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## Domestic Relations

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thus spelling out what we may assume that the 1951 legislature actually intended to provide.

JOHN B. SHOLLEY

### DOMESTIC RELATIONS

*Family Desertion—Non-support.* Chapter 255 amends RCW 26.20.-030 [Rem. Supp. 1943 § 6908] by changing the penalties for desertion where children under the age of sixteen are involved. The former section made this a felony, carrying with it imprisonment in the state prison up to twenty years, or in the county jail up to one year, or a fine of not more than one thousand dollars, or both such fine and imprisonment. There is substituted a graduated series of penalties: for the first offense, county jail up to thirty days, or fine up to one hundred dollars, or both, for the second offense, county jail for not less than thirty nor more than ninety days, or a fine up to three hundred dollars, or both; for a third offense, the same penalties as under the old section.

The problem of the deserting father is a real one, as any social worker can testify; fecundity and irresponsibility so often go hand-in-hand that the deserted mother and her brood represent a perennial drain upon relief funds. While it is likely that the act of desertion is beyond the reach of statute in a preventive sense, nevertheless the amendment here presented has real value. Assuming that the recalcitrant father can be brought to book (a rather rare circumstance in view of the limited funds available to prosecutors), under the old system he was brought before a justice of the peace who under threat of binding him over to the Superior Court for a felony trial secured a promise that the offender would contribute so much a week for the support of the family. The amendment puts the offense within the jurisdiction of the justice court; he may speedily try, convict, and suspend sentence on condition that the offender contribute. This puts the matter on the proper judicial level, avoiding the delay and the added expense of the felony trial, whether the amendment will bring in more support is speculative, but it at least has the advantage to the lawyer of being legal.

JOHN W. RICHARDS

### EVIDENCE

*The Uniform Photographic Copies of Business and Public Records as Evidence Act.* Chapter 273 is the final step taken by the legislature