WELFARE ASPECTS OF DESERTION

A casework evaluation of the effects of desertion on family life, based on a sample group of cases from public and private agencies.

by

CATHERINE LORRAINE GERRIE

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK In the Department of Social Work

Accepted as conforming to the standard required for the degree of Master of Social Work

School of Social Work

1954

The University of British Columbia
ABSTRACT

The present study examines welfare problems of desertion of one parent of either sex, from the standpoint of both public and private welfare agencies. Deserted families come to the attention of welfare societies because of economic need, marital problems, and maladjusted children in their homes. The public agency may provide (a) temporary financial assistance while endeavouring to contact the deserter, and (b) protection services for the children in the home. Generally, the focus of the private agency is on (a) the marital problem and (b) the preservation of the home for the children, as well as (c) the exploration of resources within the community. Frequently, however, permanent plans can not be worked out due to the sporadic periods of desertion, and the family situation continues to deteriorate.

This study is based on thirty records of deserted families from the Family Welfare Bureau of Vancouver, and twenty-five public agency records relating to Regina, from the Child Welfare Branch of Saskatchewan. The sample was confined to cases in which temporary or permanent desertion appeared to be the focal problem; and, in all cases studied, there were children in the home. The material used includes the files kept by the agencies on each case.

The cases were studied and evaluated from three welfare viewpoints. The contact of the private or public agency on the deserter is vitally important for its influence on the outcome of the home situation; nevertheless, it is difficult to assess it, because the type of recording does not usually lend itself to a detailed analysis of the reaction between the client and the worker. The effects of desertion in the financial area can be evaluated in a
more objective manner, from the effects on the family and the methods by which economic assistance were given. The third part of the study examines what happens to children in homes broken by desertion. From the group surveyed, children from twenty-five families were placed temporarily or permanently for periods varying from three months to permanent wardship (twenty-one years in Saskatchewan). The financial cost of the dependency of these children for each family studied would approximate $2400.00 per family. But this does not take into consideration the cost of maintaining the broken families on a public assistance level, nor the costs of lives damaged by desertion.

There is evidence that the problems inherent in homes broken by desertion could be helped by (a) education for marriage, (b) better professional guidance from social and legal agencies, and (c) an expanding and more effective community programme for family groups.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Mrs. B. Mabee and Miss M. McPhedran of the Family Welfare Bureau of Vancouver for their helpfulness and co-operation during the preparation of this study.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Leonard Marsh and Mrs. Helen Exner of the School of Social Work for their advice and criticism on the organization of the study.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welfare Problems in Desertion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent of the problem of desertion. Desertion from a legal point of view. Study of welfare aspects of desertion.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Contact of the Agency with the Deserter</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding the deserting husband. Whereabouts Unknown. Whereabouts known.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Financial Assistance in Desertion Cases</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Effects of Desertion on Children</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of both parents in the child's emotional development. Loss of security. Children of deserting parents as seen from a public agency. Children of deserting parents as seen from a private agency. Case work with children.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evaluation: Agency and Community</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix Bibliography.......................... 76
WELFARE ASPECTS OF DESERTION
CHAPTER I

WELFARE PROBLEMS IN DESERTION.

Each year more than a million American homes are broken by death, desertion, separation and divorce.¹ Full statistics are not available, but it is estimated that about 50,000 homes are broken each year by desertion, usually by the husband leaving the home. In Canada, using mother's allowance statistics and the records of non-support court cases as a guide, welfare authorities estimated that 2,000 Canadian mothers and some 5,000 children would be left to their own resources by vanishing fathers in 1951. A recent Canadian news review reported in a broadcast that the province of Quebec had over 2,000 deserted wives. Social workers in both public and private agencies, as well as groups of lay persons in related fields, have become increasingly concerned with the problems resulting from the departure of one parent. The failure to provide adequate support for the wife and children not only jeopardizes the whole future for the family, but adds an increased financial burden to the government, usually the province, in which the constitutional liability for public assistance falls.

Statistical studies are few; but there does not seem to have been much change in the incidence of desertion. In the new cases reported to the relief agencies in Boston, from 1889 to 1893, deserted wives constituted from 8.75 per cent to 10 per cent of the total, the average being about 9.33 per cent. A revised edition of Amos G. Warner's American Charities states that deserted wives made up 9.3 per cent of the dependents in Boston from 1899-1905. One out of every 10 families, who applied to three Boston relief agencies for aid from 1918 to 1928 was a family broken by desertion. In addition to this, 1 out of every 14 other families who sought aid became a broken family, while the case was under the supervision of the agency.²

1. Thorman, George, Broken Homes, Public Affairs Committee, New York, 1947, p.1

Family Welfare Association of America, New York.
In the past eight years there has been an increase of 42 per cent in the number of men who have walked out on their wives and children, and authorities estimated that in 1950, one hundred thousand American husbands would leave their wives and families. In Canada, one of the best gauges of the desertion rates are mothers' allowance statistics, since every province except Newfoundland includes desertion as a condition entitling mothers to allowance payments. In 1946, for example, Ontario was paying allowances to 206 deserted wives, but by September 1950, there were 840 deserted wives on the list. The Mothers Allowance Board in Saskatchewan had 52 deserted wives under its supervision in 1946, 162 in 1949. In 1948 six per cent of mothers' allowances in Canada were being paid because of desertion, but at present more than twelve per cent are desertion cases.

What is the financial cost of deserting husbands to taxpayers? In the United States, Federal Security Administration figures show that at least a million victims of family desertion are receiving around $205,000,000 annually in state and federal aid.\(^3\) Canadian figures show that in 1948, mothers' allowance payments to deserted wives and children in Ontario amounted to about $20,000 a month, but by September 1950 it was $53,000 a month. However, large as these figures may appear they show just a small segment of the over-all desertion picture, since Mothers' Allowance is not granted until certain eligibility requirements have been fulfilled. Hundreds of deserted families are on municipal relief, and there are many more whose run-away husbands have been traced and ordered by courts to support their families. In 1943 Canadian courts convicted 2,271 deserters of non-support, in 1948 it was 4,857.\(^4\)

Court action is always costly and the writer has observed that the results obtained in financial terms are usually insufficient to provide for the deserted

---

family, and in addition these agreements are seldom honored in the cases known to agencies.

In 38% per cent of all families served by 22 nurseries affiliated with the Philadelphia Association of Day Nurseries in 1929, the parents were separated or the fathers had deserted. In California, 30 per cent of all children in 28 nurseries supervised by the State Department of Social Welfare came from such homes.5

The Federal Security Agency estimates that in 1947 there were about 2,500,000 paternal orphans under 18, and that nearly 750,000 dependent children received aid through the Social Security Act.6 Juvenile Court records in the United States show that almost 25 per cent of all delinquents come from homes where one or both parents have deserted them, and one out of every two boys sent to reformatories and industrial schools was found to have come from a broken home.

It has been frequently said that desertion is the "poor man's divorce", or sometimes the "poor man's vacation". There is no divorce because divorce proceedings cost money, and desertion is sometimes an easy and cheap way to escape an unhappy marriage situation, although only a comparatively small number of deserters make so complete a break that they are never heard from again. Desertion leaves an uncertainty hanging over the home that makes it extremely difficult for a mother and children to adjust to the situation, and as a result the stability in the family situation frequently deteriorates quickly. We see the results in malnutrition, child neglect, juvenile delinquency, and the mental anguish which plays havoc with a woman's character as nothing else can.

Desertion from a Legal Point of View

Generally, the deserted spouse comes to a welfare agency primarily to talk over the family situation, but written records in both agencies in this study indicated that in many instances the deserted wife started the interview with questions about their legal status. The worker has to clarify if the client is seeking only legal advice, and, if so, the client is referred to an authority in law and no attempt is made to give free legal advice. However, as lawyers are becoming more familiar with programmes of social work, a closer relationship between the two professions is growing up, and desertion is more frequently viewed as a joint problem for both legal and social authorities. This present study is not primarily concerned with the legal point of view, but it seems necessary for the purpose of discussion in the study to have some knowledge of the legal aspects of desertion.

Sir William Blackstone stated that by the common law, the husband is bound to maintain his wife and when he turns her from his house, he does not thereby discharge himself of that liability, which, still remaining, is a ground for presuming an authority from him to her to contract for reasonable necessaries. Against this presumption, no general notice not to deal with her shall be allowed to prevail; but where there is an express notice to any particular individual, that person cannot sue upon contracts afterwards entered into with her. If a wife offers to return and her husband refuses to receive her his liability upon her contracts for necessaries is revived from that time.

There is no legal obligation on a parent to maintain his child, and therefore a third person who may relieve the latter from absolute want, cannot sue the parent for a reasonable remuneration unless he contracted to pay. However, a parent may, under circumstances, be indicted at common law for not supplying an infant child with necessaries. The amount of maintenance was left
to the discretion of the magistrate. These principles of English common law
as enunciated by Blackstone are still the basis for our desertion laws.

To constitute desertion there must be a deliberate purpose of abandoning the conjugal society. This definition of desertion is quite generally accepted, and from this, one can readily see the difficulties involved in proving legal desertion. Nevertheless, these are interpretations, which must be borne in mind by the social worker who deals with desertion in a social agency setting.

British, Canadian, and American people generally accept the principle that it is the responsibility of the husband and father to provide the best possible maintenance in accordance with his means and ability. However, as a result of this definite thinking in the past in regard to the responsibilities of parents, and because the family was a comparatively stable unit, the community has tended to focus its attention on the responsibility of the deserter. In so doing they have often lost sight of the deserted family faced not only with new emotional problems precipitated by the departure of one parent, but the reality of economic deprivation and possible repatriation to the province of their residence. Canadian provinces differ in their interpretation of desertion, and this difference in legislation presents one of the main obstacles in the working out of reciprocal enforcement legislation. Two recent acts, namely, those of British Columbia and Saskatchewan place the emphasis on maintenance rather than desertion, while in Alberta there is legislation making the legal obligation a mutual one. It is possible that there are many cases of desertion in which maintenance is regularly provided, but most workers who have had experience in this field find that court orders do not provide security in the nature of a steady income.

It is the general opinion of social workers and people who work with children, that if possible, mothers should be given the opportunity to remain in the home to care for their children. From the standpoint of an agency, cases in which the wife has independent means are negligible, and therefore her liability for their maintenance should not be invoked. It is necessary to examine closely what happens to deserted families and to learn what methods bring the most lasting and worthwhile results for the children and parents. In this way we may be able to bring about more uniform and effective legislation throughout the provinces.

Study of Welfare Aspects of Desertion

Throughout the years, written material indicates that many social workers engaged in family work have pondered over the question of dealing more effectively with the client, who comes to the welfare agency seeking help because the spouse has left the home. Frequently, the original request is for financial assistance, or for legal advice, but the worker soon learns that the real concern is the departure of the husband or wife.

What is this problem and why is the client coming to a welfare agency? Is the husband refusing to live with and support his family or is his wife refusing to accept the plan he is able to make for them? Is the wife intent on leaving her family, or is she in need of a holiday? Why are some workers successful with these cases and equally competent workers unsuccessful? How can an agency deal more effectively with desertion? Why do desertion cases show their highest peak after one or two years of marriage? These are some of the questions which arise in an agency working with these particular cases, and, although we feel there is no definite answer, we still think that a greater knowledge of effective methods might be helpful in a recommendation for reciprocal legislation between provinces. Even now the combined efforts of two
provinces working on such a basis might produce results which would be worthwhile enough for other provinces to follow.

In the past society frequently thought the main solution was to find the deserting partner and bring him back. Henceforth, fear of police action and the attitude of the community was supposed to solve the situation and keep the wanderer at home. Experience soon teaches the worker that the costs of finding the deserter do not justify the results. Chapter two will deal with the difficulties involved in finding the deserting husband and the contact of the agency with him after his whereabouts have become known.

As a rule, the immediate result of desertion is a loss of economic security. While we can partially estimate the costs of maintaining dependent families, it is difficult to visualize the havoc created for the wife who has to seek public assistance for herself and family. In chapter three the effects of financial insecurity will be studied, and from a public agency standpoint, some of the difficulties will be discussed.

Children are involved in every family case to be studied, because invariably they are the individuals who become the products of desertion and undergo the greatest deprivation. The view of the present study is that knowledge of the effects of desertion on children may ultimately help the community in attacking the core of the problem. For this reason an attempt is made to estimate the cost of dependent children from families broken by desertion.

It is to be hoped that more permanent re-unions could be achieved in the work with deserters as a result of the greater knowledge of the dynamics of human personality, and more skilled and tested methods in interviewing. Some evaluation of the services given to deserted families is attempted in this study, and a casework study is being made of thirty files from the Family Welfare Bureau of Vancouver and twenty-five files from the Public Welfare agency in Saskatchewan. The criterion in choosing each case was that it must involve the problem of
desertion as seen by the social worker, that is, the departure of one spouse, either sporadically or on a permanent basis. No consideration was given to a time-limit of absence or desertion, on the ground that experience indicates that the same personality factors are inherent within the individual whether he leaves for a few days, several weeks or permanently.

