards, once again punches were largely pulled. It was unrealistic, the report suggested, to expect voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom 'to accept forthwith that their methods are based on obsolete conceptions and have failed to move with the times'.⁴⁵ Training staff in these organisations in new approaches to child-care would take time, and the UK Government had a moral obligation to continue to pay the maintenance of child migrants already sent overseas regardless of whether the Empire Settlement Act was renewed in 1957 or not. Continued financial support of child migration also gave the UK Government a stake in the process by which it could attempt to influence standards overseas—something which had not, for example, been possible with regard to child migration to New Zealand. Sudden withdrawal of financial support for voluntary societies would also run against the principle that the voluntary sector still had an important role to play in children's out-of-home care, not only because their services reduced economic pressures on the State, but because of the good work done through their 'undoubted... public spirit and good will'.

⁴⁴ The Home Office also privately acknowledged that the fall in the statistic for children in the care of voluntary homes was also affected in part because certain types of institution, such as mother and baby homes, were no longer included on their register of voluntary homes (see note by Hill, 22nd September 1954, TNA: MH102/2055).

⁴⁵ *Interdepartmental Report on Migration Expenditure*, 1954, TNA: DO35/4879, part IV, para 13.

Political factors within the Commonwealth Relations Office also inclined its civil servants to be careful in discussions of the Fairbridge Society—with both the Secretary of State, Viscount Swinton, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Douglas Dodds-Parker (whose wife, Aileen, was later to become the Society's chair), known to support its work.⁴⁶ Any suggestion from the Home Office that the Fairbridge Society needed to move towards placing its child migrants with families, just the same as other voluntary societies, was thus met with the view that this would need to be taken up as part of a gradual consultation process with voluntary societies over the next few years.⁴⁷

As a consequence of the weighing up of these different factors, the approach advocated by the report was that assisted child migration should continue to be funded, regardless of any decision over the renewal of the Empire Settlement Act, for a period of up to five years after 1957. The intervening period was to be used for on-going consultation with voluntary organisations and Australian authorities to try to ensure that during that period they moved further towards a policy of placing child migrants to Australia in family homes. As an incentive to voluntary organisations, the report recommended that Fairbridge's request for increased maintenance funding from the UK Government should be approved if both it were genuinely to be used on children's maintenance rather than for capital building projects (given the number of vacancies already unfilled in receiving institutions) and any organisation seeking this increase agreed to develop new plans for placing their child migrants in family homes.

Financial constraints meant that the Treasury was not prepared to accept the report's recommendation that funding for new child migrants be agreed beyond 1957 and thus required that the longer-term future of assisted child migration be reviewed again in 1956 alongside wider discussion of assisted migration to Australia and the possible renewal of the Empire Settlement Act.⁴⁸ Whilst the Treasury hoped that this 1956 review would be able to propose a clear long-term policy on assisted migration, based on careful demographic analysis, civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office took the view that assisted migration to

⁴⁶ See, for example, reference to Swinton's very positive account of Fairbridge's work following a recent visit to Australia in Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 29th March 1954, TNA: DO35/6375.

⁴⁷ See Garner to Swinton, 8th November 1954, Swinton to Garner and Dodds-Parker, no date, TNA: DO35/10212.

⁴⁸ See Drake to Morley, 29th October 1954, TNA: DO35/4879.

Australia would remain for the foreseeable future an intractably political issue.⁴⁹ The fact that the announcement of the general policy recommended by the inter-departmental committee elicited no strong political or public criticism in Australia—despite the UK Government's contribution to the assisted passage scheme still being capped at £150,000 per annum—suggested that its careful balancing of these political concerns had, for the time being, been successful.⁵⁰ However, any future withdrawal of United Kingdom funding in this area was seen as something that would require very careful political handling, involving starting an immediate 'softening up' campaign with Australian officials to prepare them for such a recommendation in the 1956 review.⁵¹ Political management at home was still needed as well, with Viscount Swinton forced to defend the Government's approach to assisted migration in a debate in the House of Lords in November 1954 on a motion which had urged for a rapid acceleration of emigration to Australia in the face of the growing threat of communism, exemplified by the recent creation of the communist State of North Vietnam.⁵²

Although its recommendations on funding new child migrants after 1957 were not fully implemented, the 1954 Garner report nevertheless marked a growing accommodation between the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Home Office.⁵³ The Commonwealth Relations Office had broadly accepted that further reform in provision for British child migrants in Australia would be needed, although Viscount Swinton prevaricated on this point in the House of Lords' debate. In a fairly typical display of Parliamentary management of voluntary organisations' sensibilities, Swinton had argued that whilst it was probably right that children fared better in a family home than an institution, he doubted whether 'a hard and fast rule can be laid down' and praised the cottage mothers of Fairbridge who were 'as good to their foster-children as any real mother

⁴⁹ See Drake to Morley, 24th December 1954; note by Morley, 30th December 1954; Morley to Drake, 15th February 1955, TNA: DO35/10212.

⁵⁰ Tory to Costley-White, 5th January 1955; Dixon to Costley-White, 21st January 1955, TNA: DO35/10212.

⁵¹ Costley-White to Morley, 27th January 1955; Garner to Holmes, 14th February 1955, TNA: DO35/10212.

⁵² See debate on emigration to Australia, *House of Lords Hansard*, 17th November 1954, vol. 189, cols 1600–34.

⁵³ See Garner to Liesching, 19th October 1954, TNA: DO35/10212.

could be'.⁵⁴ Whilst the Home Office took the view that child migration need to be run more consistently according to good standards of child-care practice, its Children's Department accepted that such reform could only realistically be achieved through a gradualist approach.⁵⁵ In the context of the political sensitivities around any perceived weakening commitment on the part of the UK Government to continued funding for assisted migration to Australia, a working agreement appeared to have been reached between these two government departments about seeking to improve standards whilst avoiding sudden policy interventions which might antagonise the opinions of voluntary organisations and Australian officials.

COMPROMISE UNDER PRESSURE: THE OVERSEAS MIGRATION BOARD

In January 1955, the UK High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Stephen Holmes, wrote to Saville Garner acknowledging the outcomes from the inter-departmental committee's recommendations.⁵⁶ Holmes expressed particular interest in the report's discussion of child migration. Whilst Holmes noted that he had 'never been particularly happy about child migration', he was somewhat alarmed at the prospect of the reaction of 'very public spirited and benevolent people here, as of course in the United Kingdom, ... when it has to be explained to them that in the official view the whole system which they have so generously supported with their time and money is considered so out of date that it must be brought to an end'. Ending the practice of institutional care for child migrants in Australia would raise complex issues, he noted, not only about how such a system based around foster placements would work and be monitored, but also leave open the question of how voluntary organisations would use the physical infrastructure of buildings and land which they have developed

⁵⁴Viscount Swinton, *House of Lords Hansard*, 17th November 1954, vol. 189, cols 1631–2. This prevarication was not apparently shared by civil servants in his department, see, for example, note by Garner, 4th August 1955, TNA: DO35/6380.

⁵⁵See note by Hill, 30th July 1954, TNA: MH102/2055. Also note by Hutchinson, 11th January 1955, TNA: MH102/2056, in which the Deputy Under-Secretary for the Home Office comments that 'we do not contemplate an embargo (emphasis original) on the emigration of children to institutions and must develop more fully the difficulties involved in arranging the necessary tests to ensure the compatibility of foster parents and children'.

⁵⁶Holmes to Garner, 4th January 1955, TNA: DO35/10212.

for this work. Holmes's concern about these issues was brought into sharper focus by his regular contact with people involved in the Fairbridge committee for New South Wales, in which he feared he would soon be challenged again about the UK Government's policy intentions. Whilst Holmes's view might accurately have anticipated the views of some supporters of particular voluntary organisations, there was also some indication of a loss of institutional memory in his response. Walter Garnett had retired as the Deputy High Commissioner in Canberra in 1951. Holmes's concern showed little awareness of the fact that the recommendations of the Curtis report had already been known to voluntary societies and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration for several years now and the importance of boarding children out had also been discussed in the report by John Moss.

Replying to Holmes the following month, Garner recognised that some further reforms of child migration were inevitable, and noted that discussion of this policy was now being referred on to the Oversea Migration Board. With the Board's support it would be possible, Garner hoped, to begin conversations with the voluntary organisations about their approaches to child-care when their annual funding agreements came up for renewal that spring.⁵⁷ Immigration officials at Australia House were already aware of the drift of Government thinking about need for gradual reform of child migration, and Garner noted that the forthcoming meeting which had been arranged between Australia House, the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration and representatives of local authorities, would doubtless further reinforce this message about current thinking about child-care practice in Britain. As Garner noted, though, attention would have to be given to the particular circumstances of each individual voluntary society, adding sardonically that 'we do, of course, recognise that the Fairbridge Society is in this matter nearest to the angels, if indeed not already among them'.

With rates of post-war emigration rising to levels not seen since 1929, the Oversea Migration Board had been established in February 1953 as a body convened by the Commonwealth Relations Office to provide advice to its Secretary of State on schemes of emigration from the United Kingdom to other Commonwealth countries. This reflected similar work done by its predecessor bodies in the inter-war period, the Oversea

⁵⁷ Garner to Holmes, precise date not given, February 1954, TNA: DO35/10212; see also Garner to Hill, 23rd November 1954, TNA: MH102/2056.

Settlement Committee and the Oversea Settlement Board.⁵⁸ Whilst the obvious forum for continued discussion of a matter of assisted migration policy, the Oversea Migration Board was not the easiest mechanism through which to take forward the spirit of gradual reform endorsed by the inter-departmental committee report. Unlike the Home Office Advisory Council on Child-Care, whose membership consisted mainly of representatives of interested statutory, professional and voluntary organisations, the Oversea Migration Board had a majority of members who were MPs and less malleable than civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office might wish. Another member, Sir Colin Anderson, Director of the Orient Line shipping service, had a direct commercial interest in public funding being continued for migrant travel to Australia. Attempts in 1954 by the Commonwealth Relations Office to prevent the Board discussing the sensitive issue of the future of the Australia assisted passage scheme had been thwarted when one of its Parliamentary members threatened to raise a question in the House of Commons if the Board were not allowed to do so.⁵⁹ In the event, its first report, published in July 1954,⁶⁰ did not take a radically different view to that which was recommended by the Garner report later that autumn and suggested that there were strong strategic and political reasons for the UK Government continuing to contribute financially to this scheme for the time being. Unlike the Garner committee, however, there was no indication in the Board's first report that such a financial commitment might reasonably be ended in the coming years.

The task of developing policy specifically on child migration through the Board was also made more complex by the fact that it took a far more positive view of current provision in child migration than the inter-departmental committee had. Members of the Board who were particularly sympathetic to this work included not only Douglas Dodds-Parker, but also by the Countess of Bessborough,⁶¹ the wife of the chairman of the Church of England Council for Empire Settlement and the economist,

⁵⁸ On the Board's formation in 1953, see TNA: DO35/6373.

⁵⁹ See note 31st March, 1954, TNA: LAB13/836.

⁶⁰ *First Annual Report of the Oversea Migration Board, July 1954*, cmd.9261, (London: HMSO, 1954). Minutes and other documents relating to the Board's work in 1953 and 1954 are held on TNA: DO35/6375 and DO35/6379.

⁶¹ The Countess of Bessborough had been appointed to the Board as a representative of 'women's interests' given her role as President of the Society for the Oversea Settlement of British Women.

Roy Harrod.⁶² The Board's first report noted that the Moss report had indicated that 'the societies maintain a high standard in their homes and institutions in Australia and produce remarkably successful results'.⁶³ Its members also met with Moss, who suggested that very rapid expansion in child migration was impractical, but that he remained convinced that 'child migration was the best form of migration'.⁶⁴ It was also aware, from a meeting of its members with the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, that it was still the opinion of his Government that children made 'very satisfactory immigrants'.⁶⁵ There was, it argued, potential to expand this good work if more financial resources could be provided to develop the work of organisations such as the Fairbridge Society and the Church of England Council for Empire Settlement and if, as Moss had suggested, local authorities were more willing to give over more children in their care. This expansion could be made possible, the Board suggested, by increasing the UK Government's maintenance payments to child migrants and by offering grants-in-aid to support the administrative costs for small organisations (something for which the Earl of Bessborough had been unsuccessfully pressing civil servants and ministers on behalf of the Church of England Council for a number of years).⁶⁶ Indeed, the Board took it upon itself to invite voluntary societies to submit costed proposals for increased funding which it could consider for recommendation to the Secretary of State. No reference was made by the Board to any discrepancy between child migration and wider standards of child-care in the United Kingdom, and the only reference the Board's first report made about the Home Office was in the context of recommending

⁶²The Commonwealth Relations Office had, however, successfully refused a request from the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration to have one of its members appointed to the Board as a representative of the Council (see Hall to Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Office, 16th April 1953; Mills to Hall, 21st April 1953, TNA: DO35/6373).

⁶³*First Annual Report of the Oversea Migration Board*, secn (d), para 9 (and on child migration more generally, see secn (d), paras 1–12).

⁶⁴See Minutes of the third meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 26th November 1953, TNA: DO35/6375.

⁶⁵See Note of a Meeting Between Members of the Board and the Rt. Hon. Mr H.E. Holt, 10th June 1953, TNA: DO35/6375.

⁶⁶See correspondence on requests to restore the grant-in-aid to the Church of England Council for Empire Settlement on TNA, DO35/1139/M1125/1 and DO35/1139/M1125/2.

that the Home Office might consider how opportunities for child migrants overseas might best be advertised to local authorities.

Following the circulation and approval of the inter-departmental committee report in the late autumn of 1954, the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office submitted a joint paper to the Oversea Migration Board which attempted to steer its discussion of child migration more in terms of how child migrants' care overseas compared to expected standards in the United Kingdom.⁶⁷ An underlying aim, more implicit in the document, was to encourage the Board to support an inquiry into conditions of care for child migrants overseas which it would not insist on undertaking by itself.⁶⁸ Rehearsing arguments already made in the inter-departmental committee report, the submission noted that whilst it would not be possible to place child migrants directly from the United Kingdom to foster homes in Australia, there was no reason why a wider system of boarding out for British child migrants should not operate once children had been initially received in residential institutions overseas. Given the improving material conditions of many families, and the absence of 'surplus' children in the United Kingdom, it was unlikely, it noted, that substantial numbers of children would be made available for emigration in the future, even if appropriate reforms were made in Australia. To assist future policy in this area, the two departments suggested that the Oversea Migration Board might want to reflect on any advice it might wish to give to the UK Government with regard to child migrants' selection in the United Kingdom and the arrangements for their overseas reception and care.

