

Public Penance for Pollution

WARNING, began the full-page advertisement in the Los Angeles *Times* last week. The ad explained that by the time anyone read it, two executives of American Caster Corp. would be in jail. The publicity was part of the punishment given the firm for burying 254 drums of toxic and flammable waste and dumping pollutants into Los Angeles sewers. The company also had to pay \$40,000 in fines and cleanup costs. The two jailed officials: President Carl De La Torre and Vice President Ramon Garroba.

American Caster, a furniture-equipment maker, was nabbed by the Los Angeles Toxic Waste Strike Force, a team formed of police, sheriff and sanitation and health officials. The unit has devised unusual penalties for big polluters. Among those caught was a Los Angeles franchise of Culligan International, which was found guilty of improper toxic-waste disposal. It had to supply free, bottled, purified water to several customers, and its president spent three months in jail and paid a \$100,000 fine. Confessional ads are the latest strike-force tactic. Says Barry Groveman, who directs the special unit: "An ad like that is worth a million prosecutions."

WARNING

THE ILLEGAL DISPOSAL OF
TOXIC WASTES WILL
RESULT IN JAIL.

**WE SHOULD KNOW
WE GOT CAUGHT!**