

# Former Auditor Says Court Records Altered

## Lessing 'Shortage' Result of Changes After Rambo Audit

Striking like a boomerang at the recent efforts of Councilmen Powell and Murray, who with Councilman Babcock on May 27 voted to file suit against former City Judge Robert Lessing, came the statement this week from C. J. Rambo, former city auditor, that since he audited the books last September, "alterations and raised figures" had been made in the court dockets. The effect of these changes, Rambo states was to "increase the amount of fines shown as collected," and thus making it appear that a "shortage" existed.

These startling discoveries were made, Rambo states, when he examined the dockets, cash books and other records of the City Court on July 5, at which time the investigation by the District Attorney's office was in process. (As reported in another column in this issue, Joseph E. P. Dunn, chief of the district attorney's bureau of investigation, announced this week that the Lessing case was being closed and there would be no prosecution.)

All Cash Accounted For  
Amplifying his statement, Rambo said, "C. J. Rambo & Company completed its most recent audit of these records about September 1, 1940, at which time distinctive identification and check marks were placed on the dockets and cash books. This audit was concluded with the positive determination that all fines collected as shown by the dockets had been properly entered in the cash book and deposited with the City Treasurer."

"From my examination of these records on July 5th," commented the former city auditor, "it was very apparent that noations of fines collected during prior years had been written in the dockets subsequent to completion of the last audit above referred to." (September 1940). "It is also apparent that alterations and changes have been made in the dockets with the effect of increasing the amount of fines shown as collected and as originally entered and accounted for," Rambo states.

Falsification Charged  
"I am informed, that former City Judge Robert Lessing is now charged with a shortage of some \$300 in his accounts of prior years. I have examined the report upon which this charge is based and find that the altered and raised figures have been used to determine the amount of the alleged shortage," he continued.

"As an auditor," added Rambo, "I would look with serious distrust upon the integrity of purpose of a report charging a shortage based upon altered and raised figures that failed to comment upon that fact. This is especially true in this case where such alterations are so obvious and clearly and unmistakably discernable. An audit report is a narrative of findings in fact. A fact half told to obscure the whole fact, is merely another form of deliberate falsification," he added.

When asked regarding the re- (Continued on Page 6-A)

### Medical Head of Selective Service Visits Board Here

During the course of the physical examination of a number of Selective Service registrants on Tuesday night at the local board's headquarters at 1337 E. Prado, Dr. L. B. Rogers, head of the medical division of Selective Service for the Fourth Corps Area of Southern California, make an inspection. He told local board members they were doing fine work.

### Care Should be Taken in Marking Ballots

Voters favoring the recall of Councilmen Powell, Murray and Babcock were cautioned this week by the Citizens' Committee for Good Government that in order to have their votes count against all three recallers it would be necessary to stamp their ballots in THREE PLACES, in the "Yes" column opposite EACH of the three councilmen's names.

The Citizens' Committee also strongly urged that voters designate that the vacancies should be filled "BY SPECIAL ELECTION."

Unless the majority of voters favor a "special election" it will be necessary, under California Law for the City Council to fill the vacancies by appointment; and because the recallers hold their offices until their successors qualify, Powell, Murray and Babcock could, even after being recalled, select their own successors as they have a majority on the council. No sensible person desires any such result, it was pointed out.

# CITIZEN GROUP BLASTS RECALLEES

## Youth Admits Theft of Car Here Saturday

A sedan owned by R. A. Lamphear of Manhattan Beach which was reported stolen last Saturday from the Collins Gas Company parking lot on the C. C. M. O. lease was recovered that night in Santa Paula and Edward William Lehr, 22, of New Jersey was lodged in the Torrance jail, according to police.

He was captured by Santa Paula police after he had fled from a service station where he had obtained gasoline without paying for it. At his preliminary examination before Judge John Shidler Tuesday morning, young Lehr pleaded guilty and was held to answer before superior court. His bail was set at \$500 and he was taken to the county jail.

The youth revealed that he had been convicted in Los Angeles in 1937 of grand theft of another auto. At that time he was sent to a road camp, "went over the hill," was apprehended and sent to Preston reformatory. Lehr said he had arrived back in California five days previous to his arrest. He received a medical discharge from the Army in New Jersey after serving eight months.

## Four Cars Stolen Here

On the witness stand, Lehr said he was hitch-hiking thru Torrance from Wilmington when he spotted Lamphear's car. He took it to drive to Camarillo "to see my sister who is in the insane asylum there."

Lamphear's machine was the fourth reported stolen here within the last three weeks. A 1941 model coupe, belonging to Oscar Olson of 1229 Beech st. was stolen last Thursday night from in front of his home and used later in an Orange county holdup, being abandoned in Anaheim, police said.

## U.S.O. Campaign Broadens Here

Volunteer offers of assistance broadened the Torrance United Service Organization drive this week for funds to staff and maintain recreation centers near Army camps. The additions to the local canvass should assure a sizable fund being accumulated here for the U. S. O., General Chairman Earl Conner said today.

"While our figures on the amount collected so far are incomplete, we know that considerable progress has been made during the past week," he said. "We are especially glad to receive the generous help of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee lodge No. 1414 which offered to conduct the drive in the Columbia Steel plant."

"Another welcome addition to our staff of volunteer campaigners in behalf of this worthy effort is M. Hata, a local resident and member of the Japanese-American Citizens' League who is now collecting U. S. O. funds from among the local Japanese colony," Conner stated.

Employees at the National Supply Company and other industrial plants are conducting their own drives for the funds which will be added to the city's total contribution to U. S. O. A women's division will go into action Saturday by maintaining booths where donations will be accepted at both local banks. They will also give this service to U. S. O. Friday and Saturday July 25 and 26, Conner reported.

## Mrs. Leonard Young Fights Recall Trio's Attempt to Injure Husband's Status

An effort by Councilmen George V. Powell and John V. Murray to undermine Leonard Young's status as city engineer under the municipal Civil Service ordinance was effectively blocked late Tuesday afternoon by Mrs. Young, who appeared in behalf of her husband who is now recovering from a serious illness.

Powell, with Murray's support, introduced a resolution which, if adopted, would have "re-established" Young to "any position the council deemed he could fill according to his health and physical ability." When Mrs. Young, assisted by James J. O'Toole, countered this move to jockey the engineer out of his Civil Service rating by citing the law, the two councilmen facing recall July 29 withdrew their resolution.

City Attorney John E. McCall was instructed to present a written opinion on Young's status as city engineer at the next regular session of the council, which will be Tuesday night, July 22, at 7:45 o'clock. O'Toole declared that he was informed that the late Frank R. Leonard, this city's first engineer and Young's predecessor, had been paid his regular monthly salary throughout his illness and up to the time of his death April 15, 1938.

## Entitled to Protection

"Mr. Young served this city as assistant engineer longer than the present engineer (Glenn Jain)," O'Toole declared. "And he deserves the same treatment you gave Mr. Leonard. What's the rush to take Mr. Young's title away from him? As long as he is under Civil Service, who has the authority to do this without permission of your Civil Service commission?"

"If you're on the square," O'Toole continued, "you'll rescind your action making Mr. Jain city engineer, give that title back to the man it belongs to and who is entitled to protection under the law. Then when Mr. Young gets well, he'll be in a position to resume his duties for the city."

At the council session of June 26, Jain, who had been serving as acting city engineer since Young was stricken August 1, 1940, was appointed city engineer and purchasing agent under the title "Director of Public Works." This action was adopted by the recall trio of Powell, Murray and Babcock over the opposition of Mayor McGuire and Councilman Hitchcock.

Gives Pay Details  
Early in the meeting Tuesday, City Clerk A. H. Bartlett read a statement in which he pointed out he had no advance information. (Continued on Page 2-A)

## Real Estate Valuations Down Nearly \$600,000 in Torrance

Total assessed valuation of real estate, improvements and personal property in Torrance this year is \$18,621,105, as compared with \$19,059,715 a year ago, a decrease of some \$400,000, it was revealed today when new figures were announced by County Assessor John R. Quinn.

Real estate accounted for the drop in assessed valuation, being assessed at only \$5,087,525 this year as compared with \$5,681,795 last year, a drop of nearly \$600,000. Oil wells were said to account for the drop-off.

Improvements showed a gain, being assessed this year at \$5,962,225 as against only \$5,897,010 a year ago. Personal property also showed a slight gain, being assessed at \$7,766,685 this year as compared with \$7,706,725 last year.

Utilities to Come  
Exemptions, granted to veterans and others, amounted to \$195,330 this year as compared with \$195,815 last year. The 1941 valuations are the totals before equalization by the county board of equalization and do not include the assessment of public utilities made by the State Board of Equalization whose figures are due next month.

Redondo Beach has a total assessed valuation of \$5,672,475 this year as compared with \$5,560,760 a year ago, a gain of more than \$100,000. Hermosa Beach shows a total assessed valuation of \$4,731,675 this year as against \$4,563,570 a year ago, a gain of less than \$200,000.

Manhattan Beach showed a larger gain, with a new total assessed valuation of \$7,310,345 this year as against \$6,873,400 last year. Gardena's new total assessed valuation also shows a gain, being \$2,102,910 this year as compared with \$1,985,115 a year ago.

Signal Hill, the county's foremost oil city, showed a sharp drop in assessed valuations this year. The new total is \$16,820,780, as compared with \$18,725,000 last year.

Montebello, another oil city, showed a drop of about \$1,500,000 this year in its total assessed valuation, due to oil wells.

## Mrs. J. C. Smith Succumbs From Crash Injuries

An automobile collision, early Tuesday evening claimed the life of Mrs. Rose Page Smith, wife of J. C. Smith of the Torrance Investment Company. She succumbed to injuries and shock shortly before reaching the Hawthorne hospital from the scene of the crash at the intersection of Redondo Beach Blvd. and Prairie ave. in county territory.

Mrs. Smith, who was 78 years of age, was thrown from the car driven by her husband and her head struck the curb as a result of the impact with a machine driven west on Redondo Beach Blvd. by Paul D. Melbach, 27, 1728 Sherrin st., Redondo Beach. Smith, who is 71, was driving north on Prairie ave.

The pioneer local realtor, who came here with his wife in 1923, suffered a broken rib, severe bruises on one hand, cuts and shock. Melbach, according to deputy sheriffs who investigated the collision, was uninjured. The accident occurred at 6:00 o'clock.

Inquest Held Today  
Smith asserts Melbach was traveling at a high rate of speed. He said he saw two cars approaching on Redondo Beach Blvd., when he made the boulevard stop and while he was passing the intersection, Melbach swerved around the two machines and came straight toward him. Smith said he jerked the wheel over to attempt to go in the same direction that Melbach was driving and turned west in a fruitless attempt to avoid the collision.

An inquest is being held this afternoon at Stone and Myers' chapel. Mrs. Smith was born in Ohio and married her husband 48 years ago. They have one son, Lester, who arrived today from his home in Independence, Kansas.

The funeral has been scheduled for Saturday afternoon, July 19, at 2 o'clock at the Stone and Myers chapel with Rev. H. Wesley Roloff, pastor of Central Evangelical church, officiating. Interment will be at Inglewood Mausoleum.

## Selectees Get Breakfast by Lomita V.F.W.

Eight members of the nine-man Selective Service group that composed the 13th call-out from this district were present at the breakfast held in their honor Tuesday morning by members of the Lomita Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and Auxiliary at the V. F. W. hall in Lomita. The one missing honoree was being inducted into the Army in Arizona.