The Board subsequently discussed both this submission and a survey of sending organisations which confirmed that most were struggling to

⁶⁷ Child Migration, Note by the Joint Secretaries, 16th February 1955, TNA: DO35/6376; also note by Northover, 22nd February 1955, TNA: MH102/2053. Copies of relevant paragraphs from the Curtis report on child migration were appended to this submission to reinforce this point. On the preparation of this document between the two departments, see also note by Hill, 11th January 1955, TNA: MH102/2056. The process was made somewhat more complex within the Home Office by the intervention of the Deputy Under-Secretary, Sir Arthur Hutchinson, who did not initially share the view that family placement was better than institutional care for child migrants in Australia, but the Children's Department maintained its position despite his reservations (see memorandum from Hutchinson to Ross, 25th November 1954; Hutchinson to Garner, 7th December 1954, TNA: MH102/2056).

⁶⁸ See note by Hill, (date missing) February 1955, TNA: MH102/2056.

recruit children for emigration.⁶⁹ Some scepticism was expressed about the submission from the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office. The Countess of Bessborough argued that approved residential homes in Australia were of 'as high standard as anything to be found in the U.K.' Sir Colin Anderson noted that the exacting standards of the Curtis report would make even the Fairbridge cottage home system unacceptable and that the problem lay more with the insular attitudes of local authorities. Roy Harrod added that he fundamentally disagreed with the Curtis report's conclusions on child migration and observed that this seemed to be a topic to which the Curtis Committee had not given very thorough consideration. To take this discussion forward, the Board agreed that it would be a helpful meet with representatives of local authorities and the Association of Social Workers. In part this was intended as an information-gathering exercise, but the Board was also sympathetic to the suggestion by one of its Parliamentary members, Harmor Nicholls, that 'as the only body to make a detailed study of child migration in recent years', the Board should also press its views on these representatives in an effort to get them to adopt a more positive view of child migration. That the Board should believe that its work constituted the most thorough recent review of child migration reflected either how little knowledge it had of other recent policy discussions of this subject, such as the report by the Women's Group on Public Welfare, or how much its members over-estimated their expertise in this field.

When the Board subsequently met representatives from local authorities the following June (by which time Harmor Nicholls had resigned from it after taking up another Government appointment), there was little evidence of them being persuaded by the Board's views on child migration.⁷⁰ Officials from London County Council explained that they had only allowed for the emigration of 12 boys from their care in recent years because their Children's Committee was generally unenthusiastic about this option. Apart from those under court orders, the Council were only legally able to keep children in their care through the permission of their parents or guardian and emigration could only be considered in cases

⁶⁹ Child Migration: Details of Voluntary Societies, Note by the Joint Secretaries, 25th March 1955; Minutes of the eleventh meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 29th March 1955, TNA: DO35/6375.

⁷⁰ Minutes of a meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 7th June 1955, TNA: DO35/6376.

where there was no prospect at all of children being returned to their families. Even then the Council would only consider emigration for very young children, or children old enough to know their minds and who actively raised the possibility of emigration. Given difficulties in finding suitable Catholic foster homes, the Council was considering the possibility of allowing some very young Catholic children to go to residential institutions in Australia, but would only do so after one of their welfare officers had visited them first-hand. The Children's Officer from Essex County Council, Miss Gwyneth Wansbrough-Jones,⁷¹ was even more robust, giving a strong account of why her Council had little interest in emigration as an option. Of the 1600 children in her Council's care, she noted, 950 were already boarded out, and fewer than 50 were not in close contact with one or both of their parents. Of the 339 children admitted to her Council's care in the first quarter of 1955, up to 284 would only be in care for a short time, and of the 36 most likely to be in longer-term care, half would probably be taken back by relatives at some point in the future. The rest were either too young to emigrate or had already been boarded out. The importance of keeping open the possibility of re-uniting a child with his or her family, and the good prospects for finding suitable foster homes for those with no family contacts, meant that there were few, if any, children for whom emigration would be an appropriate option. When pressed by Sir Colin Anderson as to whether the prospect of a better life, in material terms, overseas might prove more beneficial to a child than living close to their parents, Wansbrough-Jones replied that 'even the most ideal material conditions might leave the child deprived to some extent of affection and security'. She also received some support for her views on the importance of maintaining children's parental contacts from another Board member, the Conservative MP, William Aitken. Any lack of enthusiasm for child migration was, the local authority representatives argued, not because they were unaware of the emigration services provided by the approved voluntary societies but because they believed that options for children in their care were good enough so as not to need to consider them.

Following this meeting, the Commonwealth Relations Office continued to press the Board to focus its attention on future recommended

⁷¹ Wansbrough-Jones was also well-connected to wider debates on child welfare policy through her role as Secretary to the Women's Group on Public Welfare in the 1940s and 1950s.

standards for child migration work.⁷² Writing to the Board's members, its then chair, Douglas Dodds-Parker, commented that whilst there was clearly 'misunderstanding on both sides' between local authorities and voluntary societies, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations would welcome their views on whether any future funding arrangements for the voluntary societies' work should be linked to their 'willingness to discuss certain modifications in their system, such as an increase in boarding-out arrangements'. At its next meeting, Board members were unwilling to accept any immediate conditions being put on future funding arrangements for child migration.⁷³ Roy Harrod argued that the Curtis Committee lacked sufficient evidence on which to base its view of child migration and that it could well be that emigration 'might be of great psychological benefit to a deprived child'. Building on his intervention, the Board generally agreed that there was insufficient information available on which to make any recommendations about voluntary societies' future practice. Finally reaching the decision towards which the Commonwealth Relations Office had been gently steering it, the Board recommended that a small fact-finding mission be established, including a representative from the Board, from a local authority and possibly from the Home Office and UK High Commission, which could produce 'an authoritative report on conditions in homes run by the approved societies, which would be acceptable to local authorities and welfare workers in this country'. Whilst the Board recognised Wansbrough-Jones's point about the limited availability of suitable children, a belief still appears to have persisted amongst its members that local authorities and social workers would be more amenable to supporting child migration if they were better informed about the standards of care actually provided overseas.⁷⁴ This recommendation was approved by Alec Douglas-Home, who had succeeded Viscount Swinton as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations earlier in the year. It was planned that the mission would undertake its work in the early spring of 1956 and produce a report in time for

⁷² Future Assistance to Voluntary Societies, Note by the Chairman, 1st July 1955, TNA: DO35/6375. It was noted in the Home Office Children's Department that whilst the wording of the paper was not ideal from their point of view, it might still serve its purpose of 'edging' the Board towards supporting the position of the 1954 inter-departmental committee (see note by Hill, 4th July 1955, TNA: MH102/2058).

⁷³ See minutes of meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 7th July 1955, TNA: DO35/6376.

⁷⁴ See, for example, note from Morley to Garner, 2nd August 1955, TNA: DO35/6380.

it to inform any recommendations that the Board wished to make about child migration in its second report which had been scheduled for publication in the early autumn of 1956. The Board's second report would then, in turn, be a point of reference for policy discussions during the autumn about the question of whether the Empire Settlement Act and assisted migration programme to Australia should be renewed in 1957.⁷⁵

Throughout this process, the Home Office Children's Department had been on the distribution list for the Board's agendas, minutes and tabled papers, and maintained a watching brief on the discussions of child migration.⁷⁶ Whilst generally content to observe the developing discussion, a number of notes were recorded by Children's Department officials critical of evidence presented to the Board by Canon Flint about the child migration work of the Catholic Child Welfare Council. Mr C.P. Hill, who had replaced Prestige as the Assistant Secretary with primary responsibility for child emigration, commented that Canon Flint's contributions were 'not likely to be very helpful so far as child care is concerned'.⁷⁷ In the copy of minutes of a meeting that Flint had with the Board in which he had claimed that the Catholic Council sought as a matter of policy 'to see that their children were settled as soon as possible into Australian families', one sceptical Children's Department official had underlined his comment and placed an exclamation mark next to it in the margins.⁷⁸ Its staff were also critical of the Board's attempts 'to dispute child care policy' and satisfied with the evidence by the representatives of local authorities which 'comfortably supports, and indeed goes further than, the views expressed by the Home Office to the Garner committee'. The Children's Department expected the proposed fact-finding mission would achieve little, given its limited focus on standards of child-care in Australia, but was happy to leave it to the Commonwealth Relations Office to lead on the organisation

⁷⁵ See minutes of meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 22nd February 1956, TNA: DO35/6376.

⁷⁶ See TNA: MH102/2053; MH102/2054; MH102/2056; MH102/2057; MH102/2058.

⁷⁷ See notes by Hill, 19th February 1955, 24th February 1955, 14th March 1955, 29th March 1955; note by Ross, 24th February 1955; note by Oates, 15th March 1955, TNA: MH102/2053.

⁷⁸ See minutes of meeting of Oversea Migration Board, 1st March 1955, copy held on TNA: MH102/2053, compare with that on TNA: DO35/6376.

of this.⁷⁹ In correspondence with the Scottish Home Department about the mission's imminent trip to Australia a more positive spin was put on its work. It would, Hill wrote, provide an opportunity for a closer review of the standards of care overseas than that done by Moss. It would also, he suggested, be a means for setting up agreed standards with Australian authorities which could then be introduced as s.33 regulations given that 'it is clearly impracticable to lay down requirements by regulation about what is to happen in Australia unless the Australian authorities are prepared to co-operate'.⁸⁰ This reflected Hill's wider view that the Children's Department still knew very little of how child migration was operating in practice—a view which may have reflected some growing scepticism in the Home Office as to whether Moss really was the most rigorous rapporteur on conditions of care overseas.⁸¹

POLICY CRISIS: THE 1956 FACT-FINDING MISSION

The Children's Department's low expectations of the impact of the fact-finding mission's report proved to be well wide of the mark. Far from being another anodyne review, the public and private views of the fact-finding mission were to place great strain not just on relations between the Home Office and Commonwealth Relations Office, but created the most serious tensions over child migration between the United Kingdom and Australian Commonwealth Governments since the resumption of assisted migration in 1947.

When proposing the final membership of the fact-finding mission,⁸² the Commonwealth Relations Office also failed to anticipate the problems that its work would cause. John Ross, now recently retired from the Home Office, was appointed to chair the mission and was obviously known to

⁷⁹ See note by Hill, 26th April 1955; note by Hill, 28th June 1955; note by Hill, 11th August 1955, TNA: MH102/2053.

⁸⁰ Hill to Watterson, 15th October 1955, TNA: MH102/2056.

⁸¹ See Hill to Rowe, 27th October 1954, TNA: MH102/2056.

⁸² See minutes of meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 1st December 1955, TNA: DO35/6376. See also notes and correspondence on this process held on TNA: DO35/6380. Myra Curtis was herself someone that was initially considered as a possible member for the mission, but the list of possible names in which she was included was rejected within the Commonwealth Relations Office as being too senior for a mission whose primary function was simply to gather facts about current conditions in Australia (see list of proposed names, no date, TNA: DO35/6380).

have supported the gradualist approach to reform on which the Children's Department and Commonwealth Relations Office had previously agreed. For the Commonwealth Relations Office having Ross as chair also had the attraction of making it harder for the Home Office to refuse to endorse the mission's findings, as they had done with the Moss report, thus ensuring that the mission's report would have greater authority as a basis for future policy discussions about child migration.⁸³ Although well-known to be sceptical of the value of child migration, Gwyneth Wansbrough-Jones was appointed as a second member of the mission, on the assumption that direct experience of conditions in Australia might modify her views and that these would also carry greater weight with other local authority Children's Officers.⁸⁴ With no MP able to make the extended visit to Australia, the chosen 'enthusiast' for child migration was Walter Garnett, who was still resident in Australia and brought back from retirement to serve on the mission to provide some context and 'balance' to any criticisms that the other two members might wish to make.⁸⁵ Such a combined membership appeared well-chosen to enable the mission to draw up proposals for reform which members of the Oversea Migration Board would have to accept as the basis for any renewal of funding from 1957 onwards. Anticipating that any decisions about future child migration policy would also be likely to upset either child-care specialists or those supportive of voluntary societies' migration work, the Commonwealth Relations Office's selection of members of the mission seemed carefully calibrated to be able to present its work as balanced and impartial to these competing interest groups.⁸⁶

Little has survived in the archives about the process through which the members of the mission reached an agreed position on what they observed in the 26 receiving institutions that they visited across Australia.⁸⁷ Although

⁸³ See, for example, note by Morley, 7th July 1955, TNA: DO35/6380.

⁸⁴ See, for example, note by Wimble, 29th September 1955, TNA: DO35/6380. See also Garnett to Noble, 18th February 1956, same file, in which Garnett expresses the hope that receiving organisations in Australia would provide sufficient reassurance about conditions for child migrants to encourage local authorities to give greater support to this work.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Noble to Garnett, 30th January 1956, TNA: DO35/6380.

⁸⁶ Note from Morley to Garner, 2nd August 1955, note by Morley, 7th December 1955, TNA: DO35/6380.

⁸⁷ John Ross, though, did later write that whilst Garnett had initially held very different views on child-care standards to Ross and Wansbrough-Jones at the start of their work, by the end of the process they were all in agreement with the report's content and nothing had

their institutional visits rarely lasted more than half a day and did not reveal underlying problems in some institutions, it was clear that John Ross was disturbed by what he found and that Walter Garnett's 'modifying' influence on the child-care specialists in the mission ended up being less than the Commonwealth Relations Office had anticipated. Even so, the UK High Commissioner, Stephen Holmes, wrote in a letter to Saville Garner, 'if Garnett had not been on the Mission, and if I [Holmes] had not had two longish talks with Ross, I have no doubt that the report would be a great deal more critical of Australian institutions and practice than it is'.⁸⁸ The mission's report, received by the Commonwealth Relations Office at the end of March 1956, was produced on the assumption that it would be publicly available.⁸⁹ In addition to this, however, Ross also forwarded on a series of confidential addenda which provided more detailed summaries of the visits that the mission had made to each individual institution.⁹⁰

What became clear from the confidential addenda was that Ross now rejected the generally positive picture of Australian institutions provided by John Moss, which Ross had previously been willing to trust when he had decided to suspend the draft s.33 regulations. At some places, such as the Burwood and Normanhurst homes run by Dr Barnardo's and the Methodist Home at Burwood, standards were in line with the smaller residential units encouraged by the Curtis and their suburban location made it possible for the child migrants to build up contacts in the local community. In a small number of cases, such as the Murray Dwyer Roman Catholic orphanage in New South Wales, more institutionalised or geographically isolated homes were seen as making considerable efforts to support children and encourage their autonomy.⁹¹ At most, however, the mission found serious failings in either standards of education and training

been omitted because of internal disagreements between them (see Ross to Shannon, 5th July 1956, TNA: DO35/6382).

