

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

IN METROPOLITAN WINNIPEG

Being a Thesis submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Social Work

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADOPTIVE FAMILIES  
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I. INTRODUCTION

"The primary purpose of an adoption agency is to find the best homes possible for the children entrusted to its care."<sup>1</sup> It is now generally accepted that, for the great majority of children, there is no better way of meeting their needs than through participation in normal family life where the child is loved and accepted. We believe that because each child's needs vary, an agency should have a wide range of potential adoptive parents, each different from the other and amongst these one particular family whose personalities and circumstances are such that they can most adequately fulfill the needs of a particular child. Which family is "best" for the child can only be decided when the full resources of the community, rather than one small segment of it, are available for comparison. This study is concerned with a comparative analysis of adoption homes in so far as they are the chief resource used by child placement agencies in meeting the needs of the adoptable children in their care.

It is only in recent years that adoption agencies have developed programs based on scientific understanding

1. Michaels, Ruth. "Casework Considerations in Rejecting the Adoption Application". Adoption Principles and Services. p. 14.

of children's needs. In the early days, in Europe and the New World, dependent children were cared for mostly by the church. During this period and up to about a decade ago great use was made of orphanages in caring for them. With the advent of legal adoptions the early emphasis was placed on environmental factors and adoption homes were selected on the basis of the family's ability to provide a pleasant home, adequate space, and financial security. The emphasis was on selecting the "right" child for the family, rather than on selecting the home for the child which would best meet its particular needs.<sup>1</sup>

At present, agencies base their selection of parents for a child mainly on casework understanding of the families, rather than on physical and environmental factors. In this selection of homes, while emphasis is placed on the emotional tone of each home, intellectual, physical and material factors are considered. Because children can be offered to so few families who apply, agencies have a responsibility for selecting for each child parents whose qualities and circumstances are such that the best possible home is found for each child depending on its needs. An agency, today, is concerned that the child shall be offered the opportunity to develop to the limit of its ability.

1. Brown, Florence. "What do We Seek in Adoptive Parents?" Adoption Principles and Standards. p. 2.



A number of follow-up studies have been made in the United States in order to estimate the success or failure of adoption placements and to point up ways in which adoption programs can be improved.<sup>2</sup> No studies of this kind, to our knowledge, have ever been publicized in Canada, and it would seem that little research has ever been done in this field. The studies made in the United States emphasized the child and its adjustment in the home. While our study is focused on adoptive families, it should be kept clearly in mind that we do this only because they are the chief resources used by adoption agencies in meeting the needs of the adoptable children in their care.

The purposes of this study are:

1. To enlarge on the knowledge of adoptive parents in so far as they are an integral part of the adoption process.
2. To examine some aspects of the casework process in the selection of adoption homes.
3. To indicate some recent trends in the adoption process.

The term "adoption" for purposes of this study refers to "the act by which a person takes the child of

1. For a summary of some of these studies see, Brooks, L. M. and R. C. Adventuring in Adoptions. pp. 170-179. The studies referred to are now out of print. For a recent follow-up study see, Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc. A Follow-up Study of Adoptive Families.

another into his family and assumes the legal obligations of a parent".<sup>1</sup> By "adoptable child" is meant "any child who has been legally surrendered by his parents and who is able to contribute to and benefit from family life".<sup>2</sup>

Adoptions, generally, are of three types: natural adoptions, where a child is adopted by his parent, step-parent or relative; private adoptions, where a family receives a child from a source other than a recognized child placement agency, this usually being directly from one of the parents; and lastly, "open" adoptions, with which we are chiefly concerned in this thesis, where a family applies to an agency for a child and, within limitations, depends on the agency to choose a child for them. Because "open" adoptions are the resource used by agencies in the placement of adoptable children in their care, we have limited ourselves to a study of this category, except that in Chapter IV we shall mention natural and private adoptions briefly.

In order to see whether families seeking to adopt a child formed a representative cross-section of all families in the community, certain factors which were available from the case records were tabulated and are dealt with in Chapter II. These factors included occupation of the adopting father, schooling of each parent, income and assets, religion, racial origin, ages at time of application and at

1. Young, H.F.Y. Dictionary of Social Welfare. p. 4.

2. Hallinan, Helen, W. "Who are the Children Available for Adoption". Adoption Principles and Services. p. 21.

marriage, and duration of marriage at time of application.

As indicated in the opening paragraph of this chapter, it was our original intention to examine some of the personal characteristics of adoptive families. It was hoped, for example, that a study of adoption records would give information which would enable us to make a preliminary assessment of such factors as the personal adjustment of each of the parents, their relationship to each other, their relationship to their own parents and siblings as an indication of childhood satisfactions, their attitude towards childlessness and towards infertility, their ability to accept an adopted child, and their understanding of children and their needs. These factors are considered important in assessing the personalities and potentials of the parents and the emotional tone of the home which they offer for a child.<sup>1</sup> However, after close examination of some 209 files it was found that the information available to us on these points was not sufficiently specific to form the basis of many definite conclusions. This is elaborated on in Chapter III.

Sources of Data and Method:

The sources of data were the files of the Child Placement Branch, Winnipeg Office, Division of Public Welfare, Manitoba. Because of the detailed home studies and recordings made of interviews it was felt that most of

1. Michaels, Ruth. op. cit. p. 2.

this information would be obtainable directly from the individual files of each family. For comparative purposes the various Dominion census records relative to Metropolitan Winnipeg and the annual reports of the Division of Public Welfare were used. From time to time comparisons will also be made to some of the findings of a follow-up study made in Chicago by the Child Adoption Research Inc.,<sup>1</sup> and published in 1951.

This thesis cannot hope to be more than a background study of some modern adoption methods. It was at first hoped to examine all open-adoption files for the years 1948 and 1949 under three categories: a) those families who applied in these years; b) those with whom children were placed in the two years; c) those whose files were closed in these years. However, because the files of those families who had applied in the two years were in various stages of being processed, it was decided to eliminate them from this group and to give all adoption applications since the post-war years a cursory examination in order to discover some of the trends in adoption. This is done in Chapter IV.

The advantages of choosing the years 1948 and 1949 for the other two categories of cases, i. e., those with whom children were placed and those whose files were closed in the two years, were that during this time the Division of Public Welfare had already embarked upon a program based

1. Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc. op. cit.

on modern theories of child development, for comparative purposes too great a period of time would not be covered, and these files were readily available. If a further study is made of adoption placements involving the cases studied here, sufficient time will then have elapsed since the placements were made so that it will be possible to judge their success or failure.

The reliability of the information will depend on how the various social workers at the agency saw and recorded the different situations. Any personal bias they may have had would be reflected particularly in the case-work aspects of adoption which are discussed in Chapter III.

It should also be remembered that only open-adoptions are dealt with in the first three chapters of this thesis. While some adoptions are dealt with by the Children's Aid Societies and the Jewish Agency, except for isolated cases, these are begun as foster home placements and become adoption homes only if the foster families decide to make the child in their home their own. These would, therefore, not be classified as open-adoptions.

## II. WHO ARE ADOPTIVE PARENTS?

### Introduction

In this chapter we will attempt to examine some of those personal factors which are common to a selected group of adoptive parents. The aim is to seek out categories which tend to describe these families so that a comparison can be made between them and the general population. A total of 209 open-application files of the Division of Public Welfare, Manitoba, were selected. Of this number, seventy files were for homes used for placements during 1948 and fifty-seven during 1949 and fifty-three were for adoptive applicants whose files were closed during 1948 and twenty-nine during 1949.

The total number of files reviewed served to cover all open-adoption applicants with whom children were placed by the Winnipeg Office, Division of Public Welfare, Manitoba, with the exception of nineteen cases. Not examined in this category were the files of five families in 1948 and four in 1949 who moved out of Metropolitan Winnipeg after a child was placed and information was therefore incomplete. Not considered also were the files of four families in each year who obtained a child privately after having submitted open applications, and the files of two families in 1948 where it was found necessary for the agency to remove the child from the home after initial placement.

In examining the files which were closed in the two years, it was often found impossible to distinguish those

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files which were rejected from those withdrawn by the applicants. We have, therefore, included withdrawn and rejected applications under the one heading of "closed" in this chapter. A further reference is made to these files in Chapter III, where some casework aspects of the adoption process are examined.

For the two categories a) parents with whom children were placed in the above years, and b) those whose files were closed in this period, a schedule<sup>1</sup> was drawn up setting forth definitive and measurable qualities of the adoptive parents. It is proposed to deal with these qualities in the order in which they appear in schedule form.

#### A - Age of Adoptive Parents at Time of Application

The age of adoptive parents at the time of application is set forth in Table 1. It will be seen that, for families with whom children were placed, there is only one parent in the age group 45 - 49 years and for this category, none older than this. With the closed cases there are thirteen cases in which a parent is forty-five years of age or older. It will also be seen that there are relatively few parents over forty years of age. The small number of older adoptive parents is explained by the fact that the agency has a flexible rule which makes forty years the maximum age of prospective adoptive parents unless an

1. This is attached as Appendix "A".

TABLE I

AGE OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS AT APPLICATION

|                  | <u>Families With Whom Children Were Placed</u> |           |             |           | <u>Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement</u> |           |                          |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|---|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
|                  | <u>1948</u>                                    |           | <u>1949</u> |           | <u>1948</u>   |           | <u>1949</u> <sup>1</sup> |           |
|                  | <u>AF</u>                                      | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>                | <u>AM</u> |
| Under 20 years.. | 0  | 0         | 0           | 0         | 0   | 0         | 0                        | 0         |
| 20 - 24 " ....   | 0  | 0         | 0           | 3         | 1   | 3         | 0                        | 1         |
| 25 - 29 " ....   | 6  | 13        | 5           | 10        | 8   | 12        | 5                        | 8         |
| 30 - 34 " ....   | 23   | 28        | 20          | 20        | 10  | 17        | 8                        | 8         |
| 35 - 39 " ...    | 30   | 24        | 26          | 21        | 16  | 16        | 9                        | 9         |
| 40 - 44 " ...    | 10   | 5         | 6           | 3         | 10  | 2         | 3                        | 1         |
| 45 - 49 " ...    | 1  | 0         | 0           | 0         | 5   | 2         | 3                        | 0         |
| 50 - 54 " ...    | 0  | 0         | 0           | 0         | 1   | 1         | 0                        | 0         |
| 55 - 59 " ...    | 0  | 0         | 0           | 0         | 0   | 0         | 0                        | 0         |
| 60 - 64 " ...    | 0  | 0         | 0           | 0         | 1   | 0         | 0                        | 0         |
| Not Stated ...   | <u>0</u>                                       | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>    | <u>0</u>  | <u>1</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>1</u>                 | <u>2</u>  |
| TOTALS -         | <u>70</u>                                      | <u>70</u> | <u>57</u>   | <u>57</u> | <u>53</u>   | <u>53</u> | <u>29</u>                | <u>29</u> |
| Mean Age (years) | 35.3   | 35.1      | 35.1        | 33.1      | 36.6  | 34.5      | 32.9                     | 31.1      |
|                  |  | 33.4      |             |           |   |           |                          |           |

older child is applied for. It can be understood that if an infant were placed with a couple beyond the age of forty years they would be well advanced in years when the child has reached adolescence and would probably be less capable of dealing with one of the most difficult periods of its life.