Members of the contingent, which left aboard a Torrance Municipal bus for the induction station in Los Angeles after the breakfast party were:

William Gordon Peacock, 31, bank bookkeeper, 6225 Via Siena, San Pedro.

Tommy Tsutomu Yasuhiro, 22, retail produce clerk, 627 South Pacific st., San Pedro.

Akira Nakamura, 22, farmer, Rt. 1, Box 91, Torrance.

Yonato Nakata, 23, flower grower, Rt. 1, Box 1081, Hawthorne.

Lee Roy Eddleman, 24, bartender, 1205 Border st., Torrance.

John Higgins Darnell, 27, furnace installer, 1340 West 146th st., Gardena.

Yoshito Haratani, 23, fruit stand clerk, Rt. 1, Box 243, Gardena.

William Toshiro Tagawa, 20, nursery laborer, 15477 So. Western ave., Gardena.

Pleasant Cliff Barringer, 23, core maker, formerly of 2219 Andreo ave., Torrance, who was (Continued on Page 6-A)

## D.A.'s Office Drops Probe Pressed By Trio Facing Ouster

With only 11 days remaining before the fateful recall election day, July 29, the campaign to oust Councilmen Powell, Murray and Babcock from their seats on the Torrance city council swung into rapid-fire pace this week.

Most powerful bombshell tossed at the recallers was the startling disclosure made by former City Auditor C. J. Rambo that "alterations and raised figures" had been made in former City Judge

## C.I.O. Seeks Vote at Nat'l. Supply for Recognition

Seeking recognition of their C. I. O. union as the sole bargaining agent for all National Supply Company workers, the Oil Workers' International, No. 128, has been endeavoring for several weeks to obtain a "consent election" in the plant. Opposed by the Employees' Association of National Supply Workers, the move is now before the National Labor Relations Board, it was learned this week.

The C. I. O. group, according to reports, maintains it has a majority representation now in the plant where two previous employee elections held under the auspices of the N.L.R.B. have resulted in favor of the Employees' Association.

George A. Yager, senior field examiner, for the National Labor Relations Board in Los Angeles informed The Herald this morning that the situation at the National Supply plant "was under investigation."

He said he could give no further information on the case, although it was learned from after full investigation by former District Attorney Buron Fitts. Three special audits were authorized by the City Council entailing an expense to Torrance taxpayers alone of \$1587.50, according to city records; and an additional expense to the county for grand jury and district attorney's investigations, estimated to exceed \$3,000.

In their efforts to defeat the recall, supporters of the Powell-Murray-Babcock regime are criticizing the cost to the city for the special elections, but they fail to point out the expense to which the public has been put for the 13 months series of special audits and investigations.

## Week's Building Totals \$34,800

Building permits totaling \$34,800 were issued during the city engineer's office during the past week to: General Petroleum Refinery for a 1,000 barrel Iso-Butane storage tank, \$6,300; First Evangelical Lutheran church for a stucco addition to the present church at 2368 Sonoma ave., \$9,000, and the Columbia Steel Company for a foundation for an office building at 820 Cravens ave., \$500.

Torrance Memorial hospital for an addition and alterations to the present building at 1425 Engracia ave., \$18,000; Leonard V. Christian for a two-room frame garage-house for temporary residence until a new home is constructed at 24245 Neece ave., WALTERA, \$1,000.

## Absentee Ballots for Recall Election Now Available

Registered voters who anticipate being away from Torrance on the recall election day, July 29, may now make arrangements at the city clerk's office for casting ballots, it was announced by A. H. Bartlett, city clerk today.

Those wishing to cast absentee ballots are required to file an application for the same, stating the reason for their anticipated absence on election day. They will then be sent an absentee ballot by registered mail to the address at which they expect to be on election day. This ballot must be presented before a notary or city or council official qualified to certify to the same, and the marking of the ballot done in the presence of the officer administering the oath, Bartlett explained.

Sample ballots were mailed this week to all registered voters in Torrance.