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TRIP TO EUROPE  
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Rent Chief Shogren says:—

# FIRE, HEALTH HAZARD NO BAR TO RENT HIKE



PICKET for traffic lights at Drexel-Oakland corner. Mrs. Phyllis Pildes, 850 E. 40th st., and Mrs. Bernadine Masser, 852 E. 40th st., of the Oakland Child Study Group get the signature of Mrs. Katherine Fowles (r), 4965 Drexel on petition addressed to Chicago Park Board and 2nd and 4th Ward aldermen.

Chicago's rent director admitted this week that his office would grant rent increases even to landlords whose tenements harbor fire and health hazards.

When a Standard reporter asked Norman B. Shogren, chief of the Chicago area rent office, if he considers it the job of his office to check on a landlord's compliance with the city's health and fire codes, Shogren answered flatly:

"No. We can't go into that."

As innumerable landlords of substandard tenements were handed a rent-boost bonanza, landlords were promised three weeks service on increase requests and they were advised by Shogren on the surest methods of clinching rent boosts.

The Standard presented Shogren with a list of sub-standard tenements on the Near North Side where rents have swelled after landlords carted in dilapidated assortments of furniture.

After checking into the list, Shogren reported back that the increases were "in order and to my satisfaction." (Photos of some of these apartments are on page 8.) He made one exception of a flagrant rent raise which he said an examiner would re-investigate.

"Service" Assures Boost

Shogren, an alumnus of his father's large real estate firm, brushed aside the decrepit state

of these flats, stating: "If a landlord adds a service, such as addition of furniture, we must allow increases. We don't penalize a landlord because he has a substandard house to begin with."

When James F. Driscoll, deputy building commissioner for Chicago, was asked if he knew of any case where building inspectors were consulted on compliance with city code standards before the federal rent office granted increases, Driscoll replied he knew of no such case.

Many Hikes Granted

Meantime, figures released by Shogren's office for the first 11 months of 1948 revealed that

any landlord who walks into the rent office has three chances out of four of walking out with a rent increase in his fist.

Of 21,015 petitions for boosts, 15, 823 were granted. The office had no figures handy to compare tenants' petitions against decreases or refunds arranged. Whether such figures are even tabulated could not be learned.

Shogren reported to apartment operators this week that over 167,000 rent hikes were granted by his office up to Nov. 1. This was by way of encouraging them to use his office rather than whacking tenants with illegal boosts.

## City to pay for probe of phone profit juggle

Chicago's City Council this week appropriated \$35,000 for investigation of the Illinois Bell Telephone Company's books but phone users were still uncertain that a \$34,000,000 a year increase had been averted.

Alderman Clarence P. Wagner (14th) announced the City Council action as the Illinois Commerce Commission moved back to Chicago to resume hearings on the rate case.

Corporation Counsel Benjamin Adamowski was to ask the Commission to defer any ruling until the study of the Company's books and rate structure had been completed. Wagner said it would take at least a month to finish the inquiry.

Whether the lame-duck ICC—appointed by ex-Governor Dwight Green—would comply with Adamowski's request was doubtful. The Commission had not even replied to an earlier motion by spokesmen for 31 Illinois communities asking that its own funds be used for the same kind of inquiry into the phone company books.

Still Uneasy

However, even if the delay was granted, phone users could still feel uneasