Waifs: The Fairbridge Society in British Columbia, 1931-1951

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The Fairbridge Farm School on Vancouver Island represents the last gasp of the trans-Atlantic child migration movement. Between 1934 and 1951, the farm school received nearly 350 underprivileged British children. The scheme, which combined philanthropy and empire-settlement, was supported by influential politicians who allowed the Fairbridge Society to contravene federal immigration regulations and flaunt provincial child welfare laws. Child welfare groups, however, denounced the farm school as an anachronism and repeatedly tried to close it. The history of the farm school was characterized by conflict between an imperially-minded generation of child savers and a new breed of professional child care workers.

La dernière vague migratoire d'enfants en provenance d'outre-Atlantique était reliée à la Fairbridge Farm School, située sur l'Île de Vancouver. Entre 1935 et 1951, cet établissement a accueilli près de 350 enfants britanniques défavorisés. À la fois philantropes et désireux de bâtir l'Empire, ses dirigeants avaient l'appui d'hommes politiques influents qui permettaient à la Fairbridge Society de violer les règlements fédéraux en matière d'immigration et de faire fi des lois provinciales touchant la protection de l'enfance. Ils soulevèrent cependant l'ire de groupes œuvrant à la protection des enfants, lesquels dénoncèrent l'école parce qu'ils la considéraient comme un anachronisme, et tentèrent à maintes reprises de la faire fermer. L'histoire de cet établissement illustre le conflit entre deux générations de protecteurs de l'enfance, l'une d'abord préoccupée de l'Empire, l'autre formée de professionnels, qui se souciaient principalement du bien des enfants.

Canada received approximately 80,000 destitute and disadvantaged child emigrants from Britain between the 1860s and the 1920s. The majority of these children migrated under the auspices of philanthropic organizations and most were directed to central Canada and the Maritimes. Their experiences and the controversy that attended their migration have been well documented by Joy Parr, Gillian Wagner, Neil Sutherland and others.[1] As these historians have shown, the child migration movement was motivated by economic considerations and was sustained by the evangelical zeal of contemporary social reformers. Recent studies have also shown how the movement, which peaked at the turn of the century, attenuated after the First World War. By the 1920s, Canada had disadvantaged children of its own to look after, while a growing number of Canadians felt that the Dominion had become a dumping ground for socially-undesirable urchins. At the same time, enthusiasm for child migration declined in Britain, following reports that "home children", as the young immigrants were called, were labouring in deplorable conditions on isolated Canadian farms. As a result of these criticisms and concerns, the federal government—acting in concert with British authorities—introduced regulations which prohibited dependent

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1. Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924*, London, 1981; Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, London, 1982; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English Canadian Society*, Toronto, 1978; Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada, 1800-1900*, New York, 1983.

Histoire sociale — Social History, Vol. XXI, nº 42 (novembre-November 1988): 224-250

children under the age of fourteen from entering Canada. The regulations were introduced in 1925 and soon after, the trans-Atlantic child migration movement came to a close.

The movement did not die, though. It was revived in 1935 when the Fairbridge Society brought out the first of over 300 underprivileged British children to Canada. It was an extraordinary achievement, given the economic climate and the fact that many Canadians resented immigration of any kind. Despite opposition from child welfare groups and immigration officials, the Society was able to bring into the country dependent children who were as young a four and five years of age. No less remarkable was the fact that Fairbridge operated exclusively in British Columbia, a province that had virtually no experience with child immigration.

But then, the Fairbridge Society — first known as the Child Emigration Society— was a remarkable organization. Unlike earlier child migration schemes, it was imperially, rather than evangelically, charged. It was founded not only to rescue children from "poverty, neglect, and antisocial influences", but also as a means of making a "mighty contribution to Empire settlement". During the Depression, when it began operations in Canada, its aim was to create "exceptional men and women for an exceptional time of difficulty in an exceptional Empire."[2] Moreover, Fairbridge commanded friends and resources unavailable to most other emigration societies. It enjoyed the active patronage of royalty as well as the support of influential politicians in Westminster, Ottawa and Victoria. Members of the academic community on both sides of the Atlantic also showed an unusual degree of interest in its work, thus giving Fairbridge an eminence and lustre which set it apart from its predecessors.

Its association with academe, its social and political connections, and its patriotic character enabled Fairbridge to revive a system of immigration that had been discredited and ostensibly abandoned in Canada; they allowed it to circumvent federal immigration regulations and, for many years, shielded it from British Columbia's child welfare laws. The Society's imperial character and prestigious connections also helped it to weather a series of scandals which would have rendered any other group prostrate. Ultimately, however, the organization, which had been conceived during the Empire's Edwardian summer, was forced to come to terms with the realities of modern Canadian society. It was not an easy reconciliation. Indeed, the Fairbridge era in British Columbia was characterized by an intense struggle between an imperially-minded generation of child savers and a new breed of professional child care workers.

I

The organization Leo Amery called "the finest institution for human regeneration that has ever existed" was conceived by Kingsley Ogilvie Fairbridge.[3] Born in South Africa in 1885, Fairbridge was raised in Southern Rhodesia where his father worked as a surveyor for the British South Africa Company. He was an ardent disciple of Cecil Rhodes and, from an early age, had been eager to make some tangible contribution to the cause of the Empire. He would do so through his child emigration scheme.

2. Fairbridge Farm Schools, Inc., *Annual Report*, 1934, p. 11; 1936, p. 4.
3. *The Autobiography of Kingsley Fairbridge*, London, 1932, preface.

Fairbridge's interest in child immigration sprang out of his first visit to England, in 1903. He was appalled by the widespread poverty and by the abject condition of children who struggled for survival in city slums. "The waste of it all", he wrote afterwards, "children's lives wasting, while the Empire cried aloud for men."[4] He decided that the best way to "save" these children was to send them to the British dominions overseas. The children would benefit by being removed to a salubrious environment, while the dominions would benefit from the additional manpower.

In 1909, having returned to England as a Rhodes scholar, Fairbridge outlined his plans to a group of fellow enthusiasts at the Oxford University Colonial Club. He proposed to emigrate destitute children between the ages of eight and ten—"before they have acquired the vices of 'professional pauperism' and before their physique has become lowered by adverse [environmental] conditions." Eschewing the practice of Dr.Barnardo's organization, which boarded out or apprenticed immigrant children with farmers, Fairbridge proposed to establish a residential farm school overseas. This children's community was to consist of several large cottages, a day-school and a well-equipped farm. Children would live together in groups of a dozen or so, under the care of solicitous "cottage mothers". By providing a basic education and an edifying regimen of "physical culture", the farm school would transform erstwhile slum-dwellers into sturdy settlers. Boys would be taught agriculture, stock-raising and other skills which would allow them to become farmers. Girls—who figured less prominently in Fairbridge's scheme of things—would be taught such skills as would allow them to become "governesses, housekeepers, cooks and domestic servants".[5]

Fairbridge's proposal was a composite of several other schemes and systems. He drew on the "cottage homes" favoured by some philanthropic organizations in Britain, and upon earlier proposals for immigrants' training centres in the colonies. He also derived some of his ideas from the Oxbridge-based "settlement movement" which encouraged "men and women of the educated classes" to bring "culture, knowledge and personal influence to bear upon the poor."[6] As he told his Colonial Club audience: "The men and women of the staff [of the proposed farm schools] must be gentlemen and gentlewomen of culture and refinement in order to bring up the children in a clean and wholesome atmosphere."[7]

The Colonial Club responded positively to Fairbridge's proposal and unanimously voted to establish the "Society for the Furtherance of Child Emigration to the Colonies." Their organization—subsequently incorporated as the Child Emigration Society [CES]—soon boasted an impressive list of patrons. Yet, despite its influential supporters, the CES had difficulty finding a location for its first farm school. Originally, Fairbridge had his mind set on British Columbia, which he had visited en route to Oxford in 1908; however, the CES had few contacts in the province at the time and, for financial reasons, decided to look elsewhere. The Maritime provinces were considered, but the Society was unable to acquire a suitable site in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Newfoundland. Rhodesia was also ruled

4. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
6. Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, pp. 189, 194, 195; "Social Settlements", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed. Fairbridge was particularly indebted to Sir Charles Kinloch-Cooke's scheme for "agricultural homes or farms for child emigrants." *See* "The Emigration of State Children", *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, 36, 1904-1905, pp. 264-281.
7. Fairbridge, *Autobiography*, p. 229.

out after a discouraging response from the British South Africa Company.[8] Eventually, Fairbridge accepted the offer of 1,000 acres from the government of Western Australia and, in 1912, the first Fairbridge Farm School was opened at Pinjarra, near Perth. Other farm schools were later established in New South Wales and Victoria.

Kingsley Fairbridge died in 1924 without having realized his early ambition of establishing a farm school in Canada. And at that time, it seemed most unlikely that the CES would ever succeed in doing so. In the 1920s, the antijuvenile immigration protest was at its height in Canada. The protest was led by Charlotte Whitton and the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, by the Children's Aid Society, and by various women's organizations who argued that Canada had insufficient resources to look after its own dependent children and, so, could not afford to care for "home children" from Britain. To bolster their arguments, opponents of juvenile immigration claimed that British emigration societies had been guilty of sending out "substandard" children who, because of heredity and environment, were inclined to criminal and immoral behaviour. Joining in the protests were Canadian trade unions who had long regarded juvenile immigrants as unwelcome competition in the labour market.[9]

On the other side of the Atlantic, juvenile emigration was also under attack. Several local government boards decided to stop sending children from their workhouses and industrial schools to Canada on the grounds that Canadian authorities were lax in inspecting the homes in which the children were placed. Their fears that home children were forced to labour under difficult and sometimes inhumane conditions were heightened in 1923, when three English boys who had been ill-treated by their masters in Canada committed suicide.[10]

In response to growing opposition to juvenile immigration, the dominion government invited the British Overseas Settlement Department to investigate the whole system of child migration and resettlement. A delegation led by the Labour MP and trade unionist, Margaret Bondfield, presented its report in November 1924, after a six-week tour of Canada. They concluded that the existing system was "liable to abuse" and recommended that no children be transported until they had reached the age of fourteen, the school leaving age in Britain. Acting on Bondfield's recommendations, the British government announced that it would no longer offer financial assistance for immigrants to Canada under fourteen years of age. For its part, the Canadian government enacted regulations, in April 1925, which banned children who were less than fourteen and unaccompanied by their parents or guardians from entering the country. Initially, the ban was to apply for a three-year period, but in 1928, the ban on unaccompanied children was made permanent.[11] The federal government's directive of 1928 ostensibly marked the end of British child migration to Canada and the end of a tradition which, Joy Parr has said, "had become redundant" and "morally repugnant".[12]

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8. Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, p. 194; Fairbridge, *Autobiography*, p. 203; State Archives of Western Australia [SAWA], Fairbridge Society Records, Acc. 934 A/3/1: British South Africa Co. to Kingsley Fairbridge, 12 June 1909.

9. Alex G. Scholes, *Education for Empire Settlement: A Study of Juvenile Migration*, London, 1932, p. 102; Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, pp. 250-269; Parr, *Labouring Children*, pp. 52-57.

10. Parr, *Labouring Children*, p. 152.

11. G. F. Plant, *Oversea Settlement: Migration from the United Kingdom to the Dominions*, London, 1951, p. 134; Wagner, *Children of the Empire*, p. 228.

12. Parr, *Labouring Children*, p. 151.

Redundant and repugnant it may have seemed to its critics in Britain and Canada, but juvenile immigration still had many advocates, including Miss Jean Bostock of Monte Creek, B.C. A daughter of Liberal Senator and former Immigration Minister Hewitt Bostock, she had long been interested in schemes involving philanthropy and imperial unity. Having read reports of the CES' work in Australia, Miss Bostock approached the federal government, in October 1931, in hopes of establishing a farm school in her province. She was not encouraged. F.C. Blair, Director of the Immigration Branch, informed her that the government was neither prepared to waive its minimum age regulations for immigrants, nor to consider providing any financial assistance for a farm school.[13]

Coincidentally, Miss Lorna Leatham, a secretary of the CES, had made a similar appeal to Ottawa a few weeks earlier. She hoped to establish a farm school in Ontario. But again, Blair made it clear that the federal government opposed the idea. Indeed, Blair, who favoured a very restrictive immigration policy at the best of times, told Miss Leatham's supporters that the very notion of resuming child emigration in Canada was unrealistic, given the economic situation and the large number of Canadian children who were unable to find work after leaving school.[14]

Miss Leatham, nevertheless, continued to lobby the federal government and, in 1933, joined forces with Miss Bostock who had also persisted with her campaign. Of the two, Miss Leatham was the more active, although she acceded to Miss Bostock's view that British Columbia was the best location for a residential farm school. Several factors favoured the province. First of all, the climate of B.C. was temperate and congenial. The social and demographic character of the province was also attractive; a large proportion (30 percent) of the population was British-born and, in many quarters, anglophile, imperialistic sentiments prevailed. Moreover, since very few "home children" had been placed in British Columbia, provincial authorities had not had many bad experiences with child emigrants in the past. Most important, the new provincial government seemed very sympathetic to the kind of settlement scheme which the CES was promoting.

T.D. ("Duff") Pattullo and his Liberal Party took office in November 1933. Pattullo's "Work and Wages" platform had appealed to organized labour and to the unemployed, groups who were traditionally opposed to immigration. But Pattullo did not share the nativistic fears of some of his supporters; rather, he regarded controlled and selective immigration as an economic stimulant.[15] He may also have been influenced by the Bostock family, long-time political allies, to meet Miss Leatham and hear first-hand about her philanthropic settlement scheme.

She arrived in Victoria a few weeks after the provincial election and was welcomed into the home of F.B. Pemberton, one of the city's leading businessmen. As it happened, Pemberton's son-in-law, Major Cuthbert Holmes, was a Rhodes scholar and a former member of the Oxford University Colonial Club; in fact, he had known Kingsley Fairbridge and had attended the meeting which had launched the Child Emigration Society. Miss Leatham had clearly fallen among friends. Her key supporter, though, proved to be Duff Pattullo. Leatham told the Premier that the CES was not seeking financial assistance, but

13. Public Archives of Canada [PAC], Immigration Branch records, RG 76, vol. 375, file 510340, pt. 1, microfilm, reel C-10273: F.C. Blair, file memorandum, 1 October 1931.

14. *Ibid.*, Blair to Grote Stirling, 23 February 1931.

15. "Immigrants wanted — Premier Pattullo", Vancouver *Sun*, 6 October 1936, cited in Betsy A. Terpsma, "Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School and Child Welfare in British Columbia, 1935-1951", UBC honours thesis [History], 1979, p. 22.

simply the relaxation of federal restrictions of immigrants under the age of fourteen. She explained that the young CES immigrants would not be entering the provincial workforce for at least five years, by which time, the economic climate in the province would likely have improved considerably. She added that a farm school similar to the Pinjarra school in Australia would inject approximately $50,000 annually into the provincial economy.[16]

Pattullo was favourably impressed and, in February 1934, he formally recommended the scheme to W.A. Gordon, the federal Minister of Immigration and Colonization. "The Government of British Columbia feels sympathetic to this work", he wrote, "and has no objection to children of the required age [i.e. less than fourteen] being brought from Great Britain in order to be trained under the auspices of the [Child Emigration] Society."[17]

Seizing the occasion, the chairman of the CES, Roger (afterwards Sir Roger) Lumley, travelled to Ottawa to secure a definite commitment from the federal government. The highly-placed Conservative MP[18] was prepared for resistance, but in the event, he encountered very little opposition to his request, at least at the top. He found R.B. Bennett, the Prime Minister, in "thorough agreement with the principles of the scheme" and seemingly unconcerned that Canada had destitute children of its own to look after:

> He thinks the Fairbridge scheme much the best for migration, and is all in favour of getting settlers young. He quite agrees that this is the time to put forward an idea of this kind, as a fresh migration policy will have to be considered in the near future.

Lumley noted that the Prime Minister was even willing to provide the CES with an operating grant. Lumley also had a congenial meeting with W.A. Gordon, who "spent a long time recounting failures in other schemes, but apparently did not seem averse to this one." The Minister did not think it would be possible to provide the Society with a grant, but saw "no difficulty" in admitting British children under the age of fourteen. "He considered the foreign element was getting too large and Canada must increase her British stock", Lumley recorded.[19]

Lumley then called on Charlotte Whitton who, predictably, reacted negatively to the CES' scheme. She regarded the restrictions, which had been imposed in 1928, as being sacrosanct and bluntly told Lumley that "it would be useless to try and get the age limit altered." Likewise, F.C. Blair was adamantly opposed to admitting children under the age of fourteen and was clearly appalled that Bennett and Gordon seemed so unconcerned about that point. "No government could possibly alter the age limit and survive", he told Lumley. When pressed, however, Blair reluctantly conceded that "if a request was made from a province, backed up by strong public opinion", the restrictions imposed on child emigrants six years earlier might be relaxed.[20]

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16. Provincial Archives of British Columbia [PABC], Premiers' Papers, GR 1222, vol. 122, file 13. Lorna Leatham to T.D. Pattullo, 24 November 1933 and 6 December 1933.

17. *Ibid.*, Pattullo to Gordon, 21 February 1934.

18. Sir Roger Lumley (Lord Scarborough) was the principal assistant to the Home Secretary. He had previously held senior posts in the Colonial Office and in the British Foreign Ministry.

19. Liverpool University Archives, D.296: Archives of the Fairbridge Society [hereinafter cited as Liverpool-Fairbridge Archives], 17/1, "Canadian Government Departments—summaries and reports on relations between the government and Fairbridge"; Lumley, typescript notes of interviews [1934], p. 1.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 2. Whitton's attitudes towards child welfare are detailed in Rooke and Schnell, "Making the Way More Comfortable: Charlotte Whitton's Child Welfare Career", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17, Winter 1982-1983, pp. 33-45. Blair's immigration policies are described in Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, Toronto, 1983.

Pattullo's letter, of course, was tantamount to such a request. Moreover, Lumley was able to garner further support from several influential MPs from British Columbia. Thus, with Bennett and Gordon in agreement, Blair was under considerable pressure to acquiesce to the Society's request. At Blair's urging, however, the CES had to meet a number of conditions before it received Ottawa's approval. Specifically, the Society had to bear all expenses for transporting and training its children; it had to take total responsibility for the immigrants until they were at least eighteen years of age; it had to repatriate, at its own expense, any children who were found to be unfit; it had to provide the government with case histories of every child it proposed to bring out, and allow Canadian immigration authorities in London to vet each prospective immigrant. The CES agreed to the terms and, on 12 March 1934, the Minister of Immigration and Colonization officially allowed the Fairbridge organization to establish a farm school in the Dominion.[21]

A few hurdles remained. Although Premier Pattullo was eager to welcome Fairbridge to British Columbia, some of his cabinet colleagues had reservations about the proposed farm school. In particular, the Minister of Lands, Wells Gray, feared it would aggravate an already acute unemployment situation. In a memorandum to the premier he wrote:

> It is needless for me to point out that our own young people... have been unable to secure employment of any description. Under these circumstances, the advisability of bringing more young people into the country to be instructed in the ways of agriculture and domestic service, thereby putting them into a position to compete with our own young people, might be considered at least until the native unemployed could be provided for.[22]

But Gray's reservations were not shared by his colleague, Dr. George M. Weir, the Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education. Formerly head of the Education Department at the University of British Columbia, Weir was regarded as an authority on matters pertaining to social services. He believed that a project as large as the farm school would stimulate the local economy and provide employment opportunities. He also liked the CES' approach to child care. His views, endorsed by the Premier, carried the day and, on 15 October 1934, the Executive Council formally approved plans for a "Fairbridge Farm Centre" in British Columbia.[23]

In Ottawa, meanwhile, government officials were feeling uneasy about the whole business. Gordon had approved the farm school on the understanding that the CES had a large pool of capital at its disposal. He and Blair also assumed that the CES would begin operations quietly and discreetly, furtively even, so as to spare the government any embarrassment for having condoned the resumption of child immigration. They were understandably dismayed when they learned that Lumley's group was planning a major fund-raising campaign in London during the summer of 1934. The CES' £100,000 Appeal

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21. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.* pt. 1: Blair to Gordon, 5 March 1934; Gordon to Lumley, 12 March 1934. R.B. Bennett actually gave the CES permission to begin operations in Canada a week before his Minister, Gordon, authorized the scheme. PAC, MG 42, Great Britain, Dominions Office Records. D.O.35, vol.1137, m894/1. p. 237, microfilm, reel b-5200: Bennett to Lumley, 5 March 1934.

