

## STEVENSON OUSTED FROM FIRE DEPT., AFTER HEARING

(Continued from Page 1-B)

permission — the complaint against Stevenson was amended twice by the prosecution to include these counts:

That he failed to "lead, manage and direct" the fire department in fire drill at the station Oct. 24; that he "failed or neglected to carry out orders" in connection with an inspection of a fire truck after its return from the city garage for repairs; and that he failed to report for duty Oct. 29 to drive the fire truck in the Factory Frolic parade.

**Dismissal Motion Denied**

After the prosecution rested its case, Attorney Shidder asked that all charges against Stevenson except that of fighting and the Factory Frolic episode be dismissed because of their "insignificance." Chairman Bishop in ruling against this plea, stated: "In view of the fact that the testimony indicates repeated interference the motion is denied."

In his summing up of the defense, Shidder held the accusations about Stevenson's indifference to the fire drill and testimony to be "trivial" and that the charge that Stevenson failed to show up to carry out orders to drive the fire truck in the Oct. 29 parade was "ridiculous" because his sons failed to awaken him in time.

Regarding the fight, Shidder pointed out that the testimony showed Benner provoked the battle and the attorney admitted that his client left the station afterward without permission.

**Councilmen Present**

Attorney Cross in his statement to the trial board declared that the "incidents in this case are more serious than those examined concerning Engineer Benner because this case involves a senior officer—a fire captain." He defended the city's Civil Service ordinance and the right of three members of the Civil Service board to serve as trial judges—a point that was argued by Attorney Shidder. The fact that Director Stroh "voluntarily eliminated himself from his place on the trial board in no way impairs the validity of the board's action," Cross held.

Only a small audience attended the proceedings. Mayors William H. Tolson, Councilmen Tom McGuire and John Y. Murray were interested observers. City Attorney John McCall was present but had little to do with the action. Cross doing all of the questioning. City Clerk A. H. Bartlett substituted for LeRoy Stevens, clerk of the Civil Service board, because of the latter's illness. The prosecution witnesses told the following story in brief:

**Begged for Separation**

Stroh reviewed his testimony concerning the original charges of fighting and leaving the station without permission and gave information about Stevenson's alleged neglect of his office during two particular fire drills. He said the fire captain was in the station during one practice but took no part in the work and on the other drill failed to carry out previous plans for a certain type of "hook-up" requested by Capt. Moser, a member of the volunteer force.

The public safety director was the first to bring out in open testimony the personality differences between Stevenson and Benner. He said the fire captain "begged me on several occasions not to put Benner and him on the same shift because they could not get along." He testi-

fied that he never saw Stevenson and Benner talk together.

Under questioning by Trial Boardmen Bunge, Stroh said he made attempts to "straighten out" the Stevenson-Benner difficulties but was unable to schedule that took effect shortly after he became head of the fire and police departments "made it impossible to keep them in separate shifts."

**Fremont On Stand**

Engineer Silence reiterated his testimony given at Benner's trial about the fight between the two men and how Capt. Calder stopped it. He could not estimate how long the fistfights lasted because he said: "I have never been to a boxing match and can't tell anything about such things."

Capt. Moser, 18 years a volunteer fireman, recounted the fire drill incidents in which Capt. Stevenson was charged with laxity. While Engineer Benner was on the stand he studiously maintained to avoid looking in Stevenson's direction while the captain, seated a few feet from him, watched Benner closely. Benner was questioned on Stevenson's alleged failure to inspect the repaired fire truck and on the captain's missing his parade assignment Oct. 29.

On cross-examination Benner said he did not inform Stevenson the repaired truck was available for the inspection, stating that he "did not believe it would help to notify Stevenson when he could see it was within 15 feet of his office." Engineer Parry's testimony centered around the manner in which Stevenson managed to avoid speaking to Benner.

**Wife Gives Testimony**

"Capt. Stevenson told me to tell Jake Benner to take the truck to the city garage for repairs," she said.

Because Mrs. Bertha M. Stevenson, wife of the fire captain, had another appointment Monday night, her testimony concerning Stevenson's appearance ("his nose and mouth were all bloody") after the fight with Benner was injected while the prosecution witnesses were being examined. She said she called Stroh at her husband's request and asked the director to come to their home. Mrs. Stevenson also stated that her husband was suffering from a headache Oct. 29 and he got to bed, leaving orders he was to be called in time to carry out his Factory Frolic parade assignment. She then was excused and left the room.

Stevenson opened his hour-long examination with his version of the fight with Benner in which he pictured the engineer as the aggressor. He asserted there was no conflict in arrange-

### Fleet Personnel Filing Tax Claims

Claims for veterans exemption on Los Angeles county assessment rules for 1939-40 now are being prepared for filing by more than 35,000 members of the Pacific coast fleet, who will leave about Jan. 15 on a cruise to Atlantic waters.

Veterans are entitled to an exemption of \$1,000 on their real and personal property, but must make a sworn affidavit that the property is assessed to them. Since the fleet is not due to return until the middle of the summer, the claims are to be filed before the fleet leaves.

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ment of fire drills as alleged by Moser as Engineer Roy Winters was in direct charge of the practice. He said he was off shift Oct. 29 and that his sons, Harold and Lawrence, forgot to call him at 2 o'clock that afternoon for his parade duty.

**Captain Denies Charges**

"I apologized to Stroh afterwards and he didn't say anything," Stevenson said and pointed out that in all the years—since 1922—he has been a member of the fire department "he has never been reprimanded. Under a grueling cross-examination by Attorney Cross and all three members of the trial board, the fire captain categorically denied any lack of cooperation or neglect of duty.

Cross stressed the fact that he did not inspect the fire truck. Asked by Chairman Bishop about how he received his demotion to captain from fire chief when Stroh was placed in charge, Stevenson said he was "satisfied" and never questioned Stroh's authority.

After a brief recess shortly before 11 o'clock, Capt. G. M. Calder, who also took a demotion when Stroh was named head of the two public safety departments, testified that he halted the Stevenson-Benner fight in short order merely by telling them to stop.

**Case Under Advisement**

Engineer Gordon Northington was examined about the parade event and receiving a phone call from Harold Stevenson to the effect that he forgot to awaken "Pop" in time. "Like testimony was introduced in substantiation of the boys' forgetfulness by Harold and Lawrence Stevenson. There was no rebuttal from the prosecution but both attorneys—Shidder and Cross—made

## SOLONS MAP COUNTY AID

Possible savings to Los Angeles county taxpayers of thousands of dollars each year was seen this week by Supervisor Roger Jessup in a virtual agreement with many of the county's assemblymen to back a bill which will relieve the county of some of the cost of the Los Angeles Municipal courts.

More than half of the county's 30 assemblymen and State Senator-elect Robert W. Kenny met with Jessup, Supervisors Gordon McDonough, Oscar Hauge and W. A. Smith, County Counsel J. H. O'Connor and Chief Administrative Officer Wayne Allen, to discuss the legislative proposal which the county will sponsor in the legislature next month.

All agreed, Jessup said, that the state should bear a larger part of the burden of old age and indigent relief, leaving the county to the actual administration of the funds.

**Family Has In-Law Club**

ADA, O. (U.P.)—In-laws of the John F. Staley family found they liked each other so well that they formed an "in-law" club.

Although Mexico offers good fishing, the sport is not popular, so the government has established a new national office to promote it.

lengthy statements to the trial board and at 11:08 Chairman Bishop adjourned the hearing with the statement that the board would take the case under advisement.

## Graduate Studies Being Planned at Narbonne High

Recognizing the fact that many people, graduates of Narbonne high school, will for various reasons not attend universities or Junior Colleges and yet find in their search for employment a need for further instruction, the Lomita school plans to offer three advanced classes for graduates.

"These graduates need not be from the 1938 or 1939 classes only—we want any member of past graduating classes to avail themselves of any or all of these opportunities," Principal John Abbott said. "The special classes will be from different fields.

"In Industrial Arts we plan on offering a class in advanced metal work with special emphasis upon welding and lathe work. In the Commercial field we will offer a class designed fundamentally to assist persons in efficiently managing a small business of their own as so many graduates do. This course will include fundamentals involved in purchasing, credit, advertising, merchandising, accounting and civic participation.

"In the field of Agriculture we plan to present fundamentals of soil analysis, chemistry of fertilization and produce marketing. In addition to these three classes, which are especially for graduate students, all of our upper grade regular work will be open to students who wish to avail themselves of it. We hope that by this arrangement we will be of increased value to the community," Abbott said.

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