



Sandra Gravlee (right), with Mrs Wanda Treitler, of California, and her children, Andrea and Brian.

Moving house without tears

By BRIDGET VAN TINTEREN

MOVING house regularly in her childhood gave Mrs Sandra Gravlee first-hand knowledge of the problems faced by families which are continually on the move.

"My father was a manager of department stores in the United States, so we moved around every three years," she said.

"When I look back on it, it was a wonderful experience because I made friends all over the country.

"At school I wasn't brilliant, probably because I knew I would soon move on. At times the moving was sad."

Mrs Gravlee came to Australia 20 years ago and now lives in Pymble.

A former real estate agent and personnel consultant, she now helps to relocate executives and their families in Australia. In Sydney her

company is known as Sydney Relocations Pty Ltd.

The firm helps executives and their families from both interstate and overseas choose a home, advises them about Australian customs and schools, churches and recreational facilities, provides a decorating service, a round-the-clock telephone service to answer their questions, a buddy system for the wives to meet other people for social activities and a counselling service.

An executive who changes job, home and/or mortgage can clock up at least 100 points on a scale of stressful events, according to American Donald Norfolk, author of *Executive Stress* — and that is enough to bring on peptic ulcers, high blood pressure, insomnia and even heart attacks.

Mrs Gravlee said the whole

family could suffer when a businessman was moved to a new city.

"Many people have left behind children at school, elderly parents, and their furniture," she said. "It is often a very big step to relocate in another State or country."

She started the company when her husband was transferred to Melbourne seven years ago. She gave up a good job in real estate to be with him, but was bored at home until a friend asked her to help an American family which had just arrived in Australia.

At first, she said, real estate agents were afraid that she was stepping on their toes.

Now she employs a staff of 27 in six offices around Australia. A psychologist, Ms Wendy Coyle, and two educational consultants, Ms Louise Beck and Ms Judy McLean, are available if required.