

# Las Vegas Gamblers Leaving Havana

ated the Riviera.

Cliff Jones, a Las Vegas lawyer and former lieutenant governor of Nevada, who opened the casino for the Habana-Hilton hotel early this year, has promised Nevada gaming control officials that he will sever his interests in Cuba as quickly as possible.

Jones has equity interests in Las Vegas casinos. While lieutenant governor of Nevada, he purchased a one per cent interest in the Golden Nugget Gambling Hall in downtown Las Vegas, for \$25,000, and immediately began to

realize a return of \$18,000 a year on the investment.

Other Las Vegas gaming licensees who have pulled out of Havana to protect their status here are Thomas Jefferson McGinty, Morris Kleinman, Moe Dalitz, and Sam Tucker.

The latter four are the old guard of the Cleveland-Detroit gambling underworld, who came to Las Vegas with Wilbur Clark as their front man after their operations in Ohio were closed down by Former Gov. Frank Lausche.

They figured dramatically in the hearings of the Kefauver crime committee years ago.

Eddie Levinson, the affable dean of the gambling fraternity in this crazy, 24-hour-a-day town, has no regrets about pulling out of Havana.

"Actually, I just went down there on a temporary basis," he says. "I'm glad to be here in Nevada, and wouldn't change. I guess I can thank Estes Kefauver for my being out here. If it hadn't been for his committee, I might still be in Florida."

Levinson thinks that Ha-

vana can enjoy a great future as a gaming center.

"Provided, of course, that they don't try to license everybody down there," he says cryptically.

When the Nevada gamblers were given an ultimatum to get out of Cuba or lose their licenses here, there was no hesitation about their future. Las Vegas and its gambling are synchronized with the apparently limitless growth curve of Southern California. The gambling (and the state tax revenue) gets bigger every year.

By EDWIN A. LAHEY  
Chief Of Our Washington Bureau

**LAS VEGAS** — Some of the biggest gambling operators in Las Vegas have pulled out of Havana to protect their status here in Nevada.

Soon after Havana blossomed out last winter as the Las Vegas of the Caribbean, it became quite apparent that the "legalized" gaming in Cuba was infested with crooked Cuban politicians and leaders of the U. S. underworld.

The Nevada gaming control board quietly served notice on the Las Vegas oper-

ators who had been brought to Havana that they would have to quit either in Nevada or Cuba.

The better known Las Vegas operators soon informed the Nevada officials that they were severing their connections in Havana.

Among them was Wilbur Clark, owner of the famed Desert Inn in Las Vegas, whose reputation as a "square John" added prestige to the casino at the Nacional Hotel in Havana for many months.

Eddie Levinson, a veteran Chicago-born gambler who

operated for years in Detroit and South Florida, and who now operates the Fremont Hotel and casino in Las Vegas has given up his interest in the Riviera casino in Havana. Meyer Lansky, a leader of the New York-New Jersey gambling underworld, was a power behind the scenes at the Riviera.

A brother of the Cuban secretary of labor, who had to give "work permits" to the American dealers brought down for the Havana gambling boom became an officer in the corporation that oper-



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