

CLUES SCARCE IN MART KIDNAP-ROBBERY

Steelworkers Circulate Petitions In Effort To Break 24-Day Old Columbia Deadlock

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Deal Made for Factory

DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT TAKES OPTION ON ALCOA PLANT



ROBBERY CLUES . . . Det. Sgt. Percy Bennett shows Officer John Maestri the tire tracks and a footprint (arrow) left by gangsters who kidnaped a market clerk, robbed the safe, and left the victim tied and gagged in a muddy field Sunday night. Bennett linked the deal to other grocery mart holdups. (Herald photo).

Thugs Waylay Clerk, Take Day's Receipts

A meager description of one man, some muddy footprints and fourteen feet of tire impressions are the slim clues which Torrance detectives hope will aid them to round up two gangsters who kidnaped a Safeway store clerk, forced him to reveal a safe combination, and then left him gagged and tied in a swampy field while they made off with an undetermined amount of cash.

Ernest S. Cloward, 26508 President Ave., Harbor City, told Det. Sgt. Percy Bennett that as he entered his car parked on the store lot, El Prado near Sartori, after locking up Sunday

Strip Must Pay New Water Tax; Torrance, Too

Residents living in the Shoshone Strip as well as those in surrounding Torrance and County areas must pay a 5-cent tax to the newly formed Los Angeles County Water Conservation District No. 1, the Board of Supervisors ruled Tuesday morning.

Efforts of the City of Los Angeles to remove portions of the strip as well as other city areas failed, as the Supervisors decided 3 to 2 in favor of the new district.

The gigantic water district will lend authorization to a program of releasing Colorado River water onto spreading grounds near Pico from which it will seep into underground storage basins. This will curb the influx of salt water into the water basins of coastal towns. Property owners will be taxed up to 5 cents per \$100 assessed valuation over a five year period. Only areas within the district which will be excused from payment are those which have ample water supplies.

District boundaries extend from the city of Montebello southerly to Long Beach shoreline, and from Inglewood on the west to the Orange County line.

Petitioners Seek To Halt Shutdown

By JACK O. BALDWIN

At least 12 petitions were in circulation among the steelworkers yesterday urging the 1250 Columbia workers to return to work.

This was the second attempt by petition to end the work stoppage, which is now 24 days old.

"We believe we are, or should be, big enough to settle our own affairs. After three weeks of no work and nothing in sight as to a settlement it has simmered down to a 'save face' set-up, read the petition.

Although the petition urged a return to work movement, the controversy over the firing of two laborers on Jan. 7 still appeared to be hopelessly deadlocked yesterday.

Vic Teer, president of Local 1414 of the United Steelworkers of America, told this writer at the union hall yesterday noon that the issue was still stalemated.

"We have had a communication from Murphy of the Wage

Five Patrolmen Added to Force

Five new patrolmen will be added to the Torrance Police roster tomorrow morning, Chief John Stroh said yesterday. They were selected from among 9 who will complete a special training class tomorrow evening.

New officers will be Hugh B. Ingram, 2127 1/2 Arington; James P. O'Toole, 2208-B Cabrillo; William C. Shaner, 723-B Sartori; Eugene J. Erbetta, 2607 Arlingtton; and Donnie H. Cook, 703-A Sartori.

Each will serve a six-month probationary term. They were hired to supplement the current staff of law enforcers, and to replace several who have resigned in the last few months.

Won't Hit 30,000?

Nose Count Nears Half-Done Mark

Census officials taking a special count of noses here are 45 per cent finished. Kenneth G. Spiker, Federal Census Bureau official, announced yesterday. A 30-man field crew started to work on the project late last week, with hopes of showing that Torrance's population has soared to over 30,000.

But Spiker said yesterday afternoon that he is doubtful if the poll will show 30,000 inhabitants.

"From past experience and the way the reports are coming in, I do not expect the population figure to exceed 28,000," he told the Herald. "We are making every effort to see that no citizen is missed in this report."

Special missed persons forms will be sent home with school children Monday, and should be filled out by those missed in the count and mailed to the census office, 1754 Torrance "Hawthorne Lake" area.

You Can Save \$\$\$ By Getting Auto Tabs Now

You've got only until next Monday, Feb. 4, to get those auto license tabs for 1952, the Department of Motor Vehicles warned again this week for the umpteenth time.

