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Homosexuals Again Dominate Session of City Commission

From Our City Bureau

Chief Edward M. Davis was accused by gay attorney Thomas Frank Coleman Thursday of using a personal lobbyist to represent him before city council committees.

The charge was made at a meeting of the State, County and Federal Affairs Committee at which police officers testified against bills before the committee.

According to Coleman, the Police Commission had not taken a position on the bills, which deal with sexual orientation and conduct. On April 24, Cmdr. Joe Gunn testified against Assembly Bill 633, sponsored by John F. Foran, D-San Francisco, which would make it an unlawful practice for any employer to discriminate against a person because of his sexual orientation.

Sgt. Glenn Souza, of the Los Angeles Police Department, testified the next day before the same committee against Senate Bill 514, by George R. Moscone, D-San Francisco, which would repeal Penal Code sections relative to lewd conduct violations that take place within public view, and loitering in public restrooms.

"I called the Police Commission," said Coleman, "and asked if the commission had formulated a policy on these matters. I learned that it had not. Therefore, these police officers do not represent the police commission, which is responsible for department policy on legislation."

Coleman added that the police officers were obviously representing the views of Chief Davis.

"I doubt if Davis has the power to send his own lobbyist," Coleman told the commission, "And I don't

think this is a technicality. These officers are engaged in an illegal act of lobbying, with an illegal use of taxpayers' funds.

"How do citizens take care of someone who defames others, and uses illegal lobbying? Davis should be instructed not to lobby, and procedures should be set up to improve communication between the Police Commission and the State, County, and Federal Affairs Committee."

Also appearing before the commission was Michael Manning, also gay, who repeated an earlier request that there be a liaison between the LAPD and the gay community. He also attacked what he called Davis's "unlawful statements, such as 'homosexuality is illegal.' We all know it is not; some acts that are considered homosexual acts are illegal, but the spirit and being of a gay person is not illegal."

Deputy Chief Vernon's controversial Dec. 19 memo on homosexuals also came up before the commission. Jeanne Barney, a "mother and heterosexual" as she termed herself, attacked Vernon's statement that 75-80 percent of the syphilis in the Los Angeles area can be attributed to homosexuals.

"I called the Board of Health," said Mrs. Barney, "and found that venereal diseases are not broken down into sexual orientation categories. . . . I resent Vernon and Davis using their offices as a platform for homophobia."

Police Commission member Salvador Montenegro answered the gays' charges, saying, "I assure you we are concerned, and are investigating. A liaison position in the department can be created, using a lieutenant."