

Need for New Laws On Arson Explained

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL
 As an outgrowth of the riots and armed insurrection in the Watts area of the City of Los Angeles, I shall introduce a series of bills in the Assembly after the Legislature reconvenes Feb. 7, 1966. Several of my bills are the result of years of research and others are the outgrowth of the armed insurrection and the rioting, looting, and burning in the Watts section of the City of Los Angeles. The existing California laws relating to arson and connected crimes are inadequate and ineffective to meet the problems rising out of the influx of bitter, ignorant, frustrated, unskilled laborers from the deep South. The following are brief summaries of a few of the bills I have prepared for introduction:

- Making it a felony to own, possess or transport any incendiary device or object unless the person having possession can establish beyond a reasonable doubt that his object and purpose is lawful.
- Protecting city and county firemen the same as policemen and deputy sheriffs are protected now, that is, making an assault on a fireman in the execution of his duties a felony instead of a misdemeanor.
- Increasing the maximum

penalty for arson to be the same as the penalty for burglary is now, that is a sentence of not less than five years in a state penitentiary with a maximum of life imprisonment.

- Increasing the penalty for the crime of unlawfully cutting a fire hose before or during a fire from a misdemeanor to a felony, with a penalty equal to that now imposed on conviction of burglary.
- Making it a felony to unlawfully shut off the water supply during a fire by any unlawful means. An example is turning the valve of a fire hydrant to the closed position. This, too, would carry the same felony penalty as now attached to burglary in California.
- Making it a felony to own, possess, manufacture, or transport a container of any type containing gasoline, naphtha, etc., with a wick leading from the exterior to the fluid in the container. This is aimed at the so-called "Molotov Cocktails" which were used in the Watts armed insurrection, and elsewhere.

A "Molotov cocktail" is simply a bottle of gasoline with a wick leading from the gasoline to the top of the bottle. The wick is led through the cork, tin cap, or other bottle-closing device, and when the gasoline soaks up the wick, a match is applied to the wick. As soon as the wick starts burning, the whole thing is thrown, causing an explosion. However, several fluids used in cleaning clothes, such as naphtha, are more dangerous than gasoline. If one of these "Molotov cocktails" is thrown under an automobile, an Army tank, or other vehicle, it can put the car, tank, or troop carrier out of business very fast.

THE ABOVE are merely brief summaries of a few of the bills which I shall introduce. Other legislators undoubtedly will do the same thing.

Several years ago I was paid to lecture at a seminar on arson at the University of California at Berkeley. The seminar was organized and conducted by the Extension

Division of the University of California. This was a national seminar in the sense that the lecturers and the students came not merely from California but from the whole United States.

As an outgrowth of that experience I have had a continuing contact with experts of all types on arson, but the armed insurrection in the Watts area has aroused the people of California to a point that they are now ready to accept a number of new laws on arson and related crimes.

ONE OF THE problems is that arson is extremely difficult to define. While I am writing this report to the people I have before me a large thick law book, titled "The Law of Arson." It consists of 689 pages and weighs almost four and one-half pounds.

All laws relating to crime are difficult to write, hard to enact into law, and even more difficult to enforce. Even our present California criminal laws protect the criminals more than they protect the victims of crimes. However, this is mild in comparison to what the United States Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of California do when a criminal case is carried up on appeal. Those august judicial bodies are extremely mischievous, I am sorry to report.



MAPS CAMPAIGN . . . Mrs. Patricia Dreizler, 217 Avenue F, Redondo Beach, checks maps of the Southwestern area in preparation of the Heart Sunday campaign throughout the area Feb. 27. Mrs. Dreizler is Heart Sunday chairman for the Southwestern Branch of the Los Angeles County Heart Association, 16811 Hawthorne Blvd., Lawndale.

Heart Sunday Redondo Woman Heads Campaign

Three Southwestern area residents will begin a busy 30-day program later this month in preparation for the Heart Sunday campaign throughout the area Feb. 27. Mrs. Patricia Dreizler, 217 Avenue F, Redondo Beach, will head up the Heart Sunday campaign throughout the area. She will report to Herbert Gulick, Heart Fund chairman for the Heart Association's Southwestern Branch, and James M. Riehman, commerce chairman.

The trio will be directing a volunteer staff of more than 7,000 as they seek to raise \$165,729 — the Heart Fund goal for the area.

Exhibit of Art Work Scheduled

Plans for an exhibition of student art work at the Palos Verdes Community Arts workshops have been completed, Mrs. Pat Cox announced today.

Students at the workshops are urged to submit their work for the exhibit, Mrs. Cox said. The exhibit will be held during registration days for the spring semester classes, she explained.

Registration will be held Monday, Feb. 7, for members of the Palos Verdes Community Arts Association, Tuesday through Saturday, Feb. 8 to 12, classes will be open for the general public.

Hours are from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on all days, Mrs. Cox said. Work submitted for the exhibition must have been done during a workshop course. Information may be secured by calling 378-5308.

ELECTED CHAIRMAN
 Torrance developer Henry C. Griswold, 45, has been elected chairman of the board of Crown Savings and Loan Association of El Monte, Griswold, who resides in Palos Verdes, was chairman of the board of Guaranty Bank prior to the merger with City National Bank.

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