

No Child In County Is Hungry If Welfare Department Knows It

By Leon Rowland

If father has to go to the pen for some peccadillo he can make his trip to San Quentin with assurance that his children will not starve. The county welfare department will step in.

The welfare department views family tragedies impersonally. Its job is to see that no children go hungry, unclothed, unschooled, untrained. A broken home, no matter what the cause, brings it to the fore.

"Father in prison" is one of five categories and a half a dozen sub-categories into which analysis divides the families for which the welfare department cares. Fortunately it is far from the largest.

Desertion ranks as prime cause of broken families, in this county, as in the state. In fact, desertion is becoming so great a consideration as cause for children being taken on the welfare rolls that a law passed by the last legislature requires the welfare department to report to the district attorney all cases of desertion.

At present in Santa Cruz county—or when the figures were last cast up by the workers under Welfare Director Helen Clemensen—are 88 families whose father has vanished.

Death of the father comes next numerically; divorce is third; incapacity of the father, either mental or physical, ranks fourth, with "father in prison" fifth.

Investigation of chiseling on the state's relief rolls by phony desertions, by a senate committee, resulted in the requirement that cases of desertion resulting in children needing aid be reported promptly to the district attorney. In some counties the load is sufficient that the district attorney has asked funds to hire an extra assistant.

Ironically the senate committee, headed by Ben Hulse of Imperial, was not one on welfare. It was the senate interim committee on state and local taxation, which found so large a part of its problem centering about the rapidly increasing call for aid to needy children that it made a special investigation of the situation.

Welfare payments to families containing needy children are liberal enough to enable the families to maintain a dignified place in the community. The mother, as "payee relative" gets \$16.50 a month and the first child \$38.50. Each additional child is allowed \$48. A family of mother and four minor children can draw \$249 a month.

Cases of chiseling are few in Santa Cruz and constant guard is kept against them, according to Mrs. Clemensen. Nevertheless the files of the department contain records of a few.

One father "deserted" his family and moved into quarters around the corner, taking an assumed name. Mother and children applied for welfare payments and got them.

Father, however, was detected in his subterfuge, a warrant was sworn out against him and he was sent to jail. After that, of course, mother and the children remained on the welfare rolls.

Mere absence of the father is not accepted as desertion. Workers of the welfare department turn detective, using every means to trace his departure. Cases of fathers located across the nation exist in this county's files, cases in which the father was persuaded to take up again at least part of the support of his children.

There were 743 needy children on the relief rolls of the county in November. In addition there

Joint Tenancies In Several Estates Are Terminated

Decrees terminating joint tenancies in several estates were signed Friday by Superior Judge J. H. Atteridge.

They include

Emma L. Lomond, died September 29, 1945, the petitioner; Lockwood represented by Stanford Smith, including four lots in Ben Lomond; George W. Stone, died February 18, 1945, the petitioner; Charles W. Stone, died De Venney, represented by Bert B. Snyder, including three lots on street, property on street and property on River street.

Burt A. Reed, who died March 30, 1951, the proper legro Heights; M. Irma McGowan, died November 1945, the petitioner being M. McGowan, and the proper Larkin Valley; Francis W. Ruppert, died January 9, 1945, the petitioner being Wilma Ruppert and the proper Third street in Watsonville.

Amos L. Cottrell, died November 17, 1951, the petitioner being Gertrude G. Cottrell, property being part of the rancho in New Freed of the Rancho Salsipuedra.

MRS. BROWN OF MYSTERY HOUSE DIES

San Jose, Calif., Dec. 15.—Mrs. Mayme S. Brown, her husband operated Mystery House here, died last night at the Winchester Mystery House attraction, is a 100-year-old woman built by the late Pardee Winchester.

over support of his small brothers and

Many years back the court files was a case recalled with more interest. In Mount Merced was found a family of 16 and 15 children. Spanish name but was largely of Indian descent.

The plight of the family covered when one of the children unwarily enrolled in a school in the south end of the investigation found the children of all ages, actually living under spreading park. The children were in, cleaned up, clothed and put in homes or

In the years that have passed the family has grown out of the "needy children" aid of the boys are in the vices; several of the girls married. The father, blind, is on the county rolls.

on the relief rolls of the county in November. In addition there were 235 payee relatives. Payments last October were \$39,913. Payments for aid to needy children in the last fiscal year were \$436,536.

The money does not all come out of the county treasury. Of the \$39,913 paid in February, \$13,634 came from Uncle Sam, \$16,389 from the state and \$9490 from the county, to which was added a refund of \$400.

The growth of the needy children rolls from 1936 when 144 minors were drawing about \$1500 a month for their support to the present total of 743 children and 235 payee relatives has been due to successive liberalizations of the eligibility laws.

No child or family of children goes hungry if the welfare department knows it. There is no delay while the departure of the head of the family is investigated. A grocery order paid for out of county funds can go overnight, rent can be guaranteed, and the next day the family is on the welfare rolls.

Despite the size of the needy children roll and the amount paid out, sight is not lost of the fact that the program is primarily one of temporary relief until a family can get on its feet. If the welfare workers can help they do so. Mothers who can work part time are helped to find jobs. One case to which Mrs. Clemensen points with pride is a family whose oldest son, now 18, has found work and taken