

THE question was recently put to the BBC Brains Trust: Should the parents of children who were evacuated to Canada bring them home as soon as the war is over; should they leave them to finish their education undisturbed; or should the parents themselves go out and settle in Canada for the children's sake?

The answers given varied, but the general belief seemed to be that each child was a special case, calling for special treatment. It would be necessary at the outset, to find out whether those children, after living three to four years in a new country, had adopted it as their own.

The question arises also with children evacuated to New Zealand. Although the Dominion was too far away to receive great numbers of evacuated children, and although many of those who arrived went to relatives or to friends nominated by the parents, there were 200 children brought out under a Government scheme, and perhaps as many again under private arrangements. Every fortnight, a group of parents speak to their children through the BBC in the "Hello, Children!" session, which is so arranged that every child hears its parents about once in nine months.

The question now is: Have these children become so adapted to their new environment as to be young New Zealanders, or do they remain essentially British at heart?

In seeking an answer to these problems, "The Listener" approached several people who have had some connection with the scheme. This is what they told us:

"Her Home Now Is Here"

"M— is 15 now. She wasn't 12 when she came out," said one foster-parent. "Her father was travelling agent for a big firm in Scotland, and away from home most of the time, and she and her brother lived with their grandmother. There was no question of her not settling down here straight away. She adopted us of her own accord, and now it is always 'our home,' 'our dog,' 'another of my cousins.' She is serious-minded, and thinks a lot for herself, but the problem of what will happen after the war, if it troubles her at all, has not dawned in its full proportion. She hasn't forgotten her own family for



Two English girls, sisters, with their New Zealand foster-father.



Young New Zealand or Young Britain?

a moment, and has heard them speak in the *Hello, Children!* broadcast, but, it seems, her home now is here. She plans to go over and see her parents, but wants to come back again. It would be wonderful if her family could come out, and indeed, her father wrote, after he had been bombed out for the third time, wanting to know what would be the prospects here. Of course we have grown very fond of her, and would hate to see her go, but she is old enough, and must make up her own mind, without a word either way from us."

Individual Differences

WE next saw someone who had actually taught in England for six years, boys as well as girls, and who is now headmistress of a preparatory school in New Zealand which some evacuated children attend. When asked if she considered that the young evacuees at the school had become young New Zealanders or whether they had retained their original identities, she replied:

"I should say it depends chiefly on the bringing-up of the child in the first

place. There was one child we have had whom we thought much influenced by her early environment. On the other hand, her brother resented having to wear the same school tie as his father, when he returned to England. The school he was attending here was much more his idea.

"With an 11-year-old, the reaction is less noticeable. She had been used to servants waiting on her, was very precocious and self-willed, for her parents had their own ideas of a child learning by self-discipline. Although she had three years at a New Zealand boarding school, she hasn't lost her tremendous zest for life, is interested in everything, and is intellectually very bright; in fact is quite complete in her new surroundings. But there is no doubt in her mind that the moment the war is over, she is catching the first boat home to her parents."

"Do you think there is very much difference between a British child and a New Zealand one," we asked, "for it seems that's what it boils down to. Would you say the British youngster is more precocious?"

"Yes. I think perhaps he is, especially as far as voice and manner are concerned. But I thought New Zealand children very precocious when I came out here, and put it down to the fact that they are encouraged to mix with grown-ups and help with the entertaining. A New Zealand child is completely independent. A British child is more respectful and his manners generally more polished."

Some Statistics

THE Superintendent of Child Welfare, legal guardian of these children, said: "They soon adapted themselves to New Zealand conditions, and most of them, if not all, are thoroughly enjoying the experience. They seem to thrive on it, anyway."

Of the 203 children under his guardianship, 50 are at primary school, 83 at secondary school, and 70 have left school either to go to university (7) or training college (6) to take up farming (10), or nursing (3), or to go into shops and offices. "They are keen to help with the war effort, and the majority of older

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Will he grow up to be a New Zealand farmer? (The picture at the top of this page shows English children at a party in Wellington).