

# BUILDERS PROTEST STRICT QUAKE LAW

## TORRANCE HERALD

### High Fees, Delays Proving Hardship To Owners Here

A rising tide of dissatisfaction over the strict, literal enforcement of the rigid amendment to the city building ordinance adopted Nov. 19 following the Nov. 14 earthquake broke out into the open at city council meeting Tuesday night. Four property owners whose buildings were quake-damaged sought relief from alleged costly engineering fees by having the city engineer's staff render additional consultation service but the council did not take any action.

The matter of priority restrictions was thoroughly explored after City Attorney John E. McCall reported his efforts in this regard at Washington, D. C. He asserted he had been told by high OPM officials at the capital no priority numbers would be required of property owners seeking materials to repair the buildings here. McCall offered to conduct a "test case" of this waiver by taking the first list of materials submitted him by an owner to the OPM headquarters in Los Angeles.

Confirmation of the city attorney's statements regarding priority waiver was received today, he said, when he learned from the Los Angeles OPM office that the only requirement was that the builders file affidavits that all material needed goes into earthquake repair jobs. McCall said: "Builders do not have to use priority numbers on quake repair work." The Torrance Lumber Co., has been supplying builders for several weeks on that basis.

Principal spokesman for the property owners seeking easement from the strict terms of the emergency-adopted building code amendment was Harvey Guttenfelder. He used his building at 1818 Grayson ave., as an example of how the city engineering department's literal interpretation of the code was working a hardship on property owners. Because this building was unoccupied at the time of the earthquake, Guttenfelder said he is not permitted to rent it now until it has been completely repaired.

To effect this, he must employ a structural engineer or architect to draft plans and specifications for what he termed "very minor improvements." Guttenfelder declared he could obtain no definite price from such an engineer for this work. Engineering fees range from \$45 upwards for one set of plans. If another has to be drawn in event the city engineering department rejects the first set, another fee must be paid, Guttenfelder said.

The service station owner contended this procedure was unjust, forcing additional cost on property owners already burdened with the cost of reconstructing their structures and asked that the city engineer's staff assist owners by checking over the work first with private structural engineers or architects to determine just what the city wants.

Although Councilmen James E. Hitchcock and Vern Babcock indicated they favored such concessions, the council as a whole took no action after City Engineer Glenn Jain had reported the activities of his department. This report brought out these facts:

1. There are 29 major earthquake repair jobs in progress now.
2. Despite statements by state, county and Los Angeles city officials that they would "be only too glad to assist Torrance in following the earthquake and widely publicized" not one state, county or Los Angeles city building inspector has been loaned to Torrance to make the required inspections.
3. Builders cannot expect to have their plans and specifications checked in much less than 10 days following submission of this material.
4. Lack of inspectors — they are very scarce, Jain said — is delaying completion of jobs.

All of the protesting property owners who addressed the council (they included Fay Parks, Cecil Smith, W. E. Bowen, Guttenfelder) said they believed that the city's own structural engineer, Frank H. Cannon, employed at a fee of \$400 a month, should serve in a more general capacity. They declared they should not be forced to pay a structural engineer when all plans are

### Ground-Breaking Starts Work on Aluminum Plant

#### L.A. City and County Mapping Separate Defense

Los Angeles city and Los Angeles county were going ahead independently of each other this week with plans for civilian defense. Allied with the county's civilian defense council were most of the other cities.

When the Civilian Defense Council headed by Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz held a special meeting late last week at the Hall of Records with members of the board of supervisors present, Los Angeles city was not represented.

Problems of the other 44 cities and of the railroads were being ironed out this week by the county council, following the appointment of Harold W. Kennedy, assistant county counsel, as executive officer of the council.

Railroad officials said they were handicapped by practice blackouts, since it slowed up movement of trains, which the army ordered moved at all possible speed, with safety. If locomotive headlights are doused, these trains have to run at reduced speed. It is next to impossible for switch yards to continue work, they said.

Approved types of air raid shelters have been adopted by the county council, and builders should obtain permits from the county building department, to see that they are of the approved type. No fees will be charged, it was indicated.

#### Draft Board Re-Classifying 4-A, 2-A Men

With only 41 Class 1-A or potential 1-A men still available for call to Army training, Selective Service Board officials serving this community, are now reclassifying 4-A men, those originally deferred for previous military service. Next the board will consider reclassifying 2-A men, those employed on replaceable national defense jobs, it was learned today from Clerk Carl Marsteller.

However, Marsteller urged men holding these or other classifications not to call the board's office at 1337 El Prado, Torrance since all will be notified by mail of any reclassifications.

