

Mr. Edward J. Hecker, Engineer of Surveys (cont'd)

of City Solicitor Charles C. Wallace, of November 1, 1926, Opinions of City Solicitor, Volume 28, page 8433) — By its terms, J. Vernon Campbell was commissioned to renumber the houses in Baltimore City. It was a special ordinance regulating the manner of the renumbering of all houses in the city. (See: Opinion of City Solicitor William Cabell Bruce, of July 18, 1907, Opinions of City Solicitor, Volume 7, page 2068) This ordinance defines "decimal system", and reads, in part:

"The contractor shall number the houses within the city according to the decimal system, viz., the point of commencement shall be at Charles Street going thence easterly or westerly, and the like point for renumeration thence northerly or southerly shall be Baltimore Street, that one hundred numbers shall be the proportion for each square and that each successive square shall have its enumeration to begin with an even hundred * * * and in all respects adherence to the decimal system shall be observed." (Underscoring supplied)

Ordinance No. 516, of 1948, employs language in every respect identical to that used in Ordinance No. 78, of 1886, in reference to the "decimal system", and we must assume that the City Council in the passage of Ordinance No. 516 intended that the term "decimal system" shall be given the same meaning it had when it was defined in Ordinance No. 78, of 1886; that is, that the "decimal system" insofar as it applies to the numbering of houses means merely that each successive square in the city running east or west from Charles Street and north or south from Baltimore Street shall begin with a separate even hundred classification. There are no other ordinances, statutes or opinions of this office which are of assistance in defining "decimal system", or making any reference to the use of fractions in designating addresses.

The power in the Bureau of Surveys to change existing house numbers under the terms of the Charter applies only when it is necessary "in order to correct mistakes and avoid confusion". It would appear that properties using the fractional designation are for the greater part in the older sections of the city, as for example, the address you referred to in your letter - 768 $\frac{1}{2}$ Washington Boulevard. From the plat which you enclosed with your letter, it would appear from the irregular shape of the lot designated as 768 $\frac{1}{2}$ Washington Boulevard that the improvements on this property were made after the adjoining properties had been constructed and had been assigned numbers. The instances where fractional designations are used have, no doubt, been in use for a long