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the records a set of criteria were lined up to study each record. The schedule of information was classified according to the three main aspects, namely, (a) financial, (b) contact of the agency with the deserter and (c) effects of desertion on the children. (See appendix A). A final evaluation was then made on the whole case, after weighing carefully the movement in each case.
CHAPTER II

THE CONTACT OF THE AGENCY WITH THE DESERTER

Desertion is a problem of peculiar difficulty not simply because the man is away from the family, but because his absence is a very real factor in the family situation, both at the present time and in the future. The children talk about their father and await his return; the mother makes plans with one on his return; the social worker's function is largely guided by his return. Family relatives may be reluctant to take an active part in making plans for the children because of later accusations, or they may take definite sides and endeavour to exert pressure on an agency for financial help. If the wife is the deserter, and there is no-one to care for the children, neighbours may be drawn into the family fray. Therefore, no complete plan can be made that excludes the deserting partner, because this individual still remains the focal point in the situation. Accordingly, the knowledge of the whereabouts of the deserter is the most urgent of the problems which confront the worker who deals with the deserted family. To deal with this point a prompt and vigorous effort is a first requisite, but it must be coupled with a firm conviction that constructive work can be done with the deserter. Case work records indicate that many workers start out courageously, but, having exhausted the first set of clues, they tend to reduce their efforts to make contact with the deserting partner.

It is common to find that deserters move around a great deal in the first few months after they leave their home, and reports always seem to indicate that they have just moved. Seasonal employment and weather conditions may be a factor in the chosen destination. Social workers in the prairie provinces have frequently had to request help in contacting a deserting husband, who presumably left for British Columbia, but few requests for a similar service have been received from the west coast.
Records from welfare agencies indicate that some wives are somewhat indifferent about the contact of the agency with their deserted husbands, and, in these cases, the worker is apt to discover, after an allowance has been discontinued for some reason, or through casual conversation, that the wife had reports on the husband, which might have been followed up had they been known earlier. On the other hand, returning husbands appear to gather considerable information about their families, even though there is no apparent direct communication. Children will receive cards or letters with no address, or the worker may be surprised to receive a letter from a father expressing great concern about a child, whom he has learned is in the care of an agency. This is rather difficult to understand when, for three years prior to this letter, there may have been no evidence whatsoever of any interest in the family. These common occurrences seem to indicate that neither party in a case of desertion, understands the true function of an agency in its endeavour to arrange some satisfactory solution for the family difficulties; but instead, both husband and wife view the agency as a useful tool to use against each other.

The necessity of doing the detective's work raises the question of how far the social worker can adopt the detective's methods, since the approach to the deserter has changed radically in the past few years. Few workers of to-day would feel that much progress could be made either with the deserted wife or family by questioning the neighbours. Yet the following extract published in 1919 gives the opinion of a social worker dealing with deserters at that time.

"The deserter is a knowing violater of the laws, and while he does not welcome it, he regards his arrest as only a question of time. He is playing the game of 'hide and seek', and he is applying every trick and subterfuge to avoid detection. He is not disturbed if he has been caught in a police trap. Our experience has been that in such cases where he has tried to outwit the police, and the police finally have 'beaten him to the game', he compliments his captor. This is a common characteristic of the criminal, a sort of negative bravado. When the deserter is arrested, all he can hope for and expect is a fair deal."
While the previous remarks help us to realize how much our philosophy has changed, nevertheless, we need to focus on an evaluation of present day methods in obtaining positive results. Are responsibilities which should accompany the rights of parenthood lessened by the fact that welfare societies quickly respond to children in need? It seems to the writer that too frequently the worker delays this contact unnecessarily, while attending to the present needs of the family.

Before the worker proceeds to contact the husband, it is necessary to have as full an understanding of the marital situation as possible, and it is advisable to verify the marriage through Vital Statistics Branch before any detailed investigation is made. From the wife or husband, a picture should be obtained of the family inter-relationships, and if the wife is willing, an interview with near relatives can often give a more rounded-out picture of the total situation. If there have been previous desertions, it is important to secure information about the factors which led to the desertion, and to the return of the deserter, since the reasons that move a man once are likely to do so again. Frequently, community resources such as the police have a knowledge of the groups and interests of many of the men who leave their homes.

The worker needs to make a careful study of the man's employment history as well as the training for employment which he has received. It is not the policy of the Unemployment Insurance Office to give out information regarding the whereabouts of the deserter, but at times, this agency can be most helpful in requesting the deserter to contact someone in the agency. Their attitude, bolstered by some interpretation of social agencies has given a number of deserters sufficient courage to come to an agency to discuss their problems.
"Whereabouts Unknown"

In the private agency study there were only two cases of desertion in which the whereabouts of the deserter was unknown. In one of these the man failed to keep in touch with his family after he went overseas and, after an assessment of all the facts the agency decided that no attempt should be made to try to contact him. In the second case, the client whom we shall call Mrs. Bond, came to the agency asking for divorce information, as she wanted to marry the man with whom she was now living. In 1943 the agency had written to the armed services requesting knowledge of Mr. Bond and the reply stated that he had deserted from the army. Further exploration made in 1946 revealed that no further information had been received from the services, so this was followed up by contact through agencies in another country with his parents, who believed their son was missing in action. On this summary of evidence, the agency was able to request legal aid in order to clarify Mrs. Bond's marital status and eventually to secure a divorce for her. The subsequent marriage of Mrs. Bond brought stability to the family unit along with a greater community acceptance for the children.

The public assistance study revealed that the whereabouts of six of the deserting husbands (described here as A, B, C, D, E, and F) was unknown at the time of desertion. Unfortunately, many of these cases did not reach the public agency until the request was made for placement of the children or the community reported a neglect situation, by which time some of the original motivation for contact had petered out. If wardship is to be considered as a plan for the children, the agency must furnish proof (by affidavit) that every effort through the R.C.M.P. and otherwise has been made to get in touch with the deserting parent. This lapse of time, usually of several months duration becomes a real obstacle in making definite plans for either the mother or the children, with the result that the social worker finds it increasingly difficult
to maintain a focus on the family situation.

Mr. A. was thought to have returned to England, but it was not until two years after he had left the home, that the department caused an investigation to be made through the R.C.M.P. By that time, all clues in Canada proved fruitless and no English address was known to follow up. Police were unable to locate Mr. B. and the investigation was dropped, nevertheless, after an absence of several years, he wrote from the east to his daughter. Mr. C. suddenly disappeared after a week's drinking bout, and although Mrs. C. made an immediate report to the police, no trace of him had been reported at the end of three years. Mr. D. drifted east but arrived home after four months, just at the time his wife had finally decided to ask our help in contacting him. Because Mrs. E. was able to maintain herself, she evaded the issue of contacting her husband, although she realized public assistance might be more difficult to obtain if an emergency arose. Mrs. F. thought her husband had returned to his country of emigration, and five years after his desertion, the agency was able to procure this information through immigration officials. Since Mrs. F. did not wish a divorce, no effort was made to contact her husband; however, this case illustrated the type of situation which may lead to the complete disappearance of the husband.

In the early thirties, Mr. F., the son of a chemist migrated to Canada, where he met a pretty Irish girl newly arrived from Ireland. Within a short time they were married, but economic difficulties, differences in religion and cultural background proved to be a poor foundation for their family life. Mrs. F. burdened with a new child every year, became an intolerable nagger, which probably precipitated the complete abandonment by Mr. F. of his family.

The cases studied in both agencies indicated that wives who left their homes could always be located, usually in the same city, whereas, husbands appear to have a stronger tendency to leave their city. We could not discern
whether it was the fear of economic responsibility that drives a man to more
distant places, or whether it was a more complete desire to obliterate the
past and start life anew.

Whereabouts Known

In seven of the twenty-eight cases remaining in the private agency study, the wife left the home, although as we have previously mentioned, the motivation did not appear to be the same. Mr. and Mrs. Day had been married for over twenty years, when Mrs. Day left her home to live with her daughter. The agency found Mrs. Day unresponsive to their whole contact, but they were able to help Mr. Day with plans for his eight year old son. After Mrs. McDonald left her husband, she demanded more support, but she came to the conclusion that her lawyer became biased, following his interview with Mr. McDonald. Family Court referred her to The Family Welfare Bureau but she showed little interest in the services offered and did not return. Two wives left their husbands for other partners and there was strong evidence that a third girl planned to do the same thing. One of these wives placed the children with various relatives; another one kept the children who were later reported to be neglected; and in the third case, the agency was able to help the husband retain his home and children.

The agency interviewed both Mr. and Mrs. Line, but each parent saw only his own side of the situation and could not accept any help from an agency. One wife who left her home took her child with her, but moved nine times in a few months and there was considerable indication that this pattern would continue. An enterprising mother "married off" her seventeen-year-old daughter to an older man repeatedly well-to-do, but within a year the daughter ran home to her mother who was anxious to arrange a financial settlement. Interviews with both partners revealed that some positive plan might have been
worked out had the couple been allowed to solve the situation without interfering relatives.

In the public agency study, nine of the twenty-five deserters were women. Periodically, three of these women used to leave their homes, although the writer felt they had little intention of leaving their homes permanently, and they all had husbands who would take some responsibility for caring for the children. Two of them appeared to show some response to an interested agency; the third girl was finally able to settle down after a lengthy contact with the agency. Two other girls who left their husband took their children with them; eventually, with an agency's help, they were able to work out stable plans for their children. By contrast, two other women who left their husbands became prostitutes, both serving gaol sentences at a later date. Although the agency had no contact with one woman, they were able to help with the care of her daughter, and in the other case, the agency helped the husband with the placement of the children.

In summary, the agency was able to make some contact with each of the sixteen women who left their home, and it was apparent that they showed little apprehension, or even feeling about the agency getting in touch with them. Nevertheless, when the wife deserts, the children bear the brunt of the marital rift even more than when the husband leaves the home; oftentimes, it becomes necessary to view the situation as one of potential neglect. There was little response of maternal love, and only a few cases showed any positive casework results, either in her attitude towards her home or the children. It was interesting that no financial support for the children was requested from any of the wives, although most of these women had the same potential earning capacity as their husbands.
Out of the twenty-eight cases studied at the Family Welfare Bureau, twenty-one husbands had departed from the home, and in four of these cases the wife did not want the agency to contact the husband. Mrs. Evans used the family agency as a listener, but she was unable to see any need for a change within herself; eventually, Mr. Evans did come to the agency where he discussed possible plans for the care of the children. Agency contact was maintained over a period of thirty months with Mrs. Cross, before she gave permission to have her husband contacted, and this was only given because her pending hospitalization made it necessary to place the children in foster homes. Because Mrs. Owens did not maintain her contact with the agency, her husband was not seen. Mrs. Munro never gave her permission to have her husband contacted, although he was seen by the Family Court, and it was their opinion that Mr. Munro was meeting his responsibility at that time as well as he could.

A Vancouver woman who had been deserted by her husband, became ill, at which time the husband had to be contacted. He was then living in another province, but the police were able to get in touch with him, and as a result, he sent regular financial contributions until his wife could manage on her own. Following demobilization, two of the husbands in this study did not return to their homes, while follow-up letters with the armed services indicated the futility in efforts to keep in touch with them. No effort was made to contact one husband, who sent money regularly to his wife through a lawyer. An interesting case was that of a father and son who showed the same personality structure and whose lives were already running parallel. Neither of these men showed any response to agency letters, and finally, the Family Welfare Bureau reviewed the case and decided that neither family were able to participate in helping to solve the family problem.
The social welfare branch of the province referred three cases, namely, Mr. X., Mr. Y., and Mr. Z. to the family agency requesting that they communicate with the husband for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance, and it was hoped for in one case, - a possible reconciliation. One interview was held with Mr. X. and two with his mother, who was anxious for a reconciliation of her son and his wife. When Mr. X. stated that he was looking for a steady job, the worker carefully explored the possibilities with him, at the same time allowing him full expression of his view of the family situation.

He told me that he had got a job, but made no mention that his brother had found it for him. He said it was hard work, but agreed with me when I pointed out that he would be paid at the end of the week. I tried to sound him out about living in the north, and he claimed it made no difference to him where he lived. I asked him if it was adviseable to leave a job that he had, and go look for work in another place. He thought perhaps it was not. I asked him if he had had this job, when he had written to his wife first, and he said he had not. In that case, I pointed out perhaps his wife will feel differently about going south, when she knows he has a job here. He said he would write to her and tell her of his job and find out if she was willing to come down to the lower mainland.

A later report indicated that Mr. X's wife had joined him in Vancouver. Mr. Y. had been able to contribute adequately to his family's support for some time, but when his business began to fail, he was unable to keep up the same monetary payments. In spite of the fact that Mrs. Y. was aware of the situation, she became very demanding, and this in turn increased his hostility to the point where he became disinterested in payments. At the same time, he was still interested in his children and contact with the agency helped him to relieve his guilty feelings and to again assume his share of the financial responsibility. Four interviews were held with Mr. Z. who constructed an elaborate picture of his responsibilities and pressures. The worker felt that Mr. Z. was counting on the unwillingness of his wife to take the matter to court for a legal settlement and further contacts seemed futile.
The family agency endeavoured to see the deserting husbands in eight other cases. Mr. Fife was completely dominated by his family, who felt they were superior to his wife, with the result that interference of in-laws prevented any constructive case work with the husband. This was also true in another case, when the mother-in-law prevented any effective agency contact with the husband. Mr. Rollins was most anxious to impress himself upon the worker, but contact with the agency did give him some understanding of the needs of his son and his relation to him, so he kept up assistance voluntarily, probably due to the influence of the agency. Mr. Olson was most demanding of the agency, and it is doubtful what influence it had, although he did keep up his financial contributions to the family. Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan both wanted to make their own plans without any thought of the children, but contact with the agency between 1945 and 1947, probably kept the family on an even keel, since Mr. Sullivan kept up his maintenance for the family. Later the children were placed temporarily, but they were returned home when the family re-united, although the husband deserted again.