⁸⁸ Holmes to Garner, 12th April 1956, TNA: DO35/6381. Holmes added that he regretted that Ross did not follow his suggestion to soften the blow of the report by including in it 'an appreciative acknowledgment of the many kindnesses show the children and the money raised in this country'.

⁸⁹ Telegram, Johnson to Costley-White, 19th March 1956, TNA: DO35/6380.

⁹⁰ Copies of the confidential addenda are held on TNA: BN29/1325 and DO35/6382.

⁹¹ See also confidential addenda on Northcote School, VA; St John's Church of England Home, Canterbury, VA; Burton Hall Farm School, Tatura, VA; Hagley Area Farm School, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

for children,⁹² the suitability of staff (including institutional managers),⁹³ poor preparation of children for life after their residential institution,⁹⁴ spartan and inadequate accommodation,⁹⁵ and children experiencing disruptive transfers within or between institutions on reaching a particular age.⁹⁶ Concerns were also raised about the standards of selection methods and transfer of case records for individual children by some sending organisations,⁹⁷ with some children reported to be confused about why they had been sent to Australia. Criticism about poor provision of case records appears to have related particularly to the work of the Church of England Council for Empire Settlement, the Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service, the Over-Seas League, the Sisters of Nazareth and the Catholic Child Welfare Council. Only a small minority of cases were found of children being boarded out, with managers of some receiving institutions declaring themselves actively opposed to such a policy.⁹⁸ The repeated effect of seeing the effects of children growing up in highly institutionalised environments appears to have unsettled the mission's members just as much as that experience had disturbed members of the Curtis Committee a decade before.⁹⁹ Many of the worst cases of

⁹²See confidential addenda on Fairbridge Farm School, Molong, NSW; St Joseph's Orphanage, Lane Cove, NSW; TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹³See confidential addenda on Melrose, Pendle Hill, NSW; Riverview Training Farm, QLD; Castledare Junior Orphanage, WA; Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, VA; St Joseph's, Neerkol, QLD; Clontarf Boys' Town, Perth, WA; St Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon, WA; Methodist, Home Victoria Park, WA; Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, WA; St John Bosco Boys Town, Glenorchy, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁴See confidential addenda on Fairbridge Farm School, Molong, NSW; Goodwood Orphanage, Adelaide, SA; Nazareth House, East Camberwell, VA; St Joseph's, Leederville, WA; Clontarf Boys' Town, Perth, WA; Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, WA; St John Bosco Boys Town, Glenorchy, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁵Confidential addenda on St Joseph's Orphanage, Lane Cove, NSW; Riverview Training Farm, QLD; Methodist Home, Magill, SA; Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, VA; St Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon, WA; Swan Homes, Midland Junction, WA; St John Bosco Boys Town, Glenorchy, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁶See confidential addenda on St Joseph's, Leederville, WA; Methodist, Home Victoria Park, WA; also Swan Homes, Midland Junction, WA, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁷See confidential addenda on Melrose, Pendle Hill, NSW; Murray Dwyer Orphanage, Mayfield, NSW; St John's Church of England Home, Canterbury, VA; Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, VA; Nazareth House, East Camberwell, VA; St Joseph's, Neerkol, QLD; Clarendon Church of England Home, Kingston Park, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁸See, for example, Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra, WA, TNA: BN29/1325.

⁹⁹See, for example, confidential addenda on St Joseph's Orphanage, Lane Cove, NSW; Castledare Junior Orphanage, WA; Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, VA; St Joseph's,

institutionalisation were noted in residential homes run by Catholic religious orders—homes which John Moss had previously told the Oversea Migration Board should be praised for the ‘excellence of their methods’.¹⁰⁰ In sum, the confidential addenda suggested that only around a third of those institutions visited by the mission gave confidence that children would not be disadvantaged by being sent to them.¹⁰¹

The public report which the mission submitted to the Commonwealth Relations Office did not name individual institutions—although in some cases sufficient detail was given about institutional practices to make it possible to guess which institution was being referred to. However, it did not hold back from making substantive criticisms based on the observations made in the confidential addenda. Selection of children for emigration was said to be unsatisfactory with too many children sent overseas with inadequate records about their backgrounds, despite Moss’s clear recommendation on this. Little appreciation was sometimes shown in Australia that children with difficult early experiences might find the upheaval of emigration a further strain rather than a positive opportunity. Cases were noted in which siblings were emigrated but sent to institutions too far apart for them to be able to maintain contact. Claims that child migrants settled down quickly and well into their new residential homes appeared too optimistic. Care was taken in not criticising staff too strongly, though it was noted that not all were suited to this work and that there appeared to be no specialist child-care training available in Australia comparable to that developed in the United Kingdom after the interim Curtis report. Specific examples of harmful institutionalisation were noted (drawing on anonymised examples from Castledare and St John Bosco Boys Town). Although the report somewhat underplayed the number of such institutions that it saw, its comment that progressive ideas had been observed in ‘three or four’ medium sized institutions implied that good practice was not as pervasive as it might hope. Whilst training and education were good in some cases, the practice of one institution (anonymised

Neerkol, QLD; St Joseph’s Farm School, Bindoon, WA; Methodist, Home Victoria Park, WA; St John Bosco Boys Town, Glenorchy, T, TNA: BN29/1325.

¹⁰⁰ See Minutes of the third meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 26th November 1953, TNA: DO35/6375.

¹⁰¹ A Home Office letter to the Commonwealth Relations Office later noted that the confidential addenda suggested that ten institutions were clearly unsuitable for child migrants, including both Fairbridge Farm Schools, Castledare, and St Joseph’s, Neerkol (Whittick to Shannon, with enclosure, 22nd June 1956, TNA: DO35/6382).

from the visit to Molong) of requiring most boys to undertake farm training and girls training in domestic work was seen as inappropriately limiting. The geographical isolation of many institutions was also seen as a significant impediment to children's ability to develop greater independence and assimilate successfully into Australian communities, although this was mitigated to some extent in those institutions which allowed child migrants to attend local schools.

Although often critical in tone about standards that it had found in receiving institutions, the report's greatest impact came in its recommendations. The mission recognised—in line with the Garner committee report—that policies of boarding out could only gradually be introduced for child migrants. However, the report suggested that if child migrants needed to be sent to residential institutions in the future they should be small, residential units in or near urban areas, which could serve as reception centres prior to children being fostered with local families. The list of institutions approved for receiving child migrants should be reviewed to take into account institutions' adequacy of staffing, provision for assimilating children into local communities (including use of holiday family placements), and their standards of accommodation. In future, the mission recommended, the emigration of all unaccompanied children from the United Kingdom should be subject to the consent of the Secretary of State—not just those sent from the care of local authorities.

In his covering letter submitting the report to the Commonwealth Relations Office, Ross also noted that he had considered making the recommendations in the report even stronger. The proposed review of institutions' approvals could, he suggested, reasonably categorise institutions into those which would or would not be allowed to receive more child migrants, institutional approvals could be made subject to periodic review every three years and no new approvals could be given to large residential institutions or institutions that were geographically isolated from sizeable local communities.¹⁰² More specifically, Ross suggested, those institutions which should be considered unsuitable to receive any more children were the Riverview Training Farm, the Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, St John Bosco Boys' Town, Methodist Children's Home Magill, and St Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon.

The strength of these recommendations had not been anticipated by any of the Government departments involved nor by the

¹⁰² Ross to Home, 28th March 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

Oversea Migration Board. In sum, they represented proposals for a significant tightening of control of all forms of assisted child migration by the UK Government. Strikingly, given prior discussions of available powers under s.33 of the 1948 Children Act, these recommendations did not suggest that s.33 regulations now be introduced, presumably because Ross recognised that there was insufficient commitment to expected standards in Australia for these to be effective. Instead, the fact-finding mission was recommending a major review of approvals for residential institutions in Australia which, given the criteria they proposed should be used for this, would in practice mean that several of these institutions would have their current approval withdrawn. The proposal that the requirement for Secretary of State consent now be extended to all children sent overseas from the care of voluntary organisations also constituted a stronger control than those which had been proposed in the s.33 regulations drafted in the Home Office. The fact that John Ross had previously ruled out such an extension of Secretary of State powers when the content of s.33 regulations had previously been under discussion suggested that he had been sufficiently troubled by what he saw in Australia to have become convinced that this stronger measure was now needed.

As soon as the draft report was received by the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, it was seen as having gone much further into recommendations on future policy than had been expected and plans for its wider circulation within Government and to members of the Oversea Migration Board were initially delayed. Viscount Swinton and Douglas Dodds-Parker had both been replaced during 1955 as Secretary of State and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State by Alec Douglas-Home and Commander Allan Noble respectively. Both were soon involved in consultations with civil servants about how best to proceed, with Noble particularly involved through his associated role as chair of the Oversea Migration Board. Although the report's policy recommendations were not, in themselves, ruled out of hand, its strong intervention was recognised as likely to cause exactly the kind of controversy in Australia and amongst supporters of assisted child migration in the United Kingdom which the gradualist approach to reform had sought to avoid. The fact that the work of the Fairbridge Society could clearly be seen in some of the anonymised criticisms made in the report also gave rise to some concern about the political reaction this might cause, as did the fact that the report implicitly criticised the rigour of approval inspections previously conducted by Australian

officials.¹⁰³ Supporters of voluntary societies in Australia were expected to be upset by its findings and the criticism of conditions of care which fell under the legal guardianship of the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration could also be seen as crossing a line in terms of what the UK Government could reasonably comment on.¹⁰⁴

Although there was disagreement within the Commonwealth Relations Office about whether or not the mission had exceeded its brief,¹⁰⁵ it was seen as having put the Commonwealth Relations Office in an extremely difficult position. Public knowledge of the mission's work—including press coverage in Australia which suggested that the future of assisted child migration was dependent on its findings—meant that it was not an option simply not to publish it.¹⁰⁶ The submission of the confidential addenda created an additional problem in making the Commonwealth Relations Office aware of significant failings in specific institutions which would give grounds for not sending more child migrants to them, but where the confidential communication of this material made it difficult to explain publicly the grounds on which any refusal for further migration to specific institutions might be based. Furthermore, it was anticipated that its strong recommendations would re-open conflict with the Home Office as to whether the proposed extension of Secretary of State powers should be supported or not.¹⁰⁷

The Oversea Migration Board was predictably unhappy with the report's contents, arguing that the mission's members had approached their subject with rigid pre-conceptions which 'they had refused to alter in the face of evidence on the spot'.¹⁰⁸ The possibility that the views of the mission's members—including Walter Garnett who had long supported

¹⁰³ See, for example, Fact-Finding Mission to Australia, Departmental Note, no date; note by Costley-White, 7th April 1956; note by Costley-White, 14th May 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹⁰⁴ See Holmes to Garner, 12th April 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the argument by Ian MacLennan, who had replaced Alexander Morley as Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the CRO's Political Division, that the mission had not produced a report that was significantly at variance from what might have been expected from its brief (note by MacLennan, 10th April 1956, TNA: DO35/6381).

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Fact-Finding Mission to Australia, Departmental Note, no date; note from Garner to Douglas-Home, 20th April 1956; note by Noble, 23rd April 1956; note by Douglas-Home, 24th April 1956; TNA: DO35/6381. On attempts to maintain a low profile for the mission's work in Australia, see Holmes to Garner, 12th April 1956, same file.

¹⁰⁷ Note by MacLennan, 18th April 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹⁰⁸ Minutes of meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 9th May 1956, TNA: DO35/6376.

the child migration schemes—might have been shaped by concern at what they had seen first-hand was not considered, nor was the fact that the Board's members themselves had no direct experience of conditions in receiving institutions in Australia. Some on the Board, including Sir Colin Anderson,¹⁰⁹ asked for it not to be published at all. Lady Bessborough also pressed, unsuccessfully, to see an annotated copy of the mission's report which identified specific institutions and voluntary societies which were being criticised.¹¹⁰ The report's recommendation that Secretary of State consent might be required in all cases of child migration was also leaked to Douglas Dodds-Parker, who privately lobbied the Home Secretary, Gwilym Lloyd-George, on behalf of the Fairbridge Society saying that he hoped that 'a Conservative Government will encourage voluntary (emphasis original) child welfare organisations'.¹¹¹ If such requirements for consent were extended, Dodds-Parker argued, someone sympathetic to the voluntary societies should be in post at the Home Office to ensure that child migration work was not disrupted through consultations about individual cases with local authority Children's Officers.

Despite the Board's unhappiness with the report, the issue of its publication proved comparatively straightforward to resolve, with its public release delayed so that it would be possible for the Board to comment critically on it in its second report that would be published around the same time.¹¹² Ian Maclennan, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Commonwealth Relations Office's Political Division, observed that this approach also had the advantage of allowing their department to note disagreements between the two reports without seeking to align itself immediately with either of their views.¹¹³

The confidential addenda submitted by Ross presented a more complex problem. In early June, Cyril Costley-White wrote from the Commonwealth

¹⁰⁹ See Anderson to Noble, 4th June 1956; note by Shannon, 9th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹¹⁰ See note by Costley-White, 25th May 1956; note by Shannon, 28th May 1956, TNA: DO35/6381. The annotated copy of the mission's report is held on the same file.

¹¹¹ See Whittick to Shannon, with enclosure, 9th July 1956, TNA: DO35/6381. There was evident concern within the Commonwealth Relations Office that Lady Bessborough was likely to be a source of leaks from the Oversea Migration Board to those sympathetic to child migration (see note by Costley-White, 25th May 1956, same file).

¹¹² On this, see note by Garner, 4th May 1956; note to Costley-White from Ewans, 10th May 1956; note from Costley-White to Maclennan, 11th May 1956; note by Garner, 14th May 1956; note by Ewans to Laithwaite, 18th May 1956.

¹¹³ Note by Maclennan, 12th May 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

Relations Office to Richard Whittick, who had replaced C.P. Hill as the Assistant Secretary responsible for child migration in the Home Office, to seek his advice about the addenda.¹¹⁴ Whilst, Costley-White noted, his department had decided not to share the confidential addenda with the Commonwealth Government, the voluntary organisations or the Oversea Migration Board, they did however contain highly critical information about Dhurringile and Riverview to which five further child migrants were about to be sent. This information would normally be grounds for suspending emigration to those institutions. But if such a suspension to those specific institutions were put in place, voluntary organisations would naturally ask on what grounds that decision had been made, raising the question as to whether a wider, temporary suspension of all assisted child migration on the grounds of ‘administrative delay’ might be one way of avoiding this bind. The position was made more complicated by the fact that the Commonwealth Relations Office had never previously refused to give approval for any individual children being sent to Australia through the assisted passage scheme.¹¹⁵

Knowledge of the confidential addenda also posed a problem for the Home Office who also had to judge how to use this unreleased information when considering approval requests for children to be emigrated from local authority care under s.17 of the 1948 Act. To try to find a way forward, Whittick spoke with Ross to try to understand why he had focused only on five specific institutions for ‘black-listing’ in the cover letter accompanying his submission of the mission’s report when the confidential addenda suggested that a larger number of receiving institutions were unsuitable.¹¹⁶ Ross’s response indicated that, however controversial the reception of the mission’s report might be, he still considered its contents to be a compromise rather than a very frank expression of his views. ‘Practical politics’ had prevented other institutions (notably the Fairbridge Farm Schools) from being included on the ‘black-list’ proposed by Ross, and Ross noted that if the mission had been more forthright in its views then ‘the battle would be lost from the start’. Given ‘Australian susceptibilities’ (including both those of the Australian Government and the Catholic Church), Ross thought that it was better on balance to continue

¹¹⁴ Costley-White to Whittick, 9th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381; also note by Costley-White, 14th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6382.

¹¹⁵ See note by Oates, 11th June 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

¹¹⁶ See note by Whittick, 23rd June 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

to send children to institutions that he had strongly criticised until a formal review of all receiving institutions could be set in place after the mission's report had been published. The suggestion that the confidential addenda be circulated more widely to make clear the grounds of refusals of emigration to particular institutions was one against which Ross objected very strongly.¹¹⁷ The solution on which both departments settled was to put into place an informal suspension of any further approvals until the autumn, justified to any enquiries by voluntary societies as being caused by 'administrative delay'. Some compromise had to be accepted even on this, though, as the Fairbridge Society successfully pressed the Commonwealth Relations Office to agree to fund the emigration of 16 children to Pinjarra and Molong that summer, with the threat that any delays might lead to questions being raised in Parliament.¹¹⁸

It was soon recognised, however, that whilst delaying publication of the mission's report might mollify members of the Board, it would not deal with all of its public and political consequences. Godfrey Shannon, Assistant Under-Secretary for the General Division in the Commonwealth Relations Office had taken over the management of this process from Maclennan and noted that divergent opinions in reports published from the Board and the mission would not necessarily be seen as equally authoritative.¹¹⁹ The Board had no members with expertise in child-care and, unlike members of the mission, had not directly observed conditions in Australian institutions themselves. It was almost inevitable, Shannon anticipated, that questions would be asked on the basis of the mission's findings as to whether the UK Government considered current

¹¹⁷Ross confirmed these views with Shannon and objected to him that records of Home Office inspections were never directly shared with criticised institutions and that normal practice was to use these notes as a basis for letters to those institutions requiring particular improvements (see note by Shannon, 28th June 1956; Ross to Shannon, 28th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6382).

¹¹⁸See note by Johnson, 2nd July 1956; note by Shannon, 5th July 1956, TNA: DO35/6382. Two children were also approved for emigration to Riverview at the same time, on the basis that child migrants were only resident there for a relatively short period of time (note by Shannon, 27th July 1956, same file).

¹¹⁹Shannon was evidently not always well-briefed on the background to the mission's work, suggesting in one note that the voluntary societies might question the qualifications of the mission's members and asking for more information on this, only to be told by another member of his department that little information was available (see note by Shannon, 18th July 1956; note by Costley-White, 19th July 1956; note by Shannon, 19th July 1956, TNA: DO35/6381).

arrangements for the child migration work it was funding to be suitable. To mitigate this challenge, Shannon suggested, it would be advisable for the Australian Commonwealth Government to initiate some kind of review before publication of the mission's report to demonstrate that these questions were already receiving serious further attention and to tie Australian authorities into supporting any necessary changes.¹²⁰ Such an initiative would only be meaningful, Shannon noted, if engaged with seriously by the Australian authorities and they did not seek a review which simply gave 'a smug finding that all is well and that the mission's criticisms are unjustified'. Shannon later noted that this might suggest a further delay to publication of the mission's report might be advisable, both to give Australian authorities time to initiate such a review and to avoid the report causing unhelpful tensions prior to important imminent economic discussions between the United Kingdom and Australian Governments.¹²¹ It would also, another senior official agreed, give the Australians time 'to get their house in order'.¹²² Such a delay, it was also realised, could have the political advantage of allowing publication during the Parliamentary recess in August so that questions about the mission's work could not immediately be raised in Parliament.¹²³

Whilst the Commonwealth Department of Immigration agreed, after further urging, to initiate such a review, Shannon's plan received strong private criticism from Whittick who tried to pressure Shannon into accepting that the Australian review would include a member of the Home Office Children's Inspectorate.¹²⁴ Without such representation on the review, Whittick argued, it would lack appropriate expertise in standards of child-care in the United Kingdom and there was a risk that if the Australian review exonerated all of the criticised institutions, the Commonwealth Relations Office would have to choose between accepting the less expert Australian view or the views of the experts that the Commonwealth Relations Office had itself selected to undertake the fact-finding mission.

¹²⁰ See note by Shannon, 29th May 1956; note by Garner, 29th May 1956; Telegram Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commission, 6th June 1956; Telegram Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commission, 9th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹²¹ Note by Shannon, 9th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹²² Note by (name unclear, possibly Gilbert Laithwaite, Permanent Under-Secretary), 11th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹²³ Note by Shannon, 12th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹²⁴ Note by Whittick, 10th July 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

Citing the urgency of setting up the review —given the need to get it underway before publication of the mission's report—and the delay that would be caused by negotiating the involvement of a Home Office official, Shannon refused. Whilst Whittick accepted that no more could be done to influence a matter that fell simply within the Commonwealth Relations Office's responsibility, he also found little support from Edward Gwynn,¹²⁵ who had replaced Ross as the Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of the Children's Department. Whittick, Gwynn noted, had made the doubtful assumption that Home Office involvement in the Australian review would produce a clear consensus between the United Kingdom and Australian officials when, in reality, it would probably embroil the Home Office in an even more contentious argument with Australian officials than the mission's report would already cause. Seeing little benefit to that course of action, Gwynn decided that the Home Office's responsibilities to the Australian review would best be limited to the offer of the Home Office providing 'general advice' to the Australian authorities about child-care standards with the Australians being left to take their own responsibility about how to use this advice. The Commonwealth Relations Office also took a similar line to Gwynn, refusing Australian pressure to make a member of the UK High Commission a formal member of their review team, on the basis that such involvement could become an unhelpful source of tension in the future.¹²⁶ Instead, the Official Secretary to the UK High Commissioner, Anthony Rouse, was attached to the Australian review as an observer.

Whittick's concerns proved prescient.¹²⁷ Tasman Heyes agreed to the Commonwealth Department of Immigration undertaking a review only on the basis that his department would be able to see in advance the confidential addenda on the five institutions that Ross had identified for particular censure. Having been pressed to prioritise reviews of these particular institutions by the Commonwealth Relations Office, the Department of Immigration declined to visit the Methodist Magill Home (as it was not proposed that any more child migrants would be received there) or the Riverview Training Farm (on the basis that child migrants sent there were very close to school-leaving age and only normally lived there for three

¹²⁵ Note by Gwynn, 12th July 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

¹²⁶ Note by Shannon, 11th July 1956, TNA: DO35/6382.

¹²⁷ Documents relating to this Australian review were compiled in Fraser to Johnson, 20th September 1956, with enclosures, TNA: DO35/6382.

months before being sent into work placements). Of the remaining three institutions, St John Bosco Boys' Town was judged by the Australian review team to provide adequate care for children who had previously lived in Catholic residential homes in the United Kingdom, and Bindoon and Dhurringile were judged only to need relatively superficial improvements to their accommodation which it was claimed could comfortably be completed within three months. As the mission had apparently only raised serious concerns about 3 institutions out of the 26 it had visited, which the Australian review team felt were either ungrounded or easily rectified, the Australian Commonwealth Government took the view that there were no reasonable grounds for any further delays to the normal resumption of the child migrant programme.

The credibility of the Australian position was, however, weakened by a further set of confidential notes about the inspection visits undertaken by the review that were compiled by Rouse and sent from the UK High Commission back to the Commonwealth Relations Office. Far from endorsing the Australian review's conclusions, as the Australian Government claimed, Rouse broadly endorsed the mission's criticisms and added further examples of the poor management and oversight of the institutions. As the Australian review had extended its visits to a wider range of institutions, Rouse was also able to comment on other institutions not immediately included in the 'black-list'. He endorsed the missions' comments on receiving institutions, both positive and critical, noting that the head of the Western Australia State child welfare department, Mr McColl, was 'hardly on speaking terms' with the Principal of Clontarf Boys' Town, Br Doyle, since McColl 'had reprimanded him for beating one of the boys unnecessarily severely'.¹²⁸

Although the correspondence about the Australian review (including Rouse's notes) were received by the Commonwealth Relations Office in late September, they were not passed on to the Home Office Children's Department until early November. The correspondence elicited a strong response from a number of staff, including Whittick and the head of its Children's Inspectorate, Miss A.M. Scorrer. They noted that the Australian Government's understanding of child-care was clearly far removed from their own, that there was little hope that Australian authorities would be receptive to pressure to change from the Home Office and that there were

¹²⁸ Rouse note on Clontarf Boys' Town, Perth, TNA: DO35/6382.

no grounds for accepting the Australian conclusion that child migration should resume without any further constraints or delay.¹²⁹

Again, though, Edward Gwynn ruled out any action from the Children's Department that might attract too much controversy. In a meeting with Shannon, Gwynn commented that the Home Office were not comfortable sending children to institutions like Molong or Castledare about which the mission and Rouse had made negative comments, and suggested that the Commonwealth Relations Office might want to try to delay any further approvals until the new assisted passage agreements had been finalised.¹³⁰ Shannon took the view that further delays were not 'politically practicable' and Gwynn conceded that, 'political considerations, which were the province of C.R.O., might well override merits' and that the Home Office would not press its concerns any further. Instead, the Children's Department privately implemented a policy, for the time being at least, of not giving consents under s.17 of the 1948 for children to be sent from local authority care to particular receiving institutions about which it had concerns. From the perspective of the Commonwealth Relations Office, the understanding taken from this meeting was that that Home Office would 'prefer not to be embarrassed by being consulted [on the emigration of more children] and are prepared not to object to our disposing of the applications on our responsibility'.¹³¹

Whilst the Australian review was taking place, the process of reviewing assisted migration to Australia was, once again, set in motion. The report of the fact-finding mission, and the second report of the Oversea Migration Board, were published on the same day in mid-August, whilst Ross was away on a long, pre-arranged trip to Scandinavia.¹³² The Board's report reviewed its discussion of child migration policy since its first report in 1954, noting reasons presented to it as to why numbers of children emigrated from the care of local authorities were so low. Whilst recognising the changing social conditions that reduced the wider demand for child migration, the report nevertheless took the view that child-care policies

¹²⁹ See joint note by Northover, Lake and Whittick, 21st November 1956; note by Scorer, 21st November 1956; note by Whittick, 27th November 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

¹³⁰ Note by Whittick, 5th December 1956, TNA: BN29/1325.

¹³¹ Note by Gibson, 13th December 1956, TNA: DO35/6382.

¹³² *Second Report of the Oversea Migration Board*, cmd.9835, London: HMSO, 1956; *Child Migration to Australia: Report of a Fact-Finding Mission*, cmd.9832, London: HMSO, 1956. See also discussion of report's text on child migration in minutes of meeting of the Oversea Migration Board, 16th May and 13th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6376.

that were ‘too dogmatic’ and based on ‘rigid principles’ should not be allowed to dissuade local authorities from making use of such schemes. Noting its decision to recommend a fact-finding mission be undertaken to reassure local authorities and provide evidence to support the case for increased funding for voluntary societies involved in this work, the report went on to note that the Board were not in ‘complete agreement’ with a number of its assumptions.

Privately, the Board maintained the view that conditions in Australia were acceptable, that the problem lay not with those conditions but with the fixed opinions that the members of the mission had brought to their work, and that they wished to be able to express their ‘extreme disfavour’ with the mission’s report when it was published.¹³³ In public, its criticisms were only slightly more muted. The Board’s report criticised the mission for not considering whether child migrants successfully settled into work after leaving their residential institutions, for insisting on standards of care in Australia that were not always achieved in the United Kingdom and for not believing assurances made by receiving institutions that children settled down quickly into their new lives overseas. Whilst accepting a number of the mission’s more specific recommendations about standards of care, the Board objected to the idea that receiving institutions should be in or near urban areas, arguing that children could assimilate into local rural communities and that getting used to isolation was important if a child were to become a farm worker in the future. The Board—in line with the views of the Australian Commonwealth Government¹³⁴—rejected the mission’s recommendation that Secretary of State consent be required for all cases of child migration, arguing that reviews of all individual cases by government officials would cause delays which would make recruitment of children even harder.

Whilst accepting some areas for improvement in this work, the Board therefore took the view that the voluntary societies undertaking child migration work still had its confidence and that UK Government funding for this work should be renewed when current arrangements expired in 1957. Although the publication of the Board’s and mission’s report on the same day had the desired effect of distracting initial press attention

¹³³ See note by Ewans, 10th May 1956, TNA: DO35/6381.

¹³⁴ Heyes to Rouse, 25th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6382, in which Heyes also commented that the review of the bona fide nature of child migrant’s cases through immigration officials at Australia House had always worked well in the past.

away from the mission's report,¹³⁵ the mission's views had the opposite effect on local authorities' views than that hoped by the Board when it originally recommended that a fact-finding mission be set up. Rather than reassuring local authorities that conditions for child migrants in Australia were much better than they had previously recognised, the report reinforced most Children's Officers' views that there were no good grounds for significantly increasing the number of children being sent to Australia.¹³⁶ Such was the perceived harm done by the mission's report to the prospects of expanding child migration that the Conservative MP, Archer Baldwin, wrote to the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Cuthbert Alport, in the summer of 1957, to say that he had been asked by the Fairbridge Society to raise a Parliamentary question to Alport asking what the Commonwealth Relations Office could do to counter this.¹³⁷ Baldwin, who was also at that point a member of the Oversea Migration Board, used one of its meetings to raise the same concerns, with Alport, as chair, suggesting that it might be useful to send one or two members of the Board to Australia to undertake another tour of institutions which could provide a more positive report.¹³⁸ With support from Tasman Heyes, Alport sought the opinion of his civil servants on this idea, including a suggestion from him that one of the members of this inspection team should be Lady Bessborough. Led by Shannon, their response was that the mission's report had made less of an impact on public opinion than had been expected, that another review so soon after the mission risked causing further irritation and conflict with the Commonwealth Government and that it would not be advisable to have someone closely associated with a child migration organisation such as Lady Bessborough to undertake this work. Alport accepted this advice, and whilst still wanting to present it to the Board as something still under

¹³⁵ See press cuttings held on TNA: DO35/6381.