1. These abbreviations are used throughout for "adoptive father" and "adoptive mother".



It will be noted that there are proportionately fewer parents under 25 years of age amongst families with whom children were placed than for closed cases and that for 1948 for approved homes there were no parents under this age. It would be expected that some time would elapse after marriage before these parents realize they are unable to have children of their own. Then too, parents with whom children are placed are expected to be relatively mature and well settled, which would also explain why there were fewer families in the former category than with the closed cases. The recordings indicated that those parents under 25 years of age with whom a child was placed were relatively mature and reasonably well settled.

For the adoptive fathers the mode in all cases is in the age group 35 - 39 years; for the mothers it is in this age group in two cases and 30 - 34 years in the other two cases. This would perhaps indicate that these families have achieved economic security and feel that this is their best time to adopt a child.

#### B - Age of Adoptive Parents at Time of Marriage

By subtracting the mean duration of marriage from the mean age at time of application, an estimate of the mean age at time of marriage was obtained. The result is shown in Table 2.

While the mean age at marriage of adoptive parents would seem to be above that of the general population, the significance is difficult to assess because it was not

TABLE 2

AGE OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS AT MARRIAGE

|                           | Families With Whom Children Were Placed |            |            |            | Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |            |            |            |       |
|---------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|--|------------|------------|------------|-------|
|                           | 1948                                    |            | 1949       |            | 1948   |            | 1949       |            |       |
|                           | <u>AF</u>                               | <u>AM</u>  | <u>AF</u>  | <u>AM</u>  | <u>AF</u>  | <u>AM</u>  | <u>AF</u>  | <u>AM</u>  |       |
| Mean Age at Application   | 35.5                                    | 33.4       | 35.1       | 33.1       | 36.6   | 32.9       | 34.5       | 31.1       | years |
| Mean Duration of Marriage | <u>7.8</u>                              | <u>7.8</u> | <u>7.6</u> | <u>7.6</u> | <u>7.8</u>   | <u>7.8</u> | <u>8.3</u> | <u>8.3</u> | "     |
| <u>AGE AT MRG.</u> -      | 27.7                                    | 25.6       | 27.7       | 25.5       | 28.8   | 25.1       | 26.2       | 22.8       | "     |

possible to obtain from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics a figure comparable to this. Many of these couples were married in the late depression years when marriages were often postponed, or in the early war years when the tendency was to marry young. It is interesting to note the close relationship between the mean ages at marriage for the two years.

C - Duration of Marriage at Time of Application

Table 3 shows that the mean duration of marriage at time of application was 7.8 years for both categories in 1948 and 7.6 and 8.3 years respectively for those with whom a child was placed and those whose files were closed in 1949. The fact that these people have been married for this length of time might serve to indicate that they have tried to have children of their own and have struggled with the problem of infertility before applying for a child. This is born out by the recorded material.<sup>1</sup>

1. Field Notes.

TABLE 3

DURATION OF MARRIAGE AT TIME OF APPLICATION

|                  | <u>Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed</u> |             | <u>Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement</u> |             |
|------------------|--|-------------|---|-------------|
|                  | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>   | <u>1949</u> |
| Under 1 year ... | 0  | 0           | 0   | 0           |
| 1 to 3 years ... | 6  | 7           | 6   | 2           |
| 4 to 6 " ...     | 20   | 16          | 15  | 8           |
| 7 to 9 " ...     | 24   | 18          | 11  | 10          |
| 10 to 12 " ...   | 12   | 12          | 9   | 2           |
| 13 to 15 " ...   | 7  | 2           | 7   | 5           |
| 16 to 18 " ...   | 1  | 2           | 0   | 1           |
| Over 18 " ...    | 0  | 0           | 0   | 0           |
| Not Stated ...   | <u>0</u>   | <u>0</u>    | <u>5</u>  | <u>1</u>    |
| TOTALS -         | <u>70</u>  | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>   | <u>29</u>   |
| Mean .....       | 7.8  | 7.6         | 7.8   | 8.3 years   |

In the Chicago Study it was found that those who were married the longest proved to be the most successful adoptive parents.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-six per cent of the most successful placements were made with parents who were married thirteen to eighteen years at time of application. Forty per cent of all parents in the Chicago Study were in this age group; with the families studied here only 8 per cent were in this age range.

1. Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc. op. cit. pp. 20 - 22.

D - RELIGION OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

According to the Manitoba Child Welfare Act it is necessary to place a child with parents whose religion is in accord with the preference of the natural parent. This makes religion an important factor to be considered in adoptions. Table 4 gives the religion of the parents in both categories of cases, and that of the population of Metropolitan Winnipeg, together with percentages of the total. It should be noted that in this table the total number of adoptive parents is taken in each classification rather than the division of "adopting father" and "adopting mother".

It is noted that the percentage for Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox religions is below what would be expected by comparison to the percentage of each religion for Metropolitan Winnipeg. The shortage of adoptive parents of these religions is a chronic problem faced by all child welfare agencies. The reasons for their scarcity are not known and could well form the basis of a further study.

The median income of Roman Catholic families with whom children were placed was \$2,400., and for those whose files were closed this was \$2,200. While no attempt will be made to analyze this further, it is noted that Roman Catholics are in a lower income group than one would expect by comparison with the figures on income for all adoptive parents.

TABLE 4

Religion of Adoptive Parents Compared With the Religions of the Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg (1951 Census)<sup>1</sup>

| Religion                    | Families With Whom Children Were Placed |          | Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |          |            |          | Population Metropolitan Winnipeg |         |                |       |
|-----------------------------|---|----------|--|----------|------------|----------|----------------------------------|---------|----------------|-------|
|                             | 1948                                    |          | 1949   |          | 1948       |          | 1949                             |         | 1951           |       |
|                             | No.                                     | Per-cent | No.  | Per-cent | No.        | Per-cent | No.                              | Percent |                |       |
| Baptist                     | 4                                       | (3%)     | 3  | (3%)     | 0          | (0%)     | 2                                | (3%)    | 6,382          | (2%)  |
| Church of England in Canada | 20                                      | (28%)    | 14   | (12%)    | 18         | (17%)    | 12                               | (20%)   | 64,925         | (18%) |
| Greek Orthodox              | 0                                       | (0%)     | 1  | (1%)     | 0          | (0%)     | 0                                | (0%)    | 8,042          | (2%)  |
| Jewish                      | 8                                       | (6%)     | 8  | (7%)     | 8          | (7%)     | 0                                | (0%)    | 18,514         | (5%)  |
| Lutheran                    | 4                                       | (3%)     | 5  | (4%)     | 3          | (3%)     | 4                                | (7%)    | 20,531         | (6%)  |
| Mennonite                   | 4                                       | (3%)     | 0  | (0%)     | 0          | (0%)     | 4                                | (7%)    | 5,751          | (2%)  |
| Presbyterian                | 0                                       | (0%)     | 0  | (0%)     | 2          | (2%)     | 0                                | (0%)    | 19,475         | (5%)  |
| Roman Catholic              | 12                                      | (8%)     | 14   | (12%)    | 9          | (8%)     | 6                                | (10%)   | 71,015         | (20%) |
| Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic  | 0                                       | (0%)     | 1  | (1%)     | 0          | (0%)     | 0                                | (0%)    | 26,855         | (8%)  |
| United Church of Canada     | 58                                      | (41%)    | 58   | (51%)    | 44         | (41%)    | 12                               | (20%)   | 98,468         | (28%) |
| Others and not Specified    | 10                                      | (7%)     | 10   | (9%)     | 22         | (21%)    | 18                               | (31%)   | 14,111         | (4%)  |
|                             | <u>140</u>                              |          | <u>114</u>   |          | <u>106</u> |          | <u>58</u>                        |         | <u>354,069</u> |       |

1. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts, Winnipeg, 1951 Census. Bulletin CT. 8. P. 4.

It is also noted that in three cases out of four the percentages of members of the United Church are considerably higher than would be expected from a study of the figures given for the total population. The same is true for people of the Jewish faith and when the number who are still on the waiting list are considered, applicants from this group can be seen to form a proportionately larger group than would be expected. At least one reason for this is that there are few children born out of wedlock to Jewish parents and it is customary for members of the Hebrew faith to care for any illegitimate children born to fellow-members. These children are, therefore, frequently not placed on the rolls of public welfare agencies. It is not known why there are so few Presbyterians, who constitute 5 percent of the population of Metropolitan Winnipeg, amongst adopting parents.

#### E - RACIAL ORIGIN OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Because in choosing parents for a child an attempt is usually made to match the racial origin of the parents with that of the child, this is a significant factor in adoptions.

