

# Public Officials Demand Tighter Fire Safety Measures in Schools

By United Press International  
Public officials throughout the nation today demanded more stringent fire safety measures to prevent school fires similar to that which

claimed 90 lives in Chicago Monday.  
Chicago's most tragic school fire, which killed 87 children between the ages of 9 and 15, and three Roman Catholic

nuns, spurred immediate investigations in most large cities.  
The Our Lady of the Angels tragedy also laid bare in many areas the recurring

crises in schools—lack of money to build new ones and the tendency to go soft on safety measures during fair weather.  
"It takes a tragedy like this to wake people up," said Fire Chief Arnold W. Phillips of Indianapolis, Ind., when he was ordered to make a thorough check of all public, private and parochial schools.

**Eye Older Schools**  
In most areas, the biggest problem was the condition of the older and obsolete school buildings, emphasized by the fact that Chicago's fire broke out in a 40-year-old building which had one fire escape.

The example set by the Chicago fire threatened the closing of at least one school.  
In Sioux City, Iowa, an investigation was made of the 68-year-old Cathedral Parochial Grade School "with an eye to ordering the school closed as a fire hazard," according to Capt. Philip Kemish, head of the Fire Department Prevention Bureau.

In New York City, Fire Commissioner Edward F. Cavanaugh Jr. ordered an immediate basement-to-roof inspection of the city's 1,500 public, private and parochial schools.

New York Gov. Averell Harriman in Albany called for a complete review of recently completed fire inspection reports covering all private and parochial schools in the state.

**Order Fire Inspections**  
Immediate fire inspections of all schools also were ordered in Atlanta, Boston, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn.; Birmingham, Ala.; Indianapolis, Ind.; El Paso, Tex.; Milwaukee, and throughout Georgia.

In Boston, where one of the nation's most disastrous fires killed 493 persons at the Coconut Grove nightclub on Nov. 28, 1942, firemen were ordered to make particular checks of storage space for trash and inflammable materials.

Percy Bugbee, general manager of the National Fire Protective Association, also in

## Parents of Young Nun To Arrive At Death Scene

Chicago—Nuns at the convent of Our Lady of the Angels today awaited the arrival of the grieving parents of Sister Mary Clare Theresa, 27, youngest of the three nuns who perished in the tragic school fire.

"We can't give impressions of Sister Mary Clare Theresa because we are so sad and there were so many," one of the several nuns attending the wake of their three sisters said.

"Let us just say she was a wonderful young lady," Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Champagne of New Orleans, La., were expected to arrive at the grim death scene of their daughter and 89 other victims, two of them nuns and the rest children, some time early today.

**Tears Shed**  
An estimated 1,500 persons from throughout the city filed past the three black caskets adorned with small silver crucifixes in the convent Tuesday night. Several unsham-

edly shed tears as they gazed upon the caskets.  
Parents of several of the nuns were present. They joined with parishioners who knew the sisters, many newsmen and others who were apparently strangers just paying their respects.

Sister Adrienne, who had been delegated to direct the wake, quietly but pleasantly refused to comment. There was significance, however, to her refusal. Her expression of grief, and perhaps slight disapproval of publicity, were visible.

South America has more than four billion coffee trees, many of which stem from a single plant smuggled across the Atlantic in 1723 by a French naval officer.

**Replace Older Schools**  
Safety Director Louis Rosenberg of Pittsburgh and other safety officials from the Steel City were to travel to Chicago Thursday to learn more about the cause of the Our Lady of the Angels fire.

Pittsburgh voters in 1953 rejected a referendum proposal which would have financed gradual replacement of obsolete buildings.

Although hundreds of new schools have been erected across the nation in recent years, construction of many has also been turned down by voters in bond issue elections.

The fire brought new demands for replacement of old schools throughout the South and the Southwest, and the concern of parents, school and fire officials was expected to result in tightening of fire safety measures.

## 'Blunder' of Leaving Doors Open Added To Fire Death Toll

Boston—The tragic death toll in the Chicago school fire was caused chiefly by the "simple blunder" of leaving doors open, the National Fire Protection Association said Tuesday night.

Two staff engineers of the association, which is the authoritative source of fire safety standards and information, had been sent to Our Lady of Angels parochial school to investigate.

Percy Bugbee, general manager of the organization which has its headquarters here, said the fire experts found that heavy doors on a second floor landing were left open, allowing fire and hot gasses to spread rapidly through the corridor serving six classrooms.

Nearly all of the 90 victims, 87 of them children, were in

these six classrooms.  
"The simple precaution of keeping these second floor landing doors closed would have kept the intense fire and hot gasses out . . . for many precious minutes," Bugbee said. "In all likelihood every classroom could have been emptied in time."

He said it was significant in the engineers' report that the fire did not enter the first floor because of a closed fire door.

The fire started in a mass of combustible trash and building materials at the basement level, the report said, with the originating cause not yet determined. The flames spread up the stairwell, were blocked at the first floor, and then flashed through the top level.

Bugbee added that "the one bit of comfort you can

start a wave of school inspections throughout the country and a tightening up of rules and regulations. So the long-term result will be a saving of human lives that otherwise might have been lost in fires like this one."



**OUT OF THE INFERNO**—A fireman carries the unconscious body of a boy from the Chicago parochial school where more than 80 children died when fire swept the 48-year-old building. The catastrophic fire burst out only half an hour before the students were to be sent home for the day.

## Virtuoso to make Medford Appearance



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**HIS BOY DEAD**—Grief-stricken father Phil Comparetto cries uncontrollably after identifying the body of his 14-year-old son at the Cook County morgue in Chicago. Comparetto's boy was one of eighty-some children who perished when fire swept through a Roman Catholic parochial school, only half an hour before the students were to have been released.

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