

Gossip-Loving Reno Drops Divorce Talk for Defense

(Special to The News)

Reno.—While it won't do to be too hasty and begin predicting that the war is going to ruin the divorce industry, this city is passing through a strange phase right now. Nobody wants to talk about "that big case granted today"; everybody wants to talk about war work.

Whereas Reno, and the state in general, have always been glad to feed and house refugees from love, now the town is prepared to care for and shelter 30,000 evacuees from the West Coast, should the need arise. Folks who have had no occupations other than duding and gossiping are now putting their all into the defense effort.

Wealthy Step In.

Furthermore, the Disaster Committee of the Washoe County Chapter of the Red Cross is being substantially aided by numerous prominent divorcees and "taxation residents" who have sought snug harbor in Nevada, long known among economic royalists as "The Only Sound State" because it collects no income, inheritance, sales or gift taxes.

In reference to the effect of war upon divorce, your correspondent sought to interview George A. Bartlett, former judge and divorce authority, whose views on the matter as regards the last war were put into a book. "Men, Women

No More Gossip



Connie Bennett knits with absorption as Mayor Frolich of Reno listens to speaker at Red Cross luncheon. Divorce city is wrapped up in war effort now. Lady at right is mayor's ex-wife.

held that the war speeded up divorce. He blamed environmental conditions, emotional acceleration during the period of the conflict, absence of husbands in the armed forces, hasty war marriages and a number of other factors.

Different Now, He Says.

"That was the most reckless age of our history," commented Judge Guild. "The workers of that period went from cotton to silk shirts. There were few restrictions on profiteering. Everything was done to excess. Everyone, for instance, bought automobiles. This time, many of us are going to have to do without cars. Then, too, the war was followed by orgies of spending and what became known as 'flaming youth' and the 'jazz age.' Lots of people smashed up in the divorce courts. There should be no comparable boom this time, in a total war. As married couples reach a sober realization of the difficulties that confront them, they will find more happiness in the home."

Judge Guild, who feels that there is tragedy in divorce, thinks that this time there will not be as many war marriages. He believes that of the war marriages, most are the culmination of long-standing romances.

He had something to say about the Nazi tendency to undermine the institution of marriage by the encouragement of illegitimacy and the recognition of pagan marriage rites.

We're Still Safe.

"It will take generations," he said, "to undo the harm done by Hitler to the institution of marriage. Let's hope that we will be able to maintain respect for the relationship. Any time we begin to overlook marital morals in the United States we are finished as a nation."

"Despite the national divorce rate, despite the publicity given Nevada divorcees, we are ahead of the game. Unsuccessful marriages are the ones you hear about. I don't think we hear enough about the millions of successful ones."

Back in Reno, a checkup of news, which can be done swiftly at the Riverside Buffet, found most of the swivel-tongued unusually silent.

Won't Talk Divorce.

One of the recent cases was that of Ludovica Dimon Graham MacFayden, 76, who got shed of Ralph James MacFayden, 56. A deposition made public in San Francisco asserted that MacFayden, who had sued his wife for "back pay," was in "poverty and rage" when he first came to Reno, but shortly after she had paid his hotel bill was the best dressed man in town—"with

the finest of pearls, deep water pearls—the ingrate." Ludovica is the largest individual donor of funds to the Red Cross. Nobody would listen to any talk about her.

Another case was that of Orator Francis Woodward, who is usually known as the Jello King. (He sold Jello to General Foods for a reported \$50,000,000 and has lived here since 1939.)

This would have been choice conversational material before the war. He won a default decree from Mary Trask Woodward of New York City and she presented no defense. The petition cited cruelty, declaring she conspired to have him declared insane; that she served him inferior food; that she used discarded fishheads to make soup; that she went around in her bare feet and tossed cigarette butts on the rugs; that she insisted on keeping unhousebroken dogs and that she had threatened to kill him.

War More Absorbing.

But nobody wanted to talk about Orator. The war was more absorbing. Divorcees, tax refugees and plain citizens alike are plunging into the job. The women are taking nutrition courses and training as ambulance and motor corps drivers. The courses are so popular that there's a waiting list.

Included in the defense ranks are the most improbable seat mates. George Whittell, fabulously wealthy and eccentric former San Francisco realty heir, who has a castle, complete with secret tunnels, on a mountain overlooking Lake Tahoe, was sued last Summer by three gamblers who said he had lost \$70,000 to them at roulette. They failed to collect, but Whittell is giving to the Red Cross.

Some others are Norman Biltz and his wife, the former Esther Auchincloss of Park Ave. (Biltz conceived the notion of Nevada as a haven for tax refugees); Max Fleischmann, yeast man, who has three Nevada homes and is the second largest contributor to the Red Cross here; Christian Arthur Wellesley, 4th Earl Cowley, and his wife, a former hat check girl here.

