

REYNOLDS KNIGHT

Post-War Boom in Building in West, Southwest Leveling Off

Income statistics seem to show that the west, southwest, and south, which led the country in the great postwar boom, are slowing down to the same expansion rate as the older sections of the United States. Things aren't always what they seem, even in statistics. Perhaps the boom is still going on, with non-booming activities merely subtracting from the apparent advances.

There's no question, for example, that the airplane industry in California is still booming, with payrolls up 18 per cent from 1952 to 1953. However, the Pacific Coast's great agricultural income fell off a little in 1953. That makes it look as if the boom were faltering. Actually, the rise and the fall affect different groups.

Similarly, the Southwest's great petro-chemical industry has more operating jobs and higher payrolls. Construction dollars are fewer, however, and the price fall of cattle and farm crops makes total state figures look not-so-good.

In the South, with some exceptions, Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and Alabama, benefiting from paper, iron and chemical development, continue to outdo the national average. Other Southern states, dependent on coal mining, textiles and cotton, lag behind.

The whole country keeps increasing its income from year to year, so that the once-favored areas aren't really crying the blues.

PUBLIC DECIDES—Every year someone writes the obituary of the building boom, and every year the people make the prophecy ridiculous. This year, once more, promises to surpass all previous years, with a probably new record for total construction of \$36 billion.

Mainstay of construction has been housing, which continues to attain new highs as buyers' desires move more and more toward quality rather than mere shelter.

In addition, the 79 per cent of American families who live in homes built before 1945 are engaged in extensive home modernization.

Home owners, for example, are demanding top grade materials such as clay tile in bathrooms and kitchens; streamlined plumbing, seasoned lumber and safety-fast wiring. Homes are more spacious. Three bedrooms replace two; there are one-and-a-half or two clay-tiled bathrooms instead of one; kitchens are larger and of more workable design.

The ordinary people have had more faith than the experts—and they have been right.

THINGS TO COME—Three sizes of steel garages have entered the do-it-yourself market. All you need is a wrench, a screw-driver, a hammer, and \$400 to \$600. Sheets of gold leaf, which can be written onto any flat surface to personalize it as a gift, will be available for Christmas. . . . A lot of two dozen hardwood blocks and lengths of threaded steel shafting make a table lamp in any of a score of designs. . . . An industrial ladder maker has branched into a folding platform home ladder, suitable for washing ceilings.

FINANCIAL FAVORITE—Factoring continues to gain favor as a form of commercial financing, not only in the textile and related industries, but in dozens of others including furniture,

Fire Truck Just For Kids Sought

Have you ever wanted to go for a ride on a fire engine? If you're like one Torrance man, chances are you've shared the same desire.

George Tebbetts, 2413 W. 171st St., is a collector and rebuilder of old automobiles. And he has spotted Torrance's antiquated 1926 ladder truck now parked next to the headquarters of the fire station.

Tebbetts asked a few questions, found that the city plans to dispose of the old truck, because a new one is on order.

Rides for Kids

"Just the thing for the kids," Tebbetts said. "If some organization in town could buy it, they could use it for parade, and drive it around to the parks where the kids could ride on a real fire truck."

Tebbetts, an aircraft engineer, is a member of the Classic Car Club of Southern California. He has contacted various service clubs and other civic groups, and presented his idea.

"Purchase the truck from the city to keep for certain special occasions," he told them. "Because of the age and model of the truck, it probably will rank among famous ancient pieces of equipment some day. Why not let the kids, and the grown-ups for that matter, get some use out of it?"

Tebbetts said he would consider purchasing the truck himself, despite the fact that he's

Nurses Will Open Office In Torrance

The Visiting Nurse Assn., a Community Chest-sponsored agency, will extend its services to the Harbor area early in November, with an office in Torrance.

A non-profit organization, the VNA was organized in 1940 to provide bedside nursing care for the sick in their homes. It also teaches the family how to care for the patient, supervises care, and aids in prevention of disease through health, hygiene and sanitation education.

The Harbor Area Welfare Planning Council has been working for some time to bring the service into this area. Torrance representatives on the council are Dr. Benjamin Cogan, of the City Health Office, and George W. Evans.

Active service by the VNA is expected by Dec. 1, according to Mrs. Ralph P. Cousins, president of the VNA Board.

LUMBER VOLUME

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