

CLUES SCARCE IN MART KIDNAP-ROBBERY

Steelworkers Circulate Petitions In Effort To Break 24-Day Old Columbia Deadlock



ROBBERY CLUES . . . Det. Sgt. Percy Bennett shows Officer John Maestri the tire tracks and a footprint (arrow) left by gangsters who kidnapped a market clerk, robbed the safe, and left the victim tied and gagged in a muddy field Sunday night. Bennett linked the deal to other grocery mart holdups. (Herald photo).

Thugs Waylay Clerk, Take Day's Receipts

A meager description of one man, some muddy footprints and fourteen feet of tire impressions are the slim clues which Torrance detectives hope will aid them to round up two gangsters who kidnapped a Safeway store clerk, forced him to reveal a safe combination, and then left him gagged and tied in a swampy field while they made off with an undetermined amount of cash.

Ernest S. Cloward, 26508 President Ave., Harbor City, told night, a well dressed bandit stuck a pistol in his face and ordered him into the auto.

A second hoodlum appeared, and the two forced Cloward to drive to a secluded muddy field on Carson St. near Greenwood Ave. Here they made him reveal the combination of store safes.

One gangster left, but soon returned, stating that he could not get into the metal cash box. All three returned to the store, where Cloward was made to aid them in opening the safe.

Walking through busy streets, the pair marched the clerk back to his car, and they sped out to the Carson St. scene. They bound Cloward, tossed his auto keys into the bushes, and fled.

The victim told Bennett that he was not able to free himself for nearly an hour. Although a home is located some 150 feet from the boggy area, residents said they heard no commotion.

Detectives carefully measured and photographed footprints and tire tracks found off of Carson St. Bennett said the method of operation was similar to that used in the recent robberies of Lomita and Manhattan Beach markets.

Cloward described one man as being in his late 30's, about 5 ft. 10 in. tall, weighing 160 pounds and was dressed in a brown suit. The gangsters made the clerk refrain from looking at them.

The incident also recalled the notorious "Green Scarf" bandit who kidnapped store managers and forced them to shell out company's daily receipts. He was stopped by a deputy sheriff's bullets in La Crescenta, and is now being held on 20 felony counts.

TORRANCE HERALD

38th YEAR—No. 5 TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1952 PHONE TORRANCE 444 24 PAGES

Deal Made for Factory

DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT TAKES OPTION ON ALCOA PLANT

Petitioners Seek To Halt Shutdown

At least 12 petitions were in circulation among the steelworkers yesterday urging the 1250 Columbia workers to return to work.

This was the second attempt by petition to end the work stoppage, which is now 24 days old.

"We believe we are, or should be, big enough to settle our own affairs. After three weeks of no work and nothing in sight as to a settlement, it has simmered down to a 'save face' set-up," read the petition.

Although the petition urged a return to work movement, the controversy over the firing of two laborers on Jan. 7 still appeared to be hopelessly deadlocked yesterday.

Vic Teer, president of Local 1414 of the United Steelworkers of America, told this writer at the union hall yesterday noon that the issue was still stale mated.

"We have had a communication from Murphy of the Wage Stabilization Board to the effect that he had considered both sides of the issue and believed we were right. He said he was going to tell the management of his belief," Teer said.

Company officials in Los Angeles stated that they had received no such communication. For what reason the Wage Stabilization Board was called in on the matter apparently was puzzling the steel officials in Los Angeles.

"There is no dispute concerning wages," they stated. Meanwhile, one of the two men fired more than three weeks ago has found another job and the other has joined the service, it was reported.

The authors of the petitions currently being circulated among the idle workers were having their second try at getting the mill operating again.

A week ago last Monday a mass meeting of the union was called when a petition was alleged to have been produced asking for a secret "back-to-work" vote.

The call for the vote was cancelled when all but one of the signers was persuaded to remove their names from the petition.

Wordage of the 12 petitions reported in circulation left little doubt as to the author's intentions.

"If we have made a mistake and used 'hair-trigger' methods why don't we be big enough to admit the mistake and follow the guide (our contract) to settle this thing as it should be," they stated.

City officials, who claim that the town will receive approximately \$60,000 per year more in revenue from the state and county if the population exceeds the 30,000 mark, urged the counting because they felt the 1950 figure of 22,241 was way outdated.

You Can Save \$\$\$ By Getting Auto Tabs Now

You've got only until next Monday, Feb. 4, to get those auto license tabs for 1952, the Department of Motor Vehicles warned again this week for the umpteenth time.

Department officials reminded motorists that the tabs may be obtained at the Motor Vehicle office, certain banks, the California Highway Patrol office or may be obtained by mailing the "white slip" to Sacramento with a money order or a cashier's check to cover the fee.

"And when you get them, please put them on your car," one official pleaded.

Retail Clerks Contract Near Settlement

Threats of a strike of retail clerks which would tie up a large per cent of the stores in Torrance, Lomita and other Harbor Area cities appeared to be canceled slightly yesterday when both union and merchant spokesmen said most of the issues had been settled.

Haskell Tidwell, secretary of the Retail Clerks Union Local 905, said agreement on a new contract was "a matter of routine."

Frank S. Selover, executive secretary of the Harbor Area Employers Council, bargaining agent for the merchants, said that demands of the clerks' union that stores agree to open at 9 a.m. for an 8-hour day or pay penalty pay of time and one-half after 6 p.m. was one of the principal issues holding up settlement of the agreement.

A mass meeting of merchants has been called for 7:30 this evening to discuss the contract. The Mercantile Agreement now in effect expires tonight. The new contract, if signed, will take effect Feb. 3.

Tidwell's statement yesterday that he thought an agreement would be reached today removed the strike threat to some extent. He said the new contract called for raises of approximately \$3

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Will Lease Plant When Need Arises

Douglas Aircraft Company this week took an option to lease the former 800,000-square-foot Alcoa plant at 190th St. and Normandie Ave., it was disclosed this week.

F. W. Conant, senior vice-president of Douglas Aircraft, told the Herald that his company would exercise the option to lease the plant "if we feel we require added manufacturing area in performance of defense obligations."

In announcing the transaction Alden J. Roach, president of the Columbia-Geneva Steel Division of U. S. Steel, said that company plans for which the 200-acre manufacturing tract was acquired had been altered.

The plant, built during World War II by the government and operated by Alcoa, one of the nation's leading aluminum manufacturers, was acquired by Columbia in 1948 from the War Assets Administration.

Purchase of the plant by Columbia was made with the thought of converting it into a cold rolling mill, officials announced at the time.

Confirmation this week of the transaction supports earlier reports in the Torrance Herald that the aircraft company was negotiating for the plant with the view of eventually employing 5000 persons here.

Announcement this week by the Navy of the new Douglas XA3D atom bomber was construed by some as the source of unconfirmed reports that operations of considerable magnitude would be set up here by Douglas.

Unveiling of the new atom bomber on a TV show in Washington set aircraft circles buzzing. The new plane has yet to undergo tests, officials declared.

Other negotiations which have been under way during the past few weeks have not reached the announcement stage, the Herald was told by reliable sources yesterday.

One transaction involving the proposed \$30,000,000 expansion of the Harvey Machine Co. was still "in the dealing stage" yesterday. Announcement within the next 10 days is expected in the development.

Meanwhile, construction of a new \$500,000 distillation unit for increased production of aviation gasoline at General Petroleum has been started. The new unit, first reported in the Torrance Herald on November 29, is one which was built late in the war for Russia. Shipment of the unit to the USSR was canceled in 1945, officials said.

Foundations for the addition are being laid south of the cooling tower on the GP property near Crenshaw Blvd. here. This unit is in addition to the \$9,000,000 TCR unit proposed for the refinery.

Bloodmobile Due March 3

Plans for a return visit of the American Red Cross Bloodmobile were being made here this week by members of the Torrance Branch of the Red Cross.

Mrs. Clifford Easley, blood recruitment chairman, said the mobile blood unit would visit Torrance from 3 until 8 p.m. on Monday, March 3. Appointments can now be made by calling Torrance 3447 or by registering at 1754 Torrance Boulevard.

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Five Patrolmen Added to Force

Five new patrolmen will be added to the Torrance Police roster tomorrow morning, Chief John Stroh said yesterday. They were selected from among 9 who will complete a special training class tomorrow evening.

New officers will be Hughy B. Ingram, 2122 1/2 Arington; James P. O'Toole, 2208-B Cabrillo; William C. Shaner, 723-B Sartori; Eugene J. Erbetta, 2607 Arlington; and Donnie H. Cook, 703-A Sartori.

Each will serve a six-month probationary term. They were hired to supplement the current staff of law enforcers, and to replace several who have resigned in the last few months.

Won't Hit 30,000?

Nose Count Nears Half-Done Mark

Census officials taking a special count of noses here are 45 per cent finished. Kenneth G. Spiker, Federal Census Bureau official, announced yesterday. A 30-man field crew started to work on the project late last week, with hopes of showing that Torrance's population has soared to over 30,000.

But Spiker said yesterday afternoon that he is doubtful if the poll will show 30,000 inhabitants.

"From past experience and the way the reports are coming in, I do not expect the population figure to exceed 28,000," he told the Herald. "We are making every effort to see that no citizen is missed in this report."



"... OR HIGH WATER ..." Census Enumerator Samuel V. Rauss, 708 Acacia Ave., here, mans the oars. The nose counters took to the water yesterday to quiz Clarence C. Graves Blvd. area. The Graves live there, Mrs. Elch was visiting. (Herald photo by Dick Friend).