From Table 5 it is noted that the percentage of adoptive parents of British racial origin exceeds what one would expect from an examination of the figures for Metropolitan Winnipeg. This is also true of the Jewish people in three cases out of four in the table and for the Scandinavian people with whom children were placed in 1949. Excepting these groups all parents of the other racial origins

TABLE 5

Racial Origin of Adoptive Parents Compared With The Racial Origins of the Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg (1951 Census)

| Racial Origin <sup>1</sup> | Families With Whom Children Were Placed |             | Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |             | Population <sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Winnipeg |          |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|--|-------------|---|----------|
|                            | 1948                                    | 1949        | 1948   | 1949        | 1951  |          |
|                            | No.                                     | Per-cent    | No.  | Per-cent    | No.   | Per-cent |
| British Isles <sup>2</sup> | 108                                     | 78<br>(77%) | 77   | 42<br>(73%) | 183,529                                       | (52%)    |
| French                     | 4                                       | 3<br>(3%)   | 6  | 0<br>(0%)   | 26,668  | (7%)     |
| German                     | 6                                       | 6<br>(4%)   | 2  | 2<br>(3%)   | 24,499  | (7%)     |
| Italian                    | 0                                       | 1<br>(0%)   | 0  | 0<br>(0%)   | 2,455   | (1%)     |
| Jewish                     | 7                                       | 8<br>(7%)   | 8  | 0<br>(0%)   | 18,096  | (5%)     |
| Netherlands                | 5                                       | 2<br>(1%)   | 2  | 7<br>(12%)  | 7,494   | (2%)     |
| Polish                     | 5                                       | 2<br>(1%)   | 1  | 0<br>(0%)   | 17,637  | (5%)     |
| Russian                    | 1                                       | 3<br>(2%)   | 0  | 0<br>(0%)   | 2,788   | (1%)     |
| Scandinavian <sup>3</sup>  | 3                                       | 7<br>(6%)   | 3  | 2<br>(3%)   | 13,341  | (4%)     |
| Ukrainian                  | 1                                       | 4<br>(3%)   | 1  | 2<br>(3%)   | 41,437  | (12%)    |
| Other European             | 0                                       | 0<br>(0%)   | 0  | 1<br>(2%)   | 10,160  | (3%)     |
| Asiatic                    | 0                                       | 0<br>(0%)   | 0  | 0<br>(0%)   | 2,131   | (1%)     |
| Others and Not Stated      | 0                                       | 0<br>(0%)   | 6  | 2<br>(3%)   | 3,834   | (1%)     |
| TOTALS:                    | <u>140</u>                              | <u>114</u>  | <u>106</u>   | <u>58</u>   | <u>354,069</u>                                |          |

1. Traced through father.
2. Includes English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh.
3. Includes Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish.
4. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. loc. cit.

are represented to a lesser degree than would be expected.

Because Table 5 shows those groups which are being missed or are not proportionately represented amongst adoptive parents, it might warrant further exploration by the Division.

#### F - FACTORS EFFECTING SOCIAL STATUS

Under this section income, assets, schooling, occupation and housing characteristics were considered because these were measurable qualities and because the files were relatively complete on these points.

1. Income: The average yearly income of the two categories of adoptive families is tabulated in Table 6. It is noted that the median income of all families studied is considerably above the median income for family head wage earners in Metropolitan Winnipeg for 1951. Only seventeen percent of those families with whom a child was placed in 1948, and sixteen percent of those in 1949, had an income below the median for family head wage earners in Metropolitan Winnipeg. For those families whose files were closed previous to adoption, forty-seven percent in 1948 and twenty-nine percent in 1949 had incomes below the median figure for Metropolitan Winnipeg.

The table would seem to indicate that families who apply for adoption are a select group of the general population.

2. Life Insurance: The amount of life insurance carried by adoptive parents is shown in Table 7. It was not possible to



**TABLE 6**  
**AVERAGE YEARLY INCOME OF ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

|   | Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed |           | Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |           |
|---|---|-----------|--|-----------|
|   | 1948  | 1949      | 1948   | 1949      |
| Under \$1,000. ....                             | 0   | 0         | 0  | 0         |
| \$1,000. - \$1,999.                             | 9   | 4         | 15   | 4         |
| \$2,000. - \$2,999.                             | 26  | 23        | 13   | 12        |
| \$3,000. - \$3,999.                             | 18  | 14        | 10   | 2         |
| \$4,000. - \$4,999.                             | 9   | 6         | 4  | 4         |
| \$5,000. - \$5,999.                             | 2   | 5         | 3  | 1         |
| \$6,000. - \$6,999.                             | 1   | 1         | 0  | 0         |
| \$7,000. - \$7,999.                             | 1   | 0         | 0  | 1         |
| \$8,000. - \$8,999.                             | 2   | 1         | 0  | 0         |
| \$9,000. - \$9,999.                             | 0   | 0         | 0  | 0         |
| \$10,000.- \$10,999.                            | 1   | 2         | 0  | 0         |
| \$11,000.- and over<br>(\$25,000.)((\$16,000.)) | 1   | 1         | 0  | 0         |
| Not Stated                                      | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>  | <u>8</u>   | <u>5</u>  |
| TOTALS -  | <u>70</u>   | <u>57</u> | <u>53</u>  | <u>29</u> |
| Median  | \$3,028.  | \$3,143.  | \$2,615.   | \$2,708.  |

Median - Male wage earners, Metropolitan Winnipeg, 1951 Census - \$2,226.

Median - Family Head wage earners, Metropolitan Winnipeg, 1951 Census - \$2,369.

quote comparative figures for Metropolitan Winnipeg. The annual report of the Superintendent of Insurance for the

TABLE 7

AMOUNT OF LIFE INSURANCE CARRIED BY ADOPTIVE PARENTS

|  | Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed |             | Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |             |
|--|---|-------------|--|-------------|
|  | <u>1948</u>                                       | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> |
| No Insurance.....                          | 1   | 2           | 3  | 1           |
| \$1. -under \$ 4,000....                   |   |             |  |             |
| \$4000. - " 8,000....                      | 17  | 12          | 13   | 5           |
| \$8,000. - " 12,000....                    | 10  | 8           | 4  | 2           |
| 12,000. - " 16,000....                     | 4   | 6           | 4  | 3           |
| 16,000. - " 20,000....                     | 5   | 3           | 2  | 2           |
| 20,000. - " 24,000....                     | 2   | 2           | 0  | 0           |
| 24,000. - " 28,000....                     | 1   | 1           | 1  | 1           |
| Over \$28,000.....                         | 4   | 0           | 2  | 0           |
| Unstated.....                              | <u>2</u>  | <u>0</u>    | <u>8</u>   | <u>5</u>    |
| TOTAL:                                     | <u>70</u>   | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>  | <u>29</u>   |
| Median (computed from ungrouped data)..... | \$6,083.  | \$5,333.    | \$5,600.   | \$5,333.    |

Province of Manitoba<sup>1</sup> gives the number of policies and the total amount of life insurance in force in all Manitoba but the amount in force in Metropolitan Winnipeg is not stated.

3. Number of Years of Schooling of Adoptive Parents:

In order to arrive at a rating scale for education, the number of years of schooling was used as a gauge, each

1. Province of Manitoba - Report of the Superintendent of Insurance 1948 and 1949

parent being credited with an additional year of educational training for every year of schooling beyond high school whether this was university, business, vocational or occupational training. The results are shown in Table 8.

It is difficult to compare the mean grades of education for these families as compared with those of Metropolitan Winnipeg. However, from the 1951 Census record<sup>1</sup> the percentages of the population not attending school in the different educational levels was computed and included in Table 8. It will be seen that the educational level of both categories of adoptive parents was considerably higher than that of the general population and that the educational level of those families with whom children were placed was higher than that of the families whose files had been closed. It can be inferred from this that the person who applies for adoption is himself in a select group of the population so far as educational attainment is concerned and that some emphasis is placed on education in selecting parents. In the Chicago study, 55 percent of the parents studied had gone beyond high school; in our study this was 23 percent for families with whom children were placed and 14 percent for families whose files had been closed.

It appears that education is a factor which affects the agency's choice of adoptive parents even though its importance may not be consciously realized by the worker.

1. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. loc. cit.

TABLE 8

Number of Years of Schooling of Adoptive Parents  
Compared with Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg

|                  | Number of Parents With Whom Children Were Placed |           |           |           | %     | Number of Parents Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |           |           |           | %     | Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg |       |
|------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|
|                  | 1948   |           | 1949      |           |       | 1948  |           | 1949      |           |       | 1951                                |       |
|                  | <u>AF</u>  | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u> | <u>AM</u> |       | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u> | <u>AM</u> |       |                                     | %     |
| no schooling     | 0  | 0         | 0         | 0         | (0%)  | 0   | 0         | 0         | 0         | (0%)  | 14,667                              | (5%)  |
| - 4 years        | 1  | 0         | 0         | 1         | (1%)  | 1   | 1         | 1         | 1         | (5%)  | 16,596                              | (6%)  |
| - 8 years        | 13   | 14        | 6         | 3         | (15%) | 7   | 10        | 1         | 1         | (22%) | 83,981                              | (32%) |
| - 12 years       | 38   | 35        | 41        | 39        | (61%) | 22  | 24        | 3         | 2         | (59%) | 128,497                             | (48%) |
| 3 years and over | 16   | 20        | 9         | 12        | (23%) | 7   | 3         | 1         | 1         | (14%) | 21,068                              | (9%)  |
| not stated       | <u>2</u>   | <u>1</u>  | <u>1</u>  | <u>2</u>  |       | <u>16</u>   | <u>15</u> | <u>23</u> | <u>24</u> |       |                                     |       |
| TOTALS:          | <u>70</u>  | <u>70</u> | <u>57</u> | <u>57</u> |       | <u>53</u>   | <u>53</u> | <u>29</u> | <u>29</u> |       | <u>264,809</u>                      |       |
| Mean:            | 11.0   | 11.1      | 11.1      | 11.1      |       | 10.4  | 10.1      | 9.5       | 9.8       |       |                                     |       |

The worker, as a part of society, reflects the importance which society places on education. Then, too, the educated parent may give a better impression by covering up unfavorable character traits and by the ability to carry on a sophisticated conversation.

It is often thought that educated parents have a better understanding of the emotional needs of children. The fact that in five of the six unsuccessful placements in the

Chicago study<sup>1</sup> the father had had college or professional training would seem to indicate that the amount of education is not by itself an index of successful parenthood. Because in our study we can give only a cursory examination to the various data, this would be an area which could warrant further study.

#### 4. - Occupation:

In order to indicate the status which accompanies a particular occupation, a rating scale<sup>2</sup> was adopted and the occupation of each adoptive father was classified according to this scale. The tabulated results are shown in Table 9, the Group 1 indicating the top of the social scale, and Group 7 those whose occupation is assumed to have the least social prestige. The fact that the mode for families with whom children were placed is in Group 2, according to the scale, would again seem to indicate that adoptive parents are in a select group of the population. It is noted that the mode for those families whose files were closed is in Group 4.

#### 5 - Housing Characteristics of Adoptive Parents:

a) Type of Housing: Because children are often a handicap to a family in obtaining housing, it would be expected that a high percentage of all childless couples would be occupying apartments and flats. It is noted, however, that

1. Child Adoption Research Committee Inc. op.cit. pp. 21

2. Warner, W.L., Meeker, M., and Eels, K. Social Class in America, pp. 140 - 141. A copy of this is attached as Appendix "B".

