

Press-Herald

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Re-Elect Vincent Thomas

When San Pedro's Vincent Thomas was elected to the Assembly by a three-to-one margin in 1940, it was a portent of events to come. He has been re-elected an even dozen times to the office and now is asking voters of the 68th Assembly District to elect him to his 14th term.

A ranking Assemblyman and Democrat in Sacramento, Mr. Thomas has proved many times in the quarter of a century in office that he has the ability and energy to get things done for his constituents. His direct intercessions on behalf of Wilmington, Torrance, San Pedro, and other areas in his district have won him the grateful thanks of officials and residents on many occasions.

His ability to get things done has been demonstrated by the early completion of the Harbor Freeway, the construction and operation of the bridge bearing his name connecting the mainland to Terminal Island, and in literally hundreds of other projects of vital local importance.

Mr. Thomas has demonstrated amply that he is an able representative of the 68th Assembly District and richly deserves to be re-elected by voters of the district on Nov. 8.

Townsend for Assembly

Torrance—the tenth largest city in California and the third in Los Angeles County—stands an odds-on chance of having a resident represent a portion of it in Sacramento as the result of the Nov. 8 general elections.

Lawrence E. (Larry) Townsend, who lives in North Torrance, is the Democratic nominee in the normally Democratic 67th Assembly District and barring an upset should take the nod of the voters. There is no incumbent in the race.

The Press-Herald believes Mr. Townsend is ably qualified to represent the 67th District in Sacramento. He is member of and has served as chairman of the city's Civil Service Commission; he is active in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, a member of the Public Personnel Association, and a member of community and fraternal groups.

We believe the election of Mr. Townsend on Nov. 8 would add significantly to the representation for this important area in the state legislature.

Public Gains an Ally

The right of the public to know what its courts and law enforcement officials are doing received a strong endorsement this week by a man who wants to be California's chief law enforcement officer.

Spencer Williams, Republican candidate for Attorney General, issued a strong statement defending the right of the public—and the right of newspapers to tell the public—in matters relating to law enforcement.

"Some solutions to this dilemma of Free Press vs. Free Trial have been taken in the form of proposed legislation and mandatory restraints. These I oppose," Williams said.

The great danger in restricting the right of the public to have pretrial information on arrests is that the rights of innocent persons arrested would be seriously infringed upon. "The detailed publicity of an arrest is in itself a protection against fraudulent charges or high-handed tactics," he said.

Mr. Williams is to be commended for his forthright stand against star-chamber justice which appears to be the goal of some powerful segments of the legal and judicial professions.

It would seem to indicate that Mr. Williams offers Californians a chance to select a high ranking official whose interest runs with the public.

It's worth remembering on election day.

Opinions of Others

It's a sad day in the history of the United States when Congress must consider legislation to prohibit American citizens from lending aid and support to enemies of our country. It has been established that various groups have contributed blood and money to the Viet Cong to help the communists in their war against American fighting men in Viet Nam. Many Americans have always thought there is already a law covering treason. There are supposed to be means of dealing with American citizens who lend aid and comfort to enemies of the country in time of war. And if this is not a time of war, it will be difficult to convince veterans of Viet Nam that the conflict there is not war.—*Foley (Ala.) Onlooker*

Kentucky citizens are taking quickly to the concept of mail-order law enforcement, Kentucky State Police report. Post Office Box No. 10, Frankfort, Ky., is an address used by State Police since last December to which citizens may report crimes and remain anonymous. Since that time 140 letters have been received . . . thirteen arrests resulted from the first fifty letters. Charges have been placed for such crimes as murder, arson, and alcoholic beverage violation.—*Benton (Ky.) Tribune-Democrat*

It is becoming crystal clear now that too many decisions in government, business, homes, schools, and even in religious circles are being made today with more regard for what will turn out to be popular than for what we know to be right.—*Bentleyville (Pa.) Courier*

The average person will believe anything you tell him if you whisper it.—*George B. Bowra in the Aztec (N. Mex.) Independent Review*.

Here He Is, Your Honor-



New Tax Assessment Law Trims Chances for Fraud

BY CHARLES E. CHAPEL
Assemblyman 46th District

The major tax-assessment reform law enacted earlier this year by the Legislature actually took effect on Oct. 6. I was one of several authors of this law. What happened was this:

Several of us who have been members of the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation for many years introduced separate bills regarding tax-assessment practices and then merged our several bills into one.

In addition to being a member of the Assembly "Tax" Committee, I also have been a member of the sub-committee on assessment practices, established to examine the practice and procedures of the county tax-assessors of California.

Although it was beyond the scope of our authority to look for evidence of crimes, there was nothing to prevent the Attorney General of the State and various district attorneys from using the facts we unearthed.

One feature of the new law is that the taxpayer can more easily learn how and why his property was assessed by a county tax assessor. Another advantage of the new law is it reduces the possibility of dishonest work by the various county tax assessors and their deputies.

I use the word "reduces" advisedly. The Congress of the United States and the legislatures of the several states never have found any way to eliminate crime by passing laws. All we can do is to make it difficult for anyone to commit a crime without getting caught, and even this type of legislation is not thief-proof.

Under the new law county tax assessors and their deputies cannot hold any other job in a county, and they cannot perform any outside work which may conflict with their official duties.

The records and reports of county tax assessors now

must be made available to all law-enforcement agencies. This serves a double purpose. It tends to keep the county tax assessors honest and it also enables law-enforcement people to catch and convict people who are operating criminal activities under the cloak of legitimate business.

Businesses and industries having movable property worth fifty thousand dollars or more must be examined at least every four years to make certain that the property statements

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they submit to county tax assessors are not at variance with their own accounting systems.

The California State Board of Equalization is now required to examine the records of each county tax assessor at least once in each six-year period to make certain that the assessments of property are accurate and that one property is not assessed lower or higher than property of equal quality and quantity.

Between now and the year 1971, all county tax assessors must assess all property at not less than 20 per cent of fair market value and not more than 25 per cent of fair market value. Incidentally, a cash value means the same thing as fair market value. Furthermore, each county tax assessor must publicly announce the ratio he uses. For example, Philip E. Watson, Assessor of Los Angeles County, long ago announced publicly that he assesses all real property at twenty-five per cent of fair market value.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 1971, all county tax assessors in California must assess all property for tax purposes at twenty-five per cent of fair market value. The reason that the new law does not require this uniform assessment is that the new law does not require this uniform assessment.

The war in Viet Nam has taken a dramatic turn—or perhaps, I should say a turn to the dramatic. The Army has installed its first TV broadcasting station. Channel 11 will beam from Mt. Vung Phu directly to the fox-holes.

GI's will have to supply their own beer, but the networks will furnish "Bonanza" and "The Beverly Hillbillies" at no charge. This is a marked improvement over combat conditions during both World War II and the Korean War, during which our men had to travel in a movie or a traveling USO show.

But, of course, every advance in warfare brings its troubles. Daddy, what did you do in the war? I was a TV repairman on a hot front.

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