¹³⁶ See extract from the County Councils Association Gazette, October 1956, TNA: DO35/6381; also Dacey to Gwynn, 31st January 1957, TNA: DO35/6383, which stated that the Association's Children and Welfare Committee had approved a motion stating that in view of the fact-finding mission's report it was unwilling to recommend increasing the number of children being sent overseas.

¹³⁷ Baldwin to Alport, 15th June 1957, TNA: DO35/6382. A copy of Baldwin's written Parliamentary Question is held on TNA: DO35/10273. See also the defensive response to this by the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration, Athol Townley (Press statement by the Minister for Immigration, 25th July 1957, TNA: DO35/6383).

¹³⁸ See notes and correspondence on TNA: DO35/6384.

active consideration, the suggested inspection visit by Board members never took place.

COMPROMISE RESTORED: THE 1956 INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION POLICY AND BEYOND

Alongside preparations for publication of the Board's and mission's reports, and with discussions about the mission's report with the voluntary societies underway, a new inter-departmental committee had already been set up to make recommendations about the possible renewal of the Empire Settlement Act and the Australian assisted migration programme.¹³⁹ Including representatives from five government departments, the committee was chaired by Godfrey Shannon, with Costley-White representing the Commonwealth Relations Office and Whittick, the Home Office.¹⁴⁰ With its text finalised by early September¹⁴¹—before news had been received of the outcome of the Australian-led review—the confidential report reinforced the broad policy direction of the 1954 Garner committee. Whilst there was support for the UK Government continuing to encourage emigration to other Commonwealth countries, there was still no great enthusiasm for continuing to contribute financially to the Australian assisted migration programme. The committee recommended that the assisted migration programme continue with the existing capped contribution of up to £150,000 per annum from the UK Government, but with this renewal not being actively initiated by the UK Government and only put into place if the Australian Commonwealth Government requested it.¹⁴² Such a request from the Australian Government was understood to be almost inevitable, however, as Tasman Heyes had already informed the UK High Commission that any withdrawal of this funding 'would make a very bad impression on the Australian Government and public' and that many people in Australia, including Heyes himself, did

¹³⁹ See notes and correspondence on TNA: DO35/6368. Early drafts of the inter-departmental committee's report prepared by early August 1956 are held on TNA: DO35/4880.

¹⁴⁰ Although the Scottish Home Department was consulted on its contents, it had no formal representative on the inter-departmental committee, reflecting a wider trend for the Scottish Office to have a more peripheral role in shaping child migration policy.

¹⁴¹ Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956, TNA: DO35/10217.

¹⁴² Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956, paras 43–54.

not think that the United Kingdom took a sufficient interest in their country.¹⁴³

The same weighing up of strategic interests and economic costs¹⁴⁴ informed the committee's recommendation that the Empire Settlement Act should be renewed again, on the basis that failure to do so would be interpreted as an active policy shift by the UK Government against Commonwealth emigration with all that would entail for political opposition at home and overseas strategic relations.¹⁴⁵

Although child migration represented only a small fraction of Commonwealth emigration,¹⁴⁶ the tensions that had arisen over the fact-finding mission's report meant that the committee gave almost as much attention to future child migration policy in its report as to all the other policy issues it discussed combined.¹⁴⁷ Its central working premise was the pragmatic acceptance that, whilst the need for assisted child migration was at best limited, the interests vested in this work made a complete withdrawal of support from the UK Government impractical. The report commented that:

If we had been untrammelled by precedent, we might not recommend the establishment of a system of subsidised child emigration, or the existing methods of operating it. But we have to deal with a well established system which has existed with Government support both in Australia and in the United Kingdom for over 30 years, has influential support from churches and prominent laymen in both countries, and, by most accounts, has benefited the children who have made use of it. Methods and amenities may, and probably do, need to be overhauled and to be brought up to date; but, as long as there is a demand, we think (emphasis original) that the system can be allowed to continue. Our conclusion on this point is, however, subject to public reaction to the Fact-Finding Mission's report. If there were a

¹⁴³ Holmes to Garner, 29th June 1956, TNA: DO35/6368.

¹⁴⁴ See Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956, paras 4–28, 48–50.

¹⁴⁵ See Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1956, paras 49, 120–136. In the event, the committee's recommendation that the Act be renewed for a further 15 years from 1957 was not taken up, and the pattern of five-year renewals continued, with Commonwealth Settlement Acts subsequently passed in 1962 and 1967.

¹⁴⁶ The total of assisted passages for child migrants in the period 1950–1955 made up less than 0.1% of all assisted passages to Australia in that period, see Inter-Departmental Report on Migration Policy, 1956, paras 45, 60.

¹⁴⁷ Inter-Departmental Report on Migration Policy, 1956, paras 57–97.

strong public demand that the system should be ended, there would be no compelling Governmental reason for allowing it to continue. The wishes of people in Australia and of the voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom might have to give way to public opinion here.¹⁴⁸

Although the report noted that there was little strategic value in ending child migration, unless public opinion demanded it, such programmes should only operate on the basis of the interests of the individual child rather than the demand for young immigrants from receiving countries. Appropriate selection of children for emigration was clearly crucial for ensuring this, but the committee did not support the mission's recommendation that such selections for all child migrants be made subject to Secretary of State consent. The mission's proposal on this clearly lacked support even from the Home Office, who argued that they had insufficient administrative resources to deal with the increased casework that this would require and would prefer such cases be dealt with by the courts if some additional level of oversight were needed. The committee's view, however, was that such additional scrutiny, under the authority of the Secretary of State, had significant drawbacks and little obvious benefit. It would require fresh legislation (with the likely Parliamentary challenges this would involve) and would be the focus of strong opposition both from voluntary organisations (and 'their influential supporters') and the Oversea Migration Board. Furthermore, the Shannon committee took the view that the number of unsuitable children being sent overseas was probably now lower than it had been in the past and that the kind of additional oversight proposed by the mission might not succeed in identifying these remaining cases anyway (an argument which implicitly questioned the apparent safeguard of Secretary of State's consent for children sent from local authority care).

The report endorsed the fact-finding mission's call for a fresh review to be undertaken of the approvals of individual receiving institutions, but proposed that the current review that had been started by the Australian Commonwealth Government would be a sufficient means of achieving this. Recognising, as the Garner committee had done, that further reforms were needed to make receiving homes in Australia less 'institutional', the

¹⁴⁸ Inter-Departmental Report on Migration Policy, 1956, para 69. The phrase 'untrammelled by precedent' was one that Whittick himself had added (see Whittick to Costley-White, with enclosure, 21st August 1956, TNA: DO35/4881).

report noted that the introduction of s.33 regulations would probably be of limited value in achieving this without the support of Australian authorities for required standards and their introduction would, again, only serve to antagonise the voluntary societies involved.

In conclusion, the report proposed that the best approach would be to try to ensure Australian agreement both on basic principles of child-care standards and on the need for government officials to ensure that these were adhered to by voluntary organisations. Alongside this, rather than introducing formal s.33 regulations, it was proposed that the Commonwealth Relations Office would use the renewal of funding agreements with voluntary organisations in 1957 as an opportunity to secure their agreement to Home Office inspections of their working practices in the United Kingdom and to them providing information about the standards of care provided for their child migrants overseas. For the Home Office, this solution had the attraction of bringing voluntary organisations' child migration activities under its inspectorate on comparable terms to its existing inspections of other forms of child-care by local authorities and voluntary societies in England and Wales. Such an arrangement would also create the conditions in which voluntary organisations would feel obligated to co-operate with informal inspections whilst allowing the Home Office to avoid the burden and limitations of introducing and enforcing s.33 regulations. In short, after the disruption caused by the fact-finding mission, the Shannon committee report re-instated the previous gradualist approach to reform for child migration rather than moving towards the more dramatic intervention recommended by the mission. The policy impact of the mission's direct observation of conditions in Australian institutions had now all but faded.

Despite the outcome of the Australian review demonstrating that there was little prospect of Australian authorities either being willing to enforce suitable standards, the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office agreed to continue this gradualist approach. With the Cabinet agreeing to the proposed renewal of what was now to be the Commonwealth Settlement Act at a meeting in late October,¹⁴⁹ Conservative whips contacted the Commonwealth Relations Office to ask that it meet with

¹⁴⁹ See notes and correspondence on TNA: DO35/10217, including Whittick to Costley-White, 9th October 1956, which indicates the Home Office view that the criticisms of the fact-finding mission were not enough to warrant complete discontinuation of child migration but that 'the voluntary organisations must mend at least some of their ways'.

voluntary organisations before the introduction of the legislation in December. It was anticipated that the introduction of this Bill would elicit Parliamentary questions about future child migration policy, and the whips wanted to ensure that the voluntary organisations had been fully briefed about the new measures in advance of this.¹⁵⁰ Lord John Hope, who had replaced Allan Noble as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, chaired the meeting and set out the proposed new arrangements linked to the 1957 funding renewals.¹⁵¹ Whilst seeking to strike a collaborative tone, emphasising that the Government wished to continue to work in a constructive partnership with the voluntary organisations, Hope also implied that if the organisations were not prepared to sign up to the new ‘voluntary’ agreements then the Government might find itself under irresistible pressure to introduce formal regulations and hinted that broadening requirements for Secretary of State consent might not be quite as impractical as the voluntary organisations had claimed. Once again, the threat of regulation seemed a more useful tool for Government officials than the actual introduction of regulations themselves. Whilst successfully objecting to a Home Office proposal that its officials be allowed to observe selection interviews with prospective child migrants and their parents, the voluntary organisations duly agreed to Home Office inspections of their records in the United Kingdom and to ensure information was provided about standards of care overseas.¹⁵² The proforma documents drawn up by the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office on the range of information to be required from voluntary societies did not explicitly prescribe expected standards in the same way that the draft s.33 regulations had done.¹⁵³ However, by requesting information about voluntary societies’ selection methods, pre-emigration preparation of children, arrangements for escorts, transfer of records overseas, and the training, staffing, after-care and arrangements for boarding out for child migrants once overseas, the implication was that voluntary societies would now be more actively

¹⁵⁰ Shannon to Lintott, 30th November 1956, TNA: DO35/6383.

¹⁵¹ See Child Migration, verbatim report of meeting with representatives of voluntary organisations, 14th December 1956, TNA: DO35/6383.

¹⁵² See Sudbury to voluntary societies, with enclosures 27th December 1956; Child migration, Replies of Voluntary Organisations, TNA: DO35/6383.

¹⁵³ Compare Sudbury to voluntary societies, with enclosures 27th December 1956, TNA: DO35/6383, with Statutory instruments, Child and Young Persons, The Emigration of Children Regulations, TNA: MH102/2047.

monitored to check their compliance with standards that had already been discussed with them for a number of years.

Whilst this increased monitoring of voluntary societies' work appeared to be an approach that would further nudge voluntary societies towards reform of their child migration work, its effects in reality were at best mixed. It had been assumed in the Shannon report that the review of all approvals of receiving institutions prior to the renewal of funding agreements would be undertaken by a direct inspection of each institution by Commonwealth and State officials, accompanied by an observer from the UK High Commission.¹⁵⁴ In reality, however, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration insisted that these approvals should be based on short reports produced only by State officials,¹⁵⁵ replicating the same process for providing information on receiving institutions that the fact-finding mission had shown to have failed in a number of cases. The Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office also generally preferred to use this review process to encourage voluntary organisations to improve conditions in receiving institutions in Australia rather than refusing outright to renew their approval, with Whittick showing little inclination to engage in this process in any detail.¹⁵⁶ Having received the fresh reports from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, there was still some discomfort in the Commonwealth Relations Office at the prospect of children being sent to unsatisfactory institutions. It did raise specific concerns about five institutions which had been criticised by the mission: Riverview, Dhurringile, Castledare, Bindoon and St John Bosco Boys' Town, although the head of its General Department discouraged suspension of approval from St John Bosco Boys' Town, as he judged it 'not... bad enough to warrant a quarrel with the Catholics'.¹⁵⁷ Recognising that the point of making new funding agreements was a moment of greater leverage over voluntary societies, the UK High Commission was asked to approach the Commonwealth Department of Immigration to establish whether it felt it would be possible to press the relevant voluntary organisations for improvements on these five specific institutions before the

¹⁵⁴ On this expectation, see also Telegram Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commissioner, 6th December 1956, TNA: DO35/6383.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Heyes to Official Secretary, 3rd May 1957, TNA: DO35/10273.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, note by Johnson, 13th June 1957, TNA: DO35/10247.

¹⁵⁷ Note by Gibson, 17th June 1957. TNA: DO35/10247.

agreements were signed.¹⁵⁸ In reply, the UK High Commission confirmed that the Australian authorities saw no need to do this. The Commonwealth Department of Immigration did agree to check on whether staffing levels at Castledare were any more adequate than those observed by the mission, with approval later agreed for Castledare on the basis of small staff increases.¹⁵⁹ However, it otherwise re-stated its view from the previous summer that, given that minor physical improvements required at Bindoon and Dhurringile had now been made, there was no reason for approval of any of these other institutions to be suspended.¹⁶⁰ Ultimately, although the approvals of a small number of institutions were allowed to lapse because there were no plans to recruit more British child migrants to them, no approvals were actively refused by the UK Government and sending organisations in the United Kingdom were simply encouraged to work with their partners in Australia to improve conditions in particular institutions instead.¹⁶¹ The problem of trying to influence conditions in receiving institutions in Australia—short of full suspension of approvals—once again proved intractable.

Inspections of voluntary societies' operations proved somewhat more productive. A visit to the offices of the Church of England Council for Commonwealth and Empire Settlement by Home Office inspectors raised a number of concerns.¹⁶² The Council's administrator, Enid Jones, was found to have been undertaking the Council's child migration work virtually by herself and without any effective oversight. Full case histories had not been produced for children being sent to Australia under the Council's auspices, the Council had no effective means of checking whether children had changed their minds about emigrating before they were placed on ship, children's records had not been properly transferred to receiving institutions in the past, and monitoring of children it had placed overseas

¹⁵⁸ Telegrams, Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commissioner, 21st June 1957, TNA: DO35/10273.