A group of 48 men will undergo physical examinations at the board's headquarters next Monday night, preparatory to being sent to Los Angeles for tests by Army medics. One of the new forms being sent out to selective service registrants asks them to indicate which branch, army or navy, of the nation's armed forces they prefer to serve, indicating that the draft for the Navy — first in history — may not be far off.

#### Police School for Civilians Will Start Here On Dec. 23

Nearly 150 local men who have signed up for training as members of the Auxiliary, Civilian Police unit of defense are awaiting the start of their schooling in classes to be started Tuesday, Dec. 23, at 7 p. m. in the Civic Auditorium. All men will be notified by mail of the opening of the school. The classes will be directed by Capt. Ray Bergh of Sub-Station No. 3 and other sheriff's officers.

Training will be in mob psychology, traffic control, poison gas and blackout control and other duties connected with possible bombardment of this area.

**HOLIDAYS BEGIN**  
Christmas holidays begin with the release of all youngsters from schools here tomorrow afternoon. Classes will be resumed Monday morning, Jan. 5, 1945.



Government, railroad and building officials officiated last Friday afternoon in ground-breaking ceremonies for the first unit of the 50 million dollar project to house four aluminum plants south of 190th st., between Western and Normandie avenues.

Above photo shows, left to right: W. G. Knoche, Pacific Electric freight traffic manager; Fred C. Walker, president of the P. J. Walker Company which has the contract to build the unit; H. T. Cory, supervising engineer for the entire project for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation; L. A. Schaeffer, superintendent of construction for the Aluminum Corporation of America; Rev. Father Joseph L. Bauer, pastor of the Torrance Catholic Church of the Nativity; William C. Lynch, sales manager for Alcoa, and Hector C. Haight, manager of the Los Angeles agency for the R. F. C.

Below, Secretary Pat MacDonnell of the Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce, (left) and Dean L. Sears, president of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, do a little ground-breaking of their own in celebration over the acquisition of the huge industry by their respective communities. . . the aluminum plant lies on the borders of both cities. Afterwards, the aluminum shovel was presented to MacDonnell while Sears received the aluminum pick as souvenirs of the event.



### First Unit of 50 Million Dollar Plant Under Way

With production of the first aluminum ingots scheduled for next May and full capacity of the huge plant set for next August, ground was broken last Friday afternoon for the \$50,000,000 aluminum plant off 190th st., between Western and Normandie avenues. Furnished with a "rush order" for construction of the first unit of the four-plant project, P. J. Walker Construction Company of Los Angeles started erecting the \$18,000,000 alumina reduction plant yesterday.

#### Cooker Blast Badly Injures Mrs. Ed Bird

A pressure cooker that exploded last Thursday afternoon badly injured Mrs. Edwin Bird at her home, 1817 Acacia ave., and today eye specialists are still uncertain as to whether she will regain her normal eyesight. The blast also caused severe burns on her arms and she may have to undergo skin-grafting on the right arm.

Mrs. Bird, it was reported, can just distinguish objects now with her left eye while the right eye is still blind. She was in the hospital of a Los Angeles eye specialist until Sunday and is now being taken into the city twice a week for treatment by her husband.

All the glass in the kitchen and a front window was shattered by the flying steel, none of which actually struck Mrs. Bird. Her injuries were caused by steam. The shattered steel tore off considerable plaster in the kitchen but no fire resulted.

#### Defense Bond Sales Soar In First War Week

Soaring with the surging tide of patriotism that followed Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, sales of Defense Bonds and stamps spiraled more than 500 per cent here during the first week of the war ending last Monday. The great demand for the securities led Postmaster Earl Conner to announce today that those desiring to buy bonds for Christmas gifts should do so at once because the supply is very limited here and almost exhausted in Los Angeles.

Sales at the postoffice, both local banks and the Lincoln Building and Loan Association totalled approximately \$19,150 in the first seven days of the war against the Axis. The Herald learned from a survey of those institutions. Three \$1,000 bonds have been sold at the postoffice, Conner reported.

"There can be no finer gift for anyone than a Defense Bond," the postmaster said. "But you'd better purchase them at once lest you be disappointed. We doubt if we receive another shipment of the certificates from Washington before Christmas."

The sales are continuing this week with the same speed that characterized the issuance of the securities during the war's first week.

#### Officer Loses Wrist Watch Chasing Suspect

Chasing an alleged car-striper and thief cost Sergeant Bill Evans a \$40 wristwatch Monday afternoon. Ordered to investigate the suspicious actions of a motorist near the city park, Evans was driving down Apple st., when he saw a car approaching. As it sped by him he noticed the machine corresponded to the description he had heard over the police radio and gave chase.

On Lincoln st., the suspect abandoned the car and ran across the city park from the picnic pavilion with Sergeant Evans in pursuit. At the railroad tracks the man turned down past the ball park and Evans fired at him but missed. The fleeing man cut across open fields and escaped. Evans called other police cars on the short wave radio but the suspect was not captured.

On his return to investigate the abandoned car, which was found later to have been stolen from a Fillmore resident, Evans noticed his wristwatch was missing. He values the timepiece more for sentiment—it was a gift than for its actual value and will appreciate and give a reward for its return.

#### Next Edition Out Tuesday, December 23

Next week's edition of The Torrance Herald and The Lomita News will be distributed on Tuesday, Dec. 23, instead of Thursday because of Christmas Day. There will be no week-end editions. Classified advertising will close at noon Monday next week, instead of the usual closing hour of 12 o'clock on Wednesdays. Churches and other organizations having announcements to be published next week are requested to submit them not later than Saturday if possible.

#### Jury Waits in Vain for Case; Speeder 'In Bad'

Orville E. Wright, 24, of Compton is "in bad" with the Torrance city court—just how bad Mr. Wright will learn in a few days.

He was given a citation Dec. 6 for speeding 65 miles in a 55-mile zone. On Dec. 13 he appeared before Judge John Shidler, plead not guilty and demanded a jury trial. This was set for Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 15, and he was released on \$5 bail.

The court and prospective jurors waited in vain for Wright to appear. It was well after 2 o'clock when Judge Shidler dismissed the jury panel after first ordering Wright's bail forfeited, a bench warrant issued for his arrest and declared that when the young Compton motorist finally "keeps his date" with the court he will face additional penalty for his contempt of that court.

#### Cabrillo Ready for City Work But No Date Set for Job

City crews can go ahead anytime now and remove the ties along the Cabrillo ave., right-of-way obtained by the city purchase from the Pacific Electric, City Engineer Glenn Jain informed the council Tuesday night. Postmaster Earl Conner, who asked the status of the right-of-way negotiations, pressed the council to learn if any date was set for the final improvement of Cabrillo ave., but he was unsuccessful in getting a definite commitment.

### NOW FOR THE \$64 QUESTION

#### Police Get Some Queer Quizzes on Home-Front War

There are many stories about human reactions when fires break out. There is the one about the man who threw the pictures out the upstairs window and carefully carried the mattresses down. And the one about the woman who ran across the street with fruit jars and dropped them on the cement sidewalk.

But you'll never be able to best Torrance police officers with those. The cops who manned the telephones for the past 10 days know that human reactions to war can be very funny—and very stupid. For instances, listen to these actual requests for information: Take the case of a mother who called the police station inquiring of Captain Ernest Ashton if he knew of a "new preparation, just put on the market of a spray that when used on small children makes them immune to bombs." Ashton thought he was being kidded and replied he had heard of it.

"Well, for God's sake tell me where to get it—I don't care what it costs," the woman said. Ashton then revealed his ignorance of such a marvelous preparation.

#### Firemen's Yule Party for Kids Dec. 22, 2 p.m.

For the greater safety of all local children who have been anticipating the Torrance Firemen's annual Christmas party, Fire Chief J. E. McFaster announced today that the affair will be held in the Civic Auditorium, starting at 2 o'clock on Monday, December 22.

It had been planned to hold the distribution of the firemen's treats in the evening at the Swiss Village in El Prado Park.

#### Stores Prepared For Last Days' Shopping Rush

With only five — count 'em 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — more shopping days until Christmas, Torrance merchants today began their "last ditch" stand before the throngs of shoppers invading the business district day and night. The "duration" of their front line duty is shortening by the hour — as are their stocks of merchandise — but every one of them are in there pitching Yule gifts right and left.

Three blackout nights, Dec. 8, 9 and 10, failed to daunt local residents who are living up to Christmas tradition by generous spending. Christmas gift stores have begun to unpack their reserves of merchandise and the "order of the day" is: No matter what it is, it CAN be purchased in Torrance!

All gift shops are open evenings until 9 o'clock through Christmas Eve, next Wednesday. Owners are prepared to give Army and Civilian Defense authorities full cooperation on a second's notice in case of blackout and shoppers will be given protection of the firms if such a "lights out" order is received during the next six nights.

#### Japanese Population Here Totals 1,189

According to the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, in 1940 there were 1,189 Japanese living in Torrance. Of this total, 781 were born in the U. S. or its possessions and are citizens and 408 are aliens. The report for Gardena showed a total of 509 Japanese, 350 of them citizens of this nation and 159 aliens.

Lack Inspectors  
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