



DIGEST

Around and About

A COMMITTEE of five prominent citizens has given registrar-recorder Ray Lee's office a clean bill of health in its conduct of computerized elections, which began two years ago. Pomona industrialist Charles Horne, chairman of the election security committee, reported to the Board of Supervisors last Tuesday (March 3) that the committee's seven-month investigation had found "no evidence to indicate that fraud has been attempted or perpetrated" and that "while computer rigging is technically possible, chances of it are extremely remote . . . Fraud would not be possible without collusion among several persons having access to computers and programs." The committee recommended, however, that the registrar-recorder doubly insure security by placing tight physical control over the computer equipment just before elections and by making post-election rechecks of random samples of ballots.

THE MORE than 6,000 employees who signed up for health insurance during the January open enrollment will find their first premium deducted

(Continued on page 2)

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Volume 3 Number 5

A SWEEPING SICK-CARE PROGRAM

THE BOARD of Supervisors has given its preliminary blessing to a far-ranging plan to create a new County department of health services, which would treat the sick in a Countywide network of neighborhood health centers and hospitals.

The new department would absorb the present departments of hospitals, health and mental health.

Dr. Franz Bauer, dean of the USC school of medicine and chairman of the committee of 21 medical leaders and County officials who prepared the plan after a 2½ year study, submitted the group's recommendations to the Supervisors Feb. 24. The Supervisors voted unanimously "to approve in principle the recommendations of the committee; to instruct the directors of hospitals and mental health and the health officer and other involved department heads and the CAO to work with the three advisory commissions to the existing departments and with all community groups involved in health services to develop a plan and timetable for implementing these recommendations; and to make a progress report to the Board of Supervisors in four months."

The committee report said the County's health care now is "fragmented" and has "wasteful duplication of effort." It said a typical patient must decide for himself what type of care he requires: "The patient must choose between going to a local public health clinic for preventive type care or going to a County hospital for therapeutic care,

when in fact he may need both types of care. In either location the patient usually receives impersonal health care, rarely seeing the same physician or nurse upon repeated visits. There are almost no effective, organized systems linking the County health centers in a logical manner with the County hospitals."

The committee proposed a system in which most patients would be treated on a walk in-walk out basis at a County neighborhood health center. If necessary, the doctor could send the patient to an outpatient clinic at a nearby hospital for more specialized tests and diagnosis. Only a small fraction of the patients would enter the hospitals as bed patients.

The committee envisioned an eventual pattern of 10 to 20 health care areas in the county, each with two to five neighborhood health centers associated with a general hospital, either County-run or private. (The health department now operates 51 district health centers and subcenters.)

The committee urged starting the proposed system in southeast Los Angeles and other areas where unmet health needs are greatest.

The report also recommended that "the many existing fragmented home care programs should be integrated with this system to keep patients from unnecessary admission to high cost hospital beds."

COST. The committee concluded that the new system could be fi-

(Continued on page 4)

Around and About

(Continued from page 1)

from their paycheck next Tuesday (March 10). Gunther Durnalski, employee benefits manager, advises enrollees to check the pay stub to be sure the proper deduction is being made. The Blue Cross "high option" plan will have a paycheck code of "09" with a deduction of \$1.50 for employee-only coverage, \$15.30 for including one dependent, and \$18 with two or more dependents. The deduction for Blue Cross "low option" plan, coded "08", will be 40 cents for employees only, \$11.75 with one dependent, and \$14.25 with two or more dependents. Enrollees with Blue Shield (coded "44") will find \$6.15 deducted for employee-only coverage, \$17.95 for including one dependent, and \$21.90 with two or more dependents. Deductions for Ross-Loos (coded "19") will be \$6.87 for employee only, \$21.79 with one dependent, and \$30.19 with two or more dependents. The Kaiser plan (coded "10") will have deductions of \$3.70 for employees only, \$15.40 with one dependent, and \$25.50 with two or more dependents. The coverage goes into effect April 1.

A PERSON buying fresh meat, fish or poultry runs about one chance in three of being shortweighted—or so it would appear from a report in the latest issue of *The Balance* published by the department of weights and measures. The department's inspectors bought both prepackaged items and those sold over the counter, and discovered short weight in more than 32 per cent of them. Inspectors blamed most of the violations on "butchers' thumbs" and inadequate allowance for shrinkage and evaporation in the display case.

HUGE JOB STUDY ON ITS WAY

FOR THE past three months, a task force of four County personnel specialists has been toiling away in a back office on the Hall of Administration fifth floor, preparing for a massive classification and evaluation study that eventually will cover every job held by the County's 68,000 employees.

The last time an overall classification study took place was in 1939 when the County payroll totaled fewer than 16,000. Since then, while the work force was doubling and doubling again, the limited staff of the personnel department classification division has been able to reclassify jobs only on a spot basis. "As a result," director of personnel Gordon Nesvig said, "some County jobs have not been adequately studied in many years."

