

What was it like for children in the Second World War?

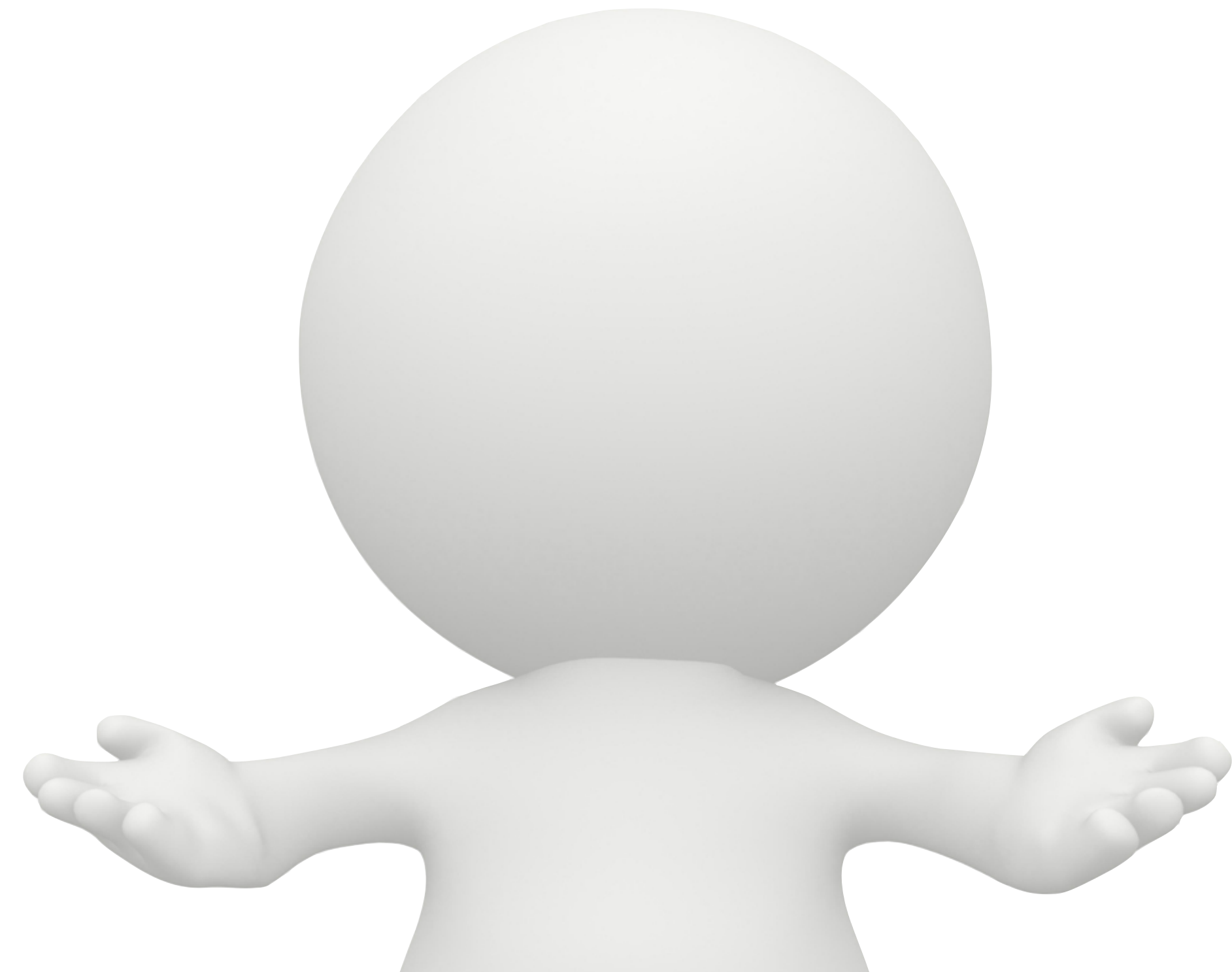
Learning Objective:

To find out about the experiences and feelings of evacuees.





Can you explain what an evacuee was?



Why do you think
children were
evacuated during
WW2?



EVACUATION
OF
WOMEN AND CHILDREN
FROM LONDON, Etc.

FRIDAY, 1st SEPTEMBER.

Up and Down business trains as usual,
with few exceptions.

Main Line and Suburban services will be
curtailed while evacuation is in progress
during the day.

