

Senate Unhappily Adopts Reapportionment Measure

By VINCENT THOMAS
 Assemblyman, 68th District

One of the unhappiest sessions in the history of our State Senate took place one recent afternoon when it discussed and passed the bill to reapportion its own membership. Confronted as it is by the order of a federal district court to come up with a redistricting scheme not later than July 1, as well as by decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court calling for apportionment of the membership of both houses in all State Legislatures on a population basis, our Senate has been reluctantly driven into drafting and acting on a measure for the purpose.

I described the major provisions of this bill a few weeks ago when it was first introduced. Briefly, it would give Los Angeles County 12 Senate seats, two each to Alameda, Orange, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara counties. Northern counties would be consolidated into district geographically huge—14 counties in one, 7 in another, 5 in a third, to enable the shift in seats. Originally, the bill provided for elections-at-large in all multi-seat counties, but in committee, it was amended to divide Los Angeles County into twelve districts, and to move one valley county out of the proposed mountain county district.

THE AUTHOR of the bill, the chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Reapportionment, opened the gloomy floor hearing with the flat statement, "I have the very distasteful task today of presenting the Senate reapportionment bill." The discussion which followed was more of a requiem than a debate. Not one of the Sen-

Investment Conference Scheduled

One man's problem properly can become another man's gold mine, in the experience of Stephen L. Melnyk, realtor of San Marino, who will be a speaker at a real estate investment conference scheduled in Los Angeles May 27-28.

The two-day session is sponsored by the California Real Estate Association and is the fourth annual such investment conference, according to Ira Gribin of Encino, CREA education committee chairman.

Melnyk is only one of the experts in various real estate specialties who will lecture during the meetings. Investors as well as Realtors may attend.

WILLIAM WALTERS JR. of Los Angeles, chairman of the conference committee, said there will also be workshops conducted by realtors with exceptional experience in specific phases of real estate and by well known tax attorneys, contractors and architects.

Victor Palmieri, president of the Janss Corporation, will discuss "Community Development as an Investment Strategy." He makes the point that "despite the well advertised facts about soaring costs of raw land in California, the impact of urban growth on values of developed land makes it worthwhile to take on development responsibility."

Those attending the conference will also hear one of the nation's leading experts in putting together and operating real estate syndicates. He is Richard H. Swesnick, Realtor of Washington, D. C.

He tells some of the advantages and pitfalls in the syndicate type of real estate investment and management.

ators who argued for passage of the bill said he favored it. Several Senators commented that they will fight for adoption of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution which would permit the people of a state to district one

house of a bicameral legislature on a basis other than population. One Senator bluntly asserted, "This Supreme Court decision is one of the greatest steps to destroy our republican form of government in this coun-

try, and that's why I'm fighting it." He emphasized, however, that he regarded the pending bill as inequitable and unfair, and so would vote against its passage. Still pending in a California Superior Court is a suit

to upset the federal court order to reapportion immediately which has been filed on behalf of our Senate. Some action on this case is expected shortly. In the meantime, teams of Senate members have been visiting other

states, working on behalf of the U.S. constitutional amendment. Their findings are that if support for the amendment continues to grow at the current rate, there will be better than a 50-50 chance for its adoption.

WHEN IT CAME time for the bill's author to close the hearing, he aptly expressed the dark mood of the Senate when he said, "This wake has gone on long enough. I ask for an aye vote." The non-partisan vote for passage, 24 to 13, well indicated the reluctance of the whole membership to surrender abjectly to a decision it believed utterly wrong in principle.

The reapportionment measure is expected to have very rough going in the Assembly. Already, opposition to the 12 districts it would establish in Los Angeles County has been strongly voiced by Assemblymen from that county. There is a likelihood that the courts might reject the bill because the five counties with two seats each would be left undistricted, thus creating unequal treatment.

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