

# TORRANCE FIRE DEPARTMENT ABANDONS CENTRAL STATION ON ORDERS OF CITY COUNCIL

Torrance Fire department will not be permitted to reoccupy the Torrance central fire station, it was ruled by the City Council Tuesday night as that body followed up the condemnation proceedings of City Engineer G. M. Jain by granting full authority to Fire Chief J. E. McMaster to make provisions for housing of equipment and men outside the quake-damaged building.

The fire-fighting equipment was moved out of the station on Monday and signs were posted on the structure that entry to the building was forbidden.

Barriades were constructed for protection of curious and unsuspecting persons who might venture into the structure.

The condemnation proceedings of the engineer, acting in his dual capacity of city engineer and public works director, were followed within a few hours by a serious explosion in Los Angeles which had it occurred in Torrance, according to officials, would have meant ruin to the quake-damaged station and fire-fighting equipment.

"This is a permanent move," Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr., declared Tuesday night as the City Council acted to back up the move of the city engineer.

"It is coincident that an explosion of serious proportions should have occurred in Los Angeles the day after the fire department building was condemned by our city engineer.

"It is coincident that we have a bond election on the ballot for submission to the will of the people March 18 calling for a new fire station.

"However, no matter what the decision of the people of Torrance may be on this all-important bond issue, the Torrance Fire department never will be permitted to occupy that building again.

"The people of Torrance have had too much at stake in allowing such a move.

"The city government of Torrance has too great a responsibility to the people of Torrance to permit such a move.

"We can only call the attention of the people to the condition as it exists and move according to our best judgment.

"The abandonment of the central fire station, in view of the report of qualified engineers, is permanent. We hope that the people realize the seriousness of this situation."

The fire fighting apparatus was moved to the lot in the rear of the fire station and police station.

The parking lot formerly set aside for official city cars has been set aside for police cars, and barriades have been constructed around the fire station.

Fire department personnel now are quartered in the City Hall corridors and offices, and in temporary buildings moved in for that purpose.

Close inspection of the fire department headquarters is sufficient to convince any person qualified to pass on the condition that the move on the part of the city engineer, backed by the City Council, is wholly justified and a move in the interest of the safety of the people of Torrance, it was pointed out.

## Explosion In Torrance Would Mean Disaster

Mortar which was intended to bind the bricks of the Torrance central fire station is of such an unstable consistency that it would not stand a serious shock, according to a decision of Henry M. Layne, consulting engineer who was asked by City Engineer G. M. Jain to inspect the building to confirm his order of condemnation and eviction, made last Wednesday.

As the engineer made tests of the mortar, it was pointed out, it seemed to break up like sand, and while the building had stood, though badly damaged, one earthquake of serious proportions, it might not have been able to go through another.

Cracks from the 1941 quake still exist and officers daily testify to those who have been watching the structure for years as to its unstable condition.

"We had considered the condition of the central fire station as a threat to the safety of the people of Torrance, and it was only a few hours after the building had been condemned by my department that an explosion of serious proportions occurred in Los Angeles to demonstrate what we meant by the condemnation proceedings. Had this explosion, or a serious quake, occurred in Torrance at that time, the people would have found their fire station in ruins and equipment and men trapped within."



**SURVIVES CRASH . . .** Howard L. Day, 19, former Torrance resident is reported in the Navy hospital in San Diego today following the crash of a Coast Guard mercy plane last Saturday in Mexico. The youth and another crew member were the only survivors of the plane which was returning to San Diego from Baja California.

## El Camino Site At Alondra Gets Planners' Okay

Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission yesterday recommended to the Board of Supervisors that it grant to El Camino Junior College district, which includes Torrance and the South Bay area, from 60 to 75 acres of Alondra park for the junior college campus.

The hearing of the commission was attended by various representatives of the district including Robert Russell, chairman of the junior college board, and James L. Lynch, vice chairman of the Torrance Charter Committee who is a candidate for the first Torrance Board of Education.

The recommendation of the planning body is that the county lease the college district acreage, amounting to 60 to 75 acres depending upon the will of the supervisors, extending along Crenshaw blvd. from Redondo Beach blvd. northerly toward

(Continued on Page 5-A)

## Annual Dinner Of Chamber To Salute Industry

The annual Torrance Chamber of Commerce dinner to be held in the Civic Auditorium on March 24 will be a "Salute to Industry in Torrance," according to Reed H. Parlin, president of the Chamber.