22. PABC, GR 1222, vol. 3, file 3, A. Wells Grey to Pattullo, 14 April 1934; Pattullo to Gray, 16 April 1934.

23. *Ibid.*, G.M. Weir to Lumley, 15 October 1934. Lumley visited British Columbia in September 1934 in order to promote the CES' scheme. He was billetted at Government House and feted by the Premier. During his stay, Lumley and Weir exchanged several notes *re* future arrangements for the farm school. On one of these notes (Lumley to Weir, 28 September 1934), Weir has pencilled: "Ex. C. [Executive Council]. Pay some o/c [order-in-council] grant. Avoid prejudicing the scheme." PABC, Records of the Provincial Secretary, GR 496, vol. 58, file 1.

was launched by Prime Minister Baldwin and was led by no less a figure than the Prince of Wales, who personally contributed £1,000 to the campaign. As Gordon feared, the appeal generated immense publicity and, inevitably, news of the proposed farm school reached Canada, where it provoked a hostile reaction.

The Canadian Daughter's League was first off the mark, denouncing the importation of British "waifs and strays" at a time when Canadian farmers were destitute and when thousands of Canadian youths were suffering the indignities of relief camps. The Daughters were joined by the Native Sons of Canada and by several local councils of women, all of whom opposed the Fairbridge scheme. More worrying for Gordon, Charlotte Whitton wrote on behalf of the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare, criticizing the Immigration Department for violating the age requirements of dependent emigrant children. Replying to these criticisms, Gordon's deputy said that it was not at all certain that the CES actually intended to proceed with its plans for a farm school, "but even if they do, it will be six or seven years at least before any children will be ready for placement in British Columbia."[24] It was a lame reply, and not entirely honest.

Having received the green light from Ottawa and Victoria, the CES immediately set about looking for a site for its farm school. An accommodating Immigration Department discreetly asked the Land Settlement Board to help the Society find a suitable property. An LSB official duly inspected several locations on the Society's behalf before reporting favourably on two sites in the Lower Fraser Valley. However, the CES decided to ignore the LSB's recommendations and instead chose "Pemberlea", a farm which F.B. Pemberton owned at Cowichan Station, near Duncan, on Vancouver Island. Although the property was assessed at only $25,000, it was sold to the CES by a local realtor for over twice that amount. "They surely have more money than brains", Blair snorted, when he learned of the deal.[25]

The CES was, nevertheless, pleased with its decision and, certainly, there was much to commend the Cowichan Station site. It consisted of a thousand acres, 300 of which were cleared. The land was well suited for mixed farming, had a plentiful water supply, and was accessible by road and by rail. Furthermore, the social composition of the Cowichan Valley made it an ideal spot for a British farm school. The valley was renowned for its emigrant gentlefolk, a conspicuous group jocularly known as "longstockings". These retired India Army officers, Oxbridge graduates, expatriate sportsmen and well-bred ladies gave the valley a distinctly genteel Old Country ambience. The longstockings were also a relatively affluent group who were able to weather the Depression in comfort and whose livelihoods were not threatened by immigrant labour. The presence of such a group virtually assured the CES of local support.[26]

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24. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 1: Whitton to Blair, 6 July 1934; *ibid.*, pt. 1: Canadian Daughter's to Gordon, 22 March 1935; Native Sons to Gordon, 24 April 1935; Blair to W.J. Black, 15 June 1934.

25. *Ibid.*, pt. 1: Blair, file memorandum, 2 October 1934; I.T. Barnet [LSB inspector] to Col. G.C. Johnston [LSB District Superintendent, Vancouver], 15 November 1934; Blair to W.R. Little, 29 November 1934.

26. Terpsma, "Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School", pp. 28, 29; Patrick A. Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier*, Vancouver, 1981, p. 110.

II

In 1935, the CES changed its name to Fairbridge Farm Schools, Inc.; its title was subsequently simplified to the Fairbridge Society, the name that will be used hereafter in this study. Also in 1935, the Society received financial support for its new venture from the British government. Under the terms of the *Empire Settlement Act*, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs granted the Society $25,000 towards the cost of the Cowichan site and agreed to provide an annual maintenance payment (of approximately $10) for each child sent to Canada. The grant affirmed Fairbridge's unique status, since it was the only juvenile migration society so favoured by the Dominion's Office. The government of Mackenzie King, re-elected in October 1935, hinted that it, too, might make a financial contribution. In the event, it only provided words of encouragement, but even these were gratifying, coming as they did from a government which had earlier been responsible for imposing age restrictions on dependent immigrants.[27]

No less gratifying was the support shown in British Columbia where the Society had no difficulty finding prominent individuals to serve on its local advisory committee. The committee came to include the Editor of the Victoria *Daily Times*; General Victor Odlum, financier and diplomat; R.W. Mayhew, MP for Victoria and later a cabinet minister; and lumber magnate H.R. Macmillan. The local ladies' committee boasted such names as Mrs. W.C. Woodward, wife of the province's most successful retail merchant, and Mrs. Eric Hamber, the chatelaine of Government House. Their patronage gave Fairbridge immense prestige. More important, nearly all of the patrons were members of the province's powerful Liberal establishment and, so, were well-connected to both the Pattullo and King administrations. The Fairbridge Society was thus assured of political support at the highest levels.

The local committee's first task was to assist Major Maurice F. Trew, interim Principal of the new farm school. The former Coldstream guardsman was responsible for overseeing the construction of residences and other buildings at the Cowichan site. Work began in the spring of 1935 and within a short time, "Pemberlea" was transformed into a small village. At its centre were several two-storey duplex cottages. Built of wood with shingle sidings, each cottage contained a dormitory ward for upwards of a dozen children, a small kitchen and eating area, and a private apartment for cottage mothers. Close by were staff residences, farm buildings, workshops, laundry, dining hall and gymnasium. The village was graced by a chapel, built on designs approved by Sir Herbert Baker, the Empire's pre-eminent architect, and decorated with windows provided by Sir Edward Beatty of the CPR. Entrance gates (donated by the local branch of the Canadian Legion), ornamental trees (provided by the provincial Department of Agriculture), a schoolhouse (erected and maintained by the Department of Education) and extensive playing fields completed the community. The only thing lacking was children.

III

The Fairbridge Society was a broker. That is to say, Fairbridge did not operate rescue homes or orphanages of its own, but sent out children from other agencies. In 1935, there

27. Liverpool-Fairbridge Archives, 17/1. King to Lumley, 26 November 1934; Lumley to King, 8 February 1935; King to Lumley, 23 February 1935.

was a maze of such agencies in Britain. Dependent children were cared for in institutions run by the Ministry of Health, by the Ministry of Pensions, by the Department of Education and by Public Assistance committees of local authorities. But the bulk of Britain's dependent children—some 30,000—were maintained by voluntary societies. In the 1930s, over 1,000 societies were registered with the Home Office, the major ones being Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Church of England's Homes for Waifs and Strays, and the Salvation Army. Under the terms of the 1933 *Children's Act*, the facilities operated by the societies were inspected regularly by Home Office officials. Even so, they were desperate places, reminiscent of Dickensian workhouses. In most instances, they were "large gaunt looking buildings with dark stairways and corridors, high windows, unadapted baths and lavatories"; cold, draughty and crowded, they reeked with "a continual smell of mass cooking, soft soap and disinfectant."[28]

Inadequate at the best of times, the homes run by voluntary organizations were under immense pressures during the Depression. In 1935, over two million were still unemployed in Britain and, in the "Distressed Areas"—such as Glasgow, Tyneside, Merseyside and Wales—, unemployment hovered at between 27 and 37 percent. In cities like Newcastle, then characterized by "squalor and ruin", the social fallout was tremendous. Malnutrition was endemic; tuberculosis and infantile mortality were twice the national average, and there was a high incidence of broken families. Indeed, in some of the Distressed (or "Special") Areas, the proportion of broken families was as high as 50 percent.[29] The children of these families were the major victims of the Depression in Britain and became the inmates of state orphanages and barrack homes run by the voluntary organizations. These were the children the Fairbridge Society wished to resettle in British Columbia.