Nesvig said his newly created Survey and Evaluation Division, headed by Lou Cornell, expects to analyze each job by considering such general factors as skills required, responsibility and working conditions.

Cornell said his staff will go into the working departments to develop the actual factors and their weights for use in evaluating specific jobs. He said committees of departmental personnel also will take part in ranking and evaluating jobs.

"We're not going to sit in our ivory tower and turn out an evaluation plan by the book," Cornell said. "We intend to utilize the expert knowledge of the people who really know the jobs best."

The process will include asking each employee to fill out a questionnaire describing his job.

Cornell said it appears the County may end up with as many as seven separate evaluation plans. His present guess is there will be separate plans for engineers, architects and allied employees; a second plan for firemen, sheriffs, guards, life-guards and others in public safety; a third plan for clerical employees; a fourth for doctors, nurses, medical technicians, attendants, and allied classes; a fifth for skilled and unskilled laborers and craftsmen; a sixth for social workers, probation officers, accountants, appraisers, administrative analysts and others in staff and professional services; and a seventh plan for department heads and their chief deputies.

Cornell said his unit will begin its study with the engineers-architects group, then move on to the other categories, one by one. He estimated his task force will need three years to finish analyzing every County position.

Peace Officers to Give It Another Go

Some 3,400 deputy sheriffs, investigators and criminalists in the sheriff's and district attorney's departments will have a second try at choosing an organization to represent them in pay-and-working-conditions negotiations with County management.

The 3,400 will receive hand-delivered ballots with their April 10 paychecks and will have until April 24 to return them to registrar-recorder Ray Lee's office. The ballot will offer a yes-or-no choice on whether Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers association should be the negotiating representative.

The employee relations commission (ERCOM) ordered the election

after PPOA submitted signatures of support from more than half the 3,400.

In a December mail-in election among the same unit, PPOA outscored Los Angeles County Employees association 1,532 to 384 but the results were inconclusive because fewer than 60 percent of the unit members voted.

THE BOARD of Supervisors last Tuesday (March 3) ordered preparation of an ordinance granting an 11 percent pay increase to deputy sheriffs and firemen. The ordinance is scheduled to come up for Board

(Continued on page 4)

The Experts Look at the Charter

THE BOARD of Supervisors last summer asked the unpaid Citizens Economy and Efficiency committee to study what changes, if any, should be made in the County charter, especially as to the makeup and duties of the County's top management and of the Board itself. Since last October the committee has played host to seven county government experts from California and other parts of the nation. All seven speakers agreed on two points—that the County should have a strong chief executive with broad powers to hire and fire department heads, and that department heads should be exempt from civil service. The speakers made these other points:

BERNARD F. HILLENBRAND, executive director, National Association of Counties, Washington, D.C. (Oct. 9, 1969)—“I believe in having an elected legislative body or board, and an elected chief executive, a county mayor, who appoints the department heads. He also appoints a CAO to oversee all internal operations. . . . There has been a trend recently toward the elected county executive. Portland and Seattle are the most recent examples here in the West. . . . The county has an identity problem. That is one reason for having an elected county executive, a mayor. . . . The county will be the city of tomorrow. It will provide more and more municipal services.”

WILLIAM R. MACDOUGALL, general counsel and manager, County Supervisors' Association of California (Oct. 29)—“We are coming to the end of an era in which people were willing to pay for inefficiencies and duplication in county government. I am glad you are looking at your creaking old 1913 model of county government. . . . The idea of an elected county executive has little application to California. It is a step forward for other parts of the country which are 40 years behind California in county government and have corrupt, incompetent administrations. . . . Los Angeles County may be ready to move to a true county manager system, a manager appointed by the Board of Supervisors and serving at the Board's pleasure. . . . I also think L. A. County is ready for an agency system similar to the State of California's, with the fifty-some County departments divided into perhaps ten agencies, each with its own agency head or director.”

LOREN ENOCH, county executive, Ventura county, formerly chief of CAO's management division, L. A. County (Nov. 24)—“A county's chief executive should serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. The Board should be able to fire him by four-fifths vote. . . . I see no reason to elect the chief executive. He would just become a sixth Supervisor, probably in

conflict with the others most of the time. . . . When a man becomes a chief executive or a department head it should not be a lifetime job. He should serve on a contract for three or four years. And he should have more authority, more discretion in managing things like budget and personnel. . . . I recommend rotating administrators from department to department. People grow tired, lazy on a job. Challenge a man by moving him to a new challenge. . . . Take separate but related County departments, combine them, integrate their operations. . . . The number of Supervisors is not so important as reducing their burdens, their functions. Once an area's population has grown to the point where personal contact between the elected representative and his constituents is lost, the number of Supervisors does not make much difference.”