TABLE 9

Occupations of Adoptive Parents Rated  
According to Accompanying Social Status

| <u>Status<br/>Group</u> | <u>Number of Families<br/>with Whom Children<br/>Were Placed</u> |             | <u>Number of Families<br/>Whose Files were Closed<br/>Without Placement</u> |             |
|-------------------------|--|-------------|---|-------------|
|                         | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>   | <u>1949</u> |
| Group 1 .....           | 4  | 2           | 3   | 2           |
| " 2 .....               | 27   | 28          | 4   | 4           |
| " 3 .....               | 20   | 14          | 10  | 5           |
| " 4 .....               | 11   | 8           | 14  | 8           |
| " 5 .....               | 4  | 3           | 12  | 4           |
| " 6 .....               | 3  | 2           | 8   | 3           |
| " 7 .....               | <u>1</u>   | <u>0</u>    | <u>2</u>  | <u>1</u>    |
|                         | <u>70</u>  | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>   | <u>27</u>   |

for both categories of adoptive parents, the majority of whom are childless, the percentages living in apartments or flats are lower than one would expect by comparison with the figures for Metropolitan Winnipeg.

Housing, as a factor to be considered in adoptions, is important insofar as a child requires an environment which is not too restrictive. The fact that adoption applicants live in an apartment or flat is sometimes weighted negatively on this account. The figures on housing are given in Table 10.

b) Occupancy: Table 11 shows the number of owner-occupied and renter-occupied dwellings for both categories of adoptive parents as compared with the figures for Metropolitan Winnipeg. The percentages, in brackets, are based on stated cases.

TABLE 10

Type of Housing of Adoptive Families Compared With Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg

|                      | Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed |             | Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |             | Number - Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg <sup>1</sup> |
|----------------------|---|-------------|--|-------------|---|
|                      | <u>1948</u>                                       | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> |   |
| Single Detached      | 55<br>(79%) <sup>@43</sup>                        | 43<br>(75%) | 36<br>(73%)  | 18<br>(72%) | 62,995<br>(68%)   |
| Apartments and Flats | 15<br>(21%)                                       | 14<br>(25%) | 13<br>(27%)  | 7<br>(28%)  | 30,220<br>(32%)   |
| Not Stated           | <u>0</u>  | <u>0</u>    | <u>4</u>   | <u>4</u>    | <u>0</u>  |
| Total -              | <u>70</u>   | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>  | <u>29</u>   | <u>93,215</u>   |

@ All percentages are based on stated cases.

TABLE 11

Type of Occupancy of Dwellings of Adoptive Families Compared With Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg

|                 | Number of Families With Whom a Child Was Placed |             | Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement |             | Number - Population of Metropolitan Winnipeg <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------|---|-------------|--|-------------|---|
|                 | <u>1948</u>                                     | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> |   |
| Owner Occupied  | 50<br>(71%)                                     | 38<br>(68%) | 29<br>(59%)  | 15<br>(60%) | 58,770<br>(61%)   |
| Renter Occupied | 20<br>(29%)                                     | 18<br>(32%) | 20<br>(41%)  | 10<br>(40%) | 37,185<br>(39%)   |
| Not Stated      | <u>0</u>  | <u>1</u>    | <u>4</u>   | <u>4</u>    | <u>0</u>  |
| Total           | <u>70</u>                                       | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>  | <u>29</u>   | <u>95,955</u>   |

1. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. op. cit. p. 10.

2. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. loc. cit.

c) Number of Rooms per dwelling and Persons per Room For Adoptive Families:

Table 12 shows the number of rooms occupied by adoptive families and the mean number of persons per room. Because the census table<sup>1</sup> gave only mean amounts, a comparative figure is not included in the body of the table.

TABLE 12

Number of Rooms Per Dwelling and Persons per Room

|   | <u>Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed</u> |               | <u>Number of Families Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement</u> |             |
|---|--|---------------|---|-------------|
|   | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u>   | <u>1948</u>   | <u>1949</u> |
| One room.....                                 | 0.....   | 0.....        | 1.....  | 0           |
| Two rooms.....                                | 2.....   | 1.....        | 4.....  | 1           |
| Three rooms.....                              | 14.....  | 8.....        | 7.....  | 5           |
| Four rooms.....                               | 15.....  | 22.....       | 13.....   | 7           |
| Five rooms.....                               | 14.....  | 9.....        | 10.....   | 6           |
| Six rooms.....                                | 16.....  | 7.....        | 9.....  | 5           |
| Seven rooms.....                              | 3.....   | 6.....        | 3.....  | 1           |
| Eight rooms.....                              | 3.....   | 2.....        | 1.....  | 0           |
| Nine rooms.....                               | 1.....   | 0.....        | 0.....  | 0           |
| Not stated.....                               | <u>2.....</u>  | <u>2.....</u> | <u>5.....</u>   | <u>4</u>    |
|   | <u>70</u>  | <u>57</u>     | <u>53</u>   | <u>29</u>   |
| Mean rooms per dwelling                       | 4.8  | 4.7           | 4.5   | 4.5         |
| Mean for Metropolitan Winnipeg -              | 4.8  |               |   |             |
| Mean persons per room                         | .5   | .5            | .5  | .5          |
| Mean persons per room Metropolitan Winnipeg - | .8   |               |   |             |

1. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. loc. cit.



G - Summary:

The average adoptive parents, for the families with whom children were placed, had been married for 7.7 years at the time they applied for adoption. The age at marriage of the father was 27.8 years and of the mother 25.5 years. At the time they applied, the father was 35.5 years and his wife 33.2 years. They had had 11 years of schooling and the family income was just over \$3,000. annually. The father's occupation carried above average status. The average home had 4.7 rooms and there were .5 persons per room and the chances are that this was a single detached dwelling. The composite picture showed that they were in a select group of the population so far as the factors studied are concerned.

For those families whose files were closed previous to placement, the average parents had been married for 8 years at the time they applied for adoption. The age when applying of the father was 36.3 years and of the mother, 33.4 years, both being slightly older than those parents who received children. The father had had 10.3 years of schooling and the mother 9.7 years. The husband's occupation was one that had about average status. The average home was probably a single detached dwelling with 4.5 rooms and there were .5 persons per room. Their annual income was \$2,640. The composite picture of these families showed that, while on these factors they did not measure up to those families with whom children were placed, they, too, were in a select

group of the population.

In the second chapter it was also shown that members of the United Church and Hebrews formed a proportionately larger group of adoptive parents than would be expected, while Presbyterians were almost entirely missing, and Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics were represented to a lesser extent than would be expected.

An examination of the stated racial origins of these families showed that those of British and Hebrew extraction were proportionately over-represented. To a lesser extent this was also true of Scandinavians. All other racial groups were proportionately under-represented.

III. AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL FACTORS  
WHICH ARE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT IN EVALUATING ADOPTION HOMES

Introduction

"The success of an adoption placement primarily depends on an intelligent initial study of the home and the careful selection of a particular home for a particular child."<sup>1</sup>

In the adoption setting, casework is focused on obtaining a thorough understanding of prospective adoptive parents based on sound diagnostic thinking. The essence of the agency's role lies in being able to predict the kind of parents the applicants will be so that an assessment can be made of their ability to meet the needs of a particular child.

As was mentioned in Chapter I, the factors which may be considered of greatest importance in assessing the home are: the personal adjustment of the prospective parents; their relationship to each other; their relationship to their own parents and siblings as an indication of childhood satisfactions; their deeper as well as their expressed motives in seeking a child; their reason for not having a child of their own; their attitude towards childlessness and infertility; their ability to accept an adopted child, and their understanding of children and their needs.<sup>2</sup> Naturally these are

1. Griffiths, Margaret. Essentials in Adoption Service. p.15.
2. Brown, Florence, G. loc. cit.

not independent factors but in examining the records these were the factors we sought information on. Table 13 shows the number of interviews before approval with those families with whom children were placed in the two years. This includes the initial interview in which the prospective parents are helped to decide if they want to go ahead with adoption.

Table 13

Number of Interviews Before Approval for Families with whom Children were placed in the years 1948 and 1949.

|   | <u>Number of Interviews</u> | <u>Number of Families</u> |             |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
|   |                             | <u>1948</u>               | <u>1949</u> |
| 1 | Interview.....              | 3.....                    | 2           |
| 2 | Interviews                  | 28                        | 28          |
| 3 | " .....                     | 20.....                   | 14          |
| 4 | " .....                     | 11                        | 10          |
| 5 | " .....                     | 4.....                    | 3           |
| 6 | " .....                     | 3                         | 0           |
| 7 | " .....                     | 0.....                    | 0           |
| 8 | " .....                     | <u>1</u>                  | <u>0</u>    |
|   |                             | <u>70</u>                 | <u>57</u>   |

In each case where only one interview was held previous to approval, the parents had already adopted a child and were known to the Department. The same is true of eleven cases in 1948 and eight in 1949 where only two interviews were held. It can be seen from the above that the majority of homes are approved after only two or three interviews. Within this time the worker would normally be expected to establish a meaningful relationship with the parents and to judge their suitability as adoptive parents and the type of child their home would be suited to. Even though the worker

in each case has a medical certificate for each parent and references from five people, of whom two are usually seen personally, it would seem difficult to get a thorough understanding of the adoptive parents in this time.

It should be pointed out that all cases are conferenced by the adoption workers and supervisors before a particular home is proposed for a child. Many of the factors mentioned in paragraph two involve intangible qualities of personality which become more clearly understood in the discussions between the worker and supervisor but are subsequently not always recorded. It is often difficult to get clients to talk freely about these factors and frequently conclusions can only be drawn indirectly from what they have said.

While the recordings on the above points were not sufficiently specific to form the basis of many definite conclusions, we shall deal with them in the order in which they appear above and, because the first two seem so closely related, they are discussed under the one heading.

A. Personal adjustments and Relationship of Adoptive Parents to each other

One author has said:

"The spontaneous discussion of present family relationships, especially catching their emotional tones, is the springboard to the principal substance of the home study. After all, the crux of the matter is to select normal families - those in which the basic gratifications have been met in the areas of love and achievement. Normality means that these people have made reasonably satisfactory adjustments to the everyday demands of life. They can hold a job, make and keep friends, marry and enjoy love, and

meet the common strains and stresses of life."<sup>1</sup>

Generally, the recordings consisted of information under various headings from the home-study outline followed by a recording of the general discussion between worker and adoptive parents and the worker's impressions of this.

While there is a heading "Personal Adjustments", generally it seemed that the worker's impressions, derived from the whole picture of the parents, were recorded here. We give an example of one of the fuller recordings<sup>2</sup> under this heading:

"Personal Adjustments:

The adoptive parents have a happy and sympathetic relationship with each other, and enjoy one another's company. They have similar interests and they feel that the atmosphere in their home is a harmonious one. The father has the feeling he likes to be the lord and master of the home, and his wife has recognized this as a quality in her husband which she has to be very careful to recognize. She has a very free and easy, casual manner with people, and said she has always found it pretty easy to get on with most people whereas it is more of an effort for her husband to go into a strange group and make his way and develop status with them. This couple would seem to have made a very satisfactory adjustment to having one child in their home, and have never expressed anything but great satisfaction with this child, and they have given her considerable freedom to develop at her own rate."

It was pointed out by the adoption supervisor of the Winnipeg Office that when the home study has been completed, it is discussed ~~with~~ the worker and supervisor before the home is approved and again at the adoptions' conference at the time the home is proposed for a child.

1. Hutchinson, Dorothy. In Quest of Foster Parents. pp. 51-52.

2. Field Notes taken from the files.

While many of the intangible qualities of personal adjustment and relationships are crystallized at these times, they are seldom recorded. It should be noted that at the conference, the factors on the home-study outline are considered together, not in isolation, since each point has a bearing on the other and a true conclusion can only be obtained by considering them as an organic whole. It is felt that to record some of the thinking and conclusions arrived at in these supervision periods would be invaluable to future workers and to the agency.

B. Relationships of Adoptive Parents to own Parents and Siblings.

Under this heading we hoped to gauge the relationship of the adoptive parents to their own parents and siblings, chiefly as an indication of their childhood satisfactions, which in turn would indicate some of their present potentialities as adoptive parents. We hoped to classify these relationships into two broad groups; positive and negative. In the majority of cases the worker did not record her findings or impressions as to these relationships. Considering the fact that there were 254 individual parents with whom children were placed, information about the relationships of each adoptive parent to his or her own parents was not recorded in 147 cases, and in regard to their siblings in 201 cases. In ten cases it was recorded that a parent had a negative relationship with his or her own parents and in five cases this was so in regard to siblings. The worker's impression with these latter cases was that the adoptive

parents had made a reasonable adjustment despite an unhappy relationship with their own parents or siblings. In five cases it was not recorded whether the parents had siblings or not. Closed cases were in various stages of completion but the general picture was much the same.

Generally the information given under this heading gave only the age, occupation, education and health of the adoptive couple's parents and siblings, and marital status of the siblings.

### C. An Examination of the Stated Motive of Adoptive Parents

#### 1) Motives for Wanting to Adopt a Child

"The need to understand the incentive of prospective foster parents is of the greatest importance in homefinding, not so much because it is an end in itself, as that the incentive is a vital indication of what kind of parents they will become."<sup>1</sup>

Having cleared in the initial interview that the prospective adoptive parents wish to go ahead with adoption and that they are not disqualified on other counts, the applicants are usually given application forms to complete. On this form the parents are asked their principle reason for wanting to adopt a child. These stated motives are generally explored more fully as the processing of the application progresses, and must be considered in conjunction with the factors discussed under the next heading, i.e., motives in preferring one sex to the other.

Here again an examination was only made of those families with whom children were placed in the two years, the

1. Hutchinson, Dorothy. p. 6. op. cit.



closed cases being in various stages of completion. The reasons given for wanting to adopt a child are listed below. Similar ways of expressing the same thing were included under the one heading. It should also be noted that in some cases the parents gave more than one reason and the total therefore adds up to more than the 127 adoptive families:

|   |    |       |
|---|----|-------|
| "We love children" .....                  | 75 | cases |
| "We are unable to have children"          | 27 | "     |
| "Desire for larger family" .....          | 17 | "     |
| "Companion for own child"                 | 12 | "     |
| "Home incomplete without children" .....  | 9  | "     |
| "Have none"                               | 4  | "     |
| "Believe children make a happier home" .. | 2  | "     |
| "Wife cannot have"                        | 2  | "     |
| "Make child happy in our home" .....      | 2  | "     |
| "To complete our happiness"               | 2  | "     |

Generally an attempt was made by the worker to relate these stated motives to other factors learned in the home study but these were seldom pinpointed. It should be remembered that in all these cases the home was subsequently approved and a child placed in it. The following is one of the fuller recordings under motives:-<sup>1</sup>

"Motives: When the parents made their second application in November, 1948, it was with the idea of taking a second baby girl, and they still want to do this but it had been in the back of the husband's mind that he would like a little boy who was somewhat older than the girl, and it would be nice to have their family before they were forty so that they would still be young enough to share their interests at the right age. They had thought in terms of a boy three to five years of age because it would still be fairly easy for a child of that age to fit into their ways pretty easily. However, when the opportunity to take the child came up, they talked it over and decided they would like to make a try at giving him a home with them. Their motivation seemed to be a combination of a desire for an older child and excitement at the possibility of what they could do for a homeless boy, such as worker had described to them."

1. Field Notes taken from the files.

Of the twelve cases where parents wanted to adopt a child as a companion for their own child, eight had previously adopted a child. Of the four who had a child or children of their own, three mothers were diagnosed sterile because of operations and in the other case no reason was given for infertility. In the two cases where the reason given was, "Wife cannot have", it was the husband who had filled in the application form. In both these cases the husband was medically diagnosed as sterile and both were well-to-do businessmen and the dominant members of the family.

## 2. Motives in Sex Preference

Table 14 shows the sex preference of the parents in the two categories of cases.

It can be seen that of the 254 parents with whom children were placed, 213 expressed a preference for a child of a definite sex, 131 requesting girls, 82 boys, and 41 had no preference. Of the 160 parents whose files were closed in the two years, 44 expressed a preference for a boy, 91 for a girl and 19 had no preference. It will be seen later that the Department respects the preferences of parents in spite of the fact that more girls than boys are requested.

Of the 127 couples in both years with whom a child was placed, 49 already had a child or children of their own, 33 having previously adopted a child. Of these, 49 couples asked for the opposite sex to the child they had, and 13 for the same sex. Nearly all those parents who asked for the opposite sex said that they had hoped from the beginning to

TABLE 14

Stated Sex Preferences of Adoptive Parents, and of Adoptive Applicants Whose Files Were Closed Without Placement

|                 | <u>Number of Families With Whom Children Were Placed</u> |           |             |           | <u>Number of Families whose Files were Closed Without Placement</u> |           |             |           |
|-----------------|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|                 | <u>1948</u>  |           | <u>1949</u> |           | <u>1948</u>   |           | <u>1949</u> |           |
|                 | <u>AF</u>  | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> | <u>AF</u>   | <u>AM</u> |
| Want Boy .....  | 31   | 27        | 15          | 9         | 13  | 12        | 10          | 9         |
| Want Girl ..... | 30   | 36        | 30          | 35        | 32  | 32        | 13          | 14        |
| No Preference   | <u>9</u>   | <u>7</u>  | <u>12</u>   | <u>13</u> | <u>8</u>  | <u>9</u>  | <u>6</u>    | <u>6</u>  |
| TOTAL -         | <u>70</u>  | <u>70</u> | <u>57</u>   | <u>57</u> | <u>53</u>   | <u>53</u> | <u>29</u>   | <u>29</u> |

adopt both a boy and a girl. The chief reasons given for asking for the same sex were for a companion for the child they already had, or to share an only other bedroom with the child they already had.

In many cases the parents could not or did not pinpoint the basis of their desire for a child of a particular sex. Many could only go so far as saying, "We have always wanted a little girl (or boy)." The reasons for preferring one sex to the other can involve numerous factors which cannot be fully gone into here. One important question seems to be, "By asking for one sex are they rejecting the other?" No evidence of a case of this kind could be found in the recordings. A little girl is often a symbol of affection which seems indicated by the two sets of parents who asked for a girl "to dress up and enjoy her looking pretty." Some said they wanted a boy because there had been more boys than girls

amongst their siblings and seemed to be expressing a desire for the continuation of what had been a positive relationship with their brothers. In two cases it seemed that a negative relationship with siblings of one sex seemed to be the chief reason for asking for the opposite sex although this feeling did not seem strong enough to be called rejection.

The desire to perpetuate the family name was indicated by some parents who gave as their reason for wanting a boy as "the desire to carry on the name." The opposite to this and the fear of heredity in adoption seems expressed by the parents who asked for a girl, because, as they indicated, they would not want an adopted boy to carry on their name. Two fathers said they wanted a boy so he could partake in sports. The remarks of one set of parents who said they wanted a boy because other members of their families had mostly girls seemed open to several interpretations. There was only one case (this among the closed) where the couple applied for adoption because the woman was afraid of a pregnancy.

It seems interesting to note in passing that, in cases where the wife was older than the husband (in the case of families with whom a child was placed) the wife requested a girl in sixteen out of nineteen cases, no preference being expressed in the other three cases. With the closed cases there were eight occasions where the wife was older than her husband. In four cases she requested a girl and in four a boy.

In the latter case the reason given for asking for a boy was to carry on the name in three cases and because they already had a girl in the other case.

The question has often been asked whether preferences should be respected in adoptions. Biologists today seem to agree that the sex of a child is accidental and therefore if adoptive parents had a child of their own they would have no conscious choice as to sex. It does seem important to realize that adoption is the way they would have chosen if they would have had a conscious choice. It would therefore seem safer to respect their sex preference and avoid the possibility of later rejection of a child which is the opposite sex to their preference.

That the agency respects sex preference seems indicated by the fact that in only eleven cases of the 127 families with whom children were placed in two years did they receive a child whose sex was the opposite to that requested, Of these, two asked for boys and accepted girls, and nine asked for girls and accepted boys. The fact that there are more requests for girls makes it more difficult to place boys even though they can often be placed with those parents who voice no sex preference.

### 3) Motives as to Age Preference

It can be seen from Table 15 that, in the majority of cases of families with whom children were placed, the request was for children under six months of age. For closed cases

Table 15

Age preference of Adoptive Parents, and Applicants whose Files were closed for the years 1948 and 1949

| <u>Stated Preference</u> | <u>Number of Families with Whom a Child Was Placed</u> | <u>Number of Families Whose Files were Closed Without Placement</u> |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Young as possible        | 37   | 23  |
| Under 3 months           | 22   | 8   |
| "    6 months            | 29   | 6   |
| "    9 months            | 4  | 6   |
| "   12 months            | 11   | 11  |
| "    2 years             | 10   | 10  |
| "    3 years             | 4  | 4   |
| "    4 years             | 4  | 4   |
| "    5 years             | 1  | 2   |
| "    6 years             | 0  | 1   |
| No preference            | <u>5</u>   | <u>7</u>  |
| TOTAL:                   | <u>127</u>   | <u>82</u>   |

the mode was children as young as possible but there was a considerable spread over the whole age range. Most parents requesting a young baby indicated they did so because they wanted a child to be their own from the beginning and wanted the opportunity of molding its development. It also seemed natural that the request for older children came from the older group of adoptive parents, or, in the cases of those parents in their mid-thirties, an older child was asked for so there would not be too great a difference between the age of the adopted child and their own or a previously adopted

child. Often interpretive work was done by the workers in helping the older parent to accept an older child.

In the great majority of cases age preferences were met. In only two cases was there a marked difference between the age of the child asked for and that placed.

One argument given in favor of the adoption of older children is that it is possible to administer psychological tests which give a prognosis of their future development. However, the Chicago Study points out that a study of the child's family history together with developmental tests give just as good an estimate.<sup>1</sup> The Division would therefore seem to be justified in respecting the age preference of adoptive parents for young babies rather than retaining these in care for a time. From the fact that there are fewer requests for older children it seems indicated that the older children become, the less chance there is of them being adopted, which again fortifies the argument that they should be placed at an early age.

#### D. Reasons for Childlessness

Before an adoptive home is approved, the agency requires that the parents have medical forms completed. One of the questions on this form is, "Has patient been examined for infertility?" While the reply in nearly all cases was

1. Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc. op.cit. pp. 131-133



in the affirmative, no explanation followed of possible reasons for infertility and in only a few cases did the worker discuss this with the doctor. It was customary for the worker to obtain any information regarding the reasons for childlessness directly from the parents themselves and its reliability would, therefore, depend on them. In many cases the worker did not enquire into the reasons or at least this was not recorded. The reasons for childlessness, as recorded, are shown in Table 16.

It is interesting to note the number of women who subsequently became pregnant after applying for a child. Of those families with whom a child had been placed, one woman in 1948 and two in 1949 became pregnant during the time the cases were active. Two of these had had previous unsuccessful pregnancies and in the other case had stated that she was unable to bear children because of an operation.

Of those families whose files were closed previous to placement, twenty-three out of the total eighty-two subsequently became pregnant. The reasons they had previously given for not being able to bear children of their own were as follows:

|                              | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Diagnosed Sterile            |             |             |
| Male                         | 0           | 0           |
| Female                       | 1           | 1           |
| No Organic Basis Found       | 4           | 1           |
| Pregnancy Experience         | 4           | 1           |
| Pregnancy contraindicated    | 5           | 0           |
| Not examined or not recorded | <u>4</u>    | <u>2</u>    |
| TOTAL:                       | <u>18</u>   | <u>5</u>    |



TABLE 16

Reasons for Childlessness. Adoptive Parents and Applicants  
Whose Files were Closed Without Placement

|   | Families With<br>Whom Children<br>Were Placed |             | Families Whose<br>Files Were Closed<br>Without Placement |             |
|---|---|-------------|--|-------------|
|   | <u>1948</u>                                   | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> |
| Diagnosed Sterility:                                |   |             |  |             |
| Male ...  | 7   | 7           | 1  | 1           |
| Female...   | 24  | 22          | 8  | 2           |
| No Organic Basis<br>Found For Sterility ...         | 8   | 14          | 9  | 5           |
| Pregnancy Experience                                | 15  | 6           | 14   | 3           |
| Pregnancy Contraindicated<br>(Poor health etc.) ... | 3   | 3           | 8  | 2           |
| Not examined or<br>not recorded ...                 | <u>13</u>                                     | <u>5</u>    | <u>13</u>  | <u>16</u>   |
|   | <u>70</u>                                     | <u>57</u>   | <u>53</u>  | <u>29</u>   |

It has been suggested that these parents may have been married for only a short time and, therefore, had assumed prematurely that they were unable to have children of their own. An examination of the records shows that the durations of their marriages were as follows:

| <u>Duration of Marriage</u>  | Number of<br>Families With<br>Whom Children<br>Were Placed |             | Number of Families<br>Whose Files Were<br>Closed Without<br>Placement |             |
|------------------------------|--|-------------|---|-------------|
|                              | <u>1948</u>  | <u>1949</u> | <u>1948</u>   | <u>1949</u> |
| Under 2 years .....          | 0  | 1           | 0   | 1           |
| 2 years, under 4 years       | 0  | 0           | 4   | 2           |
| 4 years, under 6 years.....  | 0  | 0           | 4   | 1           |
| 6 years, under 8 years       | 1  | 0           | 6   | 0           |
| 8 years, under 10 years..... | 0  | 0           | 0   | 1           |
| 10 years, under 12 years     | 0  | 1           | 0   | 0           |
| Over 12 years .....          | <u>0</u>   | <u>0</u>    | <u>4</u>  | <u>0</u>    |
| Total -                      | <u>1</u>   | <u>2</u>    | <u>18</u>   | <u>5</u>    |

The table would indicate that the parents have had sufficient time to test their ability to bear children. It has been suggested that there are psychological factors in the adoptive process which have the effect of inducing these women to become pregnant. This could not be substantiated here.

#### E - Attitude Towards Childlessness and Infertility

Of those factors mentioned in paragraph two of this chapter, some writers have stressed the couples' attitude towards their childlessness and infertility as being the most important single factor. One of these says:

"It is natural that in every case there is great disappointment, frustration, and possibly shock at learning of their inability to have a child, but we need to evaluate how the couple have learned to live with this knowledge and whether they are able to work this through so as to have a sound family adjustment. We must explore the possibility of helping them work out the problem through the adoption process itself. Is it still so painful that they cannot discuss it? Do they consider it a disgrace? Has this made them feel inadequate? Has this negatively affected their relationship? ...These questions are important because frustration continues if they have not been faced, and the adopted child will not be given the healthy and secure kind of environment we are seeking; he will be only the symbol of the parents' frustration."<sup>1</sup>

On this subject the recordings seemed very similar in nearly every case. While the apparent reason for parents not having children of their own was usually mentioned, this subject was rarely followed through. In some cases the worker recorded her impression of how she thought the parents felt about their sterility but did not say on what information this impression was based. In one case the family were referred to

1. Brown, Florence. loc. cit.

the Child Guidance Clinic and in another to the Family Bureau because of difficulties with the child after placement. Both these cases were among the few where it was known definitely that the reason for sterility lay with the husband. While our impression was that the difficulty with the child was related to the question of sterility, we were unable to bear this out from the recordings. There were other cases where both or either parent was dominating and it is possible that this was related to the question of infertility.

F - Understanding of Children and Ability to Accept an Adopted Child

In every case studied, the workers had recorded their opinions regarding the parents' understanding of children and their ability to accept an adopted child. There were no cases in which the workers' opinions about the parents, on these points, were negative. Here again each worker's opinion was based on all the information about the parents which was consolidated and crystallized in the supervision periods. However, the conclusions reached in these periods were again never recorded and the lack of definite information made it impossible for us to elaborate on our findings in this section.

Of those families with whom children were placed, we were able to obtain information about the parents' first reaction to seeing the child proposed for them. Below we show the number of cases in the two years in which the parents accepted or refused the child on first seeing it:

|                | <u>1948</u><br><u>Number of Cases</u> | <u>1949</u><br><u>Number of Cases</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Child accepted | 57                                    | 46                                    |
| Child refused  | <u>13</u>                             | <u>11</u>                             |
|                | <u>70</u>                             | <u>57</u>                             |

In all cases where the child was refused, the parents accepted the next child offered them. Chief among the reasons which the parents gave for refusing the child were based on the appearance or size of the child; that it was not of the sex they wanted; it was older than the child they had asked for; or that it did not appear to be in good health.

It is natural for many parents, who have been unable to have a child of their own, to show a negative or ambivalent reaction when they first see the child proposed for them and which requires much skill on the part of the worker in helping them to reach a sound decision about accepting the child.<sup>1</sup>

#### G - Reasons For Closing Cases

It was pointed out in Chapter II that the headings "rejected" and "withdrawn" would not be used in the case of those families whose files had been closed in the two years. In Table 17 are given the reasons for closing the files of these families. It will be noted that there were relatively few applications "rejected" or "withdrawn". It will also be noted that the reasons for closing the files, under these two categories, are very similar. It was apparent in some cases that where applicants had conflict or indecision or were ineligible for some reason, they were helped to recognize why their application was not acceptable and this was usually subsequently withdrawn. In those cases, where it was felt by the agency that the applicants would not be suitable adoptive

1. Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc. op.cit. pp.44-51.

TABLE 17

Open-Adoption Applicants, 1948  
and 1949. Reasons for Closing Cases

| <u>Reason</u>                                       | <u>Numbers of Families</u> |             |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|
|   | <u>1948</u>                | <u>1949</u> |
| 1. Application "Withdrawn":                         |                            |             |
| Because of Health.....                              | 3.....                     | 5           |
| Applicants "too old".....                           | 0.....                     | 1           |
| Mother working.....                                 | 1.....                     | 0           |
| Lack suitable accomodation.....                     | 1.....                     | 1           |
| Mother afraid of pregnancy.....                     | 0.....                     | 1           |
| No reason given.....                                | 2.....                     | 2           |
| 2. Application "Rejected":                          |                            |             |
| Because of health.....                              | 2.....                     | 0           |
| Father Neurotic.....                                | 1.....                     | 0           |
| Applicants "too old".....                           | 2.....                     | 0           |
| Mother working.....                                 | 1.....                     | 0           |
| 3. Received Child From Other Agency.....            | 3.....                     | 1           |
| 4. Mother Expectant After Applying.....             | 18.....                    | 5           |
| 5. Moved, Contact With Applicants<br>Lost, Etc..... | <u>19</u> .....            | <u>13</u>   |
| TOTAL:  | <u>53</u>                  | <u>29</u>   |

parents, and the parents could not be helped to withdraw, it was then necessary for the agency to reject their application.

H - Summary

In this chapter we had intended to examine the seven factors which are generally considered of greatest importance in assessing prospective adoptive parents. Although these factors were given some consideration by the social workers, the lack of definitive information made them difficult to assess. It would have been helpful if some of the discussions and decisions reached in the supervision periods had been

recorded.

It would seem that the personal adjustments of the adoptive parents and their relationships to each other were reasonably satisfactory before a home was approved. A reasonable resolution of any conflict about their parents and siblings seemed to be expected. In regard to motives, an attempt had been made to ascertain that these are of a positive nature and it was assured that the motive was based on affection, not exploitation. It was expected that the parents had resolved their feelings about their inability to have children of their own.

This chapter seemed to point up the importance of the need for continuous self study of our methods and a sharpening of our casework skills so that we can be sure we are selecting for placement those families that are optimum and that we are doing the least damage to those we reject. Further research in this area seems indicated.

#### IV. TRENDS IN ADOPTION

In this chapter we shall examine some of the trends in adoption and related problems during the years 1947 to 1952.

##### A - Children Born Out Of Wedlock

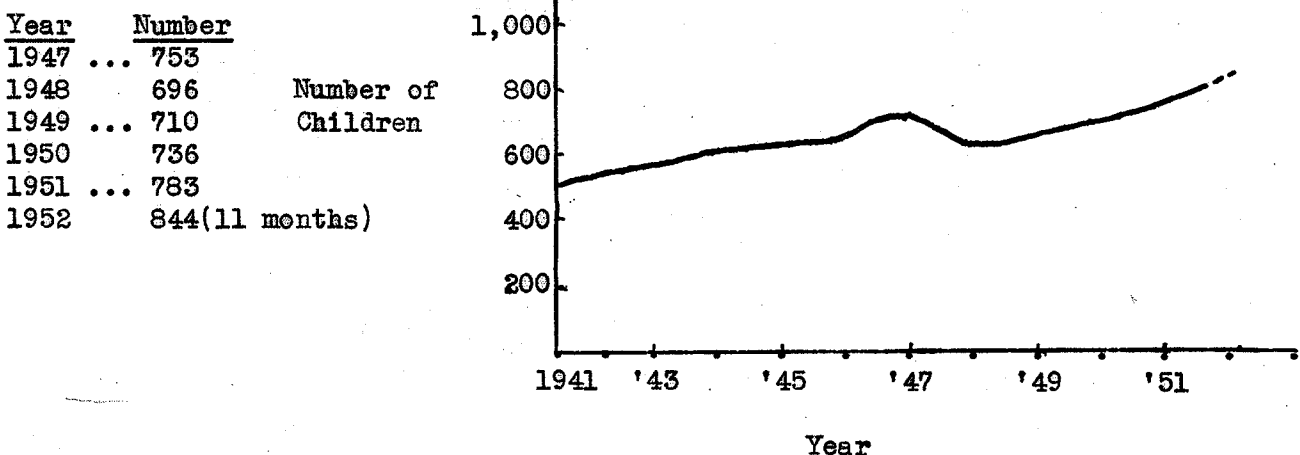
An examination of the files of the families with whom children were placed revealed that 125 of the 127 children studied had been born out of wedlock. We therefore explored the figures on the number of children born out of wedlock in the Province of Manitoba, any one of whom could potentially be listed for adoption with the Division.

The numbers of children born out of wedlock in all Manitoba<sup>1</sup> are shown by Figure 1. In order to show the trend from the early war years, the graph has been extended to include the year 1941. It should be noted that the children born to common-law marriages, who would not normally be on adoption lists, are included in the total number.

It will be noted that the number of children born out of wedlock in the twelve-year period covered, have almost doubled. While no attempt will be made to examine

Figure 1.

Number of Children Born out of Wedlock in all Manitoba



1. Government of Manitoba, Department of Health and Public Welfare Annual Reports, (1941 to 1952).

the reasons for this increase, it is possible that it is related to population increase, to the natural birth rate for the whole population, and to social factors involving the war years. The post war peak in 1947 should be noted but cannot be explained here.

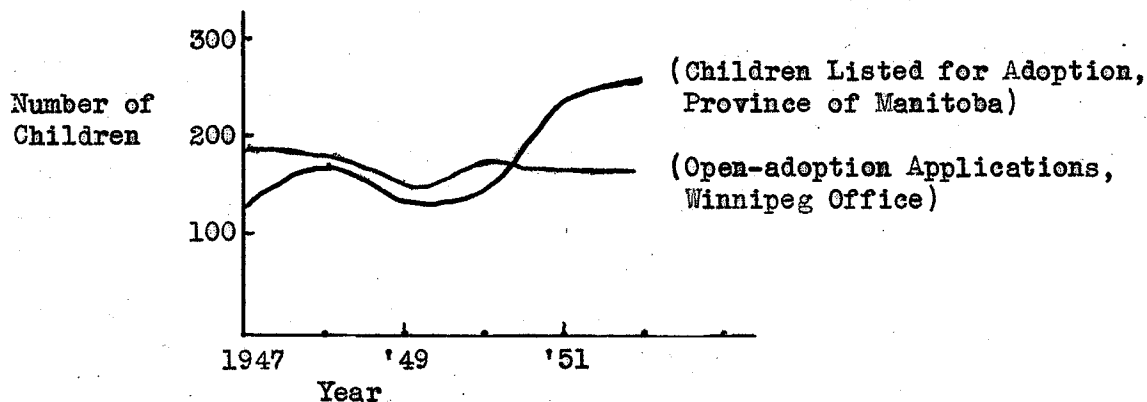
B - Number of Children Listed for Adoption<sup>1</sup> in the Province of Manitoba Compared with the Number of Open-applications<sup>2</sup> for the Winnipeg Office

Because, as already pointed out, the children born out of wedlock could potentially be listed for adoption, we next explored the number of children listed for adoption in the province and, because we were primarily interested in open adoptions, a comparison was made with the number of open-adoption applications registered with the Division in the years 1947 to 1952. This comparison is shown by Figure 2.

The post war peak in the number of children listed for adoption in all Manitoba should be noted. This peak is

Figure 2.

Number of Children Listed for Adoption in the Province of Manitoba Compared with Number of Open-applications for the Winnipeg Office.



1. Government of Manitoba. Department of Health and Public Welfare. Annual Reports (1947 to 1952.)

2. Field Notes.



in 1948, one year later than the peak year for the number of children born out of wedlock. The difference might be because of the time lapse from the birth of a child to the time of placement.

It should also be noted that from 1949 to 1952 the gap between the number of children listed for adoption in all Manitoba and the number of open-adoption applications registered with the Winnipeg office has been widening. We are unable to find a satisfactory explanation of this.

By comparing Figures 1 and 2 it would seem that a larger proportion of children, between 1949 and 1952, are being listed for adoption. It should also be considered that in the same period the number of wards of the Director, for the Province of Manitoba, have increased from 303 to 375.<sup>1</sup> It was estimated that, including the various Children's Aid Societies and other Child Welfare agencies in the province, 1 out of every 250 children under 21 years of age in the province is a ward.<sup>2</sup> These few facts are an indication of the magnitude of the problem faced by all Child Welfare Agencies and of the work they are doing in this field. It would seem important to re-examine these trends in the future so that policy can be keyed to the problem.

#### C - Children Placed for Adoption by the Winnipeg Office

The number of children placed for adoption by the Winnipeg Office of the Division in the three classes of

1. Government of Manitoba. Annual Reports -(period 1947 to 1952).
2. Field Notes.

adoption homes, i. e., open, private and natural, which have already been defined in Chapter I, are shown in Table 18. Children placed for adoption have either been surrendered to the Director, or consents to adoption have been signed by the natural parents whether the children are in natural or private adoption homes, but in practice they are not removed from the home and are therefore not actually "placed" by the Division. Included under private adoptions are those foster homes where the parents have applied for the adoption of the foster child already in their home.

Noted is the peak in the number of placements in 1948 which corresponds to the peak year for open-adoption applications for the Winnipeg office and one year later than a similar crest for children listed for adoption in the whole of the province. It would seem from this that adoptions, to some extent, follow the laws of supply and demand.

#### D - Approved Homes, Applications Outstanding

The number of approved open-adoption homes in which a child had not been placed as on December 31st, 1952, is shown in Table 19, together with the year in which the client applied. It can be seen from this that the number of approved homes, of which the applications are outstanding, are increasing at a marked rate in the period studied, each figure being almost double that of the figure preceding it. It would appear that if this increased backlog continues, it may soon prove embarrassing to the Division. It should be noted that approved applications extend back at least to 1947.

TABLE 18

Children Placed for Adoption, by Type of Placement, Winnipeg Office, Division of Public Welfare, 1947 to 1952

| <u>Types of Adoptions</u>      | <u>Number of Children Placed</u> |             |             |             |             |             | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|                                | <u>1947</u>                      | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> |              |
| Open Adoptions                 | 80                               | 81          | 65          | 80          | 110         | 108         | 524          |
| Natural Adoptions <sup>②</sup> | 28                               | 77          | 70          | 49          | 64          | 59          | 347          |
| Private Adoptions              | <u>16</u>                        | <u>31</u>   | <u>30</u>   | <u>13</u>   | <u>26</u>   | <u>30</u>   | <u>146</u>   |
| TOTAL - All Adoptions          | <u>124</u>                       | <u>189</u>  | <u>165</u>  | <u>142</u>  | <u>200</u>  | <u>197</u>  | <u>1,017</u> |

② A breakdown of the figures of natural adoptions show the adopters of the children and their numbers in each year to be as follows:

| <u>Adopter</u>        | <u>1947</u> | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Parent or Step-parent | 24          | 63          | 59          | 39          | 57          | 51          | 293          |
| Putative Father       | 0           | 1           | 0           | 1           | 1           | 0           | 3            |
| Relatives             | <u>4</u>    | <u>13</u>   | <u>11</u>   | <u>9</u>    | <u>6</u>    | <u>8</u>    | <u>51</u>    |
| TOTAL                 | <u>28</u>   | <u>77</u>   | <u>70</u>   | <u>49</u>   | <u>64</u>   | <u>59</u>   | <u>347</u>   |

TABLE 19

Number of Approved Open-adoption Homes in which a Child has not yet been placed as on December 31st, 1952, together with the Year in which the Client Applied

| <u>Year</u> .....            | <u>1947</u> | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <u>Number of Homes</u> ..... | 9           | 10          | 24          | 44          | 84          | 144         | 315          |

E - Sex Preferences

Table 20 shows the sex preferences of all open-adoption applicants of the Winnipeg office, together with the year in which they applied. For comparative purposes the sex preferences of applicants whose applications are still

outstanding have been included. Indicated by the first part of the table is the parents' greater preference for girls than for boys, which may be one reason for homes being unable to obtain the child they request. While the trend in the ratio of girls to boys varies from year to year, the number of preferences for girls in each year is always more than that for boys.

TABLE 20

Sex Preferences of Open-adoption Applicants and of those Whose Application is Outstanding, together with Year of Application, for Winnipeg Office

| <u>Open-adoption Applicants</u> | <u>1947</u> | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Boy preferred                   | 42          | 35          | 39          | 29          | 44          | 37          | 226          |
| Girl preferred                  | 68          | 78          | 50          | 77          | 60          | 56          | 389          |
| No preference                   | 80          | 69          | 58          | 81          | 68          | 79          | 435          |
| <u>Applications Outstanding</u> |             |             |             |             |             |             |              |
| Boy preferred                   | 0           | 0           | 4           | 2           | 17          | 27          | 50           |
| Girl preferred                  | 2           | 7           | 6           | 25          | 36          | 48          | 124          |
| No preference                   | 7           | 3           | 11          | 17          | 31          | 69          | 138          |

F - Religion of Adoption Applicants

The number of applications received by the Winnipeg office of the Division and the number of Applications still outstanding, classified as to the religion of the applicants, is shown in Table 21.

It can be inferred from the second part of this table that Catholic homes are more readily filled than are Hebrew or Protestant homes. This is probably because of the shortage of Catholic homes in proportion to the number of adoptable

Catholic children.

The total number of applications still outstanding for Protestant and Hebrew applicants should be noted. For example, of ten open-adoption Hebrew applicants in 1947, three were still outstanding as on December 31st, 1952.

TABLE 21<sup>1</sup>

Religion of Open-adoption Applicants and of those whose Application has been approved but is still outstanding as on December 31st, 1952, by year in which they applied.<sup>2</sup>

|                                 | <u>1947</u> | <u>1948</u> | <u>1949</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <u>Open-adoption Applicants</u> |             |             |             |             |             |             |              |
| Protestant                      | 136         | 139         | 115         | 156         | 143         | 136         | 825          |
| Catholic                        | 24          | 24          | 11          | 17          | 10          | 20          | 106          |
| Hebrew                          | 10          | 10          | 15          | 9           | 14          | 16          | 74           |
| Others and Not Stated           | 20          | 4           | 12          | 0           | 3           | 5           | 44           |
| <u>Applications Outstanding</u> |             |             |             |             |             |             |              |
| Protestant                      | 5           | 6           | 18          | 33          | 70          | 120         | 252          |
| Catholic                        | 1           | 0           | 0           | 1           | 1           | 13          | 16           |
| Hebrew                          | 3           | 4           | 3           | 8           | 11          | 11          | 40           |

It was also computed<sup>3</sup> that, of open-adoption applicants in the period 1947 to 1952, four percent of the Hebrews asked for boys and sixteen percent for girls; of Catholics, twenty-five percent asked for boys and forty percent for girls; and

1. Field Notes
2. Field Notes
3. Field Notes

thirty percent of the Protestants asked for boys and fifty-two percent for girls.

One reason for the four-to-one preference for girls over boys for the Hebrews might be because they probably desire a boy to be of Hebrew racial extraction, while with a girl this is not so important. Because, for this thesis, an examination was not made of the children's files, it was not known how many Hebrew children were listed for adoption.

Because the period studied covered only six years, no definite conclusions as to trends of applicants according to their religions could be reached.

#### G - Conclusions

It was noted that, for the short period studied, the number of children born out of wedlock and the number listed for adoption in Manitoba have increased in recent years. Compared with this, the number of open-adoption applications received and the number of placements made by the Winnipeg office have levelled off in the last two years. Some applicants whose homes were approved, at least as far back as 1947, have still not received a child. The proportion whose applications were still outstanding is highest for the Hebrews and the lowest for Catholics, and it is conjectured that this depends both on the children available for adoption and the stated religious preferences of their parents.

1. Field Notes

The greater number of requests for girls indicates that those who ask for a boy have a better chance of getting a child than those who ask for a girl.

## V. IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

As indicated in the first chapter of this thesis, our aim has been to extend on our knowledge of adoptive parents, to examine some of the casework factors involved in the adoption process, and to examine some of the recent trends in adoption.

In Chapter II it was attempted to give a verbal picture of those parents with whom children were placed and those whose files were closed without placement. Dealt with chiefly in this chapter were those qualities of a tangible and measurable quality. It was shown that the families in both categories of cases were in a select group of the population so far as monetary, educational, occupational, and other social status factors are concerned. We wondered here if too much emphasis were being put on those factors which are often important to the workers themselves but do not necessarily indicate the parental abilities of the applicants and their potentialities for meeting the needs of some children. There are children, such as the handicapped or retarded, who often require homes where the standards are not too high and where too much will not be expected of them in achievement. We felt that there must be many homes in the lower category, so far as the above factors are concerned, in which the needs of many of these children would best be met. We felt that in this lower category there would be many families whose basic gratifications of love and achievement would have been met and who would be quite contented with their station in life.

In the second chapter we mentioned, too, the problem of placement of Catholic children. We realize that legislation in this regard actually predetermines the child's religion according to the wishes of its mother. We felt that because of the shortage of Catholic homes the best choice could not always be made for each child according to its needs because of



expediency and the legislation. We could not, however, suggest an answer to the problem.

An attempt was made in Chapter III to examine some factors which are generally considered of greatest importance in assessing adoptive parents. Because of the lack of recorded material it was difficult to arrive at any definite conclusions. There are, however, some findings which will become particularly significant if a follow-up study is ever made of these families when it should be possible to relate the success or failure of a placement to some of the factors discussed. We noted the greater preference for boys than for girls but felt that this did not constitute a real problem because of the fact that the excess of boys can be placed with those parents who have not voiced a preference. We discussed too the question of sterility and noted that there were many mothers who became pregnant after they applied for adoption. We noted that in only a few cases were the parents asked to clear this with their doctor, but wondered if this should not be cleared more definitely before placement is considered. However, a follow-up study could again determine the success of those placements where an adoptive mother had a child of her own after adoption.

We pointed out in Chapter IV that the gap between the number of children listed for adoption, and the number of open-applications and open-placements has been widening in recent years. Regardless of whether this is related to such factors as population increase, the problem remains that the problem of an increasing number of children in care is becoming more acute. In the last chapter we wondered, too, about the numbers of approved homes with whom a child had not yet been placed, and noted that the numbers of outstanding applications has been doubling each year since at least 1947. We did not know whether this indicated that the agency was getting a wider range of adoptive parents or whether these were homes about which there was doubt and in which

the placement of a child may be in doubt.

Our study was hampered by the lack of recorded material. We felt, in this regard, that it is important to record the discussion and conclusions reached in the supervision periods when many of intangible qualities of personality become more clearly understood. Our impression, formed from reading the numerous files, is that the ideal is being reasonably well met, that for each child needing and able to accept parents the best home for its particular needs is found. When a follow-up study is made of the families dealt with in this thesis, it should then be possible to evaluate the success or failure of placements and to relate this to many of the findings in this thesis and to the many points which were discussed.

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APPENDIX "A"

Schedule of Descriptive Qualities of Adoptive Parents

1. Age at Time of Application.
2. Age at Time of Marriage.
3. Duration of Marriage at Time of Application.
4. Religion.
5. Racial Origin.
6. Factors Effecting Social Status:
  - a) Income
  - b) Assets - Insurance
  - c) Years of Schooling
  - d) Occupation of Adoptive Father
  - e) Housing Characteristics
    - i) Type of Housing
    - ii) Occupancy
    - iii) Rooms Per Dwelling and Persons Per Room

APPENDIX "B"

REVISED SCALE FOR RATING OCCUPATION<sup>1</sup>

| Rating Assigned to Occupation | Professionals   | Proprietors and Managers                    | Business Men  | Clerks and Kindred Workers, etc.                                | Manual Workers | Protective and Service Workers | Farmers            |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1                             | Lawyers, doctors, dentists, engineers, judges, high-school superintendents, veterinarians, ministers, chemists, etc., with post graduate training, architects | Businesses valued at \$75,000. and over     | Regional and Divisional Managers of large financial and industrial enterprises                            | Certified Public Accountants                                    |                |                                | Gentleman farmers  |
| 2                             | High-school teachers, trained nurses, chiropodists, undertakers, ministers (some training), newspaper editors, librarians (graduate)                          | Businesses valued at \$20,000. to \$75,000. | Assistant Managers and office and department managers of large businesses, assistants to executives, etc. | Accountants, Salesmen of real estate, of insurance, postmasters |                |                                | Large farm owners, |

APPENDIX "B"

REVISED SCALE FOR RATING OCCUPATION

| Rating Assigned to Occupation | Professionals  | Proprietors and Managers                   | Business Men                      | Clerks and Kindred Workers, etc.  | Manual Workers   | Protective and Service Workers                                      | Farmers |
|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|---------|
| 3                             | Social workers, grade-school teachers, optometrists, librarians (not graduate), undertaker's assistants, ministers (no training) | Businesses valued at \$5,000. to \$20,000. | All minor officials of businesses | Auto salesmen, bank clerks, and cashiers, postal clerks, secretaries to executives, supervisors of railroads, telephone etc., justices of the peace | Contractors  |   |         |
| 4                             |  | Businesses valued at \$2,000. to \$5,000.  |                                   | Stenographers, bookkeepers, rural mail clerks, railroad ticket agents, sales people in dry goods store, etc.  | Factory foremen, electricians, plumbers, watch-makers (all own business) | Dry cleaners, butchers, sheriffs, railroad engineers and conductors |         |

APPENDIX "B"

REVISED SCALE FOR RATING OCCUPATION

| Rating Assigned to Occupation | Proprietors and Managers                | Business Men | Clerks and Kindred Workers, etc.  | Manual Workers  | Protective and Service Workers  | Farmers               |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| 5                             | Businesses valued at \$500. to \$2,000. |              | Dime store clerks, hardware salesmen, beauty operators, telephone operators | Carpenters, plumbers, electricians (apprentice), time-keepers, linemen, telephone or telegraph, radio repairmen, medium skilled workers | Barbers, firemen, butcher's apprentices practical nurses, policemen, cooks, seamstresses, cooks, in restaurants, bartenders | Tenant farmers        |
| 6                             | Businesses valued at less than \$500.   |              |   | Moulders, semi-skilled workers, assistants to carpenters, etc.  | Baggagemen, night policemen and watchmen, taxi and truck drivers, gas station attendants, waitresses in restaurants         | Small tenant          |
| 7                             |   |              |   | Heavy labor, migrant workers,   | Janitors, scrubwomen, newsboys  | Migrant farm laborers |