Initially, Canadian authorities in London rejected most of the children the Society submitted. Of the 176 children examined at Canada House in the summer of 1935, only 41 were approved. The Director of Immigration and Colonization in London was "not at all impressed by the material that has already been submitted" and advised Blair that "we should take a very firm stand in selecting only children who are thoroughly sound, mentally and physically." Blair, who had been doubtful about the Fairbridge organization from the start, concurred: "One would think that for their own sake, they would have someone look the children over and weed out a lot of the unfit before suggesting migration."[30]

Roger Lumley was furious by what he considered the unduly stringent standards and high-handed attitude of Canada House. In a letter to Lord Stanley of the Dominions Office, he complained that the Canadians, unlike the Australians, seemed intent on thwarting the Fairbridge scheme before it even got off the ground. He was tempted to air the whole matter in the House of Commons during the next debate on migration within the Empire: "It might result in a very strong criticism of Canada on both sides of the Atlantic." The Canadian authorities, he said, failed to appreciate that as a broker agency, Fairbridge had little say in the children who were passed on to it. He also accused the Dominion government of

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28. Great Britain. House of Commons. Cmnd.6922. *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, 1946 [Curtis Report], par. 141. *See also* Jeremy Seabrook, *Working Class Childhood*, London, 1982, chap. 9: "Institutionalized Childhood".

29. John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, London, 1984, p. 271; Noreen Branson and Margot Heinmann, *Britain in the Nineteen Thirties*, London, 1971, p. 53; Nigel Middleton, *When Family Failed: The Treatment of Children in the Care of the Community During the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, London, 1971, p. 147.

30. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 2: Little to Blair, 2 August 1935; Blair to Little, 1 November 1936.

having "unreasonable" requirements. To illustrate his point, he cited the case of a lad, ten years old, who was rejected by Canada House because he had admitted to stealing some apples from an orchard two years previously. "Because of that, this very promising boy was turned down", Lumley fumed. "One wonders if there is a single person in this country who could be considered good enough to go to Canada if that is an unpardonable crime."[31]

Stealing apples was not the main reason why so many of Fairbridge's first applicants were rejected. Forty percent of the children were rejected on medical grounds because they appeared to be physically or mentally unfit. The others who were turned away at Canada House were rejected for "civil" reasons, meaning that their parents had criminal records, that their families had a history of tuberculosis or insanity, or that their backgrounds were in some other way "questionable".[32] These high casualty rates did not augur well for Fairbridge's future in the Dominion and, since Canada House was unmoved by Lumley's fulminations, the Society was forced to adopt a more rigorous selection policy. To this end, Fairbridge began to rely much more heavily on the Middlemore Emigration Homes in Birmingham. Middlemore received children from other voluntary homes, vetted them, and passed along selected children to the Fairbridge organization. The children were screened further at Fairbridge hostels near London. The policy was successful and, from 1936 onwards, approximately 80 percent of the children whom Fairbridge submitted as candidates for its farm school in British Columbia were passed by Canadian immigration officials.[33]

All told, 329 children came to British Columbia under Fairbridge's auspices. Of that number, 232 were boys and 97 were girls. Their mean age was ten. Although a detailed profile of the children is beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted that very few of them were orphans. In fact, only 18 children—just over 5 percent of the total—had no living parents. Forty-five percent were children of single-parent families, while the remaining 50 percent came from two-parent families. The table on the following page provides a summary of the children's backgrounds.[34]

Relatively few orphans were sent to Canada because Fairbridge officials and the immigration authorities were reluctant to accept children who had been institutionalized for most of their lives. Fairbridge felt that such children would have difficulty adjusting to its cottage system, which sought to provide a semblance of normal family life; the immigration authorities felt that such children would be difficult to integrate into the mainstreams of Canadian society. Furthermore, both parties looked at the character of a child's parent when assessing a child's potential, and it was easier to make those evaluations when a parent was known to the authorities. Much the same attitude applied to illegitimate children and, as a result, a relatively small proportion fell into that category. The mothers of most of these children were domestic servants or shop assistants "of good character"—, women whom the authorities saw as being wronged but not disreputable. An illegitimate child of, say, a prostitute would not have been accepted.

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31. Liverpool-Fairbridge Archives, 17/1. Lumley to Lord Edward Stanley, 5 October 1935.

32. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 2: "List of Children Submitted for Examination Under the Fairbridge Farm Scheme." (n.d.)

33. *One Hundred Years of Child Care: The Story of Middlemore Homes, 1872-1972*, Birmingham, 1972, pp. 23, 24; PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 3: H.C.P. Creswell [CPR European Colonization Dept. mgr., London] to J.N.K. Macalister [Chief Cmnr., CPR Dept. of Immigration and Colonization, Montreal], 7 November 1936.

34. These figures are based on an analysis of the children's case files in PABC, Add. MSS. 2045. I am grateful to Lady Dodds-Parker, President of the Fairbridge Society, Inc. in London for permission to consult these files.

Origins		Number of parents living		
		0	1	2
North of England				
Boys	106	4	47	55
Girls	50	3	15	32
Midlands				
Boys	44	3	28	13
Girls	16	1	9	6
South of England & Wales				
Boys	67	4	25	38
Girls	16	2	6	8
Scotland				
Boys	15	0	7	8
Girls	10	1	5	4
Ireland				
Boys	0	0	0	0
Girls	5	0	5	0
	329	18	147	164
% of Total	100	5.6	44.6	49.8

Generally speaking, the children who were sent to Cowichan Station were either the products of broken homes or children of widows and widowers. Nearly all of the children came from large, working-class families and an environment of acute poverty; indeed, the British government actively encouraged the Society to recruit in cities like Newcastle and Glasgow, as a means of alleviating hardship in the Distressed Areas.[35] The typical Fairbridgian, in other words, emigrated for "economic" rather than for "moral" reasons. This fact would later cause problems between the Fairbridge Society and British Columbia's Child Welfare Branch. Social workers in the branch believed that only children who had been morally or physically neglected should be taken into care. The children whom provincial social workers felt deserved to be in care were, however, the very children whom federal immigration authorities were most likely to have rejected for "civil" reasons.

The first party of children—27 boys and 14 girls—left Britain aboard the *Duchess of Atholl*, in September 1935. The children were given a farewell party by W.A. MacAdam, B.C.'s Agent-General in London, and a royal send-off by the Prince of Wales (who allowed the Society to use his name for its Canadian farm school). Photographs of the occasion show a smiling but apprehensive group of youngsters standing at the entrance to B.C. House. The children are neatly dressed in their Fairbridge uniforms: boys with brown-and-gold striped neckties and short pants, girls in broad-brimmed hats decorated with Fairbridge crests.

35. Fairbridge Society, Chancery House, London, Executive Committee minutes, 25 September 1935; 17th *Annual Report*, 1936, p. 6.

Predictably, there were questions when the children arrived in British Columbia. In the provincial legislature, the CCF Opposition demanded to know how much the Prince of Wales Farm School would cost taxpayers. George Weir answered that beyond the usual education grant available to all communities in the province, the immigrants' farm school would cost the taxpayers nothing. The government also fended criticism from the left-wing Vancouver Mothers' Council, who complained that Fairbridgians would adversely affect the labour market.[36] But for the most part, the young immigrants received a warm welcome and, within a short period of time, the farm school was a source of pride and affection. Newspapers across the country lavished attention on the school in heart-warming accounts of "manly young lads" and "bonny lasses" who had been rescued from the smokey slums of the Old Country.[37] The redemptive work of the farm school was the subject of several CBC radio broadcasts, while one of the country's best known photographers, Nicholas Morant, chronicled daily life at the farm school in a series of internationally acclaimed photographs. Enhancing the school's reputation even further was an endless stream of distinguished visitors—the Governor General, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, the President of the CPR, the Lord Mayor of London, film stars, and many others. Indeed, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, it was *de rigueur* for celebrities and dignitaries visiting the province to pay at least one call to the farm school to see erstwhile waifs blossoming in the Cowichan air.[38]

The popularity of the Fairbridge enterprise was due largely to Lt.-Col. H.T. Logan, who succeeded Major Trew as farm school Principal, in 1936. Harry Logan was born in Nova Scotia, but had been raised in British Columbia. He was a Rhodes scholar and had been present at the founding meeting of the CES in 1909. He had been close friends with Kingsley Fairbridge and the two had exchanged letters on the subject of establishing a farm school, as early as 1914. "A good farm school in British Columbia", Fairbridge had written, "would not only train otherwise helpless and homeless youngsters to be fine, upstanding, honourable men and women, it would also stand as a thanksgiving to God for the splendid unity of our far-flung Empire."[39] The war prevented them from acting on the plan and in the years that followed, Logan's energies were directed to raising a family, to local militia activities, and to his teaching duties in the Classics Department at the University of British Columbia. But Logan never lost the crusading zeal of his Oxford days; he never forgot his friend's vision, nor did his own faith in the British Empire ever waver. Appreciating this, the Fairbridge directors had approached him in hopes that he would "lift the Society on to a new plane in Canada."[40] He succeeded in doing so.

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36. British Columbia, *Journals of the Legislature*, 12 March 1936, p. 76; 21 November 1938, p. 46; PABC, GR 1222, vol. 96, file 6; *ibid.*, GR496, vol. 58, file 1.

37. "The Girls of Fairbridge", Victoria *Daily Colonist*, 14 April 1940; "New Canadians at Fairbridge", Vancouver *Daily Province*, 18 December 1937; "Young Britons Trained at Vancouver School", Toronto *Star Weekly*, 23 December 1939; "East End Boys See New Life on Farm School", Montreal *Family Herald*, 30 August 1939; "B.C. Is Scene of Ideal in the Working", Vancouver *Daily Province*, 28 August 1943.

38. PABC, Fairbridge Farm School records, Add. MSS. 2121, box 3, file 3: Visitors' Book, 1935-1940.

39. SAWA, Acc. 934A/2C, Kingsley Fairbridge letterbook, 5 November 1914, p. 63. Parts of Kingsley Fairbridge's letter to Logan were published in the Vancouver *Province*, 17 December 1937. The letter, which was something of a talisman, was read aloud by Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner to the U.K., at the Fairbridge Society's AGM on 22 July 1936. Fairbridge Society, Chancery House, London, minutes.

40. University of British Columbia, Special Collections [hereafter, UBC], H.T. Logan Papers, box 44, HTL diary, 9 June 1936.

Logan was responsible for seeing that the farm school operated according to a routine that Kingsley Fairbridge had developed in Australia. For the children, this meant a rather regimented existence, especially during the school year. They rose at six-thirty each morning and attended to their "cottage duties"—tidying their dormitories, chopping wood, lighting the fires. At eight o'clock, they filed into the main dining hall for breakfast and at nine, marched off to school. At four o'clock, they reassembled for the "duties period". For boys, the chores included milking cows, feeding livestock, tending gardens and stacking wood. Girls were occupied with cleaning, laundry and kitchen work. After supper, which the children took in their cottages, they ran errands for their cottage mothers and did their homework. They were usually in bed by eight-thirty.

During the school terms, the children's days were punctuated and regulated by the tolling of a large bell, a gift of the CPR to the farm school. But life was not all drudgery. Free time was made available on weekends and since the site accomodated over 100 children at any given time, there was no shortage of playmates. A considerable amount of time was devoted to sports (boys were taught boxing, girls excelled at basketball) and to activities organized by the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. School dances and masquerade parties, picnics and corn roasts, and expeditions to the cinema in Duncan were not uncommon.[41]

At the age of fifteen, the children entered their trainee year. Girls refined their domestic skills, while boys were given intensive instruction in agriculture. At the age of sixteen, the children were channelled into one of two streams: either they continued on with their education or they went out to work. Most went into the latter stream: girls were employed as domestics with prominent families in Victoria and Vancouver, boys worked as farm-hands for local farmers. The youths kept half of their wages; the other half was remitted to the farm school and banked for them until they reached their majority.

IV

By 1942, the Prince of Wales Farm School was well into its stride. Seven farm cottages had been completed, along with a 12-bed hospital, and an eight-room school house. A modern creamery was in operation and several hundred acres of land were under productive cultivation. Despite the war, over 250 children had been received, and dozens of them—members of the first parties to Canada—were already in outside employment. The Society's godparent scheme[42] was also proving its worth, and young Fairbridgians continued to be darlings of the Canadian media. However, the Fairbridge Farm School had two achilles tendons. One was a chronic shortage of funds, and the other was its testy relationship with provincial Child Welfare Branch officials. Both tendons had become sorely exposed.

41. PABC, K/H/L82, Barbara R. Logan, "The Community of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School", [typescript]; GR 496, vol. 58, file 3. A vivid account of life at the farm school is to be found in the letters of Mary Nichols (Add. MSS. 2459). Mrs. Nichols (nee Schofield) was a teacher at the Fairbridge Public School from 1942-1947.

42. A person or an organization could "adopt" a Fairbridgian by remitting $150 to the Fairbridge Society. "Godparents" were encouraged to correspond with their "godchildren", to take them on outings, to remember them on their birthdays and at Christmas. "Godparents" were provided with progress reports on their children by the Principal of the farm school. The scheme was very successful. The B.C. Lumberman's Association, for example, "adopted" a whole cottage of boys. H.R. Macmillan was also a conscientious "godparent" to many Fairbridgians.

As early as 1934, the Minister of Immigration, W.A. Gordon, had feared that Fairbridge might run into financial difficulties and that as a consequence, the federal government would have to bail it out. Referring to the Society's 100,000 Appeal, Gordon had told R.B. Bennett that "it does not strike me that they are in a very good position to assume responsibility over a period of years...."[43] Gordon was a nervous soul at the best of times and over the next few years, it seemed that his fears were unfounded. Rudyard Kipling's gift of $300,000, in 1936, was one of many large bequests the Society received during the period. The merchant banker Sir Charles Hambro (who succeeded Lumley as Fairbridge Chairman) made sizeable contributions to the farm school, as did the Society's Deputy Chairman, Lord Kenilworth. Even so, the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School was an extremely expensive operation. Transporting children, paying staff, maintaining farm machinery—all of this entailed considerable expenses. Moreover, these expenses increased considerably after Capt. F.C. Dun-Waters bequeathed his Fintry Estate in the Okanagan Valley to the Fairbridge Society. At first, the Society had eagerly accepted Fintry as a summer training school for Fairbridgians in B.C. Maintaining the Fintry estate, however, proved to be a considerable burden.[44]

Logan and the Chairman of the B.C. Fairbridge Committee, H.R. Macmillan, first approached the Canadian government for financial support, in 1937. By that time, Blair was not as hostile towards Fairbridge; in fact, he helped Logan draft a submission to the cabinet.[45] The Principal also received encouragement from former UBC student and family friend, Norman Robertson (then First Secretary in the Department of External Affairs); from Vincent Massey, Canada's High Commissioner in London;[46] from the British High Commissioner in Ottawa; and from the new Minister responsible for immigration, T.A. Crerar. But despite Logan's well-organized lobby, Crerar's cabinet colleagues felt that the first move, with respect to financial assistance, should come from the government of British Columbia.[47]

Logan turned to his provincial ally and former UBC colleague, George Weir, who promised that he "would do something tangible." The first provincial grant—for $12,500—was paid in 1940, and Logan vainly hoped it would be matched by the Dominion government.[48] Wartime exigencies, Crerar said apologetically, prevented his Department from providing the farm school with any funds and, so, Logan had to make do with the provincial grant. Weir's largesse, however, unwittingly placed Fairbridge within the grasp of the Child Welfare Branch.

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43. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 1: Gordon to Bennett, 12 May 1934.

44. "Kipling Remembers Fairbridge School at Duncan in Will", Victoria *Daily Colonist,* 26 February 1937; "Captain Dun-Waters give 'Fintry' to Fairbridge", Vancouver *Sun,* 6 July 1938. The Prince of Wales also considered giving his EP Ranch in Alberta to the Fairbridge Society, Vancouver *News Herald,* 29 July 1936.

45. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 3: F.C. Blair, file memorandum, 26 November 1937; UBC, Logan Papers, HTL diary, 1 November 1937, "Blair wanting to help"; 4 November 1937, "F.C. Blair the essence of kindness".

46. PUBC, Logan Papers. Massey, as Logan discovered, proved to be a staunch ally. "He is very keen to do everything possible to assist Fairbridge [and] will give Fairbridge his "blessing". ...Spirit of Sir George Parkin!", HTL diary, 16 June 1936. Massey, Sir George's son-in-law, was much attracted by empire-oriented organizations like the Fairbridge Society. *See* Claude Bissell, *The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office*, Toronto, 1986.

47. *Ibid.*, HTL diary, 3 November 1937. Logan's discussions with Crerar are documented in PAC, MG 42, D.O. 35, vol. 678, M. 94-14, pp. 20-27, microfilm, reel B-4992.

48. UBC, Logan Papers, HTL diary, 18 November 1937 and 1 April 1943. Initially, the provincial government's grant to Fairbridge was tucked away in the Department of Education Accounts as "grants for patriotic purposes". After 1941, it appeared quite openly in the Provincial Secretary's budget.

H.M. Cassidy, B.C.'s Director of Social Welfare, had never liked the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School: to him, it was an anachronism. He opposed institutionalized child care in any form and believed strongly that foster homes offered the best opportunities for dependent children. Moreover, as early as 1935, he had told Weir that the "Fairbridge experiment" would involve "very real dangers" to his Department:[49]

> Unless the children are very carefully selected in England, some of them may have nervous breakdowns.... Others...may contract tuberculosis [and] will have to be taken care of by our institutions. Unless special arrangements are made, the government will be responsible for their education.

Cassidy's successor, George Davidson, also had grave misgivings about the Fairbridge scheme, as did Laura Holland, the architect of B.C.'s social services and the government's principal advisor on child welfare policies. To Holland and her colleagues, Fairbridge represented the deplored face of nineteenth century "child savers".

The battle lines between Fairbridge and the Child Welfare Branch were first drawn in 1938, when the government introduced its *Welfare Institutions Licensing Act*. The Act defined "welfare institutions" as all facilities in which children lived apart from their parents or guardians. Under section 11 of the Act, no welfare institution could "bring, cause to be brought, advertise for, or in any way encourage the entry" into B.C. of any person who would likely become an inmate of a welfare institution. Under section 9 of the Act, all such facilities were to be inspected by provincial authorities, who were to have free access to all records pertaining to the inmates. Only those institutions which complied with these terms would be licensed by the provincial government. Those which did not comply would be compelled to close.

To Logan, the Act was objectionable on two counts: section 9 infringed on Fairbridge's autonomy, while section 11 undermined the whole Fairbridge system of child migration. He immediately made representations to Dr. Weir, who assured him that "Fairbridge was certainly not one of the institutions he had in mind during the framing of the Act."[50] But once Fairbridge became a recipient of a provincial grant, it had to comply with provincial legislation. Peter Walker, the Deputy Provincial Secretary, assured Logan that this would be a mere formality, that his Department would levy a token $1 license fee, and that the Child Welfare Branch would give the farm school only a cursory examination. Walker also intimated that the Act would be revised, so as to allow Fairbridge to continue bringing in British children to the province.[51] Thus assured, Logan submitted Fairbridge's application for a welfare institution license, in 1943. Soon after, the whole edifice of Fairbridge began to crumble.