¹⁵⁹ See correspondence on NAA: K403, W1959/89.

¹⁶⁰ Telegram, UK High Commissioner to Commonwealth Relations Office, 28th June 1957, TNA: DO35/10271.

¹⁶¹ Renewed funding agreements and associated approvals of receiving institutions are held on TNA: DO35/10242 (Northcote), DO35/10247 (Federal Catholic Immigration Committee), DO35/10251 (Fairbridge), DO35/10261 (Dr Barnardo's Homes), DO35/10269 (Church of England Council for Commonwealth and Empire Settlement), DO35/10271 (Salvation Army), DO35/10272 (National Children's Home), DO35/10275 (Church of Scotland Committee on Social Service).

¹⁶² See Whittick to Jones, 22nd April 1958, TNA: DO35/10268.

was ineffectual. The failings were judged sufficiently serious for Whittick to suggest that if the Council did not take appropriate remedial action, then this might constitute a failure to uphold its funding agreement with the UK Government, and any further approval for emigration of children by the Council under the agreement might need to be suspended.¹⁶³ No comment appears to have been made at this point about Lady Beesborough's close relationship to the Council or her endorsement of its work. By the autumn of 1960, Home Office inspectors were satisfied that the Council's working practices were sufficiently improved for the threat of suspension to be withdrawn, but from this point on the Council only sent another three child migrants to Australia under this agreement.¹⁶⁴ Similar criticisms were also made about the administrative arrangements of the Catholic Child Welfare Council's emigration sub-committee which almost entirely ended its child migration activities when the 'voluntary' inspection regime came into effect in 1957.

The Commonwealth Relations Office still judged it politically expedient to offer public statements of support for the voluntary societies still undertaking this work—particularly the Fairbridge Society—and the Oversea Migration Board continued its efforts to promote child migration.¹⁶⁵ In reality, though, any lingering enthusiasm for supporting this work within the UK Government was fading. When the Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, met with the Australian Commonwealth Cabinet during a tour of Australia in spring 1958, the need to fill a thousand existing vacancies for British child migrants in Australian receiving institutions was directly raised with him.¹⁶⁶ Despite this being discussed with the Commonwealth Relations Office on MacMillan's return to Britain, no initiative was taken to address this. When its civil servants and ministers became aware of a crisis surrounding Dr Barnardo's Homes' farm school at Picton in the summer of 1958, in which a number of men were convicted of sexual offences against boys in their work placements, serious consideration was given in the Commonwealth Relations Office to ending

¹⁶³ Whittick to Clearly, 4th February 1959, TNA: DO35/10268.

¹⁶⁴ Note by Peters, 8th September 1960, TNA, DO35/10269. On the potential removal of the Council from the agreements renewed in 1960, see note by Peters, 21st April 1960, TNA: DO35/10255.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, the publicising of child migration organisations' work in *Fourth Report of the Oversea Migration Board*, cmd.619, London: HMSO, 1958.

¹⁶⁶ Record of meeting between the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the Australian Prime Minister and Cabinet, 11th February 1958, TNA: CAB21/3153.

immediately the department's funding agreement with the charity.¹⁶⁷ An adjournment debate in the House of Commons initially proposed by the Conservative MP, Nigel Fisher, in support of child migration in July 1958 was postponed until the following February when Alport contacted Fisher to suggest the timing could be unhelpful if the debate gave any publicity to the scandal at Picton.¹⁶⁸ When it was eventually held on 9th February 1959, Alport gave a glowing account of the value of this work.¹⁶⁹ However, his private briefing notes from civil servants suggested that the primary drivers for post-war child migration had been Australian Commonwealth immigration policy and the interest of voluntary organisations in this work, and identified no particular value in it from the perspective of the UK Government.¹⁷⁰

By the start of the 1960s, child migration was in significant decline. The Oversea Migration Board no longer discussed it in its meetings or annual reports.¹⁷¹ From 1961 onwards, only the Fairbridge Society and Dr Barnardo's Homes continued this work to any degree, with Quarriers' Orphan's Homes also briefly sending small parties of children to Dhurringile. The total number of assisted child migrants going to Australia each year now regularly fell below a hundred. A Commonwealth Relations Office analysis suggested that, by 1960, of the 1914 places available for British child migrants in Australia, 1347 were vacant.¹⁷² Despite several hundred British children still being in residential institutions in Australia, the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office seemed to give up any hope of being able to influence conditions for child migrants once they arrived in Australia. Correspondence between the Scottish Home Department and the Home Office in the spring of 1960 indicated that the Home Office had received no reports from Australian authorities about conditions in receiving institutions since the reports provided for the renewed funding agreements in 1957.¹⁷³ Although Whittick generally

¹⁶⁷ See note by Johnson, 15th July 1958, and other notes and correspondence, TNA: DO35: 10260.

¹⁶⁸ See Fisher to Alport, 24th October 1958, TNA: DO35/10252.

¹⁶⁹ *House of Commons Hansard*, 9th February 1959, vol. 599, cols 949–970.

¹⁷⁰ See Child Migration, Brief for Parliamentary Secretary, no date, TNA: DO35/10252.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, notes and minutes on TNA: DO35/10282; *The Sixth Report of the Oversea Migration Board*, cmd.1243 (London: HMSO, 1960); *The Seventh Report of the Oversea Migration Board*, cmd.1586 (London: HMSO, 1961).

¹⁷² Peters to Whittick, with enclosure, 15th February 1960, TNA: DO35/10255.

¹⁷³ See Whittick to Walker, 3rd February 1960, NRS: ED11/386.

seemed satisfied with the periodic visits that Home Office inspectors made to sending organisations in the United Kingdom, there seemed little interest in trying to force greater collaboration from Australian Commonwealth or State officials. The Commonwealth Relations Office was also aware that no reports on individual institutions had been received since 1957 when it came to consider the renewal of funding agreements with voluntary societies at the start of 1960, but no action was taken to chase the Australian Government for this information and funding agreements with voluntary societies were renewed without them.¹⁷⁴ By this stage, even the Commonwealth Department for Immigration seemed resigned to writing off the investment made in trying to attract British child migrants in any significant numbers. When it commissioned a major review of the assimilation of child immigrants to Australia, published in 1960, its programme of assisted migration for unaccompanied child migrants was not even mentioned.¹⁷⁵

Despite this growing apathy, the influence of precedent continued. Discussion of child migration policy in the report of 1961 Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy was far terser than in the Shannon report five years before.¹⁷⁶ Noting the wider social trends—and changing attitudes to child-care—which had made child migration an increasingly unattractive option, the report noted that the societies undertaking this work ‘have virtually outlived their usefulness and the Home Office has considerable reservations about their standards of child care in such work as remains to them’. However, given that societies such as Fairbridge still had considerable political support, including on the Oversea Migration Board, there was little point in failing to renew child migration agreements under the Act given the controversy this would entail. As the report bluntly put it, ‘it would be particularly unfortunate to rouse fruitless controversy when the amount of money involved is so small and the societies themselves are likely to die a natural death before long for lack of child migrants’. The renewal could be used, however, to ask the Australian Commonwealth Government to take responsibility for the

¹⁷⁴ See Peters to Claydon, 20th January 1960; Claydon to Peters, 21st January 1960; Peters to Cleary, 28th January 1960; Cleary to Shannon, 2nd February 1960, TNA: DO35/10255.

¹⁷⁵ *The Progress and Assimilation of Migrant Children in Australia*, Canberra: Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, 1960.

¹⁷⁶ See *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Migration Policy, 1961*, TNA: DO175/33, section III.

entire costs of assisted child migration—in return for a larger United Kingdom contribution to the larger Australian assisted migration programme. This would have the benefit of removing the administrative burden from these schemes from the Commonwealth Relations Office, but would be proposed on the basis that the Australians would be willing to withdraw this funding from voluntary organisations if they did not keep up the existing ‘voluntary’ arrangements in place with the UK Government in relation to their standards. The gradualist approach to reforming child migration had, in this policy judgement, run as far as it could, and the best that could be hoped for was to try to constrain bad practice until such time as the schemes wound down through lack of available children.

That process took somewhat longer than might have been expected. The assisted migration of British children without their parents to Australia continued until 1970, but the work of the Fairbridge Society carried on after this. In 1957, recognising the growing pressures in finding children for emigration without their parents, the Society had instituted one-parent and two-parent schemes in which children would be sent to their farm schools in Australia on a more temporary basis until their parent had also emigrated, successfully set up home and could receive them back into their care.¹⁷⁷ This scheme continued after the last unaccompanied child migrants had gone to Australia in 1970 and attracted far larger numbers of children than their original work with children sent without their parents.¹⁷⁸ Child migration to Australia ended, as it had begun, at the Fairbridge farm school at Pinjarra, gradually fading from public awareness until the experiences of the early post-war child migrants began to receive greater attention later in the 1980s.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, notes and correspondence on TNA: DO35/10250. The Home Office were reported to be unhappy about the period of separation between parents and children on this scheme, with the Fairbridge Society offering in 1960 to amend it so that children sailed out on the same ship as their parents rather than before them (see Peters to Cleary, 28th January 1960; Peters to Vaughan, 18th July 1960, TNA: DO35/10255).

¹⁷⁸ See Sherington and Jeffrey, *Fairbridge*, p. 363, which indicates that 1900 children were received at Pinjarra between 1960 and 1980. The vast majority of these would have been sent under the one- or two-parent scheme.

¹⁷⁹ See Murray and Rock, ‘Child migration schemes to Australia’.

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‘Avoiding Fruitless Controversy’: UK Child Migration and the Anatomy of Policy Failure

My job teaches me always to remember that history consists, so to speak, of men and women, and not of Archangels. In thinking out a solution for any of the problems with which I have to deal, I have always to ask myself not only “Is this the right solution?” but also, “Is it, under our existing form of government, a practicable solution?”... And that difficulty runs, in a greater or lesser degree, right through history; so that we must remember that the reason why wrong things are done is not always, or even often, because the people concerned were wicked or stupid, but possibly because they seemed to them to be, in all the circumstances, the best things that could be done at the moment.

—Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner to Australia, 1936–41

One of the notable features of former child migrants’ accounts of traumatic aspects of their experience is that they are, for the most part, unsurprising given what appears in archival records. Their recollections of their lack of clarity about the reasons for their emigration, or their lack of informed consent to it, find echoes in repeated references to some voluntary organisations’ poor selection methods and insufficient preparation of

children they were sending overseas. Child migrants' lack of knowledge about their family origins in the United Kingdom, and the effects on their lives of false claims that they were orphans, is reflected in the frequent concerns expressed about failures to send child migrants' case histories with them. Other traumatic aspects of child migrants' experiences related to their time in residential institutions, of which many have since complained as being rigid, impersonal and over-dependent on their labour. Yet all of these elements of residential institutions had been critiqued in some detail by the Curtis report and were the subject of numerous policy discussions about the suitability of large, socially and geographically isolated institutions as places for accommodating child migrants. The extent of exploitation and physical and sexual abuse of child migrants at the Western Australian institutions run by the Christian Brothers would doubtless have come as a shock to the British policy-makers who oversaw this work, even though standards at these institutions had at various times been a source of concern. But given what was known about the importance of regular inspections of residential homes, the failure of the UK Government to implement any such monitoring and the growing evidence of the unreliability of oversight by Australian officials, it is unsurprising that such cultures of abuse were able to persist in those institutions for so many years.

The harms to which child migrants were exposed, and the failures of systems to protect their welfare, were thus far from unpredictable given expected standards of child-care and child protection in the early post-war period. Furthermore, although child migration programmes to Australia had, by 1939, come to be seen as one of the most effective parts of assisted migration policy by officials in the Dominions Office, British policy-makers' enthusiasm for this work grew substantially cooler in the post-war period. The harms to which many post-war child migrants to Australia were exposed therefore took place in the context of programmes which British policy-makers saw as having limited national strategic value.

We therefore return to the question with which this book began of why post-war child migration from the United Kingdom to Australia resumed and continued against the grain of child-care standards reflected in the Curtis report and the 1948 Children Act. How was it that the policy aim of improving standards of children's out-of-home care in this period failed to be implemented effectively in these programmes?

POLICY FAILURE AND POLICY-MAKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIMITS OF THEIR POWERS

The answer to this question lies partly in conflicting policy timetables and priorities. Although policy discussions between the Home Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office were limited during the initial resumption of child migration to Australia from 1947 onwards, from 1950 they evolved into protracted attempts to negotiate between the competing demands of assisted migration policy and the drive to improve standards of care for children. Given the United Kingdom's political, economic and military interests in good relations with Australia, and the Commonwealth Government's ambitious immigration policy, child migration became a means for managing wider political and economic tensions surrounding the Anglo-Australian assisted migration programme. This found its most instrumental expression in discussions around the 1950 Syers committee report which suggested that maintaining the UK Government's comparatively small financial commitment to child migration could sweeten the pill of substantial cuts to the larger budget for other forms of assisted migration to Australia. Whilst this was never understood as an explicit sacrificing of children's welfare for the national interest, British policy-makers' discussions of post-war child migration remained shrouded in a sense that safeguarding child migrants' welfare had to be pursued in ways that took account of the sensitivities of Australian policy-makers, voluntary organisations and wider public opinion. The policy of gradualist reform of child migration which was to become the basis of a, sometimes fragile, consensus between the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office from 1954 was forged in the spirit of managing these competing interests.

Whilst the influence of such 'high politics' on post-war child migration to Australia is already recognised in both academic and public discussions of this history,¹ there is value in developing a more fine-grained analysis of the ways in which civil servants and government ministers in Britain made sense of these compromises. It would be relatively easy to understand the resumption and continuation of post-war child migration to Australia if those policy-makers had coldly regarded risks to child migrants' welfare as a necessary evil in managing diplomatic relations with Australia. This was not the case, however. From when the first critical accounts of Australian

¹ See, e.g., Constantine, 'The British Government'; Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report*.

receiving institutions began to be received back in London in the late 1930s, civil servants and ministers typically reacted with concern to accounts of poor selection, care, training and after-care. Their responses were clearly not usually effective in producing better safeguards for child migrants and there were evidently occasions when they failed to treat reassurances about improving standards in Australia with sufficient scrutiny. But their response was never one of pure indifference.

