

Tax Assessor * Defended by Chamber

In a statement calling for public trust in the competence of the county assessor's office, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce this week voiced concern that continued abuse of Assessor Quinn can only hamper the ability of his office to function in an impartial man-

Acting upon a recommenda-tion of the state and local government committee, the chamber board of directors expressed a vote of confidence in the assessor's integrity, stressing that Quinn's office is not responsible for the high taxes currently under fire by the various citizens' committees.

In the fact of the current tax uproar being directed against the county assessor, the chamber statement termed as "misdirected," the efforts of taxpayer groups that have organized with the avowed intention of seeking Quinn's recall.

"The spending programs adopted by local governing bodies are alone responsible for the increase in ad valorem taxes, and every effort should be made to clarify this fact," said Chamber President Charles E. Ducommun.

"Efforts being made to retaliate against the assessor are misguided attempts to resolve the problem, and responsible community organizations should continue to emphasize this fact." he said.

"Acts of intimidation aimed at the assessor's office can do nothing but harm," the chamber president declared. "Over the years, the county assessor's office has earned a good reputation for an objective and fair assessment of property

Ducommun asserted that businesses have been able to locate here knowing they would neither be granted tax favors nor incur punishment in the assessment of their property.

"The assessor has a constitutional and statutory duty to assess all property in relation to his opinion of market value," he added. "Nothing could be worse than to intimidate an assessor so that he is afraid to take the necessary steps to make a proper assessment for fear of being subjected to political retaliation."

Urging the board of directors to act upon the committee recommendation, Chairman James L. Beebe said the present furor over the ad valorem tax bills is a healthy sign and may, if continued and properly directed, have a salutary effect upon the 1958-59 budgets of local govern-ment in this area.

More Snarks To Be Built

AT Northrop

Northrop Aircraft, Inc., has received a letter of intent from the Air Force for the production of more than \$70,000,000 in additional Snark SM-62 intercontinental guided missiles and related equipment, President Whitley C. Collins told shareholders attending the corporation's annual meeting at the Northrop Division offices.

At the letter of intent stage, the price is yet to be determined before a contract is signed. The company received its first Snark production contract, in the amount of \$73.000.-000, last summer.

"This letter of intent follows the historic flight on October 31 in which the Snark demonstrated unprecedented accuracy by delivering a simulated hydrogen warhead on a target 5000 miles from its launching site in Florida," Collins commented. Since that time, on December 6, he added, a second Snark has duplicated the feat, traveling 5000 miles to strike its target. The company president also

announced that earnings for the first quarter of the 1958 fiscal year were materially higher than for the like period a year

ago. "The increased earning ratio reflects improved cost controls and the realization of profits in sub - contracting operations,' Collins said.

HALF IN MISSILES Backlog as of October 31, 1957 was \$196,000,000, not including the pending additional Snark work. This compared with \$216,000,000, as of July 31, 1957 and \$251,000,000, at October 31, 1956.

Approximately half the company's present and projected business is in missiles, he said. The company will be able to maintain its present production schedules under the government's recently defined policy of reimbursement of costs on cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts, Northrop's president indicated. Northrop's sub - contracting program include major portions of the Boeing Airplane Com-pany's KC-135 and 707 aircraft, and the McDonnell Aircraft Corportion's Voodoo 101 fighter and F4H fighter. Approximately 30 per cent of Northrop's present effort is being expended on sub-contract work and present sub-contract business extends into 1959, Collins asserted.