

Members Present:

Chairman Hayes
Vice Chairman Stewart
Mr. Banner
Mr. Brady
Mr. Coulter
Mr. Fielding
Mr. Horn
Mr. Malone
Mr. Prengaman
Mr. Sena

Members Excused:

Mr. Polish

Guests Present:

Jean Ford	Senator
Charlotte McCourt	
Esther Micholson	League of Women Voters
A. Stanyan Peck	Former Legislative Counsel
Janine Hansen Triggs	Pro-Family League

Vice Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 8:09 a.m.

- ASSEMBLY BILL 225 - Removes prohibition of employment of minors in public dancehalls.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 226 - Removes distinctions based on sex from several sections of chapter 126 of NRS.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 227 - Removes distinctions based on sex from statutes regulating prostitution.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 228 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 82.310.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 229 - Removes distinction based on sex from NRS 156.040.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 235 - Removes exclusive references to men in National Guard and militia.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 236 - Extends firefighting rights and duties to females.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 244 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 41.200.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 245 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 146.010 and 146.030.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 246 - Removes distinction based on sex from NRS 194.010.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 259 - Extends annuity provision in partnerships to both widows and widowers.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 260 - Prohibits distinctions based on sex in salaries of school teachers.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 261 - Removes distinctions based on sex from insurance license applications.

- ASSEMBLY BILL 262 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 115.040, 115.050 and 115.070.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 263 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 417.090.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 264 - Removes distinctions based on sex from NRS 207.040.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 265 - Abolishes "tender years" criterion in child custody cases.
- ASSEMBLY BILL 466 - Removes distinctions based on sex from requirements to serve on posse.

Assemblyman Wagner said that the individual bills were the same as what was all one bill that failed in the last session. She said that several members of the Senate and Assembly have stated that their opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment was because they did not want Federal intervention. She said that what could be supported would be legislation that would hopefully remove most sex discrimination from the books. She said that piecemeal equality was not enough, and she felt the whole package of bills must be passed.

Mrs. Wagner distributed an article (Exhibit A) to the Committee concerning single fathers.

Senator Ford stated that she was pleased the bills had been introduced individually. She said the bills were introduced to correct areas where one sex had been given a special privilege or prohibition that was not given to the other sex. She said she felt each person is a unique individual, and she said there should not be a State law that restricts what a person can do simply because of sex.

Assemblyman Hayes said she had invited the chairman of the committee that had studied discriminatory laws to be at this meeting. She said that the committee was created by the 1975 Legislature, and the present bills were the result of work done by that committee. She introduced Charlotte McCourt, who was chairman of the interim study committee.

ASSEMBLY BILL 225

Mrs. McCourt said that the statutes had limited the definition of public dancehalls to dancehalls where women or girls were employed or attend for profit either directly or indirectly to themselves. She said the committee felt that a dancehall was a place where minors had no business being in the first place. She said that this bill was intended to apply this statute to both boys and girls.

Mrs. Hayes said that on Line 14 of the bill, this was inadvertently being deleted. She said input had been received against taking this line out. She stated that instead, the reference to women or girls on Line 21 could be changed to persons and have that subsection remain in the law.

Mrs. Hayes said that the intent of the bill was to "neuter" it rather than delete the references to public dancehalls.

ASSEMBLY BILL 226

Mrs. McCourt said this bill deals with an illegitimate child. She said that the bill would require that the father of an illegitimate child be declared a legal parent. She said this would make both parents responsible for the child throughout its life. She said the concern was that a child would be taken care of by both parents and not just the custodial parent.

Vice Chairman Stewart asked if the bill would require that a custody hearing be held. Mrs. McCourt answered that it would.

ASSEMBLY BILL 227

Mrs. McCourt said this bill amended the statutes to show that a prostitute could be either a male or female.

ASSEMBLY BILL 228

Mrs. McCourt said the committee felt that the provisions relating to the Protestant Episcopal Church had no business being in the statutes. Mrs. Hayes said these provisions should be repealed entirely because they seemed to violate the First Amendment.

Senator Ford said that it had appeared that this church was included in the statutes for incorporation reasons. She said it has nothing to do with religious aspects, rather it has to do with incorporation.

Mr. Peck, Legislative Counsel for the interim committee, said that when the committee was conducting its study, the church was contacted. He said that no one from the church was able to say why the provisions relating to the church were in the law. However, they were in favor of the proposed revision relating to membership in the vestry.

Mr. Brady said he did not understand why the provisions relating to the Protestant Episcopal Church were in the law. He said other churches have been incorporated without being included in the State statutes. He said the provision should be amended out of the law so that the church can take care of its own internal affairs.

Mr. Peck said he did not disagree with Mr. Brady, but he said the committee felt that as long as these provisions remained in the NRS, the provision relating to women should be changed.

ASSEMBLY BILL 229

Mr. Peck said this bill relates to missing persons. He said the recognition is made that both males and females own property, and in case one spouse is missing, the other spouse should be the nominee for being trustee of the missing one's estate.

Mr. Peck noted that in regard to several of the bills being considered that the 1977 Legislature had adopted a gender change provision. Where there were references to males or females, the law was adopted as NRS 0.030 that the references could apply to both.

ASSEMBLY BILL 235

Mr. Peck said that this bill changes a reference concerning service in the Nevada National Guard. He said the Guard was almost exclusively male and the amendment was just the elimination of the reference to men.

Mr. Brady asked if this bill would mean that a woman could assume any position that a man can be assigned to in the National Guard. Mr. Peck said he thought this would open up membership in all facets of the National Guard to women as well as men.

ASSEMBLY BILL 236

Mr. Peck said this was a provision that would probably be covered by NRS 0.030. He said the bill addressed the fact that women as well as men could be called on to fight fires.

Mrs. Hayes said she had received input from the smaller counties that if women were not allowed to be firefighters, there would be no one to staff the fire departments.

ASSEMBLY BILL 244

Mr. Peck said that in the payment of claims to minors, the law had stated that the father had to take care of the claim. He said that where both parents are living together, the bill would give this responsibility to either spouse.

ASSEMBLY BILL 245

Mrs. McCourt said this bill was changing the wording from "widow" to "surviving spouse" in NRS 146.010 and 146.030.

Mr. Peck said this bill expands the rights of support to include widowers as well as widows. He said he did not think the bill presented any problem, and he thought this provision would also be covered under NRS 0.030. He said that in the past a husband may have been required to put his home up for sale in order to pay his debts and obligations after his wife died. He said this bill extends the same rights to males that females have had.

(Committee Minutes)

ASSEMBLY BILL 246

Mr. Peck said this bill was a very substantial provision. He noted that there had been some conflict on the interim committee whether or not this provision in the law should be eliminated (NRS 194.010, Section 8) or if it should be amended to provide the same protection to husbands or persons acting under the threats of others. He said he thought the reason for the deletion of Section 8 of NRS 194.010 was that the same protection would be offered in Section 9.

ASSEMBLY BILL 259

Mr. Peck said this bill removed references to widows, and new language would refer to a surviving spouse. He said this provision in the present law referred to a partnership between persons where an annuity is being paid to either surviving spouse.

ASSEMBLY BILL 260

Mr. Peck said this bill related to payment of salaries by the school districts. He said the law presently allows no discrimination against female teachers. He said the committee felt that there could be reverse discrimination against males, and this bill would prevent that.

ASSEMBLY BILL 261

Mr. Peck said this bill was concerned with applications for insurance licenses. The current law provides a female applicant must give certain information about her husband. He said this implied that a wife was the agent of her husband. With this bill, any applicant for a license must provide relevant information of prior activities and working of their spouse.

ASSEMBLY BILL 262

Mr. Peck said this bill addressed provisions regarding the sale of homestead property. He said the law presently requires that a female partner acknowledge the sale of homestead property outside of the presence of her husband. The implication is that because of the dominance and control of the male, that the female would be able to say that she did not want to sell the property. This bill would simply provide for the proper acknowledgement by both parties. He said this would also address the situations where one spouse was out-of-state or insane.

ASSEMBLY BILL 263

Mr. Peck said this was a one-word amendment adding the word, "widowers," as one of the groups that would be assisted by the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. He said this was probably implied by NRS 0.030, but this would make it clear for males who qualified.

ASSEMBLY BILL 264

Mr. Peck said this bill had to do with whether or not female prisoners can be required to perform work on public works projects if they are under the custody of the sheriff. The change in the statute would be deletion of the term, "male", and letting this apply to all persons who had the physical ability to do the work required.

