

HULL'S GREAT WELCOME FOR BASQUE CHILDREN

Forty little outcasts of war came last night to Hull, where they will live until peace comes again to their own country. They are Basque children from Bilbao – and Hull couldn't have given them a greater welcome if they had been 40 Cabinet Ministers. More than an hour before the train was due, the crowd began to gather at Paragon Station and when it drew in there were hundreds there to cheer and wave handkerchiefs. There was a real touch of home in the welcome these kiddies had. On the platform were over 50 Spanish seamen from ships in dock.

The reception party for these young visitors included the Lord Mayor (Alderman Frederick Holmes), the Lady Mayoress (Mrs Holmes), Mr Sydney Priestman (Chairman of the Basque Children's Committee), the Rev F F M Haythornethwaite (joint hon.secretary) and Mrs Ubieta, who is the English wife of a Spaniard fighting for the Government, and who is to help look after the children.

NEIGHBOURS MEET AGAIN

As soon as the train drew up to the platform, the Spanish seamen tumbled into the compartments and began hugging and kissing the dark-eyed youngsters. One of the young seamen stared hard at a little boy – and then picked him up in his arms, wild with excitement. In Bilbao they had been neighbours! As the pathetic little band, dressed in clothes given by English children and carrying their luggage in biscuit tins and little cloth sacks, came out on to the platform, grown men in the crowd were smiling and crying at once. Two teachers had travelled here with the children from Southampton – a young woman and a white-haired motherly old soul, anxiously counting the heads of her brood.

Through the crowded, cheering station hall, the children went to their Corporation bus. From a few in the throng came the clenched fist salute of the Red Front and the cry "Salud!", but most of them just waved. "They might have been our own bairns", said one woman, and summed up the feelings of the crowd.

"VIVA L' ALCALDE"

The bus was mobbed as it stood in Collier Street, people handing sweets in through the windows. The Lord Mayor came in and told the children, through an interpreter, he hoped they would be happy in Hull. "Viva l'Alcalde!" shouted the children, meaning "Long live the Lord Mayor." As soon as the bus started, the children began singing Basque songs and leaning out of the windows, just like English children on a school treat. They never stopped singing all the way to Sutton. Here another crowd waited to cheer them into their new home – a splendid country mansion called Elm Trees.

22 CHICOS, 18 CHICAS

The children assembled in the cheerful schoolroom, where someone had written in chalk on the blackboard "Bien venidos!" – Welcome. Then they were shown to their rooms – just like guests at a house party – so many rooms for the 22 chicos (boys) and so many for the 18 chicas (girls). Then there was supper - massive plates of soup. Youngest in the party is the eight-months-old daughter of Mrs Ubieta. The eldest girl is 14 and the eldest boy 12. "Do you like your home?" we asked them. "Sí, sí,!" said the children.