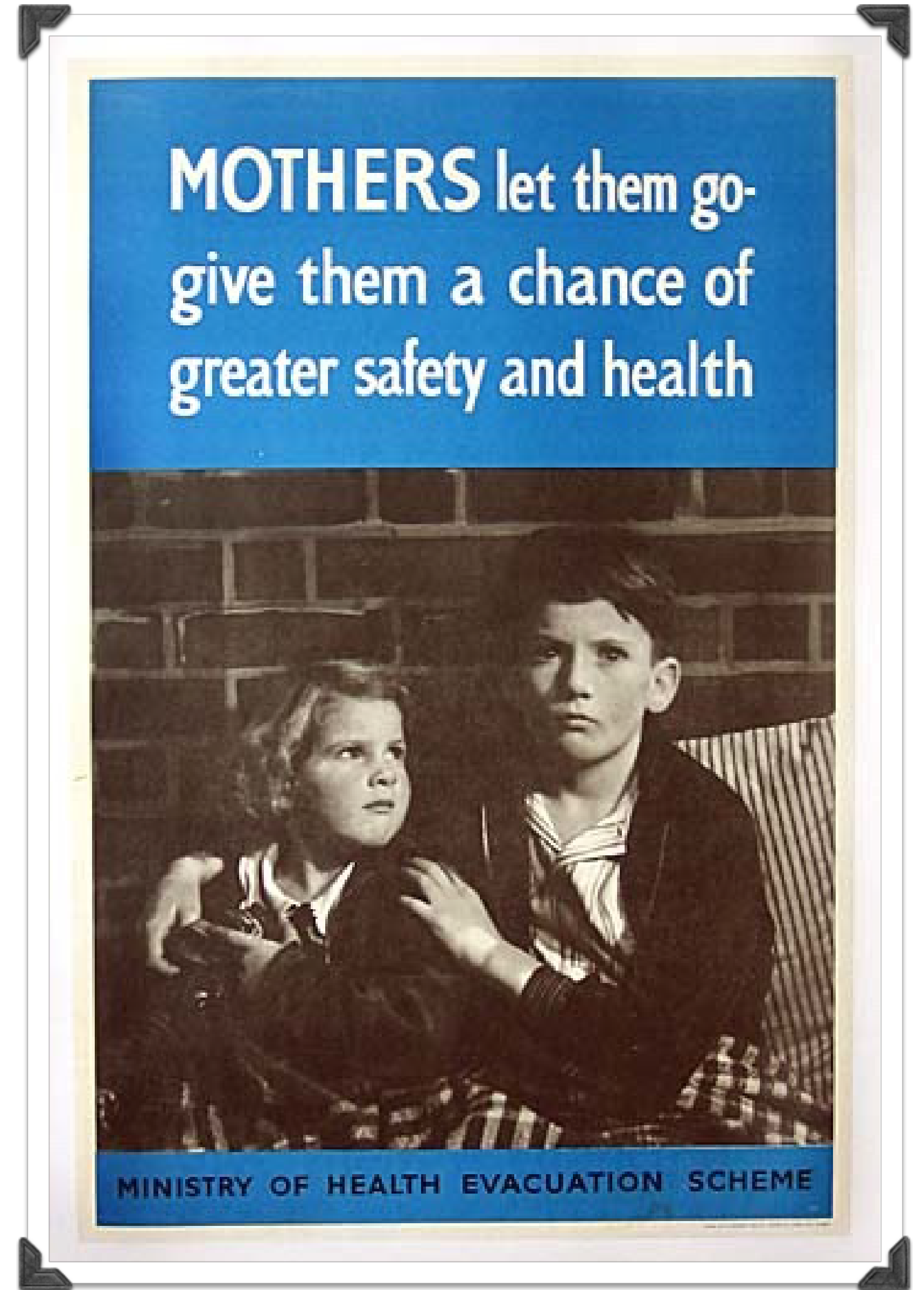
SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 2nd & 3rd.

The train service will be exactly the
same as on Friday.

Remember that there will be very few
Down Mid-day business trains on Saturday.

When the war started in 1939, the government was concerned about people being killed by possible bombings so evacuation was introduced to try and make people as safe as possible. It was mainly children who were evacuated but some other groups of people were evacuated too, like schoolteachers, mothers with children under five years old and some disabled people. The British evacuation was named 'Operation Pied Piper' and began on Friday 1st September 1939.

The idea behind evacuation was to send children out of the dangerous cities where bombs were more likely to fall and to take them to live with host families in the country where they would be safer. Evacuation was not compulsory but it was a free scheme set up by the government which millions of families took advantage of.



