

WHY ALL THE HURRY?

The City Council, as if in haste to get through a distasteful task, has passed an ordinance granting Alphonzo Bell and his influential friends the right to conduct a heavy industry in the city's finest residence section—an ordinance containing conditions which are officially declared to be probably invalid and passed in the face of charges from three separate sources that improper methods had been used to obtain votes for it. The rushing through of this ordinance in such a hurry is a slap in the face of public opinion and a defiance of public sentiment which the voters of the city ought not to forget. It has a strong flavor of the "public be damned" policy supposed to have been long ago discarded.

The City Attorney's opinion that the safeguards which the City Planning Commission tried to provide to prevent the Bell rock-grinding operations from being objectionable on every ground, instead of merely on almost every ground, cannot be enforced ought to have been enough to hold the matter up for further study—a little more delay could not make a serious difference where there has been so much already. When in addition the motives of Councilmen were impugned and an investigation demanded, the investigation should have been conducted before any action was taken. The most reasonable explanation of the situation is that some Councilmen did not care for such an investigation and if the Council finds the public accepting this explanation it will have only itself to blame.

To Mayor Porter, who is on record against industrial encroachment into residence zones, is thus given still more reason to veto the spot-zoning ordinance. He cannot well afford to attach his signature to legislation which violates sound principles to which he has expressed adherence, and which in addition smells bad. The people of Huntington Palisades have a right to expect that he will keep his campaign pledge to them, especially when the pledge was of a nature reflecting credit upon his good judgment and is and was heartily approved by the majority of the people of Los Angeles.

The whole cement plant project has been enveloped from the beginning in an atmosphere of bad faith and sharp practice. The very application for the permit was in violation of moral obligations to hundreds who had purchased homes in a neighborhood that apparently was completely protected by stringent restrictions as well as zoning laws. The majority of the City Planning Commission, which voted the permit, was able to give only the most lame and halting explanation of its action. The City Council has given none at all.

The Mayor has a splendid opportunity to show that he is not bossed or swayed by what may be improper influences; that he has no strings attached to him; that he honors his word publicly given. He can keep his and the city's hands clean of what may readily turn out to be a very nasty mess. There is at the very least an immense amount of dubiousness about this affair; he can give the public the benefit of the doubt with a veto.