ASSEMBLY BILL 265

Mr. Peck said that this bill which abolishes the tender years doctrine was one of the most substantial bills of the package. He said this doctrine essentially provided that where a child is under 13 years, it is presumed that the best care could be provided by the mother of the child. He said this is a presumption that must be overcome in custody cases by fathers. He said the committee attempted to give the court other criteria to consider in making custody determinations.

Mrs. Hayes stated that Section 1, Subsection 3 should probably be deleted because it seemed to be discriminatory inversely toward mothers.

Mr. Peck said he felt this provision should remain in the bill because it was the whole reason for the bill. He said tender years begins with the idea that the mother is the best parent, and this bill was trying to convey that this was not part of the criteria that should be used.

Mr. Peck said that if the provision of Section 1, Subsection 3 was deleted, the situation in custody cases would remain as it is now. He said also that the attitude of lawyers and judges regarding a change from placing children with their mothers would be hard to alter.

Mr. Brady said that if there were two parents who seemed to be equal through all the criteria, who would get the child? Mr. Peck answered that if everything seemed to be equal, the mother would probably get the child.

Mr. Peck said that where there is a case of an unfit mother, the father has a burden to overcome in court to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the mother was unfit. He said this bill attempts to do away with that idea.

Mr. Brady, noting that "income" was one of the criteria to be considered stated that this would probably have a beneficial effect for the father's case. Mr. Peck said that this would not necessarily mean who had the most income, but it would mean whether or not the income was sufficient to support the child.

Mrs. Hayes said this bill was perhaps providing for a best parent doctrine rather than a tender years doctrine. She said that perhaps it should be noticed that in almost 100% of the child abuse cases, those that have abused the children were the natural mother and a stepfather or the mother's boyfriend. She said that a problem was that a mother was gaining custody of her children whether she was fit or not.

On Page 1, Lines 10-13, Mr. Stewart said he did not think these considerations were all conclusive. Mr. Peck said he did not think that these items would be the extent of consideration in a child custody case. He said the primary consideration was the best interest of the child. Mr. Stewart noted that Subsection 4 beginning on Line 20 allowed for consideration of other factors only if they were damaging to the child.

Mr. Peck said he would not argue that there may be some problems with the language. He said this language was from an existing law in Oregon which has probably been interpreted in courts.

ASSEMBLY BILL 466

Mr. Peck said that this bill has to do with posses, and it says that females as well as males are subject to the command of the sheriff to serve. He said he felt this statute would be substantially taken care of in NRS 0.030.

Mrs. Hayes stated that there are many husbands and wives serving together in jeep posses.

GENERAL STATEMENT REGARDING BILLS CONSIDERED THIS DATE

Esther Micholson, representing the League of Women Voters, said she was appearing in support of all of the bills being considered. She said the League has long been an advocate of equality for both sexes. She said research was done in 1976 showing some 79 different provisions in NRS that were discriminatory. She said that the bills presently being considered would make a considerable dent in the most important laws that need consideration.

Mrs. Micholson said that the League did not feel that efforts by individual states such as the bills being considered by the Committee were enough to solve the discrimination problem. She said that some states will not pass these types of bills unless they are forced to by something such as the Equal Rights Amendment. She said the League did not feel that individual states should have the right to abridge equality before the law to either men or women.

Janine Hansen Triggs, Pro-Family Coalition, said she was happy that the bills being considered had been introduced individually rather than in one single bill as had been done last session.

Mrs. Triggs said that her group was concerned about the absolute doctrine of equality. She said the absolute doctrine of equality does not promote reasonableness or is not fair or just.

ASSEMBLY BILL 226

Mrs. Triggs said that the definition of "custodial parent" in this bill bothered her. She said she personally knew of a case regarding a similar law in California. A child had been born out of wedlock, and the mother kept the child. The child's father kidnapped the baby, and because the law stated that the custodial parent was the one with whom the child resides, a court awarded custody of the child to the father. She said that in a case where a child is born out of wedlock, a mother should have some presumption of custody even moreso than in a marriage.

Mrs. Triggs related another case where a mother had desired to place a child up for adoption. The child's father went to court and gained custody of the child which had been born out of wedlock. The mother was required to pay child support even though in this case she had remarried and was not working. The court required the payment of child support because of her ability to work. She asked if the same thing could happen through the language in Section 1, Subsection 2.

Mr. Horn asked Mrs. Triggs how she would like to see the bill changed. Mrs. Triggs said her concern was with the definition of custodial parent.