If the government decided that an area was at risk, a letter was sent to parents explaining that their child could be evacuated if they wished. This list shows what the letter told parents to pack for their children:

Boys

- 2 vests
- 2 underpants
- 2 shirts
- 2 pyjamas or night shirts
- 2 pairs socks
- 2 pairs boots or shoes
- 1 Wellingtons (if possible)
- 1 warm coat and/or mackintosh
- 1 pair knickers or trousers
- 1 pullover
- 6 handkerchiefs
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 face flannel
- 1 comb
- 2 towels

Girls

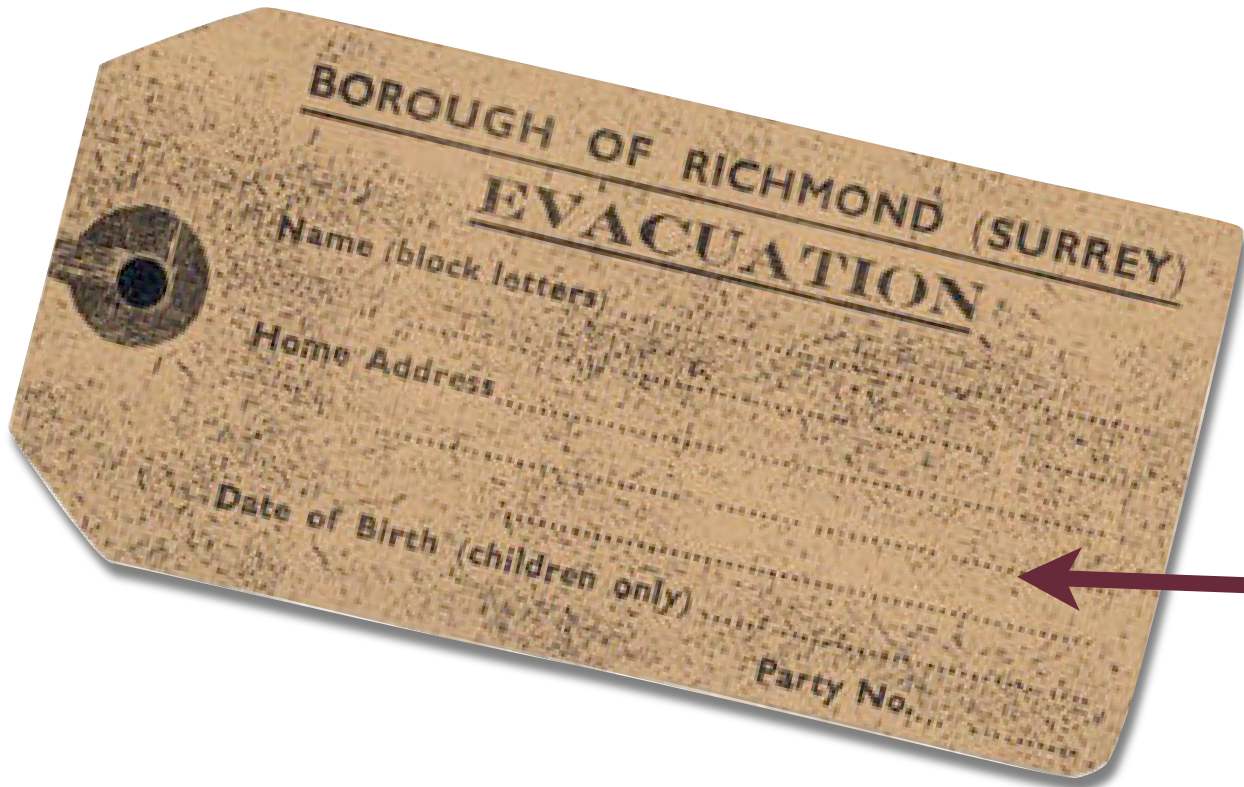
- 2 vests
- 2 liberty bodices (if worn)
- 2 knickers
- 2 nightdresses or pyjamas
- 2 pairs socks or stockings
- 1 Wellingtons (if possible)
- 1 warm coat and/or mackintosh
- 1 warm dress or tunic or jersey
- 1 cardigan
- 2 cotton frocks
- 6 handkerchiefs
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 face flannel
- 1 comb
- 2 towels

Children also had to take their gas mask, ration book, identity card and clothing coupons.

The houses that were chosen for evacuees to live in were called 'billets' and it was the job of the billeting officer to find a home for all the evacuees. Offering evacuees a home was considered to be national service and anyone who refused to house evacuees with no good reason could be fined. Host families were given some money each week to help care for the children they took in. They were given 10 shillings and 6 pence for children over 10, and 8 shillings and 6 pence for children younger than 10.



