Gemmill file with Norman or conservator

COURT OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

The court of Domestic Relations was organized on April 3, 1911, by a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Judges of the Municipal Court, who found that in order to secure the best results it was necessary that certain classes of cases, dealing especially with home relationship, should be brought into one court, where records could be much better preserved and the cases heard and dispesed of more promptly and with less publicity. At that time it was decided that the following classes of cases should be heard in this court:

(1) Wife and child abandonment.

(2) Parents' failure to support children.

(3) Contributing to the delinquency of children.

(4) Actions in bastardy.

(5) Violations of child labor laws.

(6) Violations of the ten hour law for women.

(7) Violations of the truancy laws.

(8) Selling liquor to minors.

The Chief Justice, Harry Olson, assigned Judge Charles

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The Chief Justice, Harry Olson, assigned Judge Charles N. Goodnow to presids over the court during the first year. During that year 2796 cases were heard and disposed of. During the second year, from April 3, 1912, to April 3, 1913, Judge William N. Gemmill was assigned to this court by the Chief Justice. During the second year of the court a total of 3699 cases were heard and disposed of; Of this number 2432 were for wife or child abandonment, or for failure to properly support the children. 130 were of persons charged with contributing to the delinquency of children. 499 were actions in

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643 were cases involving violations of the child labor law and the ten hour law for women.

During the year there was collected by the Clerk of the Court upon the court order the sum of $75,562.59, all of which was paid out by the Clerk of the court to the dependent wives or children of those brought into court. During the first year of the court the amount so collected and paid out was $36,546.10. The above amount represents about one-half of the total amount collected upon order of the court. In all cases where the defendants were living with their families the court directed that the money paid by them should be paid directly to the wives or children or someone in their behalf, so that in such cases no exact record was kept of the amount paid, but the total number of cases where payments were made in this way was about one-half of the cases disposed of during the year. In addition to the amount thus collected and paid out to families, the court collected in fines and turned into the treasury the sum of $6351.50.

During the last year the court moved into much larger quarters, and it now occupies two large court rooms and six smaller rooms. One of these court rooms, adjacent to the room in which the court holds its daily sittings, was fitted up as a rest room for women and children, while waiting the calling of their cases in court. Rocking chairs are supplied for the women. A table is provided upon which is kept proper reading matter. All sorts of kindergarten material is supplied for the use of the children during the waiting hours. In another room several small beds are fitted up for the babies, many of whom are brought to the court daily, and who are greatly in need of some place to rest and sleep during the long hours of the court day. Provision is now being made for a supply of milk

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and provisions for these children while waiting in and about the court.

During the last year a new system was put in operation, in order that the court might in some measure determine the causes which lead to so many family separations. A large card, giving many items of special interest, touching each case, was furnished and indexed, and all the data available was obtained and placed upon this card. Certain blank spaces were left upon the card to be filled in by the trial judge after he had listened to the testimony in each separate case. The conclusions reached by this test as to the causes of family separation were as follows:

Excessive use of intoxicating liquors,	46%
Immorality of husband,	12%
Immorality of wife,	2%
Ill-temper and abuse by husband,	8%
Ill-temper and abuse by wife,	3%
Venereal disease of husband,	12%
Interference of mothers-in-law	6%
Interference of fathers-in-law	1%
Youth of parties,	4%
Laziness of husband,	3%
Sickness,	1%

An effort also was made to determine the number of families who were induced through court intercession to resume their marital relations, and from the records it is ascertained that fifty percent of families who had separated and were brought into court afterwards were induced to re-establish the home.

By means of this same card index some effort was made to obtain the social status of the parties brought before the court. Of the 499 women brought before the court in bast[illegible]

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actions 51% were domestics, 21% worked in factories, 6% were saleswomen. 48% of these girls gave as a reason for their downfall broken promises of marriage. In 52% of these cases the wages received were below $8.00 per week. In 48% the wages were $8.00 a week or above. In 15% the wages were over $10.00 per week. In over 50% of these cases the girls' parents were not living or were separated or were living in the old country. Of the 130 girls who were brought into the court especially charged with being delinquent, 55% of them never worked at any occupation. 42% of them either had no home or ran away from such as they had, and 20% of them worked in factories or stores. The court during the year married 162 couples out of the 499 brought before the court in bastardy actions.

The work of the court is constantly increasing, due to a wider knowledge in the community of the court's effectiveness in obtaining relief for abandoned and helpless families.

Two things are of very pressing need to make the court as effective as it ought to be: #

Judge Gunnell believes that they

~~First~~, we should have a law in Illinois compelling the keepers of workhouses and penitentiaries, where wife and child deserters are confined, to pay a portion of the latter's earnings in such workhouses to the dependent families. Under present conditions, to send a brutal husband to the workhouse means to deprive his wife and children of necessary food and clothing.

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The second great need is for an amendment to our Wife Abandonment Statute. Under the present construction of that statute by the Supreme Court, when a man has deserted his family and been arrested, tried and found guilty, the court can only direct him to support the family for a period

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of one year. This he may do, but at the expirationof that year he is free and cannot be re-arrested, although continuing his desertion. Our statute should be so amended as to make wife abandonment a continuing offense, thus enabling the court to compel the recalcitrant husband and father to support those who are properly dependent upon him.

Almost from the date of the organization of this court a woman assistant was employed to assist the Judge in securing the necessary data to enable the court to obtain the best results. For the first year and a half this position was filled by Mrs. Marie Leavitt, whose work was of the highest character. Since her resignation two women have been employed to act as assistants to the Judge in securing data and preparing cases for trial. These women are Miss Carolyn Grimsby and Miss Elizabeth Moriarity, both of whom are doing excellent work.

This court would fail in its work if it were not for the generous and constant support of many philanthropic organizations, whose assistance has enabled the court to achieve a large measure of success, Among these organizations are the Juvenile Protective Association, Bureau of Personal Service, Catholic Women's League, the United Charities of Chicago, the Legal Aid Society, and Chicago Law & Order League, and others.

The major part of the data collected upon the following card is secured by the two women assistants to the Judge, whose time is largely devoted in making a careful inquiry of all applicants or petitioners before the court. After this data has been secured and the arrest made, the card containing such data as the complaining witness could furnish is then placed in the hands of the trial judge who

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has it before him during the hearing of the case, and he at the close of such hearing adds upon the card his conclusions as to the causes which have led to each separate controversy.

JUDGE WILLIAM N. GEMMILL.

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