A British war bride was referred for financial assistance when her husband deserted her. The couple had re-united by the time the husband was located; however, the agency's experience with British war brides indicated the pattern would continue, because these girls seemed unable to take any decisive action to secure support. One case at the Family Welfare Bureau, particularly showed that case work with both parents as individuals can be constructive and helpful to the total family situations. In this case the husband had left to establish another household in the city, but the agency gave constant support and environmental help to his legal wife and their children over a long period of time. At the same time the husband was seen periodically, and the following extracts from the case indicate how interest in his family was
Mr. Knight wondered what the future would be for Lorne, and what his individual capabilities would be. I said that we were not sure, but that we had been anxious that he get some sort of training. I discussed the community resources in schools. Mr. Knight did not think that Lorne would be taken away from his mother, I recognized that this would be hard, both for Mrs. Knight and Lorne, but emphasized that Lorne should have the opportunity for some sort of manual training. I suggested that Mr. Knight see the schools, so that he would know what they were like. I asked Mr. Knight he would like to see Dr. Knott who could give him a better idea of what Lorne's capacities were. Mr. Knight said that he would and asked that I arrange an appointment with him.

Mr. Knight asked me how Jean was getting along. He said she will not speak to him on the telephone, but he would like to know her. I told him of Jean's progress in school and of the printing and colouring she had done. Mr. Knight seemed anxious for any information I could give him in regard to her.

Mr. Knight asked about the charges for this schooling. I explained the fees, and said that I realized he had a very heavy financial burden and wondered whether he thought he could take on the extra. He said he might be able to do this but not before September. I said that we might be able to find some assistance, but thought it might be preferable for him to make his own arrangements. I asked Mr. Knight if he understood what a burden Lorne was becoming to Douglas (aged 15) and Jean. He said he knew it was difficult for them, particularly for Doug who was taking a good deal of responsibility. He said he wondered if Mrs. Knight might be able to contribute a bit towards Lorne's school expenses, but quickly added that he didn't suppose she could do this.

Mr. Knight also thought that Doug had been wasteful of money, and should give more to his mother, to relieve him of some of the expenses. I talked a little about the behaviour of children at that age and thought that Doug had done unusually well and had not been involved in any delinquency. About this time there had been a great deal of publicity about juvenile gangs and their destructiveness and I said Doug had kept clear of this kind of thing and was well thought of at school and by his employer. Mr. Knight seemed to be proud of Doug and said that he was going to try to get him a job that summer at the plant with him.

The possible whereabouts of the deserting husband was known in ten of the cases in the public agency study. Four men went to British Columbia, where contact was made with two of them through welfare agencies and with another one through a welfare agency and the R.C.M.P. Because of past experiences with the fourth husband, no effort was made to contact him. The three men who were
contacted gave evidence of some interest in their families, and we felt that two of them continued their support because of periodical contacts from an agency. A fifth deserter usually spent his absentee periods in British Columbia, part of which were always spent in gaol, when we received word of his whereabouts. One husband while on a holiday visit to Regina was contacted by the agency, and he continued thereafter to keep in touch with the agency by sending financial support and by making enquiries about the welfare of the children. The four remaining men could usually be found in Regina, but two of them moved so frequently that it was most difficult to keep in touch with them. In one of these latter cases, the family was eventually broken up and the children were made wards; in the second case the wife kept the children for a temporary period, after which she moved east leaving the children with the paternal grandmother. In the meantime the husband had become an elusive alcoholic, eventually, however, he was contacted and plans were worked out with him for the temporary committal of the children. Following these contacts, he settled down in his work and made payments for the care of the children. In the last two cases the agency's help brought about one reconciliation and produced more stability for the children in the other, although warring relatives easily upset the equilibrium in the latter family.

Statistics point up the ill effects of broken homes, and although the numbers continue to increase, there appears to be little literature on the subject of dealing more effectively with these situations. It is the writer's opinion that one of the first considerations is the contact of the agency with that other member of the family, not however with the focus of returning that individual to his home. In summary, it appears that deserting husbands suffer a good deal more guilt about leaving their homes in comparison to their wives
when they leave. This, of course, may partly be due to the general knowledge of the legal responsibility of the husband to maintain his family, and in some respects to tradition handed down to us. Generally, the husband is much more difficult to locate, but once he is found, he is apt to be more receptive to the worker and more willing to accept some responsibility for his family. Indeed, deserting husbands seem to expect an authoritarian attitude and are surprised instead, if they receive some thoughtful understanding. In the majority of cases, the sex of the worker appeared to make little difference in the results of the interviews with deserting husbands, in fact, there was some indication that the men benefited by this contact with a woman whose focus was concerned with the total welfare of all. The deserting wives in the present study were all interviewed by women, but it would be interesting to survey in the future whether male social workers might be more successful in dealing with deserting wives.

The most successful cases were those in which the agency had a long contact of several years with the client, in other words, cases in which both husband and wife had learned to trust the agency as an unbiased helper with their family problems. The family agency cases indicated a definite trend in recent years to draw both parties into the agency for a discussion of the marital problem. Most workers now seem to agree that wherever possible, the husband must be interviewed if the agency is to continue with services in the home. The case records also indicate that the attitude of the agencies has changed toward the deserter, and this is particularly noticeable since the war. Every effort is made to help the wife and husband work out a more mature attitude towards their own future; but the main focus is not reconciliation, but rather the best possible plans for all concerned under the existing circumstances.
CHAPTER III
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DESERTION CASES

Charlotte Towle has well said, "We fail to comprehend the inter-relatedness of man's needs and the fact that frequently basic dependency needs must be met first in order that he may utilize opportunities for independence."

Despite the fact that most provinces recognize the need for basic economic security, it must be admitted that public assistance has not kept pace with the rising cost of living. This of course, varies widely with the provinces, with the leadership given by lay and professional groups, and with the community awareness of some of the aspects of public assistance. Although the federal social security programmes and provincial hospitalization schemes have helped to pave the way in interpretation of government aid, the majority of people still have little or no understanding of public assistance, and they show little inclination except in individual cases to learn more about the programme. The majority of social workers veer from public assistance work, and yet here is the field which requires a high degree of skill and influences the largest number of people.

Our first contact with desertion cases is most frequently through a request for financial assistance, at which time the client comes to the agency, burdened with the problems of family re-adjustments and faced with real fears about his subsistence. Unless provision is made to secure the necessities of life, the client frequently becomes temporarily paralyzed in his ability to think or plan for the future. City clients at least have the objectivity of a large agency. However, one need only attend a municipal council meeting in districts not far remote from large cities, to realize that many in the local council still think of people in need as a class apart from other citizens.
Expressions such as, "No wonder he left her," "Well, it is up to him to get her back," "She will have to take him to court," "Their kids are hoodlums anyway," indicate the real lack of understanding which still prevails about the family left by a deserting parent.

It is generally agreed that economic security tends to safeguard relationships and to make it possible for them to be more stable and enduring; and as a rule, the economically secure individual is able to make the best use of his talents in planning for the present and future. As we extend to the individual the rights to which he is entitled, not only what is given is important, but how it is given. Our services must be given in relation to the client who presents the need; but the nature of the relationship with the person imparting assistance, or the status of this person in the feelings of the recipient, often are decisive factors in the whole attitude with which the individual uses assistance. Public assistance workers encounter people at a time when their feelings are strong. The deserted wife is a special case of this, because she brings to the agency all the conflicting feelings of people in need of assistance plus the loss of self-esteem and of status in the family as a wife. No matter how much she justifies her own actions, she still wonders and fears about the community feeling. She resents this and her response may be one of dislike for the worker, particularly if the worker does not have a broad understanding of the inter-relatedness of the reaction of people to economic means. If the worker is a man, the deserted wife may tend to identify him with her husband, only to find the situation more humiliating and frightening.

When people are emotionally disturbed, they tend to be highly sensitive to every reaction, and unconsciously misconstrue meanings to what workers say and do in helping them. Deserted wives often appear to show a
strong desire to become overly dependent on the agency, in fact, they frequently want the agency to take on the role of a parental figure telling them what to do and say. Quite often there is an element of retaliation against the husband, who had previously been threatened about "seeing the welfare if things did not change." Psychiatrists say that people regress to earlier satisfactory life periods, when they meet frustrating experiences in human contacts. It is the opinion of the writer, that men and women who have been deserted by their spouse appear to regress to a dependency state, quite markedly at first, or to a state of marked ambivalence in their feelings towards everyone. It is important for the worker to bear this in mind; otherwise, an inadequate impression of the client's potentialities is often assumed and the worker instead of helping the client muster his real strengths falls into the trap of creating greater dependency needs in that individual.

Adolescents in deserted families who are living under economic difficulties are subjected to extra stresses. The remaining adult in the home is more anxious, uncertain and defeated and this insecurity is quickly conveyed to the child. The adolescent frequently finds that he may be expected to meet the demands of the adult; the adolescent boy may be called upon to fill the role of the father and to assume some economic responsibility for the family or in turn he may be compared to that good-for-nothing father who ran away. If the mother finds outside employment, the older girls sometimes have to assume parental responsibilities at an early age. A deserted parent often raises difficult questions about the money their children earn, and this of course, is often aggravated by the attitude of relief giving agencies.

Within our society money is the symbol of adequacy, in fact, many of our standards vary with the wealth of the individual. The young people in public assistance families are denied to a great extent the allowances of other children and the planning that is required to go along with money earned.
From observation, the writer is inclined to believe that the latter problem is the more serious in families broken by desertion. If money is on hand, deserted wives seem to feel that they cannot deny their children anything, and adolescents who earn money delivering papers frequently spend every cent on candy, shows and comic books. Seldom do these children get the opportunity to learn any real value of money or any constructive use of budgetting; and, at times, this has created a false impression and husbands were discouraged from providing more funds when they saw how the money was spent.

Because our society places such emphasis on money, it becomes the symbol for status, friendships, and affection within the home. This seems to be particularly true when deserted wives find themselves without friends and without their husband, coupled with the loss of economic security. All the client's childhood feelings towards his family, plus the mixed feelings towards their spouse and children are mustered together, as they approach the agency for the first time. The caseworker must be well prepared to meet this initial impact, and to proceed thoughtfully and slowly before making a quick decision about the best plan. The worker may see the economic need and be anxious to help the client establish eligibility; but the client, instead of assisting in this plan, shifts the tone of the interview to her husband. Sometimes, it becomes necessary to meet the emergency situation and to delay the exploration of plans until the client has again mobilized some inner strengths. However, it is extremely important that there is a clear understanding between the client and agency on any financial arrangements which might be made. Too often, the client is further confused in dollars and cents about what total help they can receive, how much they can earn, and what action the agency proposes to take against the husband.
Diagnosis of Problem

The wife usually arrives at the agency and tells the worker that her husband has left her and she has no money. Rarely do they use the word desertion, but none the less, there are certain common factors which appear to be present at this time. The wife often requests relief urgently, although the immediate need for this is not always substantiated; seldom do these deserted wives give any indication of responsibility for the separation and at this time inexperienced workers may become biased in their viewpoint.

In almost every case the woman's original request is a frantic appeal for financial support either from the husband, or from the agency which she views as an instrument to make her husband assume financial responsibility. In fact, it is almost an exceptional case in a public agency, to find an initial request for help with the marital problem. Many workers feel that the economic problem is urgent, but several months later, they learn that the actual situation is quite different from that gained in the first interview. Therefore, the granting of assistance at the outset can become a decisive factor in the domestic situation and it is most important to explore the full situation carefully before any aid is given. The following summary from a file points up the need to be aware of the total situation.

A young attractive woman with one child was referred from a private agency for assistance. Reports indicated that her husband was always drunk, and that on the last occasion, he had beaten her unmercifully and she had left him a week ago. They had been unable to contact the husband and she was now living with friends.

The intake worker met a well dressed young woman, who launched into a long story of her husband's cruelty, drinking habits and temper. She sparked as she talked and it was evident that she was going to "show him." The worker listened carefully and explained that it would be necessary to contact her husband and talk over the situation with him. She didn't think he would talk to welfare workers, because he didn't have any use for religion or welfare. Mrs. O. did not mention any urgent need for money and conversation revealed that she was living with friends who were persuading her to go to a lawyer to get financial settlement.
The husband was contacted with little difficulty, and although at first hostile, he soon relaxed; and when he realized he could tell his side of the story, he seemed to become quite a different person. This was the fourth time his wife had gone off in a tantrum when she could not get her own way. He said that he did drink with the boys, and at times his wife had carried on in such a way that he had lost his temper and struck her. Subsequent facts proved that this man was not only a very adequate supporter, but he was very fond of his wife. With the help of an agency, a reconciliation was effected, and eventually the couple were able to use some psychiatric guidance.

This case might easily have been accepted for temporary assistance on a referral basis, had the worker not realized that the basis of the difficulty was a marital problem and not a pressing financial need.

In some cases the granting of assistance without a careful appraisal of the family situation may establish an economic level which the husband finds difficulty in keeping up. This is not common, but sometimes it does remove the last props from a husband who might stay on the job to provide for his family.

Mr. P. had deserted four times for periods of four to five months. The family always lived beyond their income, so it became necessary to get city relief for them each time. Oddly enough, Mr. P. had the ability to find work on his returns, no matter what the employment situation was at that time. On his last sojourn with his family, he remained ten weeks, then phoned the worker and said, "Well, I'm blowing, I'm not sure where, but I hope the agency will look after the family. They seem to be able to provide more than I can."

If the wife has precipitated the desertion, premature initiation of relief may be destructive because it plays into her desire to be free of her husband and to return home.

