

BARNARDO CHILDREN IN CANADA

There are more than three thousand five hundred miles between the East London studio where the photographs in this exhibition were taken and the Homes in Toronto and Peterborough where many of their subjects were introduced to Canadian life. The psychological distance between the crowded courts of British industrial cities where the Barnardo children were born and the isolated farmsteads in rural Ontario and Manitoba where they served their apprenticeships defies estimation.

Between Confederation and World War 1, one hundred thousand British children made such a journey. At destinations in every province from Nova Scotia to Saskatchewan, they tried with varying degrees of success to adjust themselves to the many ways in which the New World was distant from the Old. One quarter of these children came from the ever-open, but always revolving, doors of Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Two thirds were boys. Most came to Canada before they reached the legal school-leaving age of fourteen. After 1887 an industrial training farm at Russell, Manitoba and a Reception Home on Pacific Avenue in Winnipeg expanded Barnardo's Ontario work west. Between 1898 and 1914, more than a thousand of his children came to Canada each year.

Through the park-like setting and cottage accommodation of the Girls' Village Home in Essex Barnardo hoped to remove children from the unhealthy environment of the cities and raise them in family settings which would prepare them for roles as domestic servants and mothers.



Dr. Barnardo's Headquarters at Stepney Causeway, East London where boys were gathered from workhouse institutions and Barnardo branches throughout England and Wales to be outfitted for emigration. c. 1900.

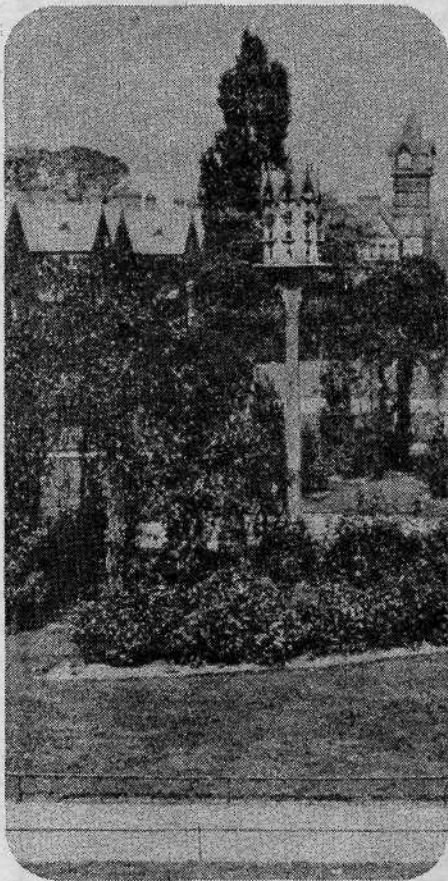
This large and remarkably long-lived programme was pursued partly as a matter of faith, partly as a matter of finance. Barnardo and his evangelical colleagues found in the poverty of working class neighbourhoods not only suffering but sin. Young children among the labouring poor grew early into working roles, and contributed in important ways to the family income. Intermittent subsistence crises forced fathers to leave and tramp in search of work, mothers to seek admission to the workhouse, children to be left under the care of friends or relations. Reformers who entered these neighbourhoods from the secure and comfortable life of more prosperous classes were perplexed and angered by what they saw. The heavy labours and unstable home life of poorer children seemed to them as much a product of parental selfishness and irresponsibility as of poverty. In the era before income supplements to needy families became accepted, rescue for these children implied separating them from kin. Some had been abandoned; others were fugitives, run-aways or orphans. Children were welcomed into large walled institutions where they were offered schooling and domestic or industrial training and the religious instruction which would lead them to a better life. But as long as family or friends and former haunts remained near, the risks of return to the old ways remained great. Dr. Barnardo and his colleagues found in emigration a means to safeguard the spiritual and moral reformation they had effected in the children. Their apprehensions concerning the British urban poor were matched by an extraordinary confidence in the temperate, Christian, agricultural people of the colonies. They hoped that in farm households, far from the temptations of urban life, in clean air and healthful labour, their children would grow to devout and industrious adulthood. The younger children entered this new environment, the more rapid would be their adjustment to its standards.