RICHARD R. ALBRECHT, Seattle attorney, chairman of the Board of Freeholders that wrote a new King county charter, approved by voters in November 1968, and JOHN SPELLMAN, first chief executive elected under the new charter (Nov. 12)—“Our old government under three county commissioners moved too slowly. It had a spoils system, no civil service. . . . We concluded we needed a strong executive, but a new charter proposed in 1952 providing for a county manager was defeated. So we provided for an executive elected countywide and nine county councilmen elected by districts. . . . The executive, with council approval, appoints a CAO to manage internal operations and the staff department heads report to him. Heads of the more politically sensitive line departments, like law enforcement, building, and planning-zoning, report to the chief executive. Councilmen may not give orders to department heads. . . . Department heads are outside civil service. Other employees are protected by civil service. . . . King County government is partisan in name but not too partisan in fact. The parties do not run the system.”

(Continued on page 4)

Experts Look at the Charter

(Continued from page 3)

M. D. TARSHES, county manager, San Mateo county (Dec. 10)—“In a situation like Los Angeles County with fifty-some departments and more than 100 advisory boards and commissions you can't expect effective communication and administration. . . . I'd recommend a system in which the Board of Supervisors would appoint a chief executive to serve indefinitely at the Board's pleasure. The chief executive would appoint five or six agency chiefs—finance, personnel, health, law enforcement, and so on—and each agency chief would appoint his department heads. . . . The voters would elect the district attorney and assessor, the Board of Supervisors would appoint the county counsel. There is no case at all for the sheriff to be elected, except tradition. . . . I prefer an appointed chief executive because an elected one is likely to become a bottleneck. An appoint-

SICK-CARE PLAN

(Continued from page 1)

nanced at present by using funds already in the hospitals, health and mental health departments' budgets. But the report conceded that the full health care program it envisages eventually would require additional money.

PATIENTS. The report said “there should be no financial eligibility limitation for receiving care. However, each patient should be required to pay the full cost of medical care rendered to the extent he is able.”

FIRST REACTION. Before the Board of Supervisors' vote Feb. 24, both County health officer Gerald Heidbreder and Dr. Harry Brickman, director of mental health, said they agreed with the committee's long-range goals, but Dr. Heidbreder said creating a new department of health services would be “premature,” and Dr. Brickman said such a reorganization would involve a risk that mental health services would lose effectiveness.

ed executive is more likely to have a good administrative organization. . . . A Board of Supervisors that is too big takes on the character and disadvantages of a legislature. Chances for wheel-spinning increase rapidly as we enlarge the Board. Five persons can be as responsive to the needs of the community as a larger number. . . . In our county, the mostly black community of East Palo Alto has an elected advisory council. The Board of Supervisors listens to them, and the people on the elected council show a real sense of responsibility. Using this device in L.A. would do more to improve communication between the Board of Supervisors and the community than would increasing the size of the Board.”

WILLIAM N. CASSELLA, Jr., executive director, National Municipal League, New York (Feb. 4, 1970)—“In light of your tradition, an appointed executive makes an enormous amount of sense. . . . He should be given very broad appointive and dismissal powers and not be subject constantly to obtaining the advice and consent of the governing body. . . . In selecting his deputies and department heads, he should be able to appoint anyone whom he believes competent to do the job. . . . Anybody, no matter what the system, needs a corps of subordinates who are in every way his men. There are grave risks of important department heads playing off the governing body against the executive if both participate in the appointing process. . . . I reject categorically any suggestion that a county governing body should be very large elected from very small wards.”

The citizens efficiency and economy committee now has begun a series of public hearings, inviting spokesmen for Los Angeles organizations and communities to suggest what charter amendments, if any, should be submitted to the voters on next November's ballot.

EMPLOYEE UNITS

(Continued from page 2)

consideration next Tuesday (March 10).

Election plans are in a preliminary stage for five units of social workers, which were approved by the employee relations commission last Friday (Feb. 27) after months of hearings.

The units include a total of more than 7,000 employees in DPSS, mental health, hospitals, and the adoptions department.

The biggest unit consists of some 3,600 social workers, community workers, social service aides, homemakers, and others.

A unit of “social welfare investigators” includes approximately 1,700 eligibility workers, property services advisors, welfare investigators, and child support assistants.

In a “professional social workers” unit are some 700 medical caseworkers, medical social workers, child welfare workers, medical social work consultants, and casework assistants. The professionals in this group will have a chance to vote on whether they wish to belong to the same unit as the nonprofessionals.

A “psychiatric social workers” unit of 120 will include also mental health services coordinators and psychiatric social work consultants.

The “supervising social welfare employees” unit will be composed of more than 1,100 supervisors of the members of the other units. Professional classes among the supervisors also will have the opportunity to vote severance from the unit.

County of Los Angeles

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