The nightmare for Fairbridge began in January 1944, when a disgruntled ex-cottage mother wrote to the Child Welfare Branch to complain of discipline problems at the farm school. She appended a list of twenty-eight Fairbridge children whom she said were unfit to be at the facility. Her remarks were most damning. Child A, she said, had a "very low I.Q."; child B was "subnormal"; child C, "a problem, seems mental"; child D, "sex pervert"; child E "sodomite"—and so the list went on.[52] Her charges were just what the

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49. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 1. Cassidy to Weir, 14 February 1935.
50. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol. 1, file 14. L.A. Grogan [Secretary of Fairbridge's B.C. Committee] to Laura Holland, 1 August 1938.
51. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol. 1 file 14; Walker to Logan, 24 February 1943.
52. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 4: Note from Miss Katie O'Neill, 18 January 1944.

branch needed to launch an investigation. Already, the branch had investigated 150 private child care facilities and had found only a small proportion to have been suitable under the terms of the *Welfare Institutions Licensing Act*.[53] Fairbridge seemed set to join the list of rejected institutions.

Ostensibly, the Prince of Wales Farm School, with its influential patrons and its high public profile, had nothing to fear from the branch. But Col. Logan and his local committee found that they were quite naked before their enemies. Pattullo, who had first welcomed them, had gone to the backbenches in a Liberal party putsch, in 1941; Weir, who had shielded them and given them sustenance, had left provincial politics to take up a position with the federal Pensions Department; Blair, who had become an ally of the Society, had retired. Fairbridge's other friends in Ottawa and London were preoccupied with the war effort.[54]

The first blow came when the new Provincial Secretary, George S. Pearson, informed Fairbridge that its annual grant would be withheld pending an enquiry by his Department.[55] A preliminary investigation was conducted, in June 1944, by Isobel Harvey, the province's Superintendent of Neglected Children. She reported that the staff policies, admissions policies and placement policies of the farm school were decidedly "weak". She was disconcerted to find that the children had been removed from their parents in Britain "for reasons other than neglect", and that detailed, comprehensive personal case files were not available for most of the children. She was also alarmed at the results of an examination which the provincial psychiatrist, Dr. A.L. Crease, had carried out for her Department. Crease examined forty children from the farm school. How and why he selected this particular group is not recorded. In any event, the intelligence of ten of the children was adjudged to be "low" or "borderline", while two were classified as being "high grade morons". In almost half of the children, their "sense of personal worth" was lacking, and more than half of them rated poorly with respect to "social adjustment". Two children were described as schizoid personalities, several had heart conditions, and one was confirmed as an epileptic. Five of the group suffered from chronic enuresis.[56]

In August 1944, Harvey and an assistant returned to the farm school to conduct another, more searching, enquiry. They spent three days at the site, interviewing children and staff and generally exploring all facets of the facility. They were not pleased by what they saw. The farm cottages, Harvey reported, were built on an outmoded plan which actually inhibited cottage mothers from fostering any feelings of "home". At mealtimes, most of the girls wore aprons which reminded Harvey of a Victorian workhouse. Menus were unbalanced, repetitive and indicative of the children's inferior status. "For breakfast, they get porridge, a cup of milk, bread and butter with jam or syrup", Harvey observed. "The cottage mothers sit at the same table and eat bacon and eggs and toast." Harvey noted

53. PABC, Add. MSS. 708, Isobel Harvey, "An Historic Review of the Social Services of the Government of British Columbia", typescript, 1948, p. 38.

54. In 1942, the Chairman of the Fairbridge Society, Sir Charles Hambro, became head of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE). Hambro had been involved with the clandestine agency (subsequently known as MI6) for many years previously. *See* David Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945*, London, 1980, p. 36 and *passim*.

55. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol. 1, file 14: George S. Pearson to L.A. Grogan, 31 January 1944; "Report of the Secretary on Recent Relations with the Government of British Columbia", 17 February 1944.

56. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 1. Isobel Harvey, "Interim Report on Fairbridge Farm School", 22 June 1944.

that the children ate off metal dishes and drank from tin mugs, while cottage mothers and staff were served on china. This too, she said, made the place "reminiscent of an orphanage of the last century." The children were dirty and unkempt in appearance, and were ignorant of personal hygiene. ("No attempt is made to teach adolescent girls how to keep themselves dainty.... How employers put up with the girls when they go out, is beyond me.")

Discipline at the farm school was lax. Personnel were untrained, the turn over rate among staff was high, morale among staff members was low. The children's morale was also low, something Harvey attributed to the "astonishing degree" of "class consciousness" at the farm school. "A Child Welfare worker viewing Fairbridge is left with a feeling of helplessness", she wrote:

> The basic idea, antagonistic to every concept of Canadian child welfare, that the children are poor English children and, therefore different from the ordinary child, is rooted so firmly in practically every staff member's mind that there is no use arguing against it. I was told over and over again by the Principal that I was incapable of understanding these children because they were English children. Anything they do, any trait they develop, is laid to the class from which they come.

As well, Harvey commented on the school's inadequate after-care programme, on the isolation of the farm site and on the staff's failure to teach the children "Canadian ideals of democracy". Altogether, she concluded, the facility fell far short of acceptable standards.[57]

The Deputy Provincial Secretary was most upset by Harvey's nine-page report. "I must say, Walker told her, that in spite of what I knew about the place, I am appalled at what your survey has disclosed, and it is pitiful to think of those children having to live in such conditions."[58] Walker then sent a copy of the report to the Director of the federal Immigration Branch, who replied that he intended to carry out an independent enquiry. Meanwhile, Logan and members of the Fairbridge's local advisory committee were informed of Miss Harvey's findings.

Logan wasted no time in replying to her charges. In a 30-page rejoinder, he addressed each of her criticisms and observations. Her charges that Fairbridge attached no importance to "Canadian ideals of democracy", he said, were nonsense: most of the farm school staff were Canadians. To her remarks about the design of the cottages, he said that the plans had proved to be satisfactory in all respects. Girls clothing, he insisted, was comfortable and functional and no more regimented than that worn by Canadian private school girls. As for aprons, these were worn only at meal times to protect the girls' frocks. The students' education was in the hands of provincially-appointed teachers, and adolescent girls had no shortage of 'Odorono' and 'Watkins Coconut Shampoo'. Meals were simple, but menus varied and included fresh produce from the school farm. With regard to after-care, he said the farm school had a full-time after-care officer for girls in Victoria; and since most of the boys were in the Armed Forces or employed by local farmers, he was able to look after that department himself.

Turning to Dr. Crease's findings, Logan noted that all of the children had been screened by Canadian Immigration officials in England. He then produced an array of graphs, statistical tables and reports to show that Fairbridge Farm School children were

57. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol 1, file 14. Isobel Harvey, "Report on a study made of Fairbridge Farm School during the month of August 1944."

58. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 5: Walker to Harvey, 24 August 1944.

equal "in mental and physical development" to their peers. Logan's defence was based in part on a McGill University study of 107 Fairbridgians and 107 students from the neighbouring Duncan Consolidated School. Figures showed that Fairbridgians had 20 percent fewer cases of tonsilitis, 10 percent fewer teeth defects, and a mean I.Q. of 100.4, compared to the public school's 100.3. Logan's evidence was supported by detailed reports from several local physicians and from the Cowichan district public health officer. In their opinion, "the Fairbridge experiment was a success".[59]

M.J. Scobie, the federal supervisor of Juvenile Immigration, agreed. Three years earlier, Scobie had visited the farm school and had been favourably impressed by it. This time, armed with a copy of Harvey's report, he scrutinized the place even more thoroughly. He spent several days at Fairbridge, questioning staff, observing children, inspecting the premises. He did note disharmony among the staff and suggested a few minor improvements in the farm school curriculum. But on the whole, he found the staff efficient, the facilities adequate, and the children to be "comfortably housed, well-fed, healthy, and happy". "Miss Harvey's report, he concluded, is an unfair presentation of the conditions at Fairbridge."[60]

Scobie's report and the evidence in Logan's rejoinder caused Walker to soften his opinions on the farm school. Certainly, there were grounds for doubt. Harvey's portrait of undisciplined, mentally-backward, socially-inferior children stands in marked contrast to the reports of provincial school inspectors and to the accounts of resident teachers at the Fairbridge Public School. Her picture of unkempt, poorly-fed child inmates was at odds with that conveyed in the diaries and notebooks of the registered nurse at the Fairbridge infirmary.[61] In fact, on only one point did these other contemporary observers agree with Harvey: the turn-over rate of cottage mothers was high and relations between the staff were characterized by a considerable amount of acrimony.

Low wages was the principal reason for the high turn over in staff. In 1943, cottage mothers with several years experience were paid only $50 per month. Although the wage was "all found", cottage staff were given very few holidays and were expected to be on duty virtually 24 hours a day. In contrast, a woman working a 40-hour week could make, on average, between $60 and $80 per month as a laundress, shop assistant or stenographer, and over $100 per month in wartime manufacturing industries.[62] Small wonder, then, that the farm school had difficulty attracting and keeping staff. The farm school matron—a dour, middle-aged Scottish woman whom the junior cottage mothers regarded as a martinette—was also the cause of many of the personnel problems at Fairbridge.[63]

Unfortunately for Logan and the Fairbridge Society, disharmony and discontent among the cottage mothers was not the worst of their problems. While carrying out its

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59. *Ibid.*, file 6. Logan, "An Elucidation of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School Prompted by the Superintendent of Child Welfare's Report of August 1944" [October 1944].

60. PAC, RG 76, *op. cit.*, pt. 3. M.J. Scobie, memorandum to F.C. Blair, 15 August 1941; *ibid.*, pt. 4. Scobie, "Report on Official Visit to British Columbia *re* Fairbridge Farm School", 28 December 1944. A copy of the report is also in PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 6.

61. PABC, British Columbia, Department of Education, School Inspectors' Reports, 1918-1957, microfilm, reel B-6674; Add. MSS. 2459, Nichols Letters; Add. MSS. 2121, file 6, Diary and Scrapbook of Margaret King, R.N., 1940-1942.