Mr. Stewart said that adoption laws relate to what happens to an illegitimate child. He said that with passage of this bill, the Committee would have to be sure there is no conflict created in the law.

Mrs. Hayes said that the Assembly had passed the Uniform Child Custody Act and that this would probably take care of some of the concerns Mrs. Triggs expressed.

Mr. Brady suggested adding a sentence saying that a mother would have custody of a child when there is an illegitimate birth.

Mr. Stewart said that there should be a provision whereby the father of an illegitimate child can assert his rights for custody in a hearing, but he said that to provide this type of hearing for every illegitimate child would be too cumbersome in the courts.

ASSEMBLY BILL 235

Mrs. Triggs said that one of her concerns with this bill was that there was no provision for separate facilities for women in the National Guard. She said that Congress had just

limited the access of women to serve on military ships because of the problems that have been caused. She noted that Congress had thereby seen fit to place a limit on the total equality situation. She said she was not opposed to women serving in the National Guard, but she noted that those supporting the doctrine of equality would have that there be no distinction between the sexes.

ASSEMBLY BILL 236

Mrs. Triggs stated in regard to this bill allowing that women could be summoned to help fight a brush fire that often prisoners are also used to help fight fires. She said that there should be some protection offered so that a woman would not have to fight a fire with a prisoner. She said she was concerned about the mandatory provisions in the bill.

ASSEMBLY BILL 265

Mrs. Triggs said her concern with this bill was on Page 1, Lines 18 and 19. She said that this statement was about as discriminatory as anything could be. She said it would be dangerous being in the laws.

Mr. Stewart suggested language such as, "Preference should not be given to one parent because of sex."

Mrs. Triggs said that she felt mothers should have a first right regarding custody. On Page 1, Lines 20 and 21, she noted that one of the considerations in custody cases would be the present marital status of the parents. She said that this could discriminate against women because statistics show that men remarry sooner than women. She said further that there is a trend nationally to award custody to the parent that has the higher income. This could discriminate in most cases against women also. Repeating her first statement, she said that women should be given some preference in child custody cases, but not to the detriment of the child.

Mr. Horn suggested the language, "Preference in custody may be given to the mother over the father, but not for the sole reason that she is the mother." Mrs. Triggs asked then what the reason for the preference would be.

ASSEMBLY BILL 466

Mrs. Triggs said that her concern regarding this bill relating to posses was that it provided mandatory service by women without providing exemptions from that service. Where there are no exemptions provided, she said there could be problems that would develop where a local law enforcement official would make a determination of whether or not a person could or should serve.

ASSEMBLY BILL 264

Mrs. Triggs said that the concern regarding this bill was that women could be placed in a position to do work that they would not be able to do. She said that there was also concern of placement of women on an integrated work crew where their safety might be jeopardized.

Mrs. Hayes said she had talked to several people concerning this bill. She said there are Federal guidelines for prisoners and how they are treated, and she said she did not think any prisoner was overworked. She said that even male prisoners do not do heavy work.

Mrs. Triggs stated that the doctrine of equality (or the Equal Rights Amendment) was defeated by the voters in Nevada. Because of this, she said that the Legislature had the right to make laws that were reasonably discriminatory. She said that the opportunity should be provided to be discriminatory. She said that those in favor of the doctrine of equality are able to put on a lot of pressure, but she said that was not the way the vote went (regarding ERA).

Mr. Sena moved to adjourn; Mr. Malone seconded the motion.

ASSEMBLY BILL 22

Allows costs in cases involving public bodies.

Mr. Stewart said that he had spoken to the bill drafter regarding this bill. He said that normally court costs do not include attorneys' fees. He said he would like to include an amendment that would allow recovery of attorneys' fees.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 2 OF THE 59TH SESSION

Proposes to amend Nevada constitution to create intermediate appellate court.

Mr. Sena moved for Do Pass of A.J.R. 2 of the 59th Session and re-refer to Ways and Means; Mr. Horn seconded.

Mr. Stewart said that his concern regarding this resolution was the possibility that after this measure would be approved by the voters, there would be the immediate creation of the appellate court.

The Committee approved the motion on the following vote:

Aye - Hayes, Stewart, Brady, Coulter, Fielding, Horn, Prengaman, Sena - 8.

Nay - None.

Absent - Banner, Malone, Polish - 3.

SENATE BILL 27

Abolishes causes of action for seduction and criminal conversation.

Mr. Stewart said that this bill would eliminate the ability to take civil action against an individual who had molested one's children. He suggested that the Committee did not want to take action such as this.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carl R. Ruthstrom, Jr.
Secretary

Custodial Fathers: The New Single Parents

"Father Power" has arrived. Of late, court decisions have been awarding custody rights to increasing numbers of fathers.

Often it's the result of a bitter struggle, but more and more it's happening with the mother's full approval.

These judicial changes herald a whole new spirit that invests men with a sense of their parental roles as well as rights.

Why is the pendulum swinging noticeably in the direction of male custody? And why are so many men willing to buck the tide?



BY LEON GERSTEN

Joe Angers, 32, divorced, explains it his way: "I invested 10 years of my life raising my children and giving them the love they needed. I was involved, a committed father, not an absentee one. My wife and I decided that we would be happier living apart, but that didn't mean I wanted to live apart from my children. Finally, we agreed that I should have custody of the kids, and so far I think I'm doing a pretty decent job of it."

As with Joe, other men I talked with are genuinely convinced their children would be better off with them rather than with the mothers. Sometimes their decision is based on the wife's incapacity to be a good parent, or on her expressed desire to lead a more independent existence after the divorce. It may be determined by the father's intended remarriage, providing a more traditional setting for the children, or even the children's own preference to remain with their fathers. Whatever the reason, all the men I interviewed felt that life without their children would be empty. That belief gave them the heart to step into a new and often frightening role.

Jerry Ames, an engineer whose consulting job took him away from his family much of the time, looks back on his marriage calmly: "We were happily married at first, then things didn't work out. After growing further and further apart, we finally sat down and decided to separate. At the time, it made sense to both of us that I care for the kids, considering my steady income and my wife's desire to go back to school. Now my ex-wife has visitation rights and she tells me that I'm more capable at the job than she was."

But how are these fathers, assuming they are indeed capable, bearing up against the combined challenges of parenting, domestic chores and career?

According to the men I interviewed, shouldering child, home and job is simply staggering. If the children are young, it becomes absolutely necessary to pay housekeepers and baby-sitters to supervise in the absence of the father. One man put it this way: "It is a financial burden to hire a woman five days a week, but it relieves me of tremendous anxiety. At the end of the day, I can devote my full time to my son and daughter."

Money certainly helps to alleviate the nitty-gritty of running a household, but there are undoubtedly psychological forces at play that are not so evident. What are these areas of stress felt by almost all divorced fathers?

Whatever the reason for the mother's absence, fathers must help their children adjust to their new life style. Assurance on the part of the fathers that they are loving and caring is primary. Secondly, placing the divorce in its proper perspective — that it was an unfortunate development, not a disease — helps the children to deal more effectively with reality. One father confessed that he has to constantly assure his kids he will always be there to love and support them. "It's a daily process of renewal," he said, "my repeating to them that I may be one parent, but I'll always be there for them."

Divorce, however amiable, leaves its scars on the children. Therefore, honesty is necessary if a good relationship between father and child is to develop. Sometimes children inquire; sometimes they bury the past. One father made the decision to be as frank as possible with regard to his former marriage . . . "The questions my two daughters asked concerning the nine years with my wife were at times very demanding. I was embarrassed at first but then I made up my mind to tell the whole truth. Somehow, knowing she wasn't at my side to bail me out gave me a whole new awareness of myself; I became more open than I had ever been before."

Divorce has a way of making men better fathers by the weight of circumstance alone, in that they feel depended on to come through for their children; but there is an added boon: they become, in the process, more competent as people. Almost every father questioned expressed concern about his children's security in the absence of a mother; and they all encountered a common hurdle: the presence of other women.

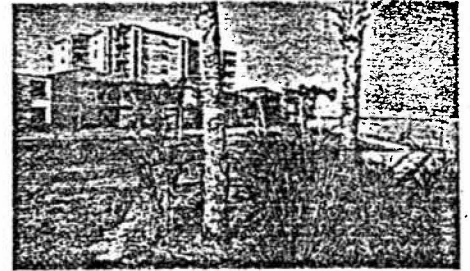
After being alone for awhile, the time naturally comes when a man considers establishing new ties with women. Some want remarriage, others are satisfied with more casual relationships. Whichever way, each father faces the possibility of hurting the children, of unintentionally imposing a mother substitute. One man brought his female companions home and introduced them to the children openly, trying to assess family prospects. "I don't want to do things secretly," he explained. "I want a lasting relationship with a woman, but I want the kids to like and accept her, too." On the other hand, a more cautious father hired a baby-sitter so that he could deal with his female friends separately. "When I'm ready to settle down again," he said, "I'll bring her home and announce the news. It's better that way."

