



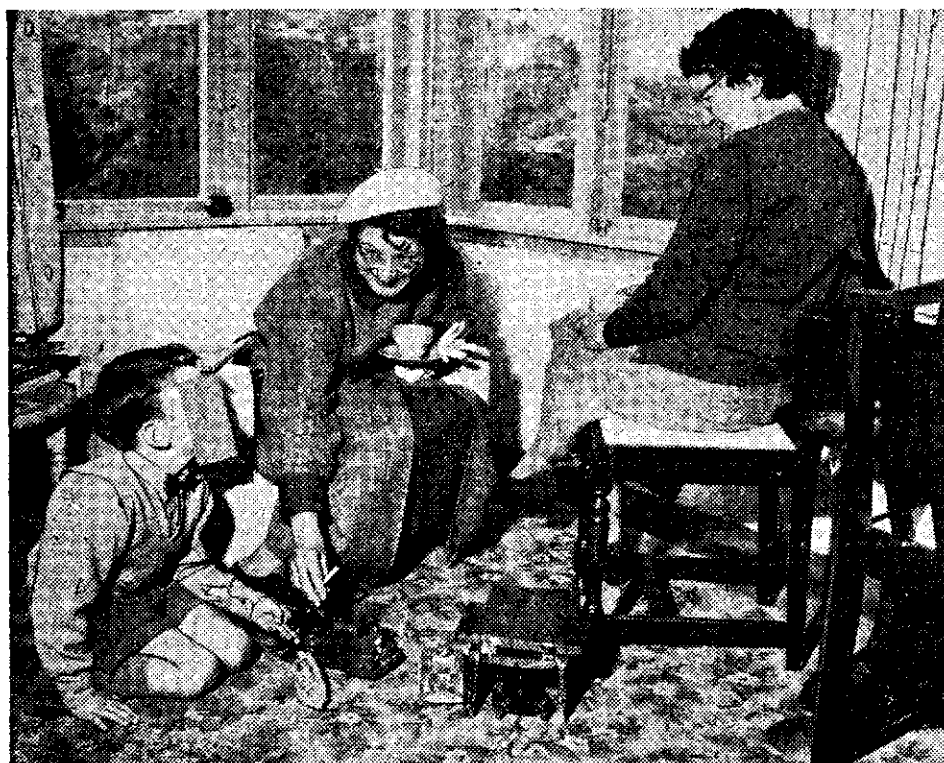
OURS is a relatively small community, and in many ways this gives us definite advantages. We can develop services of one kind and another, that although fairly complex, are still not large enough to become unwieldy and which can preserve an individuality, flexibility and humanity. Such a service—a Government Service—is the Child Welfare Division, attached to the Department of Education. Its activities and concerns are with human beings, mostly young ones—children from the day of their birth, children whose homes are shattered and who are at the mercy of their environment, children who steal and appear in court, children whose behaviour against their family, their school, or their neighbours becomes so different from that of others that it singles them out for notice. These are some of the situations that bring children under the care of the Child Welfare Division.

The Division's activities fall into two classes. There is the work of restoration and the work of reformation. In the first group are children who, through no fault of their own, have been deprived of the affection, understanding and care they would normally receive. These include illegitimate children, children who have been cruelly treated, children whose parents have separated and abandoned them, or a child whose mother may be in a mental hospital. On the other hand, there are children who are difficult, who may eventually become delinquents, and the range of difficulties these present to Child Welfare Officers is infinite. In practice these two activities of the Division tend to merge into each other, as many delinquent children have never had a normal home life.

A documentary picture of the whole of the Child Welfare Service and the institutions which have been built up to serve its needs will be broadcast in the Main National programme on Sunday, September 30, at 9.30 p.m. In the over-all picture of the organisation, many different types of welfare work are presented, and even these are only a small fraction of the great variety possible. "Each part of New Zealand has its different problems," C. E. Peek, Superintendent of Child Welfare, told *The Listener*. "An area of rapid expansion with hydro-electric schemes or afforestation projects will present different problems to a worker than will a Manawatu sheep farming area. An area of rapid expansion will have transient people with a lack of solidity about their background—quite a different proposition from the relatively static background of the city worker."

To see something of this "relatively static background," *The Listener* recently accompanied a woman Child Welfare Officer on her weekly visiting day to the area coming under her care in the city of Wellington. This Officer had many children on her "call list"—she looks after boys up to the age of ten and girls until they no longer need the assistance of the Department. Her main concern is in trying to see that the children she visits are in a warm, human environment, where the strains, confusions, and injuries can be given the best chance to heal, and where the child can gradually resume his own life.

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"IF A CHILD cannot be brought up by his own parents the next best thing is to live in somebody else's home." The two children seen here are responding well to foster-parents