62. British Columbia. Department of Labour. *Annual Report*, 1944, pp. 36-45.

63. Information concerning cottage mothers is derived from notes in PABC, GR 496, vol. 58; from Add. MSS. 2121, file 1, Register of Farm School Staff, 1935-1950; and from interviews with Fairbridge alumni, 1985-1987.

investigation of the farm school, the Child Welfare Branch discovered that a senior member of the farm school staff had been charged with gross indecency and that two other staff members had been dismissed for making sexual advances to the older Fairbridgian girls. The branch also found evidence of "sexual misconduct" between students. Although the students' liasons did not have serious consequences, the Child Welfare Branch viewed them with concern and accused the cottage staff of being insufficiently "vigilant".[64] No less damaging to the farm school's reputation, was the high incidence of pregnancy among unmarried Fairbridge girls who had been placed in domestic service. Between 1938 and 1944, nineteen out of fifty-seven (33 percent) of the girls who left for outside employment became illegitimately pregnant. Their illegitimacy rate was significantly higher than that among single girls of a similar age in the province (12.5 percent).[65] Making matters worse, three of the girls became pregnant more than once and four of them had abortions. The Child Welfare Branch regarded these statistics as evidence of Fairbridge's poor placement procedures and inadequate after-care programmes, and as testimony to the lack of sex education at the farm school. The figures were also a sad indictment of Logan's belief that "domestic work is probably the safest work into which a woman of tender years may be placed."[66]

The crisis between Fairbridge and the provincial government came to a head, in September 1944, at a meeting between representatives of the Child Welfare Branch and the Society's local advisory committee. At the meeting, the government laid out a set of demands: facilities at the farm school were to be upgraded; incompetent staff were to be dismissed and replaced by professionally-trained personnel; unfit and unsuitable children were to be repatriated at the Society's expense; the school was to conform to all provincial statutes and regulations; close co-operation was to be instituted between the Child Welfare Branch and the Society; and steps were to be taken to place Fairbridge children in foster homes, as soon as possible. The demands were relayed to the Fairbridge's London Executive by the Provincial Secretary, who warned that if demands were not met, "it will become my duty to consider such steps, either by way of a public inquiry or otherwise, as may be deemed necessary in the circumstances."[67]

The London Executive was outraged. At Fairbridge headquarters, the crisis in British Columbia was seen as a product of bureaucratic meddling, as a kind of malicious witch-hunt by petty public servants.[68] Some members of the Executive were inclined to make the matter a diplomatic issue and, with this in mind, a detailed critique of Harvey's report was sent to the Dominions Office and the British High Commissioner in Ottawa.[69] But the situation called for more than bluster and angry accusations and, in February 1945, the Society's General Secretary, Gordon Green, was sent to Canada in hopes of smoothing

64. PABC, GR 496, col. 58, files 3-6.

65. *Ibid.*, British Columbia. Provincial Board of Health. *Vital Statistics Report*, 1944, pp. 63, 64.

66. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol. 1, file 14. Principal's Report, 17 November 1943, p. 7.

67. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 4. Memo of Conference, 11 September 1944; Pearson to Hambro, 10 October 1944.

68. Fairbridge Society, Chancery House, London, Executive Committee minutes, 8 November 1944.

69. PAC, MG 42, vol. 1137, M894/2, pp. 26-249. The British government has been interested in the Fairbridge Farm School for some time, but for other reasons. Early in 1944, the Colonial Office had asked the Dominions Office if it might be possible to resettle children belonging to the "poor white" community in Barbados at the FFS on Vancouver Island. The Dominions Office replied that the Canadian government would probably disapprove, on the grounds that it might open the door to non white children from the West Indies. R.A.Wiseman's memorandum, 7 March 1944.

some very troubled waters. He had lengthy meetings with all parties concerned—with Col. Logan, with members of the local advisory committee, with federal Immigration Branch officials and, most important to the success of his mission, with Laura Holland, whom he found to be "wise, unprejudiced, broadminded in the very best sense, and perfectly willing to help us to a solution."[70] Indeed, thanks to Green's diplomacy, the provincial authorities agreed to amend contentious clauses in the *Welfare Institutions Licensing Act*. Green, in turn, promised that Fairbridge would abide by provincial legislation and work more closely with the Child Welfare Branch.[71]

Although the Society was not prepared to dismantle the farm school and disburse its children to foster homes, additional steps were taken to conciliate the provincial government. Several farm school employees (including the unpopular matron) were dismissed and a couple of Fairbridge children (who suffered from epilepsy) were repatriated to Britain. The Society agreed to provide government social workers with complete case files on the children it brought out; and, with the assistance of the Child Welfare Branch, it instituted a more rigorous after-care programme. Further, the Society's local advisory committee was reconstituted as a board of governors and given almost total authority for the management of the farm school. Members of the new board included the Deputy Provincial Secretary and the Deputy Minister of Education, along with Laura Holland and representatives of the Children's Aid Society.

As part of the restructuring process, the farm school Principal was transferred to London. In recommending the transfer, the London Executive noted that "in spite of Mr. Logan's idealism and his proved devotion to the children, he had failed to maintain discipline and was inactive in cases of unsatisfactory staff." Still, the Executive had great respect for Logan's abilities and did not want to lose his services. "His nine years at Cowichan cover a period of selfless service, unequalled in the child welfare field", Gordon Green declared. "Harry has no peer as a Kingsley Fairbridge disciple and... Fairbridge cannot live sensibly without him while he is available."[72] Logan accordingly joined the Society's headquarters staff, where he was engaged in public relations and administrative work. His successor at the farm school was W.J. Garnett, a thirty-five year-old Canadian naval officer who had been Logan's assistant prior to the war. Garnett was a Rhodes scholar and a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College. Experienced, athletic and untainted by any scandals that had beset the farm school, Garnett was an ideal choice as Principal. He took over the helm at Cowichan Station in the summer of 1945.

"Fairbridge in Canada has had an awkward corner to turn, but the prospects for its future now seem reasonably bright", the British High Commissioner informed the Dominions Office, in May 1945.[73] And so, they did. The Provincial Secretary's Department resumed its grant and in August, another party of twenty-seven children arrived. Fifty additional children were sent out over the next three years. The children had been carefully screened in Britain and detailed family histories were available for all of them. But while the administrative practices of Fairbridge were now sounder and more professional, the

70. PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 7. Green to Arthur Hendry, 24 February 1945.

71. PAC, MG 42, vol. 1137, M894/1, pp. 79-87, 166-169. Green, "Summary Report of My Visit to Canada", 5 March 1945; and Green, "Fairbridge British Columbia" report, 14 July 1945.

72. Fairbridge Society, Chancery House, London, Executive Committee minutes, 20 March 1945; PABC, GR 496, vol. 58, file 7. Green to Hendry, 24 February 1945.

73. PAC, MG 42, D.O. 35, vol. 1137, M894/1, p. 113. Malcolm MacDonald [British High Commissioner to Canada] to Sir Eric Machtig [Under Secretary of State, Dominions Office], 31 May 1945.

farm school system did not change appreciably. The cottages were still occupied and the daily routine of the children was the same as ever. Boys still went out to work for local farmers during their trainee year, girls continued to be placed as domestics. Despite sex education classes introduced in 1946, and despite close supervision by Children's Aid Society workers and provincially-appointed after-care officers, some of the girls still became pregnant. And, in spite of the vigilance of the new cottage mothers, Principal Garnett had to report that "incidents of sexual misconduct between boys and girls" remained a problem.[74]

There were other problems in the postwar years, many of them financial. By 1948, the annual cost of operating the Prince of Wales Farm School was close to $100,000. Although some of these expenses were met when the Fintry Estate was sold that year, the unfavourable sterling-dollar exchange rate and the British government's monetary restrictions meant that the farm school was continually starved for funds. A fund raising campaign in Eastern Canada met with only limited success and, while Ottawa made sympathetic noises, the federal government declined to provide the farm school with an operating grant. Much to the Society's disappointment, the B.C. government also declined to increase its grant.

When the school's financial position showed no signs of improving, and as other problems persisted, the B.C. Board of Governors began to question the very nature of the institution they were struggling to keep alive. Was it a child welfare institution, or was it a vehicle for promoting empire settlement? Few of the board members were imperial enthusiasts, and none of them were prepared to maintain the facility for sentimental reasons. Nor were they comfortable in their role as governors of a child welfare institution, even a reformed and well-managed institution like Fairbridge. Their unease was evident in a committee report which was tabled in September 1948, a few months after the last party of children arrived.

> We may think we have substituted a family environment and, *to a degree,* in a cottage system of child care, we have. But it is an impersonal relationship. Any security the child has is in the organization itself, and this cannot take the place of family relationships in the lives of most children....

Despite their interest in the farm school, members of the board ultimately favoured "foster homes as a more individualized type of care". It remained only for the board to entertain a formal motion, recommending that the London Executive close the Cowichan Station site and allow children who were resident there to be fostered. The motion was introduced on 4 November 1948 and was passed unanimously.[75]

About the time the motion from British Columbia was received, the Fairbridge Society in London was preparing to embark on a new and potentially controversial course in Canada. Specifically, the Society was seriously entertaining a request from the Canadian government to accommodate "children who had been born out of wedlock to Canadian soldiers... in Holland." The idea was to bring the children to England and care for them

74. PABC, Add. MSS. 2469, Annie M. Angus Papers; minutes of B.C. Board of Governors, 8 November 1947. *See also* Add. MSS. 2444, file 2, Fairbridge Farm School "Punishment Book", 1944-1946. "Out of bounds at girls' end" is a frequent entry in this record of offences and infractions by children at the farm school.

75. PABC, Add. MSS. 2469, Angus Papers; minutes, 18 June 1947; Armitage Report, 3 September 1948; minutes, 22 November 1948.

there until they were old enough to be sent to the Society's farm school in British Columbia. The Society had even gone as far as amending its constitution in anticipation of the scheme. Under its old constitution, the Fairbridge Society was concerned solely with resettling "poor *British* children"; under its revised constitution, published in 1947, it was committed to assisting "children *resident in Britain*". As it happened, the scheme was not carried out. The federal government anticipated opposition from provincial authorities and the proposal was quietly shelved.[76] The London Executive, therefore, was compelled to consider the future of the farm school and the motion of its British Columbia Board of Governors.

Initially, the Executive was reluctant to accept the motion. But as many members of the Executive realized, there was no longer a pressing need in Britain for a resettlement facility like the Prince of Wales Farm School. In 1946, Miss (afterwards Dame) Myra Curtis had submitted her Report of the Care of Children Committee to Parliament. It was a landmark report and a turning point for social services in Britain. The report endorsed fostering as an effective means of caring for deprived children and called for the establishment of a new corps of state-approved, professionally-trained child care workers. Although it did not condemn child emigration *per se*, the report noted that only "deprived children of fine physique and good mental equipment" were given the opportunity to emigrate: "These are precisely the children for whom satisfactory openings could be found in this country."[77] Most important, the Curtis Commission called upon the state to assume responsibility for its underprivileged children, and to provide for their social and economic well-being. The report formed the basis of the *Children Act* of 1948. Thereafter—and for the first time in its history—, Britain had a unified system of child care, operating under the authority of one ministry (the Home Office), and staffed by professionally trained social workers.[78]

In view of the new legislation—and the fact that the Australian farm schools were still accepting child emigrants[79]—, the London Executive of the Fairbridge Society felt able to accede to the wishes of its B.C. governors. The farm school at Cowichan Station began to wind down and, in July 1949, the Board of Governors formally dissolved itself. Garnett resigned as Principal and was replaced by Major A.H. Plows, formerly Principal of the Fairbridge Public School, whose task was to put the farm school 'to bed'. His job ended in 1951, when the last children were transferred to foster homes. The provincial authorities and the Children's Aid Societies of Vancouver and Victoria took up the work of supervising these Fairbridgians, although the Society continued to stand *in loco parentis* as guardian to the children for many years. In fact, the Society remained actively involved until 1962, when the last of the B.C. Fairbridgians reached his majority.

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76. PABC, Add. MSS. 2469, Angus Papers, Fairbridge Board of Governors, minutes, 23 January 1948; Fairbridge Society, Chancery House, London, Executive Committee minutes, 17 June 1947; PAC, RG 76, vol. 788, file 544-12, pt. 1, George Davidson to Under Secretary of State, 8 July 1946. The records indicate that an approach to Fairbridge was first made by Canada's Department of Veterans' Affairs "regarding the thousands of illegitimate children with Canadian fathers" in May 1947. Early in 1948, discussions also took place between Norman Robertson of External Affairs, Sir Charles Hambro, Gordon Green and Vincent Massey *re* "Children who had been born out of wedlock to Canadian soldiers... in Holland."

77. Cmnd. 6922 [Curtis Report], par. 515.

78. Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, II, London, 1973, pp. 648, 649; Jean Heywood, *Children in Care*, London, 1959, p. 154.

79. Northcote, the Fairbridge Farm School near Melbourne, closed in 1958. The farm school at Molong, NSW, closed in 1973, while the farm school at Pinjarra in Western Australia remained open until 1982. After 1960, the Fairbridge farm schools in Australia were used mainly to accommodate children of single parents who had emigrated from the U.K.

During the mid-1950s, the "home site" of the farm school was vacant, save for a resident caretaker. The property was then leased to the Canada Colonization Company, a subsidiary of the CPR, which used the cottages as temporary accommodation for immigrant families from England. In the early 1970s, the property was sold to a real estate developer, who transformed the cottages into prestigious strata-title homes. Occasionally, when making renovations, the owners find evidence of earlier occupants: childish graffiti, postcards sent to cottage mothers by Fairbridgians on active service overseas, old snapshots. But the children are now gone.

V

The boys who were sent from Britain to the Fairbridge Farm School were supposed to become farmers; girls were expected to become housemaids. Very few of them did so. By 1946, only 25 percent of Fairbridge boys were in occupations related to agriculture. Almost half as many were in the merchant marine, while the rest—approximately half of Fairbridge trainees—were employed in forest industries or in manufacturing and building trades. By 1950, the number of Old Fairbridgians in agriculture-related jobs had fallen to 15 percent, and the figure continued to decline every year thereafter. The same trends applied to Fairbridge girls. At the end of the war, 52 percent of the girls were practising "applied home economics"—a euphemism that covered domestics, cooks, waitresses and hospital maids. By 1949, only 25 percent of the girls were so classified; 20 percent were stenographers or students, and most of the rest were married, with families of their own. By the mid-1950s, only one Fairbridgian girl was still "in service"; she was the nanny to a wealthy American family and lived abroad.[80]

It is not surprising that so few Fairbridgians followed the course which their mentor had set for them. By the time most of the Fairbridgian boys entered the labour force, a wide range of relatively well-paid jobs were available to them in wartime industries. Afterwards, during the postwar boom, they could count on jobs in the province's construction or resource-based industries. Likewise, very few Fairbridge girls were prepared to accept positions as housemaids, when much more rewarding employment opportunities were at hand. Besides, by the 1940s, very few households in British Columbia required or could afford full-time domestic servants.

Indeed, much had changed in British Columbia since Kingsley Fairbridge had passed through the province, in 1908. British Columbia had become an urban, industrialized society, one that had become socially homogenized, democratized, and North American in its outlook. Imperial enthusiasms were muted and the idea of Empire unity had largely become irrelevant. Furthermore, the province's old anglophile elite—members of which had been instrumental in launching the farm school—was on the decline and was being replaced by a new, more parochial elite. In other words, by the end of the Second World War, the Fairbridge Society in British Columbia was hitched to a waning star.

Undoutedly, though, the most significant factor in Fairbridge's demise was its relations with the child care profession. In Western Australia, the site of its first farm school, the Society had been used to dealing with a relatively compliant, unsophisticated child care

80. PABC, Add. Mss. 2045, vol. 1, file 8, "Fairbridge Facts"; interviews with Fairbridgians, 1985-1987.

community.[81] In Western Canada, it met with a very different reception. There, it collided with an ascendent profession, with a new breed of locally-trained social workers and child care workers who resented the intrusion of imperially-minded "child savers". Understandably, they resented the fact that Fairbridge had been allowed to contravene federal immigration regulations and that for many years, the Society had been permitted to operate outside B.C.'s child welfare laws. They also resented the kind of splendid isolation which characterized the Society's venture in British Columbia—a point which George Davidson endeavoured to explain to Logan during Fairbridge's darkest hour, in 1944. Davidson, who was then the Executive Director of the Canadian Welfare Council, informed him that "at any time in the past, you could have obtained the co-operation and support of the provincial Child Welfare Department...had the approach been made in the spirit of give and take on both sides." But instead, Davidson continued,

> you very largely ignored and disregarded the very people who could have been of the greatest assistance to you. You took none of them into your council. You created in their minds the impression that you resented their visits to the farm school as unwarranted attempts at interference in a field of operation that did not concern them.[82]

Ultimately, the animosities that developed between the farm school and the Child Welfare Branch rebounded against the Society, as events in 1944 proved. The situation might never have developed had the Fairbridge Society courted Laura Holland as assiduously as it courted H.R. Macmillan.

That being said, the venture was not as misguided as its critics maintained. Certainly, the farm school facility was not the Bleak House that Isobel Harvey portrayed. Leonard Marsh, Director of Social Research at McGill University and author of the federal government's postwar welfare programmes, regarded it as a viable form of "institutionalized foster care for school-age children."[83] M.J. Scobie and other federal government officials were favourably impressed by the operation, while today, most Fairbridgians recall the farm school fondly.

Despite the merits of the enterprise—and without question, the Fairbridge scheme was in all respects better than the philanthropic schemes which preceded it—, the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School was an anachronism. Modelled on a system which had been conceived in 1909 by a group of Edwardian undergraduates, the farm school and the philosophy which sustained it were untenable in a modern industrial society. Certainly, the venture was out of step with social trends in Canada and, in this respect, it is perhaps remarkable that the farm school survived for as long as it did.

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81. In Western Australia, a full-time portfolio for child welfare was not established until 1934. Traditionally, the care of dependent children had been left to churches and philanthropic societies, while the government was very sympathetic to child migration schemes like the Fairbridge Society. Until the 1960s, the State gave twice as much in subsidies to child migration societies and received more school-age child migrants than all of the other Australian states combined. F. Tay, "The Administration of Social Service Provisions for Under-Privileged Children in Western Australia", *University Studies in Western Australian History*, 3 September 1957, pp. 60-105; John Moss, *Child Migration to Australia*, London, 1953, p. 3.

82. PABC, Add. MSS. 2045, vol. 1, file 14, Davidson to Logan, 6 July 1944.

83. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, file 15, Leonard C. Marsh, "Report on Fairbridge Farm School, British Columbia" [1948].

VI

The Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School represents the last chapter in the chronicle of child migration to Canada. Like earlier chapters, it involved idealism and pragmatism, imperialism and nativism, conflict and controversy. Towards the end, there was also an element of confusion. Having been battered by the crises of 1944, the Fairbridge organization in British Columbia floundered. Its objectives became blurred. It could not decide if it was an imperial settlement scheme or if it was a child welfare scheme. During its first decade in the province, the Fairbridge Society had, with the help of influential allies, been both. After the war, when conditions changed in British Columbia and Great Britain, it could be neither.