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the requirements for the degree of
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Being the report of a research project

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known to Social Agencies in
Based on a study of desertion cases

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

A STUDY OF DESERTED FAMILIES IN RECEIPT OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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to the extent of desertion by either parent depends on their ability
the children of those deserted families. Their emotional adjustment
one of our greatest concerns is the health and welfare of

to prevent the greatest economic dependency.
question of interest to those concerned could be which group tends
line of desertion with those on assistance after desertion a
study is based. In comparing these families on assistance at the
community which should be indicated by the sample in which this
public assistance in comparison to the number of families in the
community would depend on the number of deserted families regarding
the size of the problem these desertion cases present in the

deserted families in receipt of public assistance in October, 1957.
community, the main topic of this report will be an analysis of
order to appreciate the extent of the burden of desertion on the
these families becomes the responsibility of the community. In
of these cases and the financial cost of services provided for
are requested to give economic help and public assistance in many
toll in family breakdown, divorces, and desertions. Social agencies
life is threatened by strains and stresses which are taking their
in this era of modern day living, the stability of family

CHAPTER I

to accept this loss and the consequent deprivation of normal family life. If their emotional adjustment is not equal to the strain imposed by the desertion, personality problems may develop that require treatment, the cost of which in time and services will contribute still further to the economic burden on the community.

This study is part of a project concerned with a study of deserted families receiving services from five agencies in October, 1957, and living in Winnipeg proper. These agencies are, the

Department of Health and Welfare of the Province of Manitoba, the Juvenile and Family Court of the Province of Manitoba, the Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, the Public Welfare Department of the City of Winnipeg, and the Children's Aid Society of Greater

Winnipeg.

The definition of desertion used for the purpose of this

study is as follows:

- Couples living apart at any time during October, 1957, except when they are living apart by divorce or separation agreement. This will include:
- a. when the partner has willfully left and is not supporting his family;
 - b. where the partner has willfully left but there is a court order for support;
 - c. where a wife leaves with or without the children and of her own choice and does not follow it up with a court hearing for support;
 - d. where a wife leaves with or without the children and takes legal action but this fails;
- This will exclude:
- a. Mutual agreement to separate or divorce;
 - b. Separation by Court Order.

The data on which this study was based is limited entirely to the information recorded in the agencies' case records, and as such is accepted as reliable according to the agency standards without further verification.

A schedule was drafted by ten second year students in the School of Social Work. The schedule contained information needed for each individual aspect within the main study which would provide an over-all picture of desertion. The data required was obtained from the case records in the sample and recorded on the schedules.

The method of random sampling was used so that the total sample of 110 cases falling within the above definition was selected as being a reliable representative sample of the larger group, and therefore the basis on which this study would be made.

The author's interest in this particular topic of the larger research project arose from two years experience in the juvenile and family court, as a family counselor in this setting, the author was working with parents who had been deserted and were in need of financial assistance until they could take legal action for maintenance or find some other means of support for themselves and their families. The author's concern over the difficulties encountered by these deserted families in obtaining economic support prompted the selection of this topic for study.

burden to society of those deserted families and show this in
The author would like to study the real economic
burden already carried by the service agencies.
through community resources, can contribute heavily to the economic
psychiatric treatment. These additional services through provided
cases in many forms and in many cases may require casework or
through emotional conflict and inner tensions, which reveal them-
relieved by public assistance, many hidden burdens have been created
through the economic problem of many of these deserted families is
financial provision for the family that is left behind. Even
from the marriage, and escaping responsibility without legal or
one or the other partner has chosen his or her way of withdrawing
that is obvious is only the end result. What is apparent is that
because when the majority of these cases come to the social agencies
It is not easy to know what motivates an actual desertion

themselves.

ability for the maintenance of these families who cannot maintain
created for the community which undertakes to accept the respon-
are left behind. In addition, an economic and social burden is
marriage breakdown creates hardship and suffering for those who
worked with these deserted families that this particular kind of
apart from the family unit. It is recognized by those who have
Desertion is an important problem that cannot be considered