Mrs. Q., a thirty-eight year old woman was intelligent, overbearing and very positive about everything. She had shown strong hypochondriacal symptoms, but she was an able housekeeper and a reasonably good mother. Mr. Q. was just as strong willed, so that casework methods failed to bring about any permanency in the home situation, although it helped to effect two temporary reconciliations. Eventually, Mrs. Q. and her three children returned to her home. Her family were on public assistance and the addition of four persons created a situation which caused Mrs. Q. to continually plead for more assistance. Week after week the whole family requested the office.

The municipality in which Mrs. Q. had residence refused to grant assistance, because Mr.Q. steadily consented to support his family if
they would return. Finally, the agency did provide a complete medical examination for Mrs. Q. and the worker was able to talk to her about the negative findings. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Q. found herself a well paid job and within a year she was able to provide for herself and family. In addition to this, Mrs. Q. was able to make constructive use of the agency's help in other problems.

In this case the agency felt that Mrs. Q. might have become a long term dependent case had she been established on full time assistance, but she was intelligent enough to benefit from the acceptance and understanding she received at the agency and to move out on her own. Many of these women show a strong desire to return to the parental home, despite the fact that material conditions may not be as satisfactory as those they left. If assistance is given too quickly, a possible reconciliation with the husband may be prevented, or the woman may be further hampered in her ability to be independent.

In many cases the initial interview is a difficult one, and frequently, one interview is insufficient to make any diagnosis of the real problem or of the personality of the client. As a guide, the following factors might be borne in mind while making a partial diagnosis in the cases of deserted wives asking for immediate public assistance.

1. Is it impossible to see both parties before granting financial help?  
   If so, are there any resources in the family or with friends, who can assist the client for a few days? Friends and relatives often change their attitude towards a client if they feel the agency will not give immediate help.

2. Is the state of anxiety of the client occasioned by the lack of funds or the desertion of the husband?

3. What potential strengths does this client show or has shown in the past? Can she use the help of an agency without receiving financial assistance?

4. Does the client view the worker as a parent or a professional person who can help her? Does she feel that the worker identifies with her deserting husband?
5. What is the attitude of the wife towards the children? Does she focus on their needs in order to get attention away from herself?

6. Have there been previous separations? If so, what caused them and how long did they last?

Financial Assistance in a Public Agency

In the province of Saskatchewan, it is necessary to establish one year's residence before an applicant is eligible for assistance. A large proportion of the poorer residents in Regina live "over the tracks," and relief in this area comes under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. Then again, a number of cases involving desertion have moved about so frequently that they have never established residence and they are therefore considered a provincial responsibility.

The Regina city relief office (1950) employs no trained workers and the attitude of "the old relief days," is still predominant. While it is true that once a client does establish eligibility, the allowances including rent, clothing and fuel add up to a low minimum standard of living, yet nonetheless, people are still often categorized on a moral basis, the ability to keep a clean house, or willingness to take any position which is offered. There is little understanding of personality or what assistance means to people, although there is a good degree of confidentiality and recipients of relief are not made known to the public as a whole. The city relief office rarely refer any cases for casework help, although generally, referrals for relief from public and private agencies still continue to be carried by those agencies as family and protection cases. Consultations as a rule are on a telephone basis.

The social aid branch of the public agency is in the same building as the child welfare branch which administers protection services for the city. None

X The writer has noticed a change in this situation since 1950, consultations are more frequent, and the general viewpoint is more liberal.
of the social aid staff have social work training but they have become most aware of the implications of social work thinking in assistance practices, and if there is an indication of a problem other than a financial one, they quickly confer with appropriate social agencies in the community. The case is then carried on a joint basis with frequent consultation and in some ways this compares to the service offered by the city of Vancouver, except that it is preferable for only one worker to be working on a case.

In the group of twenty-five cases from the public agency, fourteen had received assistance from the social assistance branch of the province. Six of the women were on full public assistance, and by the end of 1950, it appeared that their husbands would not return. With the exception of one woman who would undoubtedly become self-supporting, the remainder of the group would be unable to support themselves. Only one husband sent maintenance and this to the extent of about two hundred dollars per year. Nevertheless, the worker thought that some financial help might have been obtained from two husbands if any real attempt had been made to contact them at the time of desertion.

Two women received temporary assistance for themselves, plus a complete medical check-up financed by the government, but it appeared unlikely that they would ever support themselves by any lawful means. Subsequently, their children were made wards of the government, and for several years after committal proceedings, the father of four of the children contributed a large portion of his salary for their maintenance. A third woman received only a medical check-up, following which she was able to find work and become self-supporting for herself and three children. Two women with large families were finally established on Mother's Allowance and in both cases the husbands had given only periodic support when they were at home. In two cases the families were usually supported by unemployment insurance or social aid during
the winter months. In one case the wife found work and supported herself and two children for eight months, after her husband left, but later on when the husband returned home, there was every indication that the previous pattern of dependency would be repeated. In the other case the woman left every four or five months for a temporary period, but the husband was always able to make arrangements with his family for the children's care. In one family both parents eventually deserted leaving the child to the care of the maternal grandmother who was on social assistance.

Four cases received aid from the city at various times. In one case, it was felt that the wife who presented a hard cold exterior, moved into a common-law relationship, partly because she could not stand the pressure of the relief officials. This particular case has been extremely costly for both the city and province, and one cannot help but wonder if the breakdown on ten lives might have been prevented, had there been a better diagnosis and plan originally made. Two women delighted in exploiting the relief office and they would do anything to earn a few dollars and "get away with it." In seven cases no direct assistance was paid to a parent, but the children of six of these families received temporary or permanent foster home care at government expense.

It would be difficult to estimate the number of deserters whose families remain self supporting, because these cases do not reach the agency unless there are serious behaviour problems in the children. Most of these cases end up in legal separations or divorce and financial responsibilities are not carried by an agency. In Regina, several requests were received by the agency inquiring into the welfare of the children but there was no mention of financial assistance.

In reviewing the cases where periodic desertion is common, one cannot help
but wonder what can be done to help these families achieve some measure of economic stability. While we realize that the fundamental problems of deserters are often deep seated personality difficulties, yet experience makes the worker believe that agencies which administer assistance could give more effective service to these clients. While reading records, the writer noticed some of the following characteristics in workers. Untrained workers sometimes contact deserted husbands for financial help with an authoritarian, policeman-like approach; or they may tend to condone the husband's flight from a nagging wife, rather than viewing the situation as a whole. Trained workers have a strong tendency to avoid the issue, meanwhile excusing their tardiness by phoning or writing the husband in vain attempts to have him contact the office. Many workers seem to feel this is not social work, and they are ill at ease when they are asked to follow up a case by making every possible endeavour to contact the husband.

The writer thinks that the majority of requests to contact deserted husbands should be treated as urgent, since deserters generally fear welfare workers and it is the rare individual who will come voluntarily to the agency. Often one interview with the deserter is sufficient to strengthen his feelings that the worker is interested in him individually, as well as with his family. For this reason, immediate contact has prevented a number of deserters quitting their employment and leaving for other provinces, because some reasonable settlement can often be reached if the man has not left his work. There are some individuals whose monthly payments have to be checked constantly for the first few months, but when they do establish the habit of regular maintenance, they appear to take a definite pride in the discharge of this responsibility. These methods may be somewhat alien to social work thinking, but the results prove themselves not only financially, but in the attitude of both husband and
wife, and in the way in which they can benefit from the help of the agency.

The following case is cited as an example of the different attitudes, which may be taken towards a deserter when both parents have been seen.

Mr. Clark held a responsible post in the military service and after the war, he continued in the same work, but in a civilian capacity. During the war years, he had married a government ward who was very much younger than himself. When the war was over, Mrs. Clark and her three children returned to her mother's home, because Mr. Clark could not find suitable accommodation. Four years passed by, and Mr. Clark still gave housing as the reason for living apart, although the agency dealing with the case felt that housing was not the main reason for the separation.

Mrs. Clark's mother and sibling had been known to a private agency in the city for many years. Finally, this family reached the end of their endurance, and they began to complain about the little monetary help which they received from Mr. Clark. Conditions steadily deteriorated, and eventually the case was referred to the public agency because of neglect.

It was learned that Mr. Clark was expected home at Christmas time, so a definite effort was made to have him call at the office. When he did call, he expressed real concern about the care of the children and he asked about temporary care for them. He also produced receipts to prove that he had sent over one-hundred dollars per month for the care of the family. Following the committal of the children, he continued to provide maintenance for them.

Public agency workers can gain a wealth of diagnostic material while dealing with people in relation to money, and every new case presents a challenge to the worker. Since no two individuals react in the same manner, workers need to be constantly integrating their own experience and learning into more effective practice.

Financial Aspects of Desertion Cases in a Private Agency

Because of the close working relationship between the Family Welfare Bureau and the Family Court in Vancouver, there appears to be a higher percentage of deserters who discharge their financial obligations to their family in Vancouver than in Regina. This might be partly due to the fact that desertion may be more acceptable to the western community than to the prairie provinces, and this is somewhat substantiated by the comparison of divorce statistics in the two cities. Actually the deserter from the
prairie provinces more often resembles the chronic non-supporter, who has himself grown up in a similar environment and who has never learned to assume family responsibilities.

A case work supervisor in the family court of Vancouver stated that approximately eight per cent of their cases were settled out of court. This included cases in which the families had effected a reconciliation, those where counselling services were given, and a small number of cases in which interviews were held with clients outside their jurisdiction. In the cases studied at the Family Welfare Bureau, it was difficult to determine whether the agreement was reached at the Family Court with or without court action, although it was apparent that even in some cases where court action was necessary the preliminary social work discussion had been constructive to the client.

The Family Court had interviewed fourteen cases out of thirty cases studied at the Family Welfare Bureau. In ten of these cases the men appeared to be trying to maintain the terms of the order. In one case the order was not enforced, because the wife worked and the husband had always been maintained by his mother who wanted this dependency. A second case revealed that the husband's family adopted the same attitude, and the wife, an English war bride, was reluctant to take any action to have the order enforced. In another case neither the wife nor the Family Court were able to obtain support from the husband, but the case was closed, when it became evident that the wife could not use the help which the agency could offer. In nine cases the husband provided assistance on a voluntary basis, and as a rule, the amount allotted was a fair proportion of the man's salary, despite the fact that in many cases the wives constantly pressed for more money. The following extract is taken from the records at the Family Welfare Bureau as
an example of this type of situation.

Mr. Wilton earned $200 per month, out of which he sent his wife $70 and paid $50 rent on the home in which his wife and family were living. In addition, Mrs. Wilton received the rent from a basement suite, plus the Family Allowance. Mrs. Wilton kept insisting that her husband could send her more money, and eventually, he left his employment.

Mrs. Wilton wanted the agency to reprimand her husband, but when it was suggested that she was putting too much pressure on him, she was reluctant to have the agency contact him. When Mr. Wilton was finally seen at the Family Court, the workers were very favorably impressed by his contributions and the case was dropped. Afterwards when Mr. Wilton resumed his work, he continued to send money for the care of the children.

The insistent demands for more money are often linked up with the assumption that the money is being spent on another woman, in addition to the resentment at having to face the family burdens alone.

There are many individuals seeking help from a family agency who appear to benefit a good deal by some small measure of economic assistance. Some help with clothing, a few dollars to tide them over, or even the knowledge that they can obtain help if destitute, is enough to restore their self respect. Again the agency through its knowledge of community resources may be able to obtain free medical care when required, assistance from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or from community clubs. There is always the client who is ineligible for public assistance through no fault of his own, the client who is temporarily unable to function because of emotional stress, the mother who needs special clothing so her child will not be different from others. A new dress may give an adolescent girl a different feeling about herself and it may help her to find employment. In an article on relief published in The Family in 1942, Clara Rabinowitz makes the following statement, which sums up the thinking of the agency in regard to temporary financial assistance. "If caseworkers know the agency can give help, their problem and the client's then becomes a mutual one of seeing "how" the
agency's meeting the need is related both to the agency's basic and philosophical purpose and to the client's goal for the family."

In six of the thirty cases studied at the family welfare bureau some assistance was given on the diagnostic basis of need. In another case the woman refused to enter the hospital because she had no money, but when a worker found she was eligible for assistance, she agreed to hospitalization. The agency was then able to locate her husband and he sent her money until she was able to make other plans. The following illustrations show the way in which a family agency can assist clients over a difficult period.

When Mrs. Sawyer lost most of her bedding through a fire, the family agency referred her to an army club, where they were able to assist with bedding and other necessities. Mrs. Sawyer had also accumulated a number of medical bills which were a constant worry to her, but referral to the Dependents Board of Trustees enabled her to clear up these debts. These services together with the knowledge that there were community services for financial help and medical care in time of need, helped her to become a self supporting person able to care for herself and child.

Mrs. Thompson suffered from a chronic ailment and she was not able to work to supplement the income received from her husband. The Family Welfare Bureau were able to give some help financially and they provided periodic help with clothing for the children. Train fares were provided for the family, when an opportunity arose for the family to visit on a farm for the summer, and although nothing further was heard from the family, it can be assumed that they were able to work out satisfactory plans for themselves in a rural setting.

Mrs. Tait had part of her army allowance cut off when her husband left the army without permission. Temporary assistance tided this woman until she received a cheque from the army.

Mrs. Wood was referred by the Department of Veterans' Affairs for help, when Mrs. Wood who lived in another province was hospitalized. The family agency arranged conferences with several agencies and as a result the Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to pay maintenance until he was discharged from the hospital, the Benevolent Fund paid half the cost of a visiting house-keeper while Mrs. Wood was in the hospital, and the City Health Centre arranged for clothing for the children. The final results in this case were most promising, but without this help Mrs. Wood might have been returned to an impossible situation in another province.

