

By RALPH R. GOMPERTZ
Remember your civics teacher talking about "democracy," "the balance of power" and "the check-and-balance system?"
Remember Thomas Jefferson's warning: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely?"
In a democracy we are always trying to maintain a good check-and-balance system.
Sometimes, however, rival bodies disagree. Sometimes those disagreements are of such basic nature that the two bodies challenge each other's authority.
That is what has happened in Torrance between the Civil Service Board and the City Council.
As a result, none of the city's 350 employees know what their status would be if they should ever have to appeal to the Civil

Service Board regarding their job.
Is the Civil Service Board's ruling final or can the City Council overrule the board? That is the question.
This issue was brought to a head two years ago when the Civil Service Board voted for temporary suspension and loss of pay of Building Inspector James Dresser and his assistant, Cecil Smith (since deceased). The council, however, overruled the board and fired the two men.
The case was taken to court. The court ruled in favor of Dresser and Smith on a technicality—namely, that the council may only overrule the board according to the present law when heads of departments are involved. The city has decided

to settle with Dresser and Smith for \$10,000 and \$5000, respectively.
As long as the two bodies agree on actions to be taken there is no controversy, of course. But if they disagree, as was the case in this instance, what then? Whose authority should be final?
The previous council, which dismissed the Civil Service Board as a hearing board following the above episode (dismissal was never official, though) obviously felt that the final authority should rest with the council. How the present council feels is not clear yet.
Reasons for the above attitude are several.
Direct Responsibility
The council is directly elected by the people and is held di-

rectly responsible for everything that happens in city government. The council thus feels that it should be able to right all wrongs directly and as soon as they are called to the council's attention.
Therefore, if one of the commissions like the Civil Service Board, makes a decision which the council considers wrong, some councilmen believe that the council should have the final say in the matter.
They point to other commissions such as the airport commission, planning commission, and recreation commission whose decisions are subject to the approval of the council.
The present Civil Service law gives the council the right to overrule the board by a 4/5 vote. This, some councilmen

believe, is protection against the council's misuse of power since it is difficult to get a 4/5 vote on as serious a matter as overruling a Civil Service Commission.
Opposing Attitude
Gordon Mothersell, chairman of the Civil Service Commission, firmly believes that the board, rather than the council, should have the final word in Civil Service matters.
"The majority of the Civil Service board members feel that the board's decision should be final," Mothersell said. "If an employee wishes to appeal the board's decision, his next step should be the civil courts."
The idea behind this arrangement is that an appointing power should not also

serve in the capacity of an appealing power. Employees should be protected from politics.
While the council would not have direct control over the board's decisions, it would still have direct control over the individual commissioners who could be removed by a 4/5 vote of the council.
"I found that Long Beach uses this system," Mothersell explained, "and I understand that other cities use it, especially in the midwest and the east."
Voters Should Decide
Regarding a streamlined Civil Service ordinance which has been kicking around for the last two years without ever coming up for action, Mothersell said: "Such an ordinance should go on the ballot. We as the commission, the employees and the citizens want it there—then

each council can't come along and make changes. In the majority of cases (in other cities) it is voted on by the people."
A check with county sources showed that cities seemed to be pretty evenly divided on this issue. Some cities place the final authority with the council, others with the Civil Service Board.
The Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission has the final word in civil service matters, it was explained, and the Board of Supervisors cannot overrule that decision. However, the supervisors can appoint and dismiss commissioners.
Employees may appeal the commission's decision by taking it to court.
What is going to happen in Torrance? The decision is not an easy one. It is a classic study in the balance of power.

L. Christian Appointed to ECC Post
Leo M. Christian has been named assistant to Marl F. Sloan in the office of student personnel at El Camino College, President Forrest G. Murdock announced this week. He will be in charge of registration and records.
A former counselor, the new assistant director is a resident of Torrance, where he makes his home with his wife Harriet and two children, Neil and Jean. Christian joined the El Camino faculty in 1952 as an instructor in agriculture.

15 Added to Staff Faculty At El Camino

A total of 15 new instructors will join the El Camino College division in humanities this fall, announced Dr. William H. Harless, director of instruction.
Two instructors were named to teach foreign languages during the coming year. They are Frank E. Belsler of Manhattan Beach who will teach Spanish and French and Seymour Travers of Los Angeles who will teach French.
Judson A. Grenier of San Marino will teach photography, journalism and English.
Seven instructors have been employed to teach English. They are: Mrs. Sydney B. Klissner, Edward E. O'Neill and Edward H. Jones of Long Beach, Robert L. Schultz of Redondo Beach, Joseph M. Collier of Oxnard, Eugene J. Kerstiens of Torrance and Harold Wennstrom of Los Angeles.
Five will join the department of Willis W. Weber, assistant director of instruction. They are Veve E. Wilson of Los Angeles who will teach secretarial subjects, Fredrye R. Darby of Los Angeles who will teach business law and economics, Joseph E. Gadden of Hawthorne will teach art, James J. Gualtieri of Placerville will instruct in business education and Christ L. Mijelsen of Inglewood who will teach music.

Hardy Boy Scouts Trek 65 Miles

None the worse for wear, but a great deal wiser about the ways of the woodsman and the mountaineer, 26 hardy Boy Scouts of Troop 753 are back in their North Torrance homes after a gruelling 65-mile hike through the Los Angeles National Forest and up the rugged slopes of majestic Mt. Baden-Powell.
The lads, who carried packs all the way, weighing from 25 to 40 pounds, and subsisted partially on dehydrated foods, GI style, were under the leadership of Scoutmaster Milton Huber, who said these boys were fine examples of the modern Boy Scout.
"There were few complaints, even when the going got rough," said Huber. "Much of it was hot, dusty, and ruggedly uphill, but they made it without a whimper, and I'm mighty proud of them, and congratulate their parents on having such fine boys."
The Troop remained on the march from June 30 to July 7, hiking every day on mountain trails, cooking their own food, and sleeping under the stars. All were bronzed and hardy, although a bit tired, when they were greeted by their parents at Jackson Lake, Verdugo Pines Camp, at the end of the march.
Each of the boys will be credited with the Silver Moccasins award, for higher rank in the Scouts, and merit badge purposes.
Scoutmaster Huber performed an emergency operation for snake bite on one of the boys, who was able to continue the march. The lad believed he had been struck by a rattler, and his right leg showed evidence of it, the scoutmaster reported.

150 CHILDREN ATTEND PARTY

More than 150 boys and girls attended a special party last Friday, July 20, on the 223rd St. School playground, marking the first summer playground program of the school.
A thirty-minute movie started off the party, followed by "group singing," a dramatic play entitled "The Magic Ring," two treasure hunts, folk dancing and refreshments. The refreshments were served by 15 mothers who have been helping with the playground activities. The mothers were led by Mrs. Willis Albaugh, Mrs. Lew Broatch and Mrs. Jack Cameron. Don Heath, teacher at the school, is the summer director of the playground.

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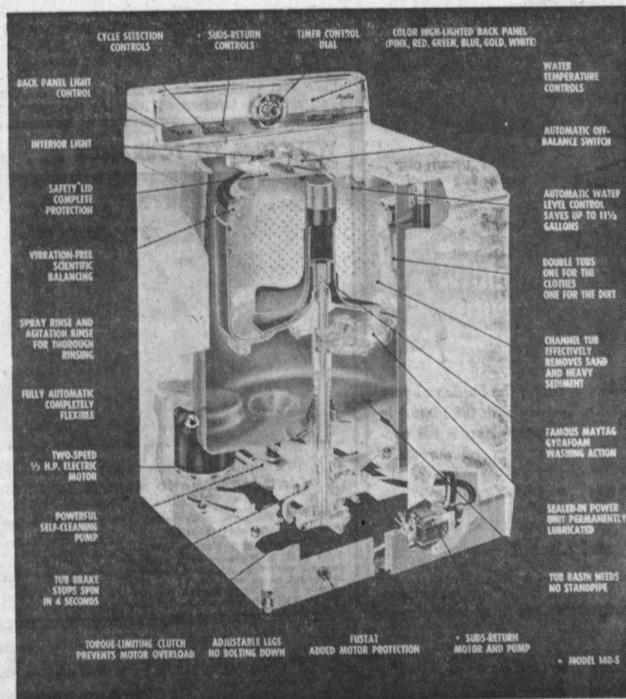
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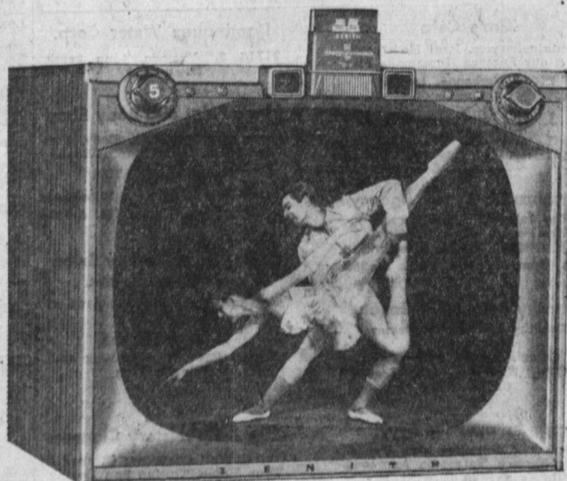
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