

Legislature Moves Fast to Give Shot in Arm to School Building

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

A bill originally introduced to aid impoverished school districts build more classrooms has turned out to be equally important as a prop to our sagging California economy. The measure would make immediately available \$30 million in loans to districts for new construction, and thus would give a boost to the building trades and to all suppliers.

Emphasizing the seriousness of the unemployment problem, state officials told the Assembly rules committee that the number of jobless was 349,000 in November, the highest on record for that month since 1949, and 50 per cent higher than the same month in 1959. Unemployment is particularly severe in lumbering counties like Humboldt and Mendocino, agricultural counties like Colusa and Glenn, and industrial centers like San Diego and San Bernardino counties.

ACTING ON the recommendation of its rules committee, the Assembly moved swiftly, first to permit immediate consideration of the bill without reference to the 30-day waiting period which would otherwise apply, and second, to pass it to the Senate. Rapid approval by that house is predicted as this is being written.

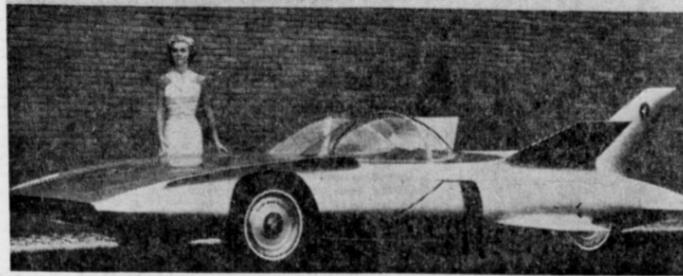
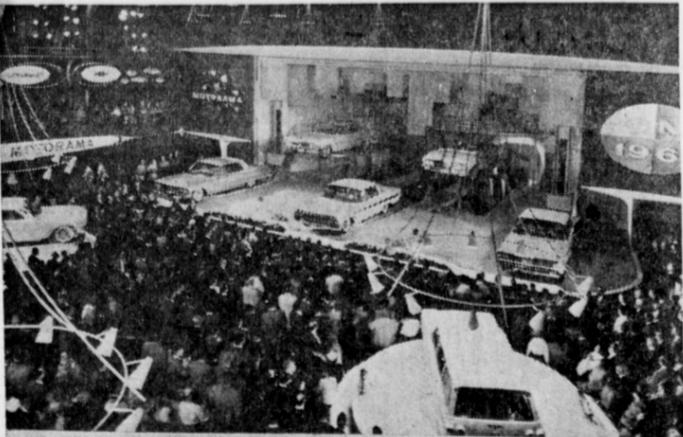
Since the Governor has given his blessing to the bill, the money could start flowing before you read this. The day after the bill is signed the state allocation board will meet to allot the funds where needed. A backlog of \$25 million in applications is already on file, so the full amount should be quickly disbursed. Many school districts have plans all drawn up, so should be able to award contracts and start the jobs within a few weeks. One spokesman said the economy will begin to feel the effects of the measure within six weeks.

OUR SENATE also acted quickly to attack the recession in other ways. One significant measure introduced seeks to deal with the problem of unemployment created by industrial automation. This situation is one of increasing concern to both labor and management. It is of special importance to us in California because of the size of our missile and electronics industries, in which major changes can occur with great rapidity.

The bill would provide benefit payments to a maximum of \$55 up to 26 weeks to workers displaced by automation while they are being retrained in new jobs. Funds would come from unemployment insurance reserves, but no additional tax would be involved. The bill would provide simply that the requirement that a worker be available for work and looking for work in order to draw benefits would be suspended while the worker is enrolled in an approved retraining class. Experts say the measure might even lower the total cost of unemployment insurance by restoring workers to jobs faster.

ANOTHER Senate bill which has been speeded on its way would change the jobless benefit law by adding another 6 to 13 weeks of benefits on an emergency basis if the level of unemployment rises above 6 per cent of the labor force. Under present law, such extended benefit payments could not be made available for the first three months of this year. Departmental estimators fix the additional amount to be paid out if the bill went into effect on Feb. 1 at not to exceed \$18 million. Extended benefits are now financed by a special additional tax on employers. If enacted, the new bill might shift this tax slightly, but it is not thought that the overall effect would be great.

While certain areas in our state have been hit by serious unemployment, our statewide situation does not compare badly with that of other industrial states. Nevertheless, the measures discussed here show that we Legislators will not stand by while things get worse.



OPENING SATURDAY . . . General Motors' greatest Motorama — 160,000 square feet of excitement, stage entertainment, kitchens, "ideas for living" and push-button scientific exhibits, opens Saturday at the Pan Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles. The admission-free family show will continue daily through Sunday, Feb. 5. The fabulous "Firebird III" (lower photo above) plus 1000 new automobiles and trucks are among Motorama's attractions, plus an original Broadway stage show presented six times daily.

Moose Scout Committees Announced

Scout committee appointments for the Moose Lodge-sponsored Scout Troop 315 were announced this week by Gov. Dan Hutchinson of Torrance Moose Lodge 785.

Homer Foster was named scoutmaster and Fred Bunch assistant scoutmaster to head the committee assignments.

Others included Les Roach, treasurer; Danny Reyes, secretary;

Herb Shattuck and Irv Caulkins, activities; Jim McCune, publicity and sustaining membership; Ted Whisnand and Al Wilson, personnel; Fred Bunch, awards; Vic Matulich, advancements; Varney Simpson, merit badge consultant; and Don Bose, Herb Wilson, and George Richardson, quartermasters.

Tentative plans for the year

announced by Chairman Lynn Dane included a monthly family swim party, bi-monthly campouts or hikes, week end snow trips, and plans for a two-week bus trip to Canada in 1962 or 1963.

A campout in El Prado park in downtown Torrance is planned during Boy Scout Week in February.

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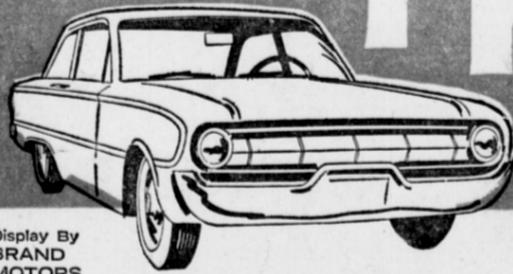
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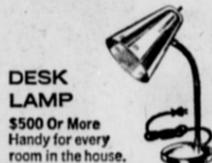
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