In three other cases, when there was evidence of very strong anxiety,
small sums of money and some clothing were given and this recognition enabled them to make use of their own resources.

A supervisor at the Family Welfare Bureau in Vancouver, concluded her address at the Canadian Conference on Social Work in 1950 with the following statement. "We can never really help our clients, unless our treatment is effectively related to their particular needs. We cannot achieve differential treatment without sound diagnosis. We must also strive to maintain our sense of values. I have devoted considerable time to discussion of those families who need supportive and environmental treatment. I think this emphasis is sound because those families represent a large proportion of our case loads. We must remember that when we provide their children with such material help as clothing, or health services, or summer camp, we are meeting their particular needs, just as surely as we meet the needs of other children for direct casework treatment. The kind of treatment we give is not important in itself. What really matters is whether our treatment meets the individual's need."

Court Action

Probably, very few of the women who go to police courts asking for maintenance orders against their husbands, realize what lies ahead should a court order be secured. The present situation seems unbearable to these wives, and for some reason, they endow the court with a magical influence to make their husbands return or support them. Despite the fact that they are aware of the earning power and employability of their husbands, they constantly refuse to face the real facts of the power and control of the court.

In Regina, the writer found that this idea was somewhat fostered by the city relief department, although their own experience had shown the futility and cost in the securing of these orders. The wife was hampered in her
ability to get city relief, until she had laid the complaint with the city police court, and the latter realizing the difficulties involved tended to discourage the complaint. At this time particularly, clients need the help of a casework agency, not only to clarify the general legal procedure to meet eligibility standards, but to support them in facing a situation involving court. The following paragraph sets forth clearly the view of those people who deal with family situations in court settings.

"The need for full investigation of matrimonial discord will only be realized, when upon the Courts themselves is placed a legal obligation to see that wherever possible an adequate investigation is made. At present our Courts are limited to the legal duty of deciding, according to strict laws of evidence, such questions as 'has desertion been proved?' and 'Is there wilful neglect to maintain?' To few magistrates has it yet occurred that their duties are at present too restricted. So long as these conditions continue it is idle to hope for much reduction in the number of broken homes with all the consequent dangers to the children. Marriage problems are not solely matters of law. More scientific handling of the factor of matrimonial discord would very considerably strengthen our attack on the kindred social problems of divorce and child delinquency."

In Regina, desertion and non-support cases are still held in the usual public manner in the police court, with the local newspaper representative present. Generally this means that a tired magistrate who has heard a long list of traffic offences is now called upon to listen to a tale of domestic discord, and on his attitude and decision rests the future of the marriage as well as the welfare of the children and parents. The defence often used

\[X\] This has been changed considerably since 1950 and more help is now given the wife who lays a complaint.

by a husband is that he is willing to live with his wife, when and if she will change; the wife frequently complains that her husband has beaten her. A magistrate who dislikes this type of case and without any examination of the real conditions, or its consequent results, may suggest that they start over again. Within a short period the couple may be back again, and the clerk of the court may be so tired with their continual re-appearance as to suggest any plan to keep them away.

The court setting in which desertion cases are heard has an important bearing on the reaction of both parties in court. All court formalities are bewildering especially to the uninitiated, and in Regina, these cases are heard in the city police court which has the traditional appearance of a court room. The average couple involved in desertion cases appear in the witness box without benefit of counsel, and afterwards, it is common to find that they cannot recall what they said in court, besides being further bewildered by the court procedures. As a rule, the hearing does not even skim the surface, much less touch the problem.

Four cases were involved in police court action, out of the twenty-five cases from the public agency. In one case the husband was escorted by the R.C.M.P. from Vancouver to appear in court in Regina. On the witness stand, he readily agreed to send his family at least $100. per month, a sum certainly not in line with his monthly earnings. In addition the court fined him $200. though the agency had been maintaining his family for some time. The cost of travelling expenses plus the fine might have benefited the family situation considerably. In another case, the relief authorities persuaded the wife to lay a charge everytime her husband disappeared. She appeared in court three times in a period of two years, but in every instance she withdrew the charge when the time for the hearing arrived. One husband who had dual citizenship always managed to get across the border,
following the hearing. The fourth couple sought legal advice from two different lawyers, but the only money paid out at the end of eighteen months was that paid in legal fees.

It cannot be over-emphasized that the application of the law however correctly applied is seldom enough. The law is a cold thing and individuals involved in marital discord need human sympathies and understanding as much as they need legal decisions. Many of the younger lawyers are aware of the need for social diagnosis and they immediately refer these cases to social agencies. Social workers in turn should recognize the immeasurable value of sound legal advice and support from the court, and it would seem that in desertion cases the legal and social problems must be worked out on a joint basis between the court and social agency.

A summary of the brief presented by the British Columbia Mainland Branch, Canadian Association of Social Workers, to the provincial government in 1948, stated the following, "The Family Court setting for administration provides for an individual approach to situations coming to the attention of the court, and allows for consideration of the social factors of the situation in pre-court, court and post-court contacts. Consideration can be given to the advisability of, and the most effective method of action, and close contact can be maintained with social agencies and other groups and resources in the community, to facilitate provision of any available service which would appear helpful to the particular family."

The Vancouver Family Court was established in 1945 along the lines suggested in the above brief. This agency now has a staff of social workers and probation officers working along with the legal authorities. The writer has not made a study of this court, but in the financial area, the results of court action in cases in Vancouver showed a marked difference from the cases
studied in Vancouver. Even if one takes into consideration many factors which would necessarily influence the type of case, the results show that the Family Court were successful in securing a financial response from the husband in approximately two-thirds of the cases where they were contacted.
CHAPTER IV
THE EFFECTS OF DESERTION ON CHILDREN

Both parents play some part in the physical and emotional development of children, and the feelings which the child may develop as the result of desertion by one or both parents, are also important. There are many parallels between physical and emotional needs, and in the ill effects of meeting these needs inadequately. It has been established that a child who has attached no negative meaning to food intake will seek those foods that his body needs; similarly, a child's behaviour, if understood, will indicate the emotional hunger the child is trying to meet. For example, a child of ten will often indicate a need for a dependency type of love, which resembles the pattern of a three year old. The small infant cannot gain proper nutrition from food that meets the needs of adults; and in the same manner, the emotional needs must be modified according to the emotional ages of the child. The child is not born prepared to meet the frustrations and dangers of the outside world. He needs to have an adult, who can temper the situation for him and adapt it to the structure of the child.

Even before the child is born, the relationship between the husband and wife may have an effect on the attitude with which the child is received into the home. The wife needs to have a fatherly tenderness and protection from the husband, but if the man is unaccepting of the child, then the wife is

11. The following material served as a guide in the writing of this chapter.

4. Josselyn, Irene, Psychosocial Development of Children, New York Family
5. Spock, Benjamin, Baby and Child Care, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946
bound to have some reaction, with stronger feelings of love and hate for the expected child. The family triangle of father, mother and child is beginning to form, and the extent to which the triangle is complicated depends on where the parents are in their emotional development. If the pregnancy period is one of frustration, deprivation and unpleasant demands, the woman may resent this period, and her capacity is lessened for acceptance of her child at a level of increasingly developed maturity. The first phase of personality development is referred to as the oral phase and it is generally regarded as constituting the first twelve or fourteen months of life. The first days and weeks of life are of vital importance not only in the nursing experience itself, but in the attitudes of the one who is taking care of the child. The infant has largely one satisfaction: being fed, and, supplemental to it, being in contact with his mother and having her affection. The first step in the child's healthy development is a capacity to sense the love of another and to turn to that individual who can meet his dependency needs. Some fathers have been brought up to think that the care of babies and children is the mother's job entirely. We know that the father's closeness and friendliness to his children will have a vital effect on their character for the rest of their life, so the time for him to begin being a real father is right at the start.

Most mothers may feel somewhat depressed when they come home from the hospital with the first baby. It is the feeling of being responsible for the whole household again, plus the new responsibility for the baby's care and safety. The father begins to feel that his wife and the rest of the household are completely wrapped up in the baby, and so the vicious circle begins. The mother should remember to pay some attention to her husband and she should give him every chance to share the care of the baby. The early dependency period of the child is of real significance in terms of the ultimate personality pattern. Lack of satisfaction does not result in growth but rather in a
continual search for satisfactions that are not forthcoming. Infants, as has been indicated, have their needs met first on a physical basis. If the parent gratifies these physical needs and at the same time gives emotional warmth, the child gradually develops the capacity to receive love independent of physical gratification. During this very important period of the child's life, he can readily acquire the feeling of desertion by the mother, especially if she is busy with many tasks, and even more so, if she is upset emotionally and has to carry the total family responsibility. Many fathers who take little responsibility for the children during these months are still able to give the necessary security to the mother and she can satisfy the infant's needs; but this is not the case when the father is entirely gone from the home.

The next period on which to focus our attention, lasts roughly from the end of the first year to the end of the third year, and is known as the anal phase. The most significant manner in which the child has to conform during this period is to go through bowel and bladder training. He also learns that it is important to keep his body clean, to be neat about his clothes and to share with other children. Children have their own rhythm about toilet training and it is especially important that both parents have some understanding of what can be expected. Too often they compare their children with other children or they set standards guided by their own parent's advice. If the parents do not agree about methods of toilet training, the child becomes further confused and more difficult to train. If a child is happy and well adjusted at the end of the first year and the mother indicates what is expected of him in the matter of toilet training—does not hurry him too much, does not become irritated, does not become unkind on too many days—she will get the desired result. The father should realize that his wife has an
ordeal of diapers and cleaning up, often along with other monotonous work. If he does this and shows some consideration for her, then she will react with more tolerance toward the children. It is during this period that fathers generally being to show a greater interest in the child's curiosity, and if desertion occurs at this time, the child may appear to be too young to understand what has happened, but child psychologists feel that even before he is a year old, the effects of such a loss are evident.

During the third phase of personality development, which covers roughly the period between the ages of three and six, the child is leaving a stage of self love to a stage where he can give love as well as receive it. There is perhaps a short stage in which the child appears to love both parents without discrimination other than that encouraged by differences in attitude shown by them. He loves the persons who have been the source of his security and pleasure. This love does not remain asexual, however, and normally it turns with greater intensity to the parent of the opposite sex. The ramifications of this domestic triangle and the effects of them are different for the boy and girl. This period is a difficult one for both the boy and girl, and the way in which the conflict is solved determines the future relationships of the adult in their relationships with the opposite sex and in marriage.

The love relationship between the boy and his mother gradually comes to be broken up by the presence of the father and by the fear of his disapproval, anger or punishment. At this point, the boy's feelings toward his father are mixed, and he is, of course, ambivalent to him. He does not want to give up the feelings he has for his mother but if the father is a reasonably kind man and a desirable character, the boy decides to identify with his father. The same thing is true for the girl. If she is to advance toward healthy emotional maturation, she must find gratification and security in a feminine role. To do this she identifies with her mother but represses the sexual
aspect of the identification. Both boys and girls should begin to turn to
outside contacts in order to lessen the tie to the parent figure, but there
are many situations which prevent the smooth evolution of this period. If
the father is out of the home at this period, the mother frequently plays
into the boy's conflicting feelings about her and unconsciously she endows
him with the role of the father in the family. Not only is the boy more
confused with his role, but he may have had no father figure by which to
pattern himself. If a small girl loses her father through desertion, at this
period, she may tend to become too strongly attached emotionally to her
mother, and it may form the basis for homosexuality. Many women today have
never worked through this period and the girl who adores her mother may
find it difficult to move into normal marriage relationships. This is a
difficult time to make changes in the child's environment, such as foster
home placements, since the significant factors are often bound to the person-
ality structures of the parents.

The latent period of personality development in the child's life is
between the ages of six and ten, or from the sixth year to the onset of
puberty. This is a comparatively quiet period, based on earlier experiences,
when the child turns to his school and his neighborhood for much of his
emotional outlet. The nature of the child's relationships to his parents
is often revealed for the first time during this period. If a child has
learned through intimate day by day contact with his parents that adults are
accepting, friendly persons, even if at times they impose rules, he will
turn to new adults with the confidence he has learned through early exper-
iences. Wise discipline at this time gives the child a sense of security and
at the same time of freedom. However, both parents must agree on the matter
of discipline, and in cases of desertion, one finds that parents seldom, if
ever, agree on any aspect of control. Most children accept reasonable restrictions if they have the reassuring experience of having their own desires considered, when major decisions are at stake. At this period, boys in particular, need some male influence with whom to identify and unless they get it in the home, they do not generally receive it in the schools of to-day. The writer has noticed that in the groups of delinquent boys between the ages of 9 and 12, there is a high percentage from homes, where there is no father.

Today, many children growing up in America must have a tendency to believe that women are the bosses, since they receive the greater part of their home supervision from women, and again in public schools, much of their early teaching comes from female instructors. In the old days, the frequent contacts of the sons with their fathers in the performance of a man's work had values for children which we cannot match. Through them, children saw specifically the whys and wherefores of hard work, self control, honesty, and other essential virtues. They saw their fathers practice punctuality, courtesy and the rest, even in the face of discouragement, and knew that a man's livelihood depended on his capacity to see things through. Although girls still have an opportunity to help around the home and keep busy in a useful fashion, the boys of today are to a great extent denied this learning experience. However, it is not only in the matter of work that identification is important. Boys need a male figure from whom they can gain confidence in sports and other manly competitions. The lack of any accomplishments is quite noticeable in the histories of juvenile delinquents, and the cause, too frequently, is that these youngsters never had a chance to learn with the helping hand of a father figure.
The final phase to be discussed is that of adolescence, a period which is a trying one for all concerned, even under normal circumstances. It is at this time that parents and teachers, frightened by the apparent instability of the adolescent, tend to inhibit where freedom formerly was implied. Very often, the concern of the parents has some justification. It is important for the parents to realize that while the adolescent protests his adequacy to care for himself, he is actually more frightened than he has been since infancy. From fourteen to twenty-one the adolescent must decide upon a vocation and do some work in preparation for it, effect an emancipation from his family, bring about a satisfactory relationship with the opposite sex, and integrate his responsibility. Even in mature families a great many misunderstandings arise between parents and their adolescent children. In practically every family the adolescent fights a war of independence, but much more so in families broken by desertion. The remaining parent fights to retain authority, at the same time pushing the untrained adolescent into the economic world to support himself. He is also expected to assist financially in his home. The parent fights with black looks, scolding, forbidden rules and taboos; the child fights with sullenness, secret rendez-vous, disobedience and open defiance. Parents need to discuss these problems together and give support and warmth to the confused adolescent, but if there is only one parent in the home, then a tendency develops to focus on the parent's needs rather than those of the teenager. The adolescent begins to regard the gang-thinking as his only law, and does not temper this psychology with that incorporated from his parents, who have shown a steady, constant and mature understanding of his problems.

Finally, the individual needs to be helped by both parents to see the necessity of participation in the life of the community, the nation, and even of the world in which he lives. As an adolescent grows up he needs not only
to be taught to think of himself, but to be tolerant of people individually, to refrain from being too critical and too aloof, and to have a willingness to take part in community life. The teenager growing up in a home with one parent has often lacked the opportunity to mingle with other families where there are two parents. They become biased and intolerant, listening to the one-sided view of their parent, and they begin to see the world as a force which works against them. They feel they have no part in the community life and enter the economic world with a chip on their shoulder. Children need both parents from the earliest years, not only as providers, but because each parent is an essential contributor to the child's sound emotional growth.

The following summary from a file shows the importance of a father person in the home and the immediate effects on the children of the absence of their father.

Bill was five and John was three years of age, when their father started to leave the home for six or seven months at a time. While the father was in the home, he gave a great deal of affection to his children and played with them in his spare time. He was never cruel to the children, despite his nightly drinking sprees, and he took a real interest in teaching Bill how to use a building set and other mechanical toys. Bill was an intelligent boy and he enjoyed learning new things, as well as finding out some of the answers to his inquiring mind. When Mr. Black left the home, he usually became involved with the law and remained in prison for a few months.

Mrs. Black was an extremely erratic, impetuous girl, and each time her husband left the home, she had to seek public assistance. The city relief authorities showed no understanding of her difficulties, and assistance was usually obtained only after she promised to "lay a charge" against her husband. Mrs. Black talked a great deal about her husband to everyone in the neighborhood, and frequently the children became the target of their mother's hostility.

Within a few days after Mr. Black left, Bill would start to throw stones and beat up other children in the neighborhood. He would demand to go and live with his grandfather, and when he visited there, Bill would refuse to go home. Several times he started off by himself "to find his dad."
John, the second boy, always grew increasingly irritable, cried on any provocation, and would start to wet the bed again.

The neighboring children teased these boys about their father, and Bill especially, began to ask questions as to why his father had left them. This made the mother more irate and her own loss of security reacted on the children. Behaviour problems increased in the two boys, until finally the community began to complain about their behaviour. This same pattern repeated itself each time the father left the home, and just about the time that some adjustment had taken place, Mr. Black would arrive home again.

In this particular case the children were really deprived of both parents, and this appears to be the common result in homes where parents habitually "take off" for indefinite periods. The mother, remaining in the home, without friends, feels completely rejected and acts like a child herself. She fails to give the children the increased love and security which they need at this time, and instead takes out her feelings against her husband on his children.

To children, desertion means the disruption of the foundation on which their lives rest and the confusing realization that the parents on whom they depend have failed. Although some children seem to take the breakdown of their home in their stride, they are likely to be concealing more complicated feelings. Others, like Bill, cannot understand why their parents cannot live in friendship and harmony.

Delinquent behaviour frequently begins to appear in the latent period, when a boy has no masculine person with whom to identify. The following case illustrates this type of behaviour.

Mrs. Stevenson was a neurotic, high strung woman, with grandiose ideas. During the war period the children were under six years of age, and reports indicated there was no serious problems in the home. The father returned home from overseas, remained for a few years, then left the home, just before another child was born. Mrs. Stevenson became increasingly dissatisfied with her uncertain limited income, her need to apply for assistance, and her rejection by her
huband. She constantly nagged the boys and compared them to their father.

George and Douglas Stevenson aged eleven and nine in 1950, were two boys who had been exceptionally popular in the school and community. Both lads had outgoing personalities and a genuine, infectious spirit which attracted old and young. Their school work was about average, they participated in school and community activities and they presented no problems.

Within a short period after the father left the home, a marked change was noted in the behaviour of George. By the end of a year, he had become a sullen lad, and there were reports from the community of petty stealing and exhibitionism. He began to attack his mother in sullen explosions and eventually he began to strike her. He lost his interest in school and in sports. He talked frequently about his father and his mother began to compare them, always speaking in deriding terms about "their father". George said he was going to his father in the west, despite what his mother said.

Douglas did not follow George's pattern until about the end of 1950, at which time he began to show the same characteristics as George. There was every reason to believe that both boys would eventually become delinquents if they remained in that environment.

These are two everyday examples in a public agency, one in which the children were under six, and the other in which the boys were over six and under twelve.

Numerous articles published after the war, brought to the attention of child welfare workers that the child suffered more from being separated from his parents through the evacuation scheme, than he did when he remained with them and underwent the experiences of war. It was thought that separation from the mother was more traumatic for small children than separation from the father. However, observation of desertion cases would lead one to believe that reactions to separation from the father tend to go on under the surface and not to become evident for several years.

Children of Deserting Parents as seen from a Public Agency.

In twenty-two out of the twenty-five family cases selected from the
public agency, one or more of the children in each home presented behaviour problems. In two of the remaining cases, the occurrence of problems in the children appeared to have been prevented by case work services. The other case concerned an adolescent girl who had successfully weathered the most depraved conditions of any family in the group. In this group of twenty-two cases neither parent showed any marked degree of stability, so the child was really left without any real parent.

In the two families where the children did not exhibit behaviour problems, the mothers appeared to be mature enough to face the problems of managing a home alone without unduly projecting their feelings on their children.

In this group of twenty-five cases, eighty-one children were involved, and this does not include the older children over sixteen, who were out of the homes and had already become unmarried mothers and juvenile delinquents. There were thirty-eight children in the group from one to six, twenty-eight in the group from seven to twelve, and fifteen children in the group over twelve years of age. Every type of problem was presented in these cases. Some children became more aggressive when a parent left the home and some became more withdrawn.

In the group from one to six, the common problems appeared to be extreme dependency on the remaining parent, temper tantrums and enuresis.

Generally, in the period from six to twelve, when a parent deserted, the school results of the children, particularly the boys became poorer and this often marked the appearance of behaviour problems both in the home and in the community. Truancy was common with boys, although this seemed to depend more on the particular teacher and school. Girls were often kept home to mind the younger children, with the result that they soon lost interest in their school work. In three cases, the boys began to steal after they were eleven years old.
In the group over twelve, three children appeared to be well adjusted, due to the stability in the home. The majority of the girls began to show indication of sex problems between the age of thirteen and fourteen, and when they began to stay out late, the remaining parent soon found them uncontrollable. One of the girls ran away several times. In this particular group there were only three boys over twelve. One boy left school at fourteen and there were indications that he would follow in his brothers' footsteps to the industrial school. Two other boys had been placed before the age of twelve in foster homes. Both these boys had done remarkably well, and one had won a scholarship to the University. Their sister, who remained with the mother showed little incentive for anything, and there was every indication that she would leave school as soon as she was old enough.

Out of these twenty-five families, children from seventeen of the families were placed temporarily or permanently for foster home care, for periods from three months to permanent wardship, which is discharged at twenty-one. In one case arrangements were made to pay relatives on a social aid basis; two boys were placed by their mother in an institution which is partly supported by the province. Eighteen of the children, all under ten years of age were made permanent wards of the Minister of Social Welfare. If we take into consideration the number of children who were made permanent wards until eighteen, when they are generally self-supporting, and the placement periods of the other children, we get a total of 1384 months of placement, at a cost of thirty dollars a month. This cost the treasury $41,520. or $1660. per family. However, these figures do not include medical, or clothing and other expenses. If a very conservative estimate of $100. per year for clothing and $50. for medical expenses is made, the cost of dependency for this group of children would total $58,770. or an approximate
cost of $2350. per family. The facts concerning these families indicate that in ten of the twenty-five families, further placements involving twenty-seven children will be necessary.

These figures show that broken homes are a real economic problem, but they do not show the broken lives, which are the result of these homes. Out of these homes will come the unmarried mothers, the juvenile delinquent, and the gaol prisoners. They are not only costly in terms of monetary figures but they start another generation in the same pattern of personality disorders.

Children of Deserting Parents as seen from a Private Agency.

In the thirty cases studied at the Family Welfare Bureau, a total of seventy-eight children under twenty-one years of age were involved.

In the age group from one to six, there were twenty-eight children, but only five of these children were mentioned with behaviour problems. Three children were enuretic and aggressive in behaviour towards smaller children. Two girls showed some difficulties when their father left, but the problems gradually disappeared with the help of the agency.

In the age group from seven to twelve, five boys and three girls exhibited problems, out of a total of thirty-one children in that grouping. One boy of eight demanded constant attention; one boy was enuretic, dependent and withdrawn; and one lad of twelve showed pre-delinquent tendencies. Two boys were taken into care by the Children's Aid Society because their mother could find no one else to care for them, but the record did not mention any serious behaviour problems.

In the age group over thirteen, more problems were mentioned in the records. Fifteen children out of the twenty or seventy-five per cent showed some personality maladjustment, in comparison with seventeen and twenty per cent in the first two groups.
Two girls were reported as very nervous, one found difficulty in her business adjustment because she hated all men, and one girl was reported as neglected. An older adolescent girl was taken into care by the children's aid society, and later, the record indicated that she was confined to a mental hospital.

Out of the ten boys mentioned, three showed symptoms of psychosomatic illness, another was pre-delinquent and wanted to quit school, two were quarrelsome and aggressive, and one boy appeared to be completely tied to his mother. Three boys from one family were delinquent in behaviour. The older one, who was reported as stealing and unable to mix with other children, was found dead under a house, when he was fifteen.

Out of this group of thirty cases, there was no mention of problems with the children in ten of the families. In one of these families two children had moved nine times. In another family in this group, one girl was diabetic and one had polio, but nevertheless these girls appeared to have made a good adjustment in daily living.

Case Work with Parents and Children in Homes Broken by Desertion

It is significant that only three children out of the seventy-eight in the last study were placed under agency care, in comparison with forty-four out of eighty-one children requiring placement in the public agency study. What then is the fundamental difference in these cases in regard to children?

A public agency is responsible for accepting all cases when they are referred for service, and as a rule, the case is not referred until the family bonds are so weakened and personality patterns so distorted that casework services are less effective.

The private family agency in Vancouver selects those cases in which the family group shows enough positive strength to benefit from the help of the
caseworker. This agency is aware of the necessity for social diagnosis, and they use skilled casework consultants to consider the focus of the treatment. Community services to children are better, and the child guidance clinic offers consultative and treatment services for children. Several agencies now employ workers who are qualified to carry out direct treatment of children.

If the remaining parent in the home is accepting of casework services, the beneficial results can often be measured by the normal progress of the children. It may seem presumptuous to credit this to the case worker, but we only need to compare these children with those from deserted homes, where welfare services are totally rejected. The direct results of casework with the parent lessens the strain on the child and this enables him to face the reality situation in a normal manner, without pre-conceived ideas and prejudices. The amount of supportive help of course varies with the individual, but for the first few months the woman generally needs some steady reassurance, that she is not completely inadequate and that she can give the children a good deal of security, even by herself. She needs help in interpreting the missing father to them and in helping the children talk about it to the other children. If possible, she should be helped to talk about desertion naturally, rather than with terrific feelings of emotion which inevitably carry over directly to the children. It is important to look for some interest for the mother outside the home, for no woman can live a hermit's life and remain unbiased with her children. Here again, the worker can give helpful guidance in helping the deserted wife from over-indulging and protecting the male child, especially when the worker is aware of growing signs of pre-delinquency.

The following case illustrates the way in which a worker helped an adolescent boy through a major crisis in his life.
Mrs. Brown had been deserted by her husband about 1944, but she did not seek help from an agency until 1946, when she came to seek advice about the handling of her second child. He was then eight years of age and was too dull to attend school. Mr. Brown supported his wife financially, but she could not accept the fact that her husband had left her for another woman.

The agency worked continuously with this case and built up a very positive relationship with Mrs. Brown. They also kept in touch with Mr. Brown, but they were very careful not to take sides in the marital conflict. Mr. Brown maintained an interest in the children and kept up his financial obligations. Both Mr. and Mrs. Brown were helped very gradually to accept the fact that the younger boy could not learn like other children.

The oldest boy, Jeff, was twelve years of age when the case opened. Because his mother accepted the helpful interest of the agency, he too was able to relate to the worker in a positive manner.

"Jeff, now fifteen, was angry about having to take a letter to his father. When he got home he was furious, as he always was after he had seen his dad. He felt there should be some way they could get more support from him, and he told about improvements his dad had made in his home and of new things he had bought. Jeff felt it was very unjust. Mrs. Brown said to Jeff that there was nothing more they could do about it, and finally calmed him down. The worker said she could understand how very difficult it must be for Jeff, but that it was just as well for him to be able to talk it out with his mother than to keep his resentment to himself. The worker said she would be very glad to talk to Jeff at any time too, if it would be of any help. Mrs. Brown said she thought it would, and she could arrange for that.

About a year later, this lad became involved quite by accident, with the juvenile court. The family worker told the court of Jeff's excellent record and through her intervention, the boy was placed on probation to her. Jeff was very relieved at the outcome and followed out every recommendation of the magistrate."

This family case was still active in 1951, but by this time, Jeff had secured himself a steady job, although he was still hoping and planning to get a university education. Jeff continued to contribute to his family's support, but his mother, with the help of the case worker, was endeavouring to help her son to effect a more complete emancipation.

In this case the workers served as stalwart persons upon whom Mrs. Brown could place some of her burdens and from whom she was assured warmth and sympathy. In this relationship, the mother and indirectly the children, gained the satisfaction of which reality deprived them. In many of these cases, the continuous sympathetic support of the worker, appears to give the remaining partner an understanding of her reactions to her children, with the result that the children develop in a normal manner. In addition, this
help often stabilizes the restless reactions, which wives frequently feel when their husbands have left them. It is not an easy task to assume the role of both parents, and deserted parents need the support of any help which the agency can give.
Marriage is one of the closest of all human relationships; it is hardly surprising that lack of adjustment in marriage often causes great difficulty. Both choice of partner and the adjustment to married life are tests of maturity, tests which a great many people cannot meet. However, despite all the advice given by authorities, there is no one pattern of adjustment in married life, for the personalities of husband and wife impinge directly and constantly on each other. Its central core is love in all its variations; its greatest hazards are hostility and anxiety. At times, anger and hostility enter every marriage; if they are not expressed overtly, then they exist covertly, although the degree and manner of their expression vary enormously. Moreover, immature needs as well as mature ones are expressed and gratified in marriage; and, in the normal course of events, childish dependence emerges, even between husbands and wives whose relationship is characteristically one of adult independence.

What are the aspects of a desirable marriage? A good marriage could be defined as a relationship between two people in which there is equality and satisfactions which give security and happiness to each individual. It permits self-confidence and neither party undermines the other; there is gratification of dependency, independency needs and sexual drives. Marriage permits a couple to create a family and to continue development of all the incentives in the direction of more maturity. What is needed is a capacity to be parents, and to give love to the children as well as to each other. A desirable marriage involves tolerance of people outside the home and an understanding of cultural and community relationships. Modern writers on psychiatry,
psychology, and social work emphasize the ideal marriage as one which exists between two mature people; but nevertheless, there are many so-called neurotic marriages which seem to meet the needs of the two partners. It is extremely difficult to assess all the tenuous qualities which hold a marriage together, because some marriages break up after one or two disputes, while others continue through violent battles. Usually, it is necessary to understand the personalities involved, as well as the environmental factors that may be pressing on the individuals in the marriage.

Personality Factors in Desertion Cases

A study was made by Dr. Hollis, Professor of Social Work at Columbia University, of one hundred families selected according to a random pattern from eleven large family service agencies, after the completion of the treatment period. These marriages involved typical marriage conflicts from the middle and lower economic strata of society. The over-all impression left by the study of these cases is that personality factors lie at the root of most marriage conflicts. Not infrequently other factors, such as relatives, cultural differences, and economic pressures, contribute causally to the maladjustment; sometimes they play a major role, but more often they are either symptomatic of the personality factors or subordinate to them. This does not mean that they can be overlooked in treatment, even though the major treatment effort is directed to psychological factors. 17

The material studied in the fifty-five family cases of the present study permits some comparison to the study of Dr. Hollis. In these family cases studied, the social workers gave enough written information about the wife and/or husband for the reader to form a fairly complete picture of the

17. Hollis, Florence, Women in Marital Conflict, Family Service Association of America, New York,10, N.Y. 1949
personalities involved in these desertion cases. Certain factors were taken into consideration in summing up the personalities and these will be discussed very briefly. Adolescent characteristics were shown by many of the clients who still appeared to be following a teen-age pattern; their life was pleasure motivated and they were unable to meet the reality demands of marriage. Their ideas of marriage moreover, were often based on romantic portrayals, commonly seen in the movies, or in fiction magazines. Some neurotic marriages were held together by the need for punishment and the desire to punish. The alcoholic marriages closely resembled this pattern and to some extent they are the so-called masochistic-sadistic unions, in which the one partner seems to be seeking punishment and the other one desiring to render it. At first the alcoholic is submissive and dependent, then his resistance builds up, at which time, he punishes his wife with oral abuse and blows; a period of atonement may then follow when the wife gets some satisfaction from being dependent again. Parental ties and the inability to emancipate themselves from their parents handicap many marriages; a number of relationships were further complicated by interfering relatives, especially mothers-in-law.

Different cultural backgrounds in religion, education, nationality, economic security and modes of living have long been recognized as significant in marital instability. The general populace frequently express the feeling that economic conflicts cause many conflicts in marriage, but it is difficult to determine whether the personality factors are not the ones which precipitated the economic difficulties. In recent years, the relation of sexual and marital incompatibility has been widely recognized by psychiatrists and social workers; but there is little evidence in the records read to show that the increased knowledge of sex had strengthened the marital tie. Promiscuity, either real or imagined seemed to have a definite effect on the trust and confidence in the home and in the family relationships as a whole.
Among the fifty-five couples studied, three women had been diagnosed as psychotic, all of them having spent a short period in the mental hospital. Three other women had been diagnosed by a psychiatrist as having psychopathic personalities, while a fourth wife showed the same typical characteristics. Two men were psychotic and a third man had been diagnosed as a psychopathic personality. Psychologists had rated four women and one man as inferior in intelligence. (these were below 80) The social workers in the agencies, considered three women to be alcoholics, two other wives drank to excess, and there were numerous complaints from wives that pay cheques were spent for liquor. Definite adolescent characteristics showed up in nine wives, and this was indicated by their inability to give up pleasures as dancing and shows, when there was no one to care for the children. It was difficult to determine how many men were really functioning as adolescents, since it was not known just how they met day-to-day responsibilities. Definite adolescent characteristics were prominent in five men, but the writer does not feel this is an accurate count.

Both husband and wife bickered constantly in ten of the families; the wives nagged and the husbands retaliated by being hostile, cruel and loud. Both men and women in this group went on periodical drinking sprees. It was known that nine women had promiscuous relationships with men, although this does not take into consideration the women who left their husbands for other men. It was impossible to determine how many men had extra-marital relationships. There was evident indication that four men and five women were very strongly tied to their parents; none of these nine individuals could make a decision without the advice of their family. Interestingly enough, the men seemed to be even more dominated by their parents than did the wives, but in these cases, it was apparent that the husband's mother was hostile to the wife.
While one wife openly rejected her feminine role, it is probable that other wives, not so vocal, felt the same way. The records called one man a religious fanatic, whereas guilt feelings about religion showed up prominently in the conversation of one wife.

"Dependency", was the most noticeable characteristic appearing in the records of these broken marriages, and in the light of the previous discussion on dependency factors, this diagnosis could generally be considered as correct. Twenty-one women and eleven men showed definite dependency traits; six women from this group were unable to make up their mind about the desertion of their husbands, although the workers thought they would have accepted the return of their spouse under any conditions. In particular, English war brides, found it difficult to resort to court action, but this may have been partly due to the fact that they were far from home and without any kin in this country. In the fifty-five cases, there was insufficient information on nine men to arrive at any conclusions in regard to definite traits in their behaviour.

From the social worker's point of view, desertion is itself only a symptom of some more deeply seated trouble in the family structure; therefore, the problem presented is not essentially different from what it was before the man or woman's departure. However, the majority of cases have not come to the agency until one parent departs, and we can only hope with the increasing knowledge of agency services, that we might expect to receive these referrals at an earlier date.

Treatment Methods

Treatment methods are common terms used in casework records and in social work magazines; there is evidence enough in the files of social agencies to prove the scientific correctness of methods which have been developing over the past thirty years. Environmental treatment means the modification of the
environment so the individual can profit by the assistance of an agency when the external burden is reduced. It may involve helping a deserted wife to find new living accommodation or helping him with a referral to an employment agency; temporary financial assistance might be obtained due to sickness, when a mother enters a hospital; a visiting housekeeper might be secured to help keep the family together. Generally speaking, this type of treatment is undertaken when it is felt that the client is unable to make these plans himself or he is unfamiliar with the existing resources in the community, but the writer feels that it is most important not to minimize this type of help in favour of purely psychological.

Counselling may be a matter of helping the client to line up the issues in a decision or to see the needs of others as well as the results of his own actions. Insight or interpretative treatment is a newer type of treatment which requires an increased skill on the part of the worker and it is usually used in consultation with a psychiatrist. The purpose of the development of insight is to increase the client's understanding of himself and his situation so he can manage his life with less anxiety. A term frequently used in casework is the client-worker relationship, a term most difficult to define, but it is on that intangible rapport between the client and worker that the success or failure of the case depends. The type of plan and the direction it takes is determined to a large extent on the type of relationship which can be formed between these two people.

The effectiveness of family case work in marriages that are facing dissolution can, to some extent, be measured by the degree of adjustment the client is able to make to his new situation. At times, this involves the acceptance of the responsibility for caring for children, the surrender of family ties or the legal transfer of the authority to care for the children. In both agencies, it is important to note that when separation plans were the
final outcome, the workers were very careful not to give legal advice on the marital status, though they did clarify what was involved in the legal commitment of a child.

**Evaluation of Services of Agencies**

The data which are compiled from the study of records are important not only for over-all planning in the field as a whole, but to individual workers; for the experience of different workers offers a yardstick to judge and evaluate what methods are most effective. Why does one case show marked improvement whereas in another case, with the same apparent potentialities, fails? Improvement occurred in some situations, with little relation to the service offered by the agency, while in other situations there was little response, despite the use of skilled agency workers. The type of situation presented did not seem to be the determining factor, but rather the personality of the client to make use of outside help. In the present study an attempt has been made to compare the home situations before and after services from the agency. No attempts were made to evaluate the skill of the caseworker in dealing with the particular problem of desertion.

Many of the causes of failure of these marriages have just been outlined, for example, there were four psychotic individuals, four psychopathic individuals, five of inferior intelligence and several alcoholics. Characteristics of adolescence and excessive dependency showed up very strongly. In some cases there was a further breakdown of the marriage, but the help of the agency did focus the attention of the parents on concrete plans for the children, so, an actual improvement did take place in the family situation. In some cases, the agency felt that a reconciliation was a positive movement, if the lasting effects in the home were for a more harmonious feeling between the various family members. If a separation resulted in less anxiety and
hostility within the home, or even for one partner without having too adverse an effect on the other, then further considerations were considered an improvement. Progress was noted too, in cases where the agency helped the deserted wife or husband adjust to the desertion of their spouse.

While it is recognized that criteria selected for evaluation of a case record can be precise when read only by one person, nevertheless, some general conclusions can be made from the careful study of these records. The financial aspect of each case was considered whenever possible, because fundamental to almost every case of desertion is the economic situation of the family left to fend for themselves. One of the first responsibilities of the agency is to ascertain the real financial situation of the family and to determine what present resources the family has; the possibilities of securing steady support from the husband; the possible attitude of the family toward relief; and the effect of loss of income on the morale of the whole family. The worker here has a most important role in maintaining a helping but constructive relationship with both partners, without in any way antagonizing or criticizing either partner. The help given by the agency in this area is often not financial, but the results of discussions with the deserter have a direct bearing on the financial outcome and whether relief will be necessary. Some assistance with rent or clothing will at times accomplish wonders, but the worker must be very careful in assessing what this might mean to that particular client. Each case must be assess on its own merits, and there is no one set of rules to cover all cases. The contact of the agency in relation to financial aspects of the situation was especially ture of cases which had been referred to the Family Court in Vancouver.

Following contact with the deserter, the agency is faced with the difficult task of helping the wife to face the reality situation without a

X These case records were all fully read at least twice, assessed on each reading, and then classified by the criteria as outlined in Schedule A, Chapter 1.
complete loss of morale. The results of the understanding, objective attitude, with which the caseworker deals with both husband and wife, can only be estimated by the total improvement in a case, but nevertheless, it is felt by the writer, that this is what often influences the whole trend of the case. The help of the agency to the children in these situations is frequently one of protection, to observe that the situation in the home does not deteriorate to the point where the children are permanently harmed. Children appear to benefit most by the direct effect of casework on the parent, with the consequent increase or decrease of tension in the home. While the agency can help to maintain a subsistence level of living and help with clothing and medical care, the real importance to the children in the home is the improvement of family relationships within their environment.

In the cases designated "no improvement", no change was observed or the situation became more unstable. In some of the cases it appeared that some improvement might have taken place in the deserting partner, but at that point the case was terminated by the client for varying reasons. In the cases designated "some improvement", there appeared to be some movement tending toward a more positive outlook in the attitude of one or both of the marital partners. Sometimes, the men continued to make more regular financial contributions, and in other cases, more adequate plans were worked out for the care of the children. "Considerable improvement", implied that a definite improvement had taken place in the home situation. In these cases the deserted wife or husband had been able to accept the desertion and to make changes within the family life that afforded some permanent security for the children. In some of these cases the deserting husband was encouraged to maintain an interest in his family as well as in providing some financial support for them.
There appeared to be a striking similarity in the percentage evaluation of the cases, studied from the two agencies. However, it was felt that the family breakdowns were more serious in the "no improvement" cases from the public agency; the results showed that more children from this group were committed as wards; these breakdowns in most cases could be considered as permanent. No evaluation could be made of the future results of separation on the children, or of the second generation of broken homes, which would undoubtedly result from these broken marital unions.

In the private agency study, thirteen cases or 43.3 per cent showed little or no improvement. In two of these cases, the mother-in-law interfered to such an extent that the help of the agency could not be used, and in four cases the clients appeared to be unable to accept any help from a worker. In seven cases there was no positive movement; the situation remained static or deteriorated as shown by further separations and breakdowns, as well as in the increase of behaviour problems in the children. In the public agency study, eleven or 44 per cent showed no improvement, despite a long contact with the agency; although at times, there was some temporary improvement.

Forty per cent of the cases in both agencies showed some improvement. Typical of these cases were those where a crisis was reached in the family situation; the agency was then able to give help at this time, until the family had mobilized their own resources to deal with the situation. In other cases better plans were made for the care of the children either in their own home or with interested relatives or friends. In some cases the remaining parent gained enough insight to accept the home situation and effect a better understanding between the members of the family.

The very good or considerable improvement cases numbered five or 16.6 per cent in the private agency study and four or 16 percent in the public agency. In one case the agency helped the wife to accept the possibility
that her husband was not returning; following these interviews she appeared to gain some insight into dealing with the problems of her child, and she was later able to find employment for herself. In two cases, intensive case work with both parents produces changes, which indicated that the results might be permanent and constructive to all members of the family.

It is significant that approximately sixty per cent of the cases from both agencies showed some improvement while the agency worked with them. In one study by Mr. Wilfred Calnan, he found that in at least five of the eleven cases studied, the clients were helped with partial effectiveness, while in two others, it was too early to evaluate the real effectiveness of the work. The cases in this study indicate that workers need to evaluate carefully what happens in situations where the initial problems are somewhat similar but the effectiveness of results are widely separated. The degree of participation that the client can assume for talking about his problem and working towards a solution is an important factor in deciding what help he might be able to use. Better consultative and supervision services, along with more available reading material are helping to make workers more aware of the complex problems involved in dealing with family interrelationships. Some hope for the future would seem to lie in the strengthening and support of the family to provide some stability for the second generation.

Agency and Community Leadership

Because the seeds of desertion are usually sown in childhood, we see the same pattern repeated over and over again. A husband and frequently the wife had neglected and unhappy childhoods and they married early to escape the trials of their own home. This background left them immature and unfitted for the responsibility of married life. Preparation for marriage begins not when

---

the couple are thinking of elaborate wedding plans, although that is an important time for immediate preparation, but back at the beginning of their existence as a member of a family unit. The qualities of responsibility, stability, independence, as well as the social virtues of loyalty, honesty and integrity, if deeply implanted in the minds and behaviour of individuals as they grow up, would make very fertile soil for marriages later on. It is the very lack of these qualities which create emotional instability, which often ends in desertion, because when difficulties arise, individuals lacking in stability cannot face the problem squarely. These qualities which make for stable marriages must be ingrained in children, as they are forming their pattern of behaviour in the formative years from infancy to adolescence. Therefore, in looking at the whole problem of broken homes, it would seem that both the private and public agencies could give leadership in the way of immediate and long run approaches. Part of this could be done by the agency itself on a small scale and part by the influence of its leaders on the community and nation as a whole.

Improved social education should help to make emotional adjustments easier, but nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the causes of desertion are individual as well as social, and the method of treatment must take this into consideration. It is easy enough to talk of pre-desertion symptoms, but the problem seldom comes to the case worker until matters have progressed farther than this. The real problem is to get family referrals, when these symptoms are in the incipient stage. Public school guidance services working in conjunction with family services might help to spot the warning signals in children having home problems. The school could thus be drawn into a greater awareness of the home situation and their support could do much to help children over some of the difficult situations they face.
Marital counselling services might well be a part of the function of a family agency. The case work staff who give service in this area should be able to work sympathetically with all creeds, supplementing their teaching from other fields without duplicating them. Most important of all is the need to bring to the attention of every person contemplating marriage the value of seeking professional help at the time serious difficulties arise in marriage. Often, we see articles discussing the merits of preparation for marriage through marriage courses, and this opinion is further substantiated by Mr. Lamb who has been the chief investigator for New York's teeming Queen's County. His work is to find runaway husbands and over the past thirty years, (1950) he has listened to 90,000 complaints. In his discussion he cites the little known Quaker method of contracting a marriage. When it becomes communal knowledge that a given couple are thinking of marriage, a board of elders is summoned and the man and his lady must individually discuss with these elder heads their innermost thoughts and feelings. After several sessions of unbelievable candor they are allowed to resume their courtship. Mr. Lamb records that he has never had a call to find an errant Quaker husband.

Professional caseworkers are beginning to realize that marriage counselling requires the services of the most skilled workers in the field and much could be done by committee study or by an agency review of marriages, which involve desertion. We need to learn what special skills are required, and if certain workers are by experience, training and personality more adapted to dealing successfully with these cases. Caseworkers should also familiarize themselves with the work of others in the marriage counselling field,—psychologists, physicians, clergymen and lay people. Written articles often indicate that there has been considerable rivalry among many of the professional people, and yet what we need is a pooling of the knowledge and experience of many fields. The problem is a complex one to solve and there
is no one solution or quick remedy, and the situation requires the total potential strengths of the community.

There is still the tendency to associate welfare agencies with relief, and people are still dubious about the need for professional help with problems other than financial or medical. Group leadership in the community with a knowledge of marital counselling casework could help to interpret the function of the agency, so its services could help all groups of people. Until more research is carried out by qualified personnel in the fields of desertion and marital conflict, we can give only a superficial evaluation of case work services. Meanwhile, private and public agencies in Canada should feel responsible to give in-service training in the field of marital counselling whenever it is possible to secure outstanding leadership. This should be followed up by further staff education and group study with interested personnel from other fields.

The community centre movement which could promise so much for the stability of family life, is dependent on the responsibility which citizens will assume for the welfare of their community. On them rests the importance of informing themselves on welfare problems and of communicating their desires to representative bodies, who will assist in bringing about the desired preventative measures.

**Family Courts**

Every community is face to face with the problem of the deserting husband, who has run out on his family obligations, and who for the time being can think only of himself. The duty to provide for one's family is both a moral and a legal obligation; the object of the law making desertion a crime is not to compel husbands to live in unhappy homes, but to enforce upon them reasonable support for their dependent families. The community and tax payer are interested not only in the problem of support, but also in contented homes.
Dr. William Drummond at the Canadian Conference on Social Work in 1950, maintained that the family court could no longer deal in symptoms, the deserting husband or wife, but in causes, the underlying emotional factors. He suggested the family should be the child of a marriage between law and social science. The family court is in a key position to set up a plan, which will make it possible to bring people into the office of the therapist, the social worker, under order of the court. Some social workers might dispute this plan, but nevertheless, the writer feels that numerous individuals who find themselves in an authoritative setting soon forget the setting, if they meet the right type of professional help. Dr. Drummond stated that while the court should use the authoritative approach with the utmost reluctance, it should have in reserve ample authority for dealing with people who seem to understand only the language of authority.

The atmosphere of the family court needs to be an informal one, where parents and children should feel free to talk with members of the permanent staff of the court. The desired aim should be one in which the community could regard the family court as a clinic for the study of desertion cases in an effort to find a cure for old ills. The qualifications of the judge should be in addition to legal training, warmth and understanding of people. He should be the leader and upon him would rest the responsibility of promoting the usefulness of the court as a real social clinic to which parents would turn for suggestions and guidance. The family court should not be under the sole charge of the law, because by training and experience, lawyers do not have enough training in the behaviour of individuals. The lawyer has been trained to render decisions on legal problems, but not to adjust human relations. The staff of the court should be carefully chosen not only because of their professional background, but because they can establish a relationship with these clients and inspire confidence. The court
should have certain resources for purposes of referral or consultation, such as psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists, social agencies, the school, church, legal profession and interested non-professional people in the community. However, not until the population as a whole has a better understanding of human behaviour and of the emotional factors involved, will the community be willing to support a true family court. Nevertheless, the first step forward is the creation of an interest in remedial efforts to attack the ever increasing problem of desertion.

National Requirements

Canada's desertion and non-support laws are a conglomeration of provincial acts, every act different, except Quebec which has none at all. There is one nation-wide law relating to desertion—a section of the criminal code—but it requires a wife to be in destitute circumstances, and as a rule the community grants relief before such a state exists. Most provincial Desertion Acts allow a court to order the husband to pay support to the family, though generally speaking this is quite ineffective, and magistrates take a very lenient view of the situation. Every effort is made to find a man who steals twenty dollars, but actually, there is less effort to find family deserters, who commit an offence which is more serious and which certainly has more ill effects than theft.

If a federal desertion law was enacted and reciprocal agreements worked out between the provinces, the British Isles and the United States, deserting husbands would not be able to move away so freely. Reciprocal arrangements should be worked out between the provinces to facilitate personal interview, to attempt reconciliation, or to obtain voluntary payments for support of the family. The writer thinks that it should be possible in every province for a private or public agency to lay a complaint against the offending husband; this measure would protect the deserted wife should a reconciliation be
subsequently effected. Then too, a prompt referral could do much to promote
good working relationships and it would give the social worker the oppor-
tunity to interview the man while he is still concerned about his family.
Through the interview, arrangements could be worked out for the deserting
husband / or wife to make monthly payments for the family. This would
save a good deal of needless expense in transporting the deserter back to
his original residence and it seems to be a more positive approach in dealing
with the problem. The federal government needs to assist in a co-ordinated
effort, because deserted families and their children become costly as well as
social liabilities to the dominion. Co-operation on an inter-provincial level
between various social agencies and legal departments could also make this
method more effective.

It is a recognized fact that a large proportion of the people who often
need help from agencies, are people who spend countless hours in the movies.
More film "shorts" which depict the actual conditions of family life and its
resulting consequences, might help to give people a better perspective on
their own family experiences. Good wage levels, steady employment, better
housing and working conditions would ease the strain of family living
together for many people. Pride in workmanship and improved social
education would also help to make emotional adjustments easier. Planned
welfare measures help to build up morale, and broader social security
programmes would undoubtedly help to stabilize the home situation.
APPENDIX A

Criteria Used in Assessing Case Records

A Financial Aspects

(a) Considerable improvement:
1. Deserted spouse able to plan adequately for maintenance of children.
2. Deserting parent kept up economic responsibilities for family.
3. If family were established on social assistance and able to function within fairly normal limits.

(b) Some improvement:
1. Family able to maintain a degree of economic stability.
2. Maintenance payments more spasmodic than in (a) and more difficulty encountered by families having to live on assistance.

(c) No improvement:
1. No financial responsibility accepted by deserter.
2. Debts accumulated.
3. Financial aspect seriously affected family relationships in home.
4. Families resisting living on relief.

B Contact of Agency with Deserter

(a) Considerable improvement:
1. Contact with deserter resulted in better total planning for the family.
2. Through agency contact, the deserter began to show an interest in his family; encouraged to maintain this as well as his financial responsibilities.
3. Through the agency's contact with the deserter, the deserted spouse helped to accept the reality situation.

(b) Some improvement:
This is a modification of (a) and has to be rated accordingly.

(c) No improvement:
1. No contact made or maintained with the agency.
2. Deserter grows hostile and interferes with the plans made through the agency.
3. Neither partner can see the function of the agency except as a punitive measure against the other.
4. Court action breaks up any strength within the family relationship.
Effects on Children

(a) Considerable improvement:
2. The children function better at school, in the home, and in the neighborhood.
3. Physical standards improved in the home and for the children.

(b) Some improvement:
1. Lessening of tension within the home creates a better feeling in the home, with consequent results on the children.
2. Physical standards maintained on a normal level.
3. Children getting on at school and in the neighborhood with few difficulties.

(c) No improvement:
1. Physical standards in the home lowered.
2. Emotional problems manifest themselves in truancy, theft, etc.
3. Wardship taken by agency.
APPENDIX B

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Colcord, Joanna C., Broken Homes, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1919.

Deutsch, Helene, Psychology of Women, Greene and Stratton, New York, 1944.


Spock, Benjamin, Baby and Child Care, New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946.


ARTICLES


Rabinowitz, Clara, "When is Relief Giving the Role of the Private Agency," The Family, February, 1942.


--------,"Relief Practices in Desertion Cases," The Family, December, 1940.

REPORTS

The Canadian Abridgement, Desertion, (A Digest of Decisions of the Provincial and Dominion Courts), Burroughs and Co., (Eastern) Ltd.,

Laycock, S.R. Psychological Factors in Marriage, Division of Health Education, Department of Public Health, Regina, 1947.


Thorman, George, Broken Homes, Public Affairs Committee, New York, 1947.

Woolf, Joseph A., Prevention of Family Desertion, and Clark, G.B. Rehabilitation in Family Desertion, Fifth Annual Canadian Conference on Child Welfare, Department of Labour, Canada, 1925.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
(Continued)

THESSES


Ellis, Vivian, Multiple Placement of Foster Children, MSW Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1949