Specially honored will be the leaders in several new industries in Torrance, headed by American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corp., whose \$1,000,000 new Torrance pottery is to be built during the next few months; Bates Expanded Steel company of Chicago, whose \$600,000 factory will be in operation within the year; American Rock Wool Co., already in operation, and Anderson-Carlson Co., who will occupy the old Planor building of the National Supply company.

Likewise honored will be several new smaller units and the pioneer factories of Torrance which established for Torrance the reputation of being "The Modern Industrial City."

According to Blaine Walker, secretary of the Chamber, the reservations will be held to 300. A novel manner of issuing tickets has been decided upon, he said.

"We will sell 'tables' of eight each, to the various industries, service clubs, firms and organizations," Walker explained. "Each table will be labeled with the name of the firm or organization represented. Of course, those who cannot support a full table will be grouped with other smaller firms." It is contended that the dinner will cost about \$2.50 a plate.

## Census Count Of Torrance Shows 13,000 Residents

Torrance population has gained 31 percent since 1940, according to Robert J. Milliken, supervisor of the special census taken here. He announced preliminary returns revealed that Torrance is a city with 13,000 persons as compared to 9,950 on April 1, 1940.

While the 13,000 figure represents a population increase of approximately 31 percent, these figures are preliminary and subject to minor revisions, Milliken explained.

The supervisor welcomed examinations of the census results and urged residents who were missed in the count to inform him at once so that corrections could be made. The 13,000 population count will mean approximately \$6,000 a year more in increased gasoline funds, officials here decide.

The official certification of population will be made at a later date by the director, Bureau of Census, Washington, D. C. Milliken said.

## Construction On New Pottery Due To Start

Waal-Campan Co. & Smith, Inc., general contractors of Beverly Hills, have been awarded the general contract for construction of the new \$1,500,000 pottery of the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation, it was announced this week.

According to Marvin L. Williams, representative of the contractors, who conferred with officials here Tuesday, the grading and excavating on the 45-acre site at Crenshaw blvd. and 203rd st. will start next week.

This will be followed by pouring of foundations and floors for the vast buildings of the plant which will be of reinforced concrete construction.

Of the most modern design, the Torrance pottery of American Standard will require the work of from 400 to 500 construction workers during the coming months, according to Williams.

## Supreme Court Refuses To Grant New Hearing In Bus Sale Lawsuit

The Supreme court of California has refused to grant a rehearing of the suit brought against the City of Torrance by William J. B. Hughes to require that section 5203 of Deering's general laws be adhered to in the sale of the municipal bus lines.

Hughes won a Superior court decision that the city could not sell the lines without first holding an election and then calling for bids. This decision was appealed and the District Court of Appeals upheld the lower court. The Supreme court refused to grant a rehearing and thus brought the lengthy litigation to an end.

The city had sought to sell the bus line to Charles F. Koors, who had deposited some \$60,000 for the purchase.

In defending the action, the city contended that it was selling only equipment and not a "public utility" as claimed by Hughes. The city claimed it has no franchise to sell, and therefore was dealing only in personal property.

In upholding the lower courts new law was written, it was pointed out, in that this case was the first in which the powers of a city to sell a transportation system had been

## NEW FIRE STATION WILL BE LOCATED ON CITY-OWNED LOTS; TO BUY SITE IN N. TORRANCE

The proposed new Torrance central fire station will be built on the city-owned lots at El Prado and Cravens ave., thus saving the taxpayers some \$20,000 previously agreed upon in the bond issue for purchase of property, and a site will be purchased in North Torrance for a fire station which will be required in that area within a year.

This was revealed by Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy Jr. and the City Council Tuesday night. It was announced that the insurance underwriters had selected the city-owned lots as the best possible site in the central area of Torrance for the proposed new fire station.

The declaration that the city had decided to use its own lots for the fire station came after Ed Saul, North Torrance resident and extensive property holder in the city, had inquired if any provision for a North Torrance fire station had been made in the \$185,000 bond issue to be voted March 18.

Mayor Sherfy replied that the Council had decided not to use the \$20,000 set up in the bond fund for a site for the central station, but to use the city lots.

From the \$20,000 an allotment will be spent for a site in the northern section of the city which now must depend

upon the central fire station for its protection. Extensive home development is planned there immediately after the water supply is provided by the newly formed Torrance Municipal Water District No. 2. It was pointed out, and the fire protection will be necessary.

While the bond issue does not mention purchase of the North Torrance fire station site, Mayor Sherfy pointed out to Saul, that "the \$20,000 set aside for a site doesn't specify where it shall be spent." He pointed out when the Council decided to use the city-owned lots for the central station, the members agreed that a portion of the \$20,000 should be set aside for a North Torrance fire station site.