Emigration was not an expensive rescue policy. The transatlantic passage cost about the same amount as one year's keep in an English Home. Once in the colony, the child cost the institution very little. Canada's

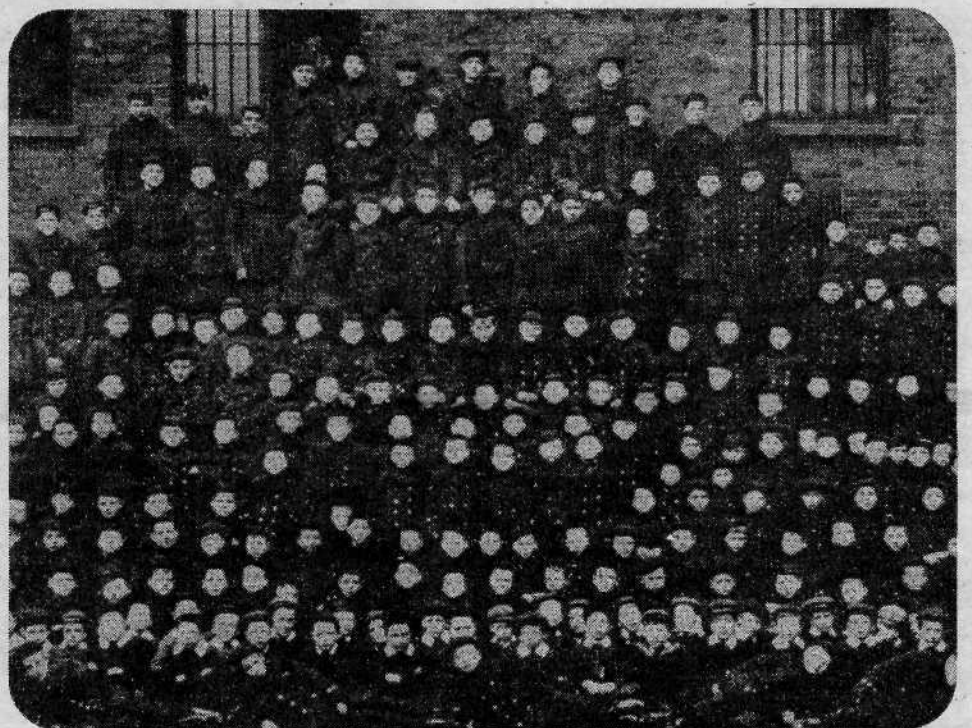
closeness made it the least expensive and thus the most favoured destination for emigrants. Each child who embarked by ship left an empty bed behind, and thus allowed an expansion of the rescue work without addition to the English facilities.

Emigration offered better economic prospects for the child as well. Many rural young people were drawn away to the wages, independence and adventure of the cities. The work load on the farm before the advent of household appliances and power driven field machinery was onerous. Rural people were eager for extra help and especially willing to receive a young apprentice who would work for board and perhaps a small wage. There was good reason to expect that this training would stand the immigrant in good stead in later life. The demand for agricultural labourers and domestics was likely to continue. There were homesteads and many homesteaders looking for capable wives in the West and New Ontario. Canada seemed to hold a promise beyond all expectations for the working child in Great Britain, the security of agricultural proprietorship. Thus, there is little cause to wonder at the vigour with which Dr. Barnardo pursued his emigration policies.

Barnardo was not the first to send children to Canada and he did not labour alone. Child apprentices had been sent to the Canadas under the auspices of the Children's Friend Society before the 1837 Rebellions and by Lord Shaftesbury in the 1850's. The broader movement of which Barnardo's work is a part was initiated in 1868 when two women, Maria Rye, a feminist, and Annie MacPherson, a Quaker, working independently, brought individual London children to Ontario. Miss MacPherson encouraged Barnardo, William Quarrier of Glasgow, Leonard Shaw of Manchester and her sister, Louisa Birt of Liverpool to use emigration as a child-saving policy. Other agencies, the Middlemore Homes in Birmingham, the National Children's Homes, Mr. Fegan's Homes of Southwark and Westminster, Miss



**LONDON
1900**



By the 1890's several very large parties were crossing the Atlantic yearly. Situations were readily found for the boys but adequate supervision became more difficult as the number of apprentices increased. c. 1890.