



*Jimmie Walker: "THIS IS AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE!"*

# OUTLOOK

## *and Independent*

April 8, 1931

### ▶▶ Trend of the Week ◀◀

#### ▶▶ Reason for Reno

WE TRUST there are no New Yorkers among those who deprecate the divorce racket in Nevada, where one may now have a marriage dissolved on a wide variety of grounds, after a six weeks' residence, without publicly disclosing the details of the action and with a bit of legalized gambling on the side. Considering the mediaeval divorce laws of their own state, they cannot afford to be contemptuous of Nevada. To a large extent the situation in Nevada is, in fact, but a measure of the difference between divorce laws and customs in New York.

A goodly proportion of those who "take the cure" in Reno, as Reno light-heartedly phrases it, are New Yorkers, driven there by the narrowness of their own state's divorce laws, which the Legislature at Albany refuses to broaden. For years, every bill to liberalize these laws has been killed in committee. This year, when such a bill reached the floor of the Assembly, it was defeated by a vote of more than three to one. It was a home-wrecking and family-wrecking bill, opined one eminent Assemblyman. Not far away from the doctrine and policy of Soviet Russia, said another, who also found it "one step nearer companionate and free-love marriages." A third was moved to ask: "Do we stand with Christianity or with this modern group whose God is the devil?"

And what was the measure which moved the Assembly to such violent opposition? Simply and solely a bill to make a cause for divorce out of desertion for five years. Virtually all other states, even the most backward, consider desertion for five years a suitable cause for divorce. New York does not, unless the absent person is presumed to be dead. Moreover, its legislators nearly have hysterics when any one suggests that the divorce laws of New York be

made as liberal as those of Maine and Mississippi, say, or those of Arkansas and Vermont. Hence, New Yorkers who can afford it obtain their divorces outside the state and Albany is the father of Reno.

#### ▶▶ Tammany Tactics

NOW THAT THE Republican-controlled New York Legislature has ordered an investigation into New York City's government, Tammany is trying to clean house before the inspectors arrive. The prospect of finding some Republican elements in the debris has given it not a little zest for the housecleaning.

While the Republicans in the Legislature were deciding to order the investigation, a private inspection of the city government was being conducted by Commissioner of Accounts Higgins, a Tammany affiliate under the control of Mayor Walker. During the week following the March 24 vote for the legislative investigation there were rumors that Tammany was about to sweep away several minor city officials. On March 27 came the arrest and arraignment of Rollin C. Bastress on charges of accepting a \$1,500 bribe as chief building inspector, a post which he had resigned the week before. Arrested on orders from the office of Tammany's District Attorney, on evidence of Tammany's own investigator, Mr. Bastress naturally turned out to be a Republican.

This incident, which has its amusing side, may indicate the tactics which Tammany will follow in preparing for the Republican investigation. It may attempt not only to cover up the extensive and repellent misdeeds which point toward the Hall but to uncover the comparatively few miscreants who hold office in the city government and vote the Republican ticket. Should it catch several Republicans with their fingers in the pie, it may take a little of the edge

off the revelations made by the legislative inquiry. Or so Tammany apparently hopes.

#### ▶▶ Through American Eyes

IN ALL PROBABILITY the customs union planned by Germany and Austria will have little or no effect upon American trade. The plan, not yet worked out in detail, is to tear down virtually all tariff walls between the two countries and bind them into an economic unit by means of a treaty. How seriously, at worst, our exports could be affected by the Austro-German union can be estimated by reference to the amount of our exports to Austria which are subject to competition from Germany and to the amount of our exports to Germany which are subject to competition from Austria. In 1929 our exports to Austria were valued at 29 million dollars and only a tenth of the total—or 1-1800th of all American exports—were subject to competition from Germany. Similarly, but a small fraction of our exports to Germany—valued at 410 million dollars in 1929—were in competition with exports from Austria.

It may be, indeed, that the trade losses we sustain through the union will be offset by trade gains if the union helps to create a richer Austro-German market. Again, it may be that such losses will be forestalled by negotiations based on the most-favored-nation treaty between Germany and the United States. This treaty, which does not expire until 1935, provides that neither country shall place higher tariffs on goods from the other than it places on the goods of any other country. It is questionable whether this provision would apply to the tariffs of the customs union. Yet, even if it would, the disputed trade will hardly be considerable enough to prevent an amicable agreement between Berlin and Washington.