Councilman W. H. Tolson declared that the development in North Torrance which will follow the completion of the water system will be of such proportions that the fire station and equipment in that section of the city will be essential, probably within a year.

The \$185,000 bond issue provides \$125,000 for acquisition and construction of the fire station and \$60,000 for rehabilitating the old central fire station, condemned last week as unsafe for occupancy, for use as a police station and jail.

## Charter Changes Discussed By Chamber-Council

Members of the City Council and directors of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce conferred Tuesday night on proposed amendments to the new City Charter of Torrance which will provide for the installation of the city manager form of government for this city.

The panel discussion of the two bodies was led by Attorney C. T. Rippey, a Chamber director, who drew up the original draft of the city manager amendment. Each paragraph of the document was discussed at length and many worthwhile suggestions were made, which will be written into the proposed law. Agreement was reached on all matters discussed.

Participating in the discussion were Mayor J. Hugh Sherfy, Jr., Councilmen W. H. Tolson, A. L. Jackson, Merton Gilbert, and Chamber Directors Dean L. Sears, R. I. Plomert, Jr., Charles V. Jones, Grover C. Whyte, Chamber Secretary Blaine Walker, and City Attorney Otto Willett.

At the next joint meeting of the group, Louis H. Burke, counsel for the League of Municipalities, will be present to discuss the proposed changes to be submitted to the voters at an election in the spring.

Attorney Burke will be present at the annual meeting of the Chamber on March 24, at which time proposed charter changes will be a topic of discussion.

## J. J. WEBB NAMED CITY ELECTRICIAN; HAD BEEN ACTING

J. J. Webb was elevated to the position of city electrician by the City Council Tuesday night. He had held the position as "acting city electrician" for a year, pending Civil Service examinations which he completed and passed.

The Council also set up new classifications under the Civil Service ordinance for water department manager, field foreman, senior maintenance man, junior maintenance man and other minor classifications in the water department.

## TORRANCE CHILDREN SENT TO LOMITA SCHOOL AS L. A. MOVES BUNGALOWS FROM CITY

Action of Los Angeles city school district in moving bungalows away from Torrance elementary school and then transferring Torrance students from the school to Lomita elementary was rapped by a group of irate parents yesterday.

Staging a "strike" in behalf of the Torrance resident students, mothers and fathers of some 14 students of the elementary school refused to send their children to Lomita elementary school upon directions from the principal of Torrance elementary school. Shortly after two bungalows were moved from Torrance to Gardena, a few weeks ago, additional half-day sessions were instituted at the school, and this move now has been followed up by the order to transfer Torrance children to Lomita schools.

Complaining to Dr. Howard A. Wood, chairman of the Torrance Charter Committee, and Mrs. Grace W. Wright, several parents said that they will keep their children home rather than permit them to go to Lomita through heavy traffic on Normandie avenue and Lomita blvd., passing two saloons and traveling a distance greater than can be covered under the law. The Torrance elementary school is nearer to their homes than that of Lomita.

No warning was given of the pending move, parents said. Notices were sent home, each entitled "Pupil Accounting Report" which gave the names of the children, addresses, classrooms, grades and similar information declaring that the pupils named are "herely" relocated from this school to attend Lomita elementary school. It was said that parents of the children involved were given no choice in the matter.

Mrs. Wright, who investigated the move at the request of several of the parents involved, declared that she could see no reason for such action in view of the fact that the Los Angeles schools had moved out the two bungalows from the same school.

Dr. Wood said that he was astounded at the action and urged the parents to protest as once in V. Kasey, Los Angeles city schools superintendent, and to similar high authorities.

"This is working an unnecessary hardship on the children of Torrance," he declared, "and it is a move which is hard to justify. Los Angeles has threatened to remove non-resident children from Torrance schools, but when the Los Angeles system undertakes to send Torrance children to schools outside of the city boundaries of Torrance we find it difficult to understand." He promised that every effort will be exerted to correct the situation.

"Many problems will be faced by our first Torrance Board of Education," Mrs. Wright declared, "but we did not anticipate that our Torrance children would be made to suffer such a move as that taken by Torrance elementary school at this time." She urged the parents to keep their children in the schools designated by the Los Angeles authorities pending an investigation of the whole matter.

Mrs. Wright pointed out that to keep the children out of school would be a violation of the Education Code.

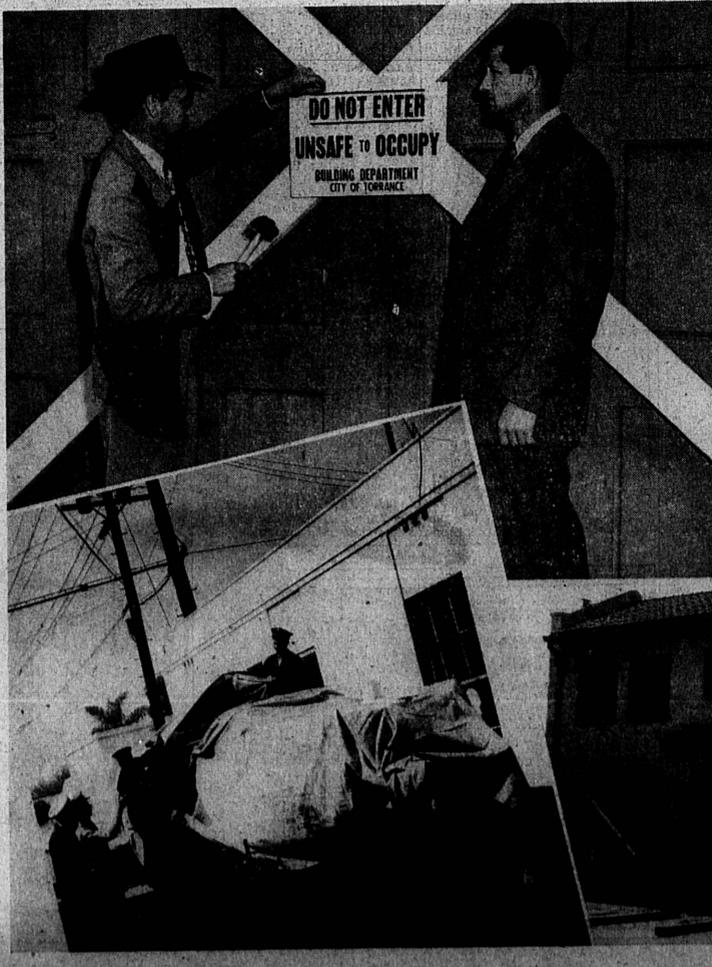
## Clifton A. Hix Gets Permit To Operate Taxicabs

Clifton A. Hix was given permission to operate the Yellow Cab Company of Torrance by the City Council Tuesday night. His application, filed last week had been approved by Chief of Police John Stroth.

Dan Frohman's plea that he be granted the right to operate a taxicab here for 90 days, to get money to "pay up my debts before I leave town" was referred to the Council as a whole and the police chief. Under provisions of the taxicab ordinance Frohman has been barred from operating here. He showed the Council a copy of his San Francisco 1947 taxi driver's license.

## TOO DANGEROUS TO OCCUPY . . .

The central fire station of Torrance, condemned due to damage in the 1941 quake, was barricaded and posted to bar entry by city officials this week. City Engineer G. M. Jain is shown, above left, as he posts "Unsafe to Occupy" signs on the fire station door. Henry M. Layne, consulting engineer who verified Jain's condemnation order, is looking on. Lower left, firemen are covering with canvas one of the pieces of city fire-fighting equipment now being stored in the open. Lower right, the fire station with barricades installed on the door and others being made ready to keep the curious away from the structure. City Engineer Jain said, and Layne agreed, that if an explosion such as occurred in Los Angeles last week had been suffered in Torrance, the fire house would have collapsed and equipment and men buried in the rubble. (Photos by Lee Weinstein.)



## National Supply Builds \$47,500 Foundry Addition

A \$47,500 steel frame foundry addition to National Supply Co., 1524 Border ave., hiked building permits in Torrance to \$59,100, according to building department records.

The foundry addition will be 142 feet in length by 111 feet in width.

Other building permits issued here during the past week are the following:

B. F. Kinnannon, 2415 Arlington ave., sandwich shop, \$9,000.

Edward Nash, 3685 Newton st., frame Sunday school building, \$750.

Joseph Carter, 2277 Ocean ave., utility house, \$950.

Harry Furusho, 20438 Hawthorne blvd., utility building, \$900.

Community Airports Inc., 4100 Redondo Beach blvd., moved-in frame hangar to be used as repair shop, \$5,000.

Frank Biederman, 24490 Hawthorne blvd., addition to residence, \$500.

R. H. Duncan, 2334 W. 238th st., living quarters, \$1,500.