Evacuations were organised by the government. Groups of children would gather, usually at a railway station, to say goodbye to their families and travel to their temporary homes. Each child would have their suitcase, gas mask and an identity label.



identity label



gas mask

When the evacuees arrived at their destination they had to be chosen by their host family. Lots of evacuees found this very difficult as host families would choose children they thought looked 'nice'. Children were considered 'ugly' were often left until last.



Children waiting for a host family



What does this source tell you about evacuation?



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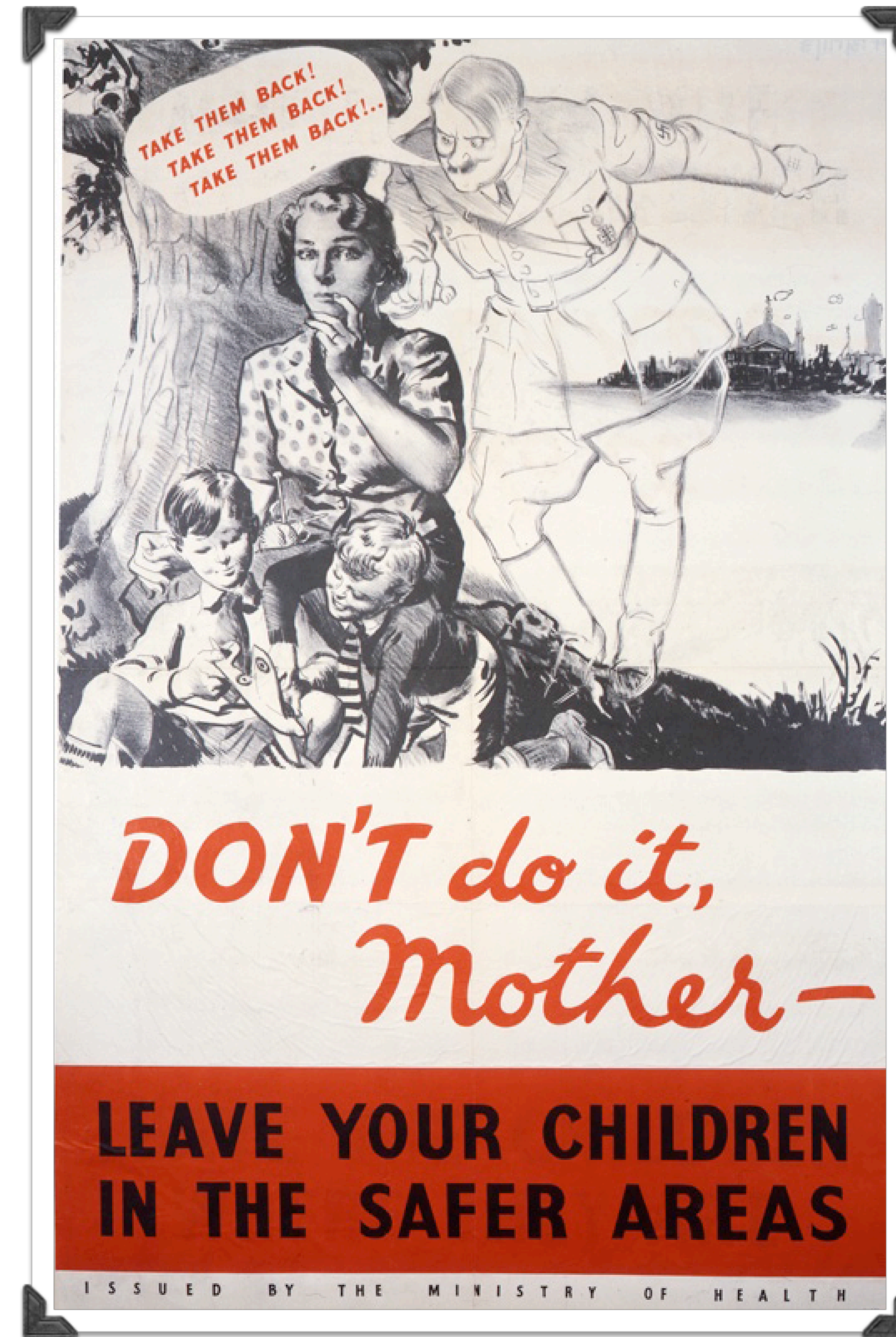


What does this source tell you about evacuation?





What does
this source tell
you about
evacuation?



Dear mummy and daddy
I love you very much
I hope you are all right
With love from your daughter
Margaret

What does this source tell you about evacuation?



What does this source tell you about evacuation?





How do you think children would have felt when they were evacuated? Create a list of adjectives:

