

December 11, 1944: p. 14

1944 Out of Wedlock Births

Increase in babies born out of wedlock is bringing a changed attitude toward illegitimacy.

Department of Labor figures show that more than twice as many illegitimate children were born this year as in 1942. The ratio now is one in 12 against one in 25 two years ago. While organized groups are fighting for state laws to insure that approved agencies arrange adoptions, the Child Welfare League reports that more and more unwed mothers are keeping their babies.

"A new problem of the war is the fact that children are born to married women whose husbands have been long overseas," says Henrietta L. Gordon of the League. "An interpretation of the law is required to determine whether the mother may proclaim the child illegitimate so that she may release it for adoption without her husband's knowledge. The problem requires a re-examination of all social and moral values."

While intimating that a general change of attitude toward illegitimacy is needed, she warned that social agencies should help mothers face facts. Children should live only where they are wanted, where they can have a feeling of belonging.