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Committee Told 500 Tots 'Sold' in Year

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

The slave traffic was wiped out by the thirteenth amendment to our U.S. Constitution. But something akin to it has developed recently here in California and elsewhere which has many of the same shameful aspects. That is the traffic in babies up for adoption, about which the Assembly Judiciary committee is holding hearings.

At its meeting in San Francisco a few days ago, the committee was given some really startling testimony by state and national experts in the field as a basis for its consideration of remedial legislation. The group was told that ten thousand babies were adopted in California last year, of whom an estimated 500 were illegally "sold on the black market," and an additional 100 were exported out of the state.

PRIMARY authority over adoption of children has rested in our courts for a century or more. About thirty-five years ago a law was enacted to bring

"placement agencies" — those organizations which bring children and prospective parents together before court proceedings — under state licensing regulation. At present, there are twenty such agencies run by California counties, and ten private ones.

The law made placement of children by unlicensed persons a misdemeanor. The committee was told, however, that this provision is generally regarded as unenforceable because of the difficulty in defining the word "placement."

THIS LAW IS designed to protect all parties to an adoption, the child, the natural parents, and the adopting family. The licensed placement agencies have the important responsibility of making all necessary investigation to assure that the best possible match between child and adopting parents is made. But private persons — "intermediaries" — have found that money is to be made in locating babies for couples who

want to adopt them. The reason? Shortage of available children. There's an estimated three and a half couples waiting for every such child.

Heavy criticism was leveled at intermediaries who demand fees of \$1,000, \$2,000 or more. Charges of fee-splitting, demands for fees from both parties, and failure to render any service for fees, were laid against a "relatively small group" of intermediaries. One adoption specialist who defended the business as legal, claimed his highest fee was \$500, and the average, only \$400.

THE SPOKESMAN for a national child welfare organization traced the root of the problem to the unwed mother. Usually, it was said, such women have no real knowledge of probable dangers to themselves and their babies, and so are easily led into unwise contracts. "Middlemen" then try to frighten them to prevent their backing out of the agreements. Experts, it was stated,

regard 30 per cent of independent placements as extremely poor, and another 24 per cent as only fair.

The representative of the state department of public welfare, which administers the licensing law, suggests two changes in the law to improve the situation. First, and strongly emphasized, is that unlicensed placement of any child for adoption should be made a felony. Second is that the law should be changed to require full disclosure to the court of all financial transactions connected with an adoption.

When a major newspaper can head its story "Baby Sales — Big Racket in State" it would appear about time to put a legislative stop to the slavery implied for some of our future citizens.

STAR GAZER			
By CLAY R. POLLAN			
Your Daily Activity Guide According to the Stars			
To develop message for Thursday, read words corresponding to numbers of your Zodiac birth sign.			
ARIES 21 5-7-13-25 29-45-80-87	TAURUS 21 2-4-22-40 43-53-77	GEMINI 22 7-26-32-36-47 50-55-83-88	CANCER 23 12-24-31-57 72-76-78
LEO 24 41-44-48-61 63-68-85-89	VIRGO 24 8-11-30-38 49-65-79-82	LIBRA 23 16-21-31-42 54-58-86-91	SCORPIO 24 9-10-56-59 60-64-71
SAGITTARIUS 23 12-23-33-35 42-67-69	CAPRICORN 23 19-25-39-42 73-74-75	AQUARIUS 23 1-3-6-17 18-20-55	PISCES 23 15-27-37-46 52-70-81-84
1 Lay	31 Will	61 Easy	
2 Be	32 Smart	62 To	
3 Out	33 Affair	63 To	
4 Hesitant	34 Be	64 Hairbrained	
5 Obstacles	35 Comes	65 To	
6 Work	36 To	66 Relations	
7 Seem	37 Too	67 Light	
8 Looks	38 Is	68 Influence	
9 Watch	39 Send	69 Now	
10 Out	40 Making	70 You're	
11 Like	41 You'll	71 Schemes	
12 Some	42 Messages	72 Surprise	
13 To	43 A	73 And	
14 Expect	44 Find	74 Visit	
15 Don't	45 Up	75 Friends	
16 Opposite	46 Sure	76 Or	
17 Let	47 Maintain	77 Move	
18 Others	48 It	78 Gift	
19 Write	49 Attempting	79 But	
20 Carry	50 Good	80 Rapidly	
21 Sex	51 Pleasant	81 Entirely	
22 About	52 That	82 Again	
23 Hidden	53 New	83 With	
24 A	54 Especially	84 Right	
25 Letters	55 On	85 Important	
26 Be	56 For	86 And	
27 Be	57 Social	87 Now	
28 It's	58 Attractive	88 Officials	
29 Piling	59 Enticing	89 Persons	
30 Romance	60 But	90 Responsive	
		1/16 Neutral	
		Good	Adverse

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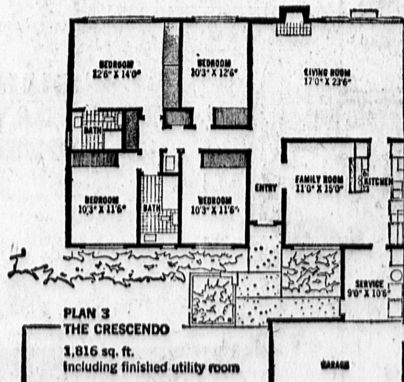
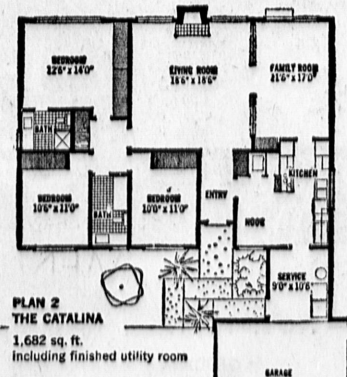
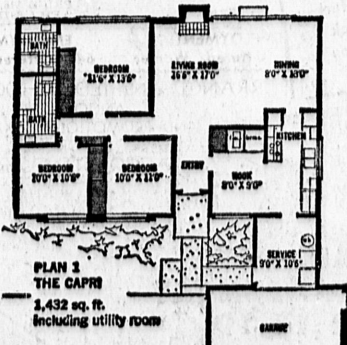
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