Department officials reminded motorists that the tabs may be obtained at the Motor Vehicle office, certain banks, the California Highway Patrol office or may be obtained by mailing the "white slip" to Sacramento with a money order or a cashier's check to cover the fee.

"And when you get them, please put them on your car," one official pleaded.

Retail Clerks Contract Near Settlement

Threats of a strike of retail clerks which would tie up a large per cent of the stores in Torrance, Lomita and other Harbor Area cities appeared to be eased slightly yesterday when both union and merchant spokesmen said most of the issues had been settled.

Haskell Tidwell, secretary of the Retail Clerks Union Local 905, said agreement on a new contract was "a matter of routine."

Frank S. Selover, executive secretary of the Harbor Area Employers Council, bargaining agent for the merchants, said that demands of the clerks' union that stores agree to open at 9 a.m. for an 8-hour day or pay penalty pay of time and one-half after 6 p.m. was one of the principal issues holding up settlement of the agreement.

A mass meeting of merchants was held yesterday evening to discuss the contract. The Mercantile Agreement now in effect expires tonight. The new contract, if signed, will take effect Feb. 3.

Tidwell's statement yesterday that he thought an agreement would be reached today removed the strike threat to some extent. He said the new contract called for raises of approximately \$3

Will Lease Plant When Need Arises

Douglas Aircraft Company this week took an option to lease the former 500,000-square-foot Alcoa plant at 190th St. and Normandie Ave., it was disclosed this week.

F. W. Conant, senior vice-president of Douglas Aircraft, told the Herald that his company would exercise the option to lease

the plant "if we feel we require added manufacturing area in performance of defense obligations."

In announcing the transaction Alden J. Roach, president of the Columbia-Geneva Steel Division of U. S. Steel, said that company plans for which the 200-acre manufacturing tract was acquired had been altered.

The plant, built during World War II by the government and operated by Alcoa, one of the nation's leading aluminum manufacturers, was acquired by Columbia in 1948 from the War Assets Administration.

Purchase of the plant by Columbia was made with the thought of converting it into a cold rolling mill, officials announced at the time.

Confirmation this week of the transaction supports earlier reports in the Torrance Herald that the aircraft company was negotiating for the plant with the view of eventually employing 5000 persons here.

Announcement this week by the Navy of the new Douglas XA3D atom bomber was constructed by some as the source of unconfirmed reports that operations of considerable magnitude would be set up here by Douglas.

Unveiling of the new atom bomber on a TV show in Washington set aircraft circles buzzing. The new plane has yet to undergo tests, officials declared.

Other negotiations which have been under way during the past few weeks have not reached the announcement stage, the Herald was told by reliable sources yesterday.

One transaction involving the proposed \$20,000,000 expansion of the Harvey Machine Co. was still "in the dealing stage" yesterday. Announcement within the next 10 days is expected in the development.

Meanwhile, construction of a new \$500,000 distillation unit for increased production of aviation gasoline at General Petroleum has been started. The new unit, first reported in the Torrance Herald on November 29, is one which was built late in the war for Russia. Shipment of the unit to the USSR was canceled in 1945, officials said.

Foundations for the addition are being laid south of the cooling tower on the GP property near Crenshaw Blvd. here. This unit is in addition to the \$9,000,000 TCR unit proposed for the refinery.

Bloodmobile Due March 3

Plans for a return visit of the American Red Cross Bloodmobile were being made here this week by members of the Torrance Branch of the Red Cross.

Mrs. Clifford Easley, blood recruitment chairman, said the mobile blood unit would visit Torrance from 3 until 8 p.m. on Monday, March 3. Appointments can now be made by calling Torrance 3447 or by registering at 1754 Torrance Boulevard.

"If we have made a mistake and used 'hair-trigger' methods why don't we be big enough to admit the mistake and follow the guide (our contract) to settle this thing as it should be

(Continued on Page 3)



"... OR HIGH WATER . . ." Census Enumerator Samuel V. Rauss, 708 Acacia Ave., here, mans the oars. The nose counters took to the water yesterday to quiz Clarence C. Graves, Mrs. Vida Elch and Mrs. Suzie Graves at 2768 Earl St. in the flooded Hawthorne Blvd. area. The Graves live there, Mrs. Elch was visiting. (Herald photo by Dick Friend).