Nor was it the case that British policy-makers lacked sufficient information about shortcomings in child migration work. The failure of the UK Government to establish annual, independent inspection visits to receiving institutions in Australia certainly meant that it was over-dependent on systems of reporting from Australian officials which were compromised by their wider policy interest in maintaining and increasing child migration as well as informal reports, such as the one produced by John Moss, which were not as critical as direct inspections by the Home Office were likely to have been. Despite this, though, British officials had sufficient knowledge of problems in the working methods of some sending organisations in the United Kingdom and at some receiving institutions in Australia to have taken more decisive action in response to this—and had numerous opportunities when they could have done so.

Rather than being the result of ignorance or indifference, the attitudes and decisions made by British policy-makers in relation to post-war child migration are better understood in terms of the ways in which they perceived their power to be limited. Whilst the development of the post-war welfare state created anxieties amongst some supporters of voluntarism that the British state would become more centralised, impersonally bureaucratic and over-controlling, in government, civil servants and ministers experienced their power as being far more constrained than this.

In the context of child migration, some of these constraints related to limitations of resource. Whilst discussions between the UK High Commission in Canberra and the Dominions Office in 1945 were, for example, clearly sympathetic to the idea of regular monitoring visits to all receiving institutions in Australia, lack of staff resources at the High Commission meant that this was never made a priority. Similarly staff in the Home Office Children's Department also periodically rejected administrative measures that would have allowed greater oversight over child migration and other forms of out-of-home care on the grounds that they would add too great an administrative burden on its staff.

Another perceived constraint on power—sometimes as much assumed by civil servants as consciously reflected on—was precedent. In 1945, there had been considerable discussion within the Dominions Office about the problems that had emerged in relation to Australian receiving institutions during the war, future standards that might be expected and even the possibility of children no longer being sent to the Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra. However, when the Australian Commonwealth and State governments set out their plans for the resumption of assisted child migration in August 1946, the unquestioned assumption within the Dominions Office was that the pre-war precedent of the UK Government also giving financial support to this work would be followed. Such perceived constraints were made particularly explicit in the 1956 Shannon committee report which stated that ‘if we were untrammelled by precedent’ then the Government would not choose to support child migration programmes of this kind. The report noted, however, that precedents for this work had, by then, become such an assumed part of the relationship between the UK and Australian Governments and influential churches and voluntary organisations that it could not be ended unless there was a sufficient public outcry against this policy.

Far from simply being the expression of intellectual laziness or passivity, such deference to the principle of precedence had positive value in the decision-making worlds of civil servants.² Precedent had the value of establishing policy frameworks in which civil servants could operate, and helped to set limits on what needed to become a matter for fresh decision-making. Precedent made possible stable collaborations with other institutions on which the day-to-day running of the machinery of government depended. Precedent also served as a means by which government officials could present themselves as taking an even-handed approach to external bodies who wished to make claims on government resources (even if, in reality, some preferential treatment was privately shown). Clearly precedent could be over-turned by economic necessity (as in the push towards decreasing the UK Government’s financial contribution to the Australian assisted migration programme) or a sudden crisis which demanded an

² Recognising the role of precedence for policy-makers can helpfully broaden concepts of policy-making as a series of decisions in relation to perceived policy problems (see FitzGerald et al, ‘Policy success/policy failure’, 3–4) and draws attention to the ways in which policy-making may, in some contexts, involve a presumption against implementing new policy positions.

urgent response (such as the discussion of possible cessation of funding for Dr Barnardo's Homes when the sexual scandal at Picton became known).³ However civil servants' investment in the principle of precedent meant that any radical alteration to a policy was only contemplated when it was judged that the reasons for change were sufficiently compelling to outweigh any anticipated adverse reactions.

Underpinning this caution was a wider sense amongst both British civil servants and ministers that the exercise of power in government was constrained by the interests and sensitivities of powerful organisational stakeholders.⁴ This did not mean, in the context of the mixed economy of the post-war welfare state, that policy-makers simply ceded power to voluntary societies. There are many instances in the history of post-war child migration in which demands by voluntary organisations—and even the Australian Commonwealth Government—were politely declined or received only very minimal assistance. From refusals of the post-war restoration of the government grant-in-aid to the Church of England Advisory Council of Empire Settlement or for increased funding requested by the Fairbridge Society, to the lack of any active support for demands that local authorities to be encouraged to give over more children for emigration, civil servants and ministers in the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office never allowed their policy decisions simply to be dictated by the requests of external bodies. Those demands would always be courteously heard and receive at least the impression of serious attention, but were never acceded to if they did not fit with policy-makers' existing views or priorities. Whilst there seemed to be far greater co-working between the Dominions Office and Fairbridge Society during the inter-war years, this had later cooled as the Dominions Office sought to distance itself from the demands of Fairbridge's London committee for greater control over the operation of Fairbridge farm schools in Australia. By the post-war period, some ministers such as Douglas Dodds-Parker still actively supported child migration organisations. However, in general, civil servants and ministers displayed a greater sense of institutional distance from the voluntary organisations with whom they worked, seeing them more as

³ On the role of crisis in challenging default forms of policy inertia, see Thomas Birkland, *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change after Catastrophic Events* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006).

⁴ On the role of interest groups in policy-makers' perceptions of constraints on their decision-making, see, e.g., FitzGerald et al, 'Policy success/policy failure'; also Birkland, *Lessons of Disaster*, pp. 177–8.

organisations whose working practices and sensitivities had to be managed rather than as close collaborators in a shared policy project. The warmth of ministerial tributes in Parliamentary debates to the work of voluntary societies involved in child migration increasingly contrasted with the more reserved, and increasingly critical, tone of private notes and memoranda in government files.

However, whilst British policy-makers generally maintained a sense of institutional distance from voluntary organisations involved in post-war child migration, and were quite willing to refuse requests from them, they were also averse to creating tensions in those relationships through 'fruitless controversy'. Within both the Home Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office, decisions about post-war child migration were consistently characterised by the wish to avoid overt conflict with other stakeholders with interests in this work—whether the Australian Commonwealth Government, voluntary organisations or local authorities. From the decision to give approval to St John Bosco Boys' Town or the Padbury Boys Training Farm as receiving institutions despite the Home Office's initial concerns, the approval of the Over-Seas League as a sending organisation under pressure from the Commonwealth Government, and the agreement to allow the Fairbridge Society to send children to Australia during the summer of 1956 when an unofficial suspension of child migration was meant to be in place, civil servants consistently showed an unwillingness to press their concerns to the point where it might provoke conflict. Although the case of St John Bosco Boys' Town seemed to be one in which the Home Office did, at first, seem willing to face down lobbying from supporters of the Catholic Church, it eventually conceded in the face of broad reassurances about the institution and a faint hope that Catholic officials had understood what standards of child-care were expected of them.⁵ Government ministers, on occasion, seemed more willing to contemplate bolder measures, but for civil servants, a common thread in their work was to avoid their department becoming embroiled in conflict with external bodies which they saw as having no benefit in furthering their policy aims. Within the Home Office Children's Department, this sense of the limits of their power in the face of concerted opposition also extended to its

⁵ It is notable in this case that the initial strong stand by the Home Office against the approval of St John Bosco Boys' Town was helped by the fact that it was explicitly supported by the Home Secretary, James Chuter Ede, rather than a position taken by civil servants alone.

experience of pressing for policy and operational changes in some local authorities in England and Wales.⁶

A different and more complex picture of policy negotiations between government officials and voluntary organisations therefore emerges from the idea of the latter having to ‘converge’ with government policy if it were to continue to receive public resources,⁷ or of policy-makers instrumentally using voluntary organisations as the informal means of meeting the Commonwealth Government’s demand for child migrants.⁸ The post-war history of child migration was one of policy-makers’ increasing doubts about the working methods of voluntary organisations and the wish for them to undergo gradual reform, alongside a wariness of forms of control which might prove too controversial and have insufficient practical benefit. Where there was pressure for convergence with standards expected by the state, this pressure was, for the most part, only slowly and cautiously exerted. In the case of the Home Office Children’s Department, this arguably reflected a wider culture of timidity in enforcing standards in children’s out-of-home care. One later academic review was to go on to criticise its staff for being ‘unnecessarily restrained in their attitude to [other] authorities whose departments are inefficient or who are acting against the spirit of child care legislation or the general consensus of professional opinion on what is good child care practice’.⁹

In discussions within government, this aversion to conflict also sometimes translated into civil servants’ unwillingness to trespass into the powers and responsibilities of other government departments with whom they were liaising.¹⁰ This was exemplified in the Children’s Department’s reluctance to contemplate complete refusal of requests for approvals of receiving

⁶ See, e.g., Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p. 398, on the Children’s Department’s experience of limited influence over improving standards in established residential homes in the face of concerted opposition within a local authority.

⁷ Finlayson, ‘A moving frontier’.

⁸ Grier, ‘Voluntary rights and statutory wrongs’.

⁹ Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p. 425.

¹⁰ Similar caution was, at times, evident within the Home Office Children’s Department in terms of encroaching on the policy remit of local authorities, although where the Home Office had clear statutory powers over local authorities (e.g. in terms of powers of veto over appointment of specific individuals as Children’s Officers) it was more willing to use these, see Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, pp. 376–8, 380, 385. On well-established departmental resistance to the possible transfer of power and responsibilities to other departments as an impediment to reform, see Richard Chapman and J.R. Greenaway, *The Dynamics of Administrative Reform* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 132–3.

institutions forwarded to it by the Commonwealth Relations Office in the early 1950s because the Home Office had no formal regulatory powers in this context. With the Home Office's role in this approval process only an advisory one, its civil servants showed considerable caution over the extent of influence they sought to exert over decision-making within the Commonwealth Relations Office, at the same time as some civil servants within the Commonwealth Relations Office found the delays caused by consultation with the Home Office tiresome.¹¹ Similar deference to departmental lines of responsibility was also reflected in Edward Gwynn's decision in 1956 that the Children's Department should not challenge the Commonwealth Relations Office on how best to manage political relations with the Commonwealth Government over the increasingly obvious disagreements about appropriate standards of care for child migrants. Aversion to straying into other department's policy remits also had its advantages. The Home Office's desire, in December 1956, to avoid 'being embarrassed' by further consultation from the Commonwealth Relations Office on the emigration of children to unsatisfactory Australian institutions reflected an attempt by its civil servants to insulate themselves from difficult and uncomfortable policy decisions by placing responsibility for them firmly in another government department.

The belief that conflictual organisational relationships could make the process of government impossible doubtless made civil servants keen to avoid any overt confrontation with influential voluntary societies. However, there were even more obvious limits to their powers when it came to governmental and voluntary bodies in Australia. A recurring challenge for British policy-makers in the post-war period was that beyond the selection and preparation of child migrants in the United Kingdom, the most significant impact of emigration on children's lives was likely to arise from the standards of care and training they received once overseas. Yet it was precisely over these overseas matters that the UK Government had no legal power. The only meaningful sanction which the UK Government could apply was to threaten to end its financial contribution to these child migration programmes, but as discussions from the Syers Committee onwards showed, such a measure both risked a hostile response from the Commonwealth Government and would remove the only contact with

¹¹ See, e.g., on pressure from the Commonwealth Government to speed up Home Office responses to requests for institutional approvals see MacGregor to Walsh Atkins, 25 August 1950, TNA: MH102/2032.

these schemes through which British policy-makers could exert any influence over them.¹² To attempt to employ any strong influence over the working practices of organisations in Australia also smacked of the old colonialism which officials in the Dominions Office and Commonwealth Relations Office saw as no longer tenable or desirable.

The lack of ability to exert any controls over children once overseas played a significant role in the Children's Department's decision to abandon regulations for child migration by voluntary organisations. The preferred alternative option was to try to exert moral persuasion on Australian government officials through inter-governmental channels, or on Australian voluntary societies via the sending organisations in Britain who provided them with children. However, when the events of 1956 showed that trust in Australian systems to maintain appropriate standards of care had been misplaced and that the Commonwealth Department of Immigration had a very different understanding of suitable standards of care for child migrants to the Curtis Committee, a central policy bind that had run through the entire post-war programme became all too stark. The Commonwealth Government clearly wanted child migrants and had made significant financial investments to create space for them in residential institutions across Australia. Furthermore, any cessation of child migration would, it was feared in London, be perceived in Canberra as a sign not only of British indifference towards assisted migration, but towards its strategic commitment to Australia more generally. Yet, British officials came to realise, the Commonwealth Government had neither the inclination nor the systems to ensure that standards of care advocated by the Curtis report would be implemented in the institutions to which British child migrants were being sent. In the absence of any legal or other control over those Australian institutions, the UK Government was reliant on the willingness of the Commonwealth Government to insist on particular standards of care and had no means of addressing this when such willingness was absent.

When the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office agreed to introduce closer monitoring of the working methods of voluntary societies sending children from the United Kingdom in 1957, this could only

¹² Civil servants involved in these policy discussions would generally have been aware of the child migration programme to New Zealand, operated by the New Zealand Government and the Over-Seas League, over which the UK Government had little formal control because it did not rely on any form of UK Government funding.

effectively address problems occurring in the United Kingdom and not in Australia. The bind of feeling compelled to continue official support for child migration, whilst feeling disquiet about the inability to ensure adequate standards in Australia, was one that was never resolved by British policy-makers. When they became aware of the prosecutions for sexual offences against boys from the Picton farm school in 1958, British officials once again hoped that the Commonwealth Department of Immigration might institute some wider investigation of whether similar sexual offences had occurred at other institutions receiving British child migrants. Yet again, though, they found Commonwealth officials to be unobliging. By the end of the 1950s, the privately expressed hope of civil servants in the Commonwealth Relations Office and Home Office was that this bind could ultimately be resolved through child migration programmes dying a quiet death through declining numbers of available children. Those children who had already sailed to Australia were beyond the powers of their intervention and became the forgotten subjects of a policy problem that they had found too difficult to resolve.

POLICY DELAY, COMPLEX SYSTEMS AND MISPLACED ASSUMPTIONS

Whilst policy-makers' various perceptions about the limits of their powers doubtless constrained their decisions about child migration, other causes of policy failure can be found in the over-complicated policy and administrative systems through which it operated.

The slow progress in developing policies for safeguarding child migrants in the post-war period is, in one sense, not surprising given that assisted child migration was a very small part of both the wider assisted migration brief of the Commonwealth Relations Office and the responsibilities for children's out-of-home care for the Home Office Children's Department. This process was made yet more protracted through processes of discussion which involved two government departments and two government advisory bodies in London, the UK High Commission in Canberra, the Australian Commonwealth Government, and professional bodies, local authorities and voluntary societies in Britain. The fact that these processes took place in the context of the wider re-organisation of children's out-of-home care in the emerging post-war welfare state, and of wider, contentious, reviews of assisted migration policy, was also a source of further

delay. The first post-war child migration parties to Australia had sailed in 1947 when the Home Office Children's Department was still in the very early stages of adjusting to its new role as the lead government department for children's out-of-home care and devising a wider range of new policies in the wake of the Curtis report. With the Home Office's Advisory Council only meeting to discuss regulations for the child migration work of voluntary societies in 1949, and its discussions then delayed by other business and trans-national consultation over proposals, it was only in 1952 that the Advisory Council had a clear set of regulations to discuss. Subsequent consultation on the regulations created further delays, exacerbated by Home Office officials' apparent fatigue with this process. By the time the Children's Department eventually reached the decision not to introduce these regulations in 1954, the Home Office and Commonwealth Relations Office were already beginning to work towards a consensus on the value of a gradualist approach to reform in place of regulation. With attempts to implement this gradualist policy through the Oversea Migration Board hindered by the enthusiasm of some of the Board's members for child migration, a further resolution on how to pursue this approach was only found through the Shannon committee report in the early autumn of 1956. By 1957, the informal agreement that voluntary organisations sending children from the United Kingdom should allow Home Office officials to monitor their working practices as a condition for receiving Government funding finally meant that some mechanism for oversight of their work had eventually been achieved.

Whilst, in terms of the administrative and political processes involved, it is possible to see why this policy process could take so long, for child migrants such periods of time constituted their entire childhoods. The slow progress of policy development in this context meant that child migrants' lives were lived through a system maintained by the momentum of precedent and policy-makers' aversion to overt conflict, with concerns about their standards of care generally assuaged with the hope that things would improve in the future. It was never the case, then, that standards for child migration were ignored by British policy-makers after 1947, or that the aspirations of the Curtis report for high standards of care for child migrants were forgotten or rejected. Failures to protect the welfare of British child migrants occurred, instead, because the ways in which British policy-makers' perceptions of the limits of their powers hindered their ability to undertake more effective and decisive action.

More robust policy positions could certainly have been taken. Approval of residential institutions or sending organisations, about which Home Office officials had concerns, could have been withheld. As John Ross later suggested, more exacting criteria for these approvals could also have been agreed to prevent children being sent to large, impersonal and isolated institutions. Despite their limitations, the introduction of regulations for the work of voluntary societies sending child migrants from the United Kingdom would almost certainly have discouraged some of the organisations with the worst practices from continuing their work. Policy tensions with the Australian Commonwealth Government may well have been difficult to resolve, but British policy-makers still had much greater scope for pressing for better safeguards in this work than were actually, in practice, pursued.

Other causes of policy failure can also be seen embedded in the dynamics and limitations of organisational systems. The Australian Commonwealth Government's enthusiasm for post-war child migration was, well into the late 1950s, premised on an unrealistic assessment of the number of British child migrants that might be available. Initially, this involved a gross over-estimate of the numbers of 'war orphans' in Britain who might benefit from new homes overseas once peace was restored. Then, when that mistake was realised, Commonwealth ministers and immigration officials continued to over-estimate what proportion of the 125,000 children identified by the Curtis report as being 'deprived of a normal family home' could be available for assisted migration. An important consequence of these mistakes was the Australian policy decision to provide grants to voluntary organisations to enable the opening of new residential institutions—or the expansion of existing ones—to accommodate this anticipated supply of children. Once this investment had been made, and children were not forthcoming in the numbers that had been expected, the policy imperative to press British officials for more children was strengthened. This pressure led, in turn, to the approval of the Over-Seas League as a sending organisation by the UK Government—despite concerns about its resources and working practices—as well as the active recruitment of British children to fill institutional vacancies, as happened, for example, with girls sent by the Sisters of Nazareth to the Nazareth House at East Camberwell in Melbourne. Irrespective of the flawed understandings on which a policy was based, this process showed that, once established, a programme could generate its own demands for the resources it needed (in this case, children) in order

to sustain itself, regardless of whether the consequences of these demands were ultimately beneficial or not.

Child migrants were also poorly served by the complex and fragmented system of administration and oversight through which the programmes operated.¹³ The risks of poorly co-ordinated systems for children's out-of-home care were well-known at the birth of the post-war welfare state and had been a central concern of the Curtis and Clyde reports. In this context, the child migration programmes were an exceptional case in that they were a form of children's out-of-home care where administrative and policy decisions fell outside the primary control of the Home Office. The more coherent administrative system encouraged by Curtis and implemented through the 1948 Children Act was, of course, no guarantee of effective delivery of child-care services. By the early 1960s, Home Office inspectors were still complaining of cases in which local authority child-care officers in England and Wales were failing to adhere to boarding out regulations, placing children in foster homes which had not previously been visited and failing to undertake sufficiently regular checks on their welfare.¹⁴ However, the complex governmental systems for the administration of child migration—operating between different departments in both the United Kingdom and Australia—created even worse conditions for competing interests, failures in the sharing of information and anxiety about others' reactions to policy decisions. These systemic problems were further exacerbated by the failure of the Home Office to introduce the controls over voluntary organisations' work which it did have available to it under the 1948 Act.

Tensions within this complex administrative system were also shaped by policy-makers' perceptions of which organisations within the system were closer to, or further from, their own views or trusted networks. Walter Garnett, whose work at the UK High Commission in Canberra was so important for these programmes, had for example clearly come to identify far more strongly with parts of the Commonwealth and State Governments in Australia than with the Home Office, whose interventions he saw as often ill-informed, overly rigid and insensitive. Home Office civil servants, equally, at times expressed frustration with High Commission officials whom they saw as trying to be 'more Australian than the Australians'.

¹³ On the significance of contingent systems of governance in impeding effective policy development and delivery, see also Birkland, *Lessons of Disaster*, p. 157.

¹⁴ Griffith, *Central Departments and Local Authorities*, p. 396.

Such bonds of trust and mistrust shaped the working of this policy system. When overlaid over the vast geographical spaces of Australia, it was unsurprising that this fragmented system failed to meet the need for the effective monitoring of British child migrants and hindered attempts to improve the standards of care and training they received.

Alongside these organisational factors, policy-makers' assessment of how child migration was working in practice was significantly influenced by their prior beliefs as to whether the fundamental policy underlying this work was a good one or not.¹⁵ When reviewing the catalogue of shortcomings in Australian receiving institutions of which the Dominions Office had become aware during the Second World War, Sir John Stephenson had noted that whilst more careful monitoring and government controls were needed, the 'original idea' of the child migration schemes was 'a sound one'. Having received the information that it had about poor management, accommodation, standards of care, training and after-care, it would have been equally possible for policy-makers in the Dominions Office at that point to conclude that the project of sending British children thousands of miles away to remote, often poorly run, institutions, entailed too great a risk to their welfare for it to be sensible to continue. Policy-makers' belief in what constituted 'good' policy was not, therefore, based simply on the evidence available to them—as Whiskard's image of the rational civil servant carefully weighing up their limited options suggests—but on whether the policy provided a meaningful narrative for political action. The idea of the isolated child, with limited prospects in the United Kingdom, being offered an opportunity for a better life as a citizen of the Commonwealth, whilst consolidating the broader cultural, economic and political bonds between Britain and her former Dominions, had enduring appeal. Even in 1956, after the Ross report and its confidential addenda, had shown the various ways in which the current system was failing, the Shannon committee report went on to argue that although policy-makers would probably not choose to establish such programmes from scratch today, most child migrants appeared to benefit from this work. When a policy was seen as fundamentally sound, numerous examples of its shortcomings could be interpreted as exceptions or temporary failures that could be improved with gradual reform, rather

¹⁵ On the role of ideological assumptions or other pre-conceptions in policy failure, see, e.g., Richard Grossman, *Wrong: Nine Economic Policy Disasters and What We Can Learn from Them* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

than as evidence that the policy was, at root, unsafe. Assumptions about the basic ‘soundness’ of a policy idea—despite evidence of its failings—could therefore persist for many years and require either a significant shift in knowledge (as occurred when John Ross finally saw conditions in Australian receiving institutions for himself) or the fresh perspective of a new generation of policy-makers for such perceptions to change. In this regard, Walter Garnett’s shift from his often defensive attitude to criticisms of child migration systems to his apparent acceptance of the need for far greater controls in the report of the 1956 Fact-Finding Mission is an interesting case example of the process of change in a policy-maker’s thinking.

HISTORY, POLICY FAILURE AND REDRESS

On 1st March 2018, the United Kingdom Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published its report for its Child Migration Programmes investigation. Whilst identifying failures in a number of the voluntary organisations involved sending child migrants overseas, the Inquiry commented that:

[I]t is the overwhelming conclusion of the Inquiry that the institution primarily to blame for the continued existence of the child migration programmes after the Second World War was Her Majesty’s Government (HMG)... The policy itself was indefensible and HMG could have decided to bring it to an end, or mitigated some of its effects in practice by taking action at certain key points, but it did not do so... We concluded that the main reason for HMG’s failure to act was the politics of the day, which were consistently prioritized over the welfare of children... We have made a small number of recommendations, focusing on the need for HMG to institute immediately a financial redress scheme for surviving child migrants.¹⁶

The Inquiry’s criticism of the UK Government was based on a number of issues addressed in this book, namely the failure to introduce s.33 regulations or requirements for Secretary of State to consent for the emigration of children by voluntary societies, the failure to ensure child migration programmes ran according to the standards advocated by the Curtis report, and the tendency for policy-makers to act in ways calculated to avoid conflict with the other organisational stakeholders. As has been

¹⁶ IICSA, *Child Migration Programmes Investigation Report*, pp. viii–ix.

argued in this conclusion, however, these failures are better understood not as the result of purely instrumental decisions to prioritise political interests over the welfare of children, but of policy-makers' perception that their powers were limited and that a policy of gradualist reform was the best option available to them. The Inquiry was, however, quite correct in arguing that the UK Government did in reality have far greater powers to act to protect child migrants' welfare than it was willing to deploy, and that the lack of more effective action on its part left child migrants vulnerable to harm which, for many, had life-long effects.

The UK Government subsequently agreed to accept the Inquiry's recommendation and establish a redress scheme to former child migrants that provided a flat payment of £20,000 to all eligible applicants. The UK child migration schemes have therefore become part of the international phenomenon of historic child welfare provisions that have become the focus of public critique, investigation and redress, and part of the even wider phenomenon of contemporary debates about how historic injustice might best be understood and addressed.

One element of these debates is the role that historical research can, and should, play in these processes.¹⁷ Historical research into policy and organisational failures and abuses of rights can generate a more nuanced framework for thinking about different kinds of historic wrongs inflicted on vulnerable citizens. Alongside studies of state-sponsored violence or other policies that knowingly contravened legal or moral standards of the day, a case example such as the UK child migration programmes demonstrates that traumatic consequences can result not just from the intentionally violent exercise of state power, but from poor policy decisions and failing organisational systems.¹⁸ By developing fine-grained historical accounts of how the workings of the machinery of government could cause profound suffering, it becomes possible to have a clearer understanding of forms of organisational responsibility for past wrong which go

¹⁷ On this see, e.g., Gordon Lynch, Pirjo Markkola, Eoin O'Sullivan, Johanna Sköld and Shurlee Swain, *The Uses of Historical Research in Child Abuse Inquiries*, History and Policy policy paper, published 7 May 2020, <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/the-uses-of-historical-research-in-child-abuse-inquiries>.

¹⁸ Thinking about patterns of failure in organisational systems and cultures can be another way of connecting historic and contemporary injustices, distinct from, but potentially complementary with, the interest in how long-term social structures underpin historic and contemporary injustices (on this see, Alasia Nuti, *Injustice and the Reproduction of History: Structural Inequalities, Gender and Redress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

beyond broad notions of the nation as a moral community responsible for harms inflicted through its history.¹⁹ Such historical analysis can also provide more careful accounts of past trauma which challenge more popularised versions that over-simplify the organisational processes and cultures involved.²⁰

In this sense, historical research can provide a strong basis for wider public discussions of past organisational wrongs and inform more careful debates about the nature of apologies and redress. Historical research is not, however, simply a precursor to the ‘real’ process of considering restitution and redress, but an integral part of it. One principle that has come to be associated with transitional justice is that proper restitution for historic wrongs can be shown, in part, by guarantees of non-recurrence of such abuses in the future. In many instances, however, historic wrongs take forms that are unlikely to be replicated directly in contemporary society. The notion that the UK child migration programmes should be studied so that such policies are never implemented again is, for example, rendered redundant in the face of wider policy and social changes that have already made any such recurrence unthinkable. The principle of non-recurrence can have much wider significance than this, however. Some factors underlying the dynamics of policy failure in a case such as the UK child migration programmes are clearly specific to this particular history (such as the politics of early post-war Anglo-Australian assisted migration). Cultures of policy-making also change over time, with the current emphasis on learning from past crises and social trauma (reflected in the IICSA process and subsequent redress scheme), being very different to the early post-war context in which policy-makers were more willing to take the view that there was little benefit in raking over previous failures if there were reasonable grounds for hoping that things would improve in the future.²¹ Other factors evident in this case can, however, have wider

¹⁹ For debates about the relative significance of the state or the wider moral community of the nation in redress for historic injustice, see, e.g., David Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jacob Levy, ‘National and statist responsibility’, in (eds) Helder De Schutter and Ronald Tinnevelt, *Nationalism and Global Justice: David Miller and His Critics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 113–27; also Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000).

²⁰ For a very effective study of this kind, see Kim Wagner, *Amirtsar 1919: An Empire of Fear and the Making of a Massacre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

²¹ On the the current policy-making culture of learning lessons from dramatic instances of past failures, see Jonathan Sher, John Frank, Lawrence Doi and Linda Caestecker, ‘Failures

relevance for other policy failures in the care of children and vulnerable adults such as over-complex administrative systems, conflicting policy agendas operating to different timetables, poor lines of communication, delays in policy decision-making, commitment to the soundness of a policy idea in the face of contradictory evidence and over-cautious avoidance of adverse reaction to policy decisions.²² The history of post-war child migration to Australia therefore raises questions not only about whether similar factors might have been at play in failures in other health and social welfare systems of that period, but how such structural and cultural flaws in government can continue to harm the lives of vulnerable citizens today.

in reproductive health policy: overcoming the consequences and causes of inaction', *Journal of Public Health*, 41(2), 2019, 209–15.

²²This study therefore concurs with the argument by Bovens and 't Hart, 'Revisiting policy failures' that explanations of policy failures based on single causes are unlikely to be helpful, and invites further reflection on whether certain clusters of factors may be particularly pertinent to specific policy areas, periods or systems of government; see also Grossman, *Wrong*, on the inter-play of intersecting factors such as ideology, delay and interest groups in economic policy failures.

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