



THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REF
COMM.

I AM WRITING THIS AS I HAVE BEEN REQUESTED BY A MR. MAURICE WILKS AFTER TALKING TO HIM.

I WAS PUT INTO THE "SUTHERLAND HOMES FOR CHILDREN" AT THE AGE OF 8 YRS. IN 1945. MY BROTHER WAS 2 YRS OLDER THAN ME, OUR MOTHER HAD DIED & FATHER WAS UNABLE TO CARE

AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER THE MAIN THING I REMEMBER WAS BEING VERY HOPELESS AS THE BOYS STAYED DOWN THEIR "END" I WAS IN THE GIRLS "END" SO I DID NOT SEE MY BROTHER VERY MUCH:

THE STAFF WERE NOT CRUEL BUT WE DID HAVE TO WORK HARD. POLISHING FLOORS & CLEANING WINDOWS, WE ALL HAD TO MAKE OUR OWN BEDS WITH ENVELOPE CORNERS (WHICH I STILL DO). AT 8 YRS OLD, WE NEVER HAD MUCH IN THE WAY OF TOYS OR THINGS TO PLAY WITH, WE WOULD DRAW ON THE DIRT & MAKE UP STORIES TELLING OUR STORY IN PICTURES.

ALL OF THE DAY WAS GOVERNED BY BELLS. BELLS TO GET UP, BELLS

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FOR SCHOOL, BELLS FOR EACH MEAL. ALSO WE WOULD LINE UP OUTSIDE THE DINNING ROOM & ON COMMAND WE WOULD SING HYMS GOING INTO EAT. BREAKFAST WAS ALWAYS PORRIDGE & BREAD & DRIPPING. I CANNOT REMEMBER EVER HAVING BUTTER. WE WERE GIVEN ENOUGH FOOD, BUT I CAN REMEMBER ALWAYS BEING HUNGRY.

WE HAD DINNER OFF TIN PLATES & SWEETS WERE PUT ON THE SAME PLATE SO OF COURSE ONE HAD TO FINISH YOUR FIRST COURSE, OR NO SWEETS.

BEFORE I LEFT WE DID GET CHINA PLATES & SWEET DISHES, THAT CAME WITH THE NEW MATRON. WHILE I WAS THERE, WE HAD 3 DIFFERENT MATRONS.

AT A REUNION A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO I MET UP WITH MY LAST MATRON & MET 2 GIRLS THAT WE HAD BEEN VERY CLOSE & WE STILL KEEP IN TOUCH.

LOOKING BACK I THINK THE "HOME" MADE ME STRONGER AS A PERSON, BUT MY BROTHER WHO WAS CONSIDERED A SLOW LEARNER OR EVEN A BIT BACKWARD IT MADE HIM WORSE HIS WAS NOT ABLE TO COPE VERY WELL & HAD TROUBLE HOLDING DOWN A JOB.

BUT ALWAYS WORKED HARD, BUT OUR MOTHERS DEATH REALLY WAS HARD ON HIM.

AT THE REUNION IT WAS INTERESTING TO SEE HOW OTHER PEOPLE MANAGED AS THEY GREW UP. SOME PEOPLE STILL SEEM TO HAVE A GRUDGE OR ARE AFFECTED IN SOME WAYS. INSTITUTIONAL LIFE IS ALWAYS WITH YOU IT, I DONT BLAME FATHER FOR PUTTING US THERE, BUT I WONDER IF YOU ARE GIVEN MORE CHOICES WOULD YOU HAVE MADE A BETTER LIFE, IT IS AN INTERESTING THOUGHT.

I HOPE MY LETTER WILL BE OF SOME HELP IN YOUR INQUIRY.

I REMAIN

Jean FOSTER.