Of course, it's too early at this date to tell whether an all-out war will turn Reno from the nation's divorce capital to just another small town, but certainly divorce is not the chief topic here today.

Here's to Crime

Lordsburg, N. M.—The first Grand Jury in 20 years in Hidalgo County adjourned after a three-day session. The jurors reported they found nothing to indict anybody with.

Tragedy Parts Them



Mrs. Marlus Mooberry



The late Lyle Mooberry

Father wouldn't believe she was happy.

DAD OBSESSED BY GIRL'S HAPPINESS KILLS SON-IN-LAW

Peoria, Ill.—James Beams, 49, machinist, heard that his son-in-law, Lyle Noel Mooberry, 39, whom he had never met, wasn't taking good care of his wife, the former Marlus Beams. Marlus told her father that he was mistaken—that she and Mooberry were happy together. But the father didn't believe her, so he shot Mooberry dead.

In an effort to evade indictment he will tell the March grand jury why he didn't believe his daughter. However, States Attorney Les Carson, armed with Beams' confession and inquest testimony, will seek an indictment as a preliminary step in sending Beams to the electric chair.

Beams objected in 1937 when Marlus, then 16, married Mooberry, more than twice her age and already twice wed. Several years later Billy, now 3, was born. Fifteen months ago Bobby was born.

Then Beams heard that Mooberry was mistreating the young wife, now 21.

Although he had never met his son-in-law, Beams took Billy away from his parents last Summer and tried to persuade Marlus to leave her husband.

"He said he'd kill Lyle if he ever had a chance."

Marlus said her husband was steadily employed and always supported herself and the children.

Nevertheless, on Sunday evening, Feb. 8, while she was at a movie, Beams appeared at the Mooberry apartment, introduced himself and then shot his son-in-law. Mooberry apparently was smoking, for by the time the police



James Beams
Slew son-in-law.

arrived the crib in which the baby was standing, unhurt, was on fire. Beams was picked up after he boasted of the murder to a taxi driver.

Speed Defense Job In Race With Time

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over an extended period of time. This means five days a week of 10 hours and six hours on Saturday, which probably will be the rule in this country after the completion of conversion.

Plants Facing Conversion.

Civilian industries, in addition to the automotive plants that face immediate conversion to war production, include refrigerators, washing machines, typewriters and business machines and radio receiving sets.

All these products of a peacetime world face complete curtailment for civilian use. The production will be limited to a few specified plants to fill only essential needs of the war program. Manufacturers of these products will not be permitted to use material on hand, as was the automobile industry, because that was the tragic mistake made by OPM. Instead the Government will requisition all material that can be used or resmelted.

Conversion of other industries may be found necessary to meet our production goals, but these are

the first. While they are being converted, the nation will have to depend upon the physical stamina and courage of its industrial army on the production lines now in action.

Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, draft director, estimates the 1942 labor force at around 60,000,000, including service men. He says the nation's man-power must be budgeted to put everyone "in the place where he can render the maximum effort."

Among the tasks facing the Government is the finding of new employment for 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 workers laid off during 1942 because of war curtailment of civilian goods and services. It is estimated that perhaps 2,200,000 women—equal to the number of men called to the colors—may be placed in factories and on farms. Says Mr. McNutt:

"The gigantic task of supplying man-power for the war industries, for the armed forces and for essential civilian production, must be assigned in the most productive way to the appropriate people."



Judge Clark J. Guild
Thinks war will tighten family ties.

and Conflict." Bartlett, after consideration, decided that "such an interview might not be proper at this time." Reno lawyers ordinarily are pretty cagey anyway about talking for publication, as the ethics committee of the Nevada Bar Association is ever vigilant to preserve the dignity of the profession.

Judge Is Interviewed.

Rebuffed in Reno, your correspondent went to Carson City. There sits Judge Clark J. Guild, famed divorce-granting judge, who is quite well aware of the bench's dignity and has been interviewed before.

(Incidentally, and Reno may be a little worried to discover this, 1,079 divorce actions were tried in Carson City last year. Of course, that can't compare to Reno's 20,000, but it may be described as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.)

"This war," said Judge Guild, "definitely will tend to knit closer the ties of the average American family. By average I mean those in the \$250-\$350-a-month wage bracket. Couples in the middle and lower salary classes will be thrown closer together. That will lower the divorce rate and hold it static after the war is over."

Judge Guild sadly admitted, however, that the effect upon the wealthy is likely to be the opposite. He considers money to be at the root of many marital troubles. Furthermore, Judge Guild believes conditions this time are somewhat different from those which gave rise to the situation former Judge Bartlett described in his book.

Bartlett, who stepped down from the bench in 1930 after presiding in more than 20,000 divorce cases,