

Freeway Jammed, Air Smoggy-Now Mayor, Council at It Tooth and Nail

By DIAL TORGERSON
Of the Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles, beset with freeway traffic you frequently can out-walk and smog so thick you can hide a city in it, has just what it doesn't need: A new problem.

Things are in an uproar at city hall.

Some say the mayor has given the city council 80 days to get out. The council has its own plans for the mayor: something along the lines of annihilation.

Voters, watching key legislation founder among the epithets, are trying to puzzle out answers to questions like these: Do shadowy figures lurk in city hall corridors?

Are there mysterious slush funds?

Who makes money because householders have to sort and store old tin cans for a month at a time?

It's a classic case of a mayor vs. the city council.

On one side is handsome, aggressive Samuel W. Yorty, 33, not yet halfway through his first four-year term.

On the other side is the city council—14 men, 1 young woman. Its cliques shift membership like kids playing touch football, but the majority alignment seems to agree on one alignment: anti-Yorty. Municipal offices are non-partisan. The breakdown in relations

has its basis in the city charter. It gives the mayor few powers, the council many. Yorty is determined to be a strong mayor.

People are getting shouting mad. One councilman, Karl Bundberg, called Yorty "the most pompous man I have ever met in my life."

And Bundberg used to be a Yorty friend. What changed him?

"Rubbish," said Yorty at a recent news conference. "He changed suddenly after the rubbish matter came up."

Rundberg hinted the mayor was a fringe paranoid. Said Yorty of his former supporter: "He's a bit erratic and unstable. He may be back on my

side tomorrow."

For the first time anyone can recall, a Los Angeles mayor is going to the voters to campaign for city council candidates who will back him in the council.

The council says Yorty wants to boss a Tammany Hall-type machine so he can run the city. Council members hint at ulterior motives and mutter darkly about a recall action against Yorty.

Yorty and his backers describe the struggle as a sort of morality play—good government against bad government—in which the mayor is in the right. Yorty cites the garbage problem: "Because the city gave a pri-

vate firm a contract to pick up tin cans, the cans are only picked up once a month—and the housewives have to wash out the cans and store them until the pick-up day.

"The small amount the company pays the city for salvaging the cans isn't worth the inconvenience to the housewives. I favor a weekly combined trash pickup.

"This contract—which was voted by the council before I came into office—is to expire in June. The can company is lobbying with the council to get it to continue the contract. The council was hoping to make a quiet vote on it and renew the contract when I turned the

spotlight on them."

The mayor's talk of lobbyists' shadowy figures in city hall also infuriated the council members. Rosalind Weiner Wyman—who was called "the world's cutest councilman" when she was elected 10 years ago at 22—challenged Yorty to a lobbyist count.

He gets three times more lobbyists than the council does," she said. "Because of the number of lobbyists going into Yorty's office, he can raise a slush fund the likes of which will never be equaled."

The mayor says that oil, real estate, hotel, railroads and lumber lobbies actively woo city council members, keeping

the body from taking responsible action on many important issues.

He advocates rewriting the city charter to give some council responsibilities to the executive department.

He also wants to make council membership a part-time occupation, attracting "civic leaders instead of paid, professional politicians." The councilmen are paid \$12,000 a year—full time. (The mayor makes \$25,000. He's full time, too.)

When Yorty began to make Doomsday plans for his council members, they dropped a blockbuster of their own.

Two council seats were va-

lated when members were elected to Congress. The council agreed to leave them vacant until the April 2 primary.

Then, in an action which even caught a couple of councilmen by surprise, they voted to fill the two jobs with interim appointees. One is the first Negro to sit on the council. The other is a fire captain.

This gives Yorty an uphill fight in his battle to change the council membership. But he's a man who obviously isn't afraid of a fight.

"I'm not worried about a recall movement," he said. "As long as I can appeal to the people, I have nothing to fear."

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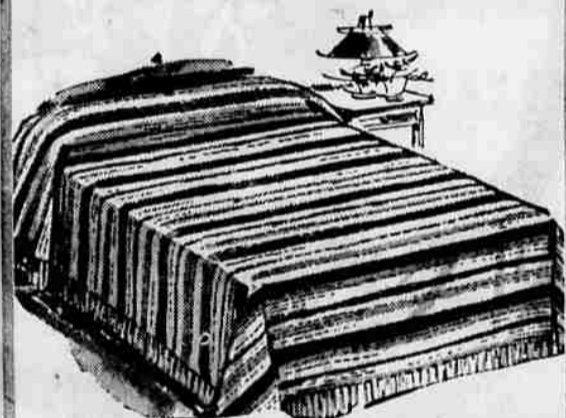


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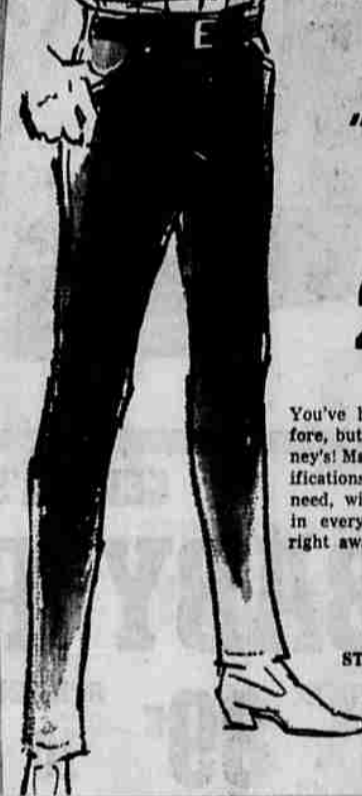


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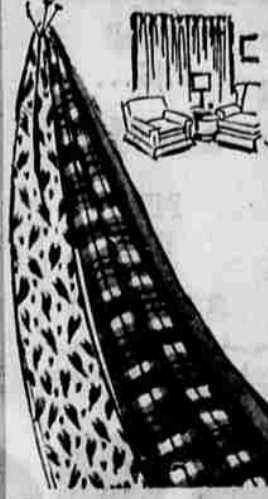


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