The nurturing experience is very new to most fathers. But do they regret in any way their decision to assume custody? Apparently not.

While it is true many men didn't foresee the magnitude of what lay ahead, the consensus is that their new role makes them more able to confront life and all its problems. They agreed they were better fathers than they had been while married.

Continued page 51

Live on Isla Del Sol. You'll get your island's worth.



Island living. If there's a more delightful way to enjoy residential luxury and seclusion, we've never heard of it. And Isla Del Sol takes island living giant steps beyond the Swiss Family Robinson image.

With a championship golf course that gives you beaches for bunkers and Boca Ciega Bay for a water hazard. With lighted tennis courts. And a clubhouse with everything from pro shops and game rooms to a gourmet restaurant and lounge. All surrounded by three miles of uncluttered, uninterrupted beach.

And a choice of lifestyles for the selective islander. The bayview apartments of La Puerta Del Sol. The exclusive townhomes of Playa Escondida (with private village pool and tennis). And our newest village, Palma Del Mar, with a choice of bay-or-golf-view villas and mid-rise apartments.

Drive out the Bayway Causeway (54th Avenue South), between St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg Beach, any day between 9 and 6. Or call 867-1191. We'll see that you get your island's worth. And then some.

ISLA DEL SOL Because you're
an islander
at heart.

*Home ownership at Isla Del Sol gives you the privilege of purchasing a charter membership in the Island Club and related golf and tennis facilities.



AN AFFILIATE OF
General Electric Credit Corporation By Trafalgar 347
Developers
of Florida, Inc.,



Custodial Fathers:

Continued from page 49

One spokesman put it this way: "The children are now top priority in my life, before and above anything else."

These men are all spending more time with their children in play activities than before the divorce; relationships become more intense, love deeper and family bonding solid. In short, by living up under the strains, coping humanly with intensities and extending themselves beyond normal capacities, these fathers are growing as human beings.

"Before the divorce," one father remembered, "I avoided coming home because of family hassles and demands on my time. My job was the single most important thing to me. But now I can't wait to return to the kids and share as much of myself as I possibly can."

Dr. Mildred Ashburn, a family counselor who has been involved with single parents throughout her career, observes: "The interesting sidelight on men who are in custody cases is that they take upon themselves often insurmountable problems, and the result is a humanizing process that makes them fuller and more complete people."

This observation seems to be borne out in the reactions of the men:

• "I feel more adequate and enriched, with a clearer definition of who I am. Fatherhood is only one tiny aspect of a total growth process for me."

"I now have a better understanding of why my wife used to complain about domestic burdens. Never before did I wash dishes, do the laundry, or chauffeur the kids around the neighborhood. I believe I'm going to be a wiser husband a second time around."

• "For the first 11 years after having children, I never considered them as people. Instead, they were responsibilities that I wanted to do without. Now a whole new dimension has opened between us: communication, a level of trust, and a dependence that works both ways. It's a beautiful thing I would never have thought possible."

• "I've made constructive changes in my life. For instance, the kids frequently ask questions about their mother — how it used to be, what happened to make us fall out of love, and why we didn't make a greater effort to preserve our family. By responding as truthfully as I can, I have a better balance of my strengths and weaknesses."

How does the future look? Knowing the problems, will more fathers want custody of their children?

The trend is clear. Considering the testimony of men who have survived the first, toughest years; the records of the divorce courts; and the observation of judges, lawyers, and counselors, the precedent has been set. The incentive to set foot in the virgin territory of single parenting for men is planted. If the evidence is valid, then men will continue to discover that "mothering" is not an art exclusively practiced by women and more of them will assume full-time parenting responsibilities post-divorce.

Some observers of the scene see it as a reaction to "Momism." They insist the trend is a very real *men's* liberation movement that threatens to upset the sanctity of Mother Power. This reaction to the old sexism — this belief that men can parent as well as provide — promises to be an exciting phenomenon in the next decade. Father Power, they contend, is here to stay.

The men whom I got to know during these interviews are answering a very real and new question: Must a person bear a child to be able to love it, nurture it, and provide the best of homes?

Their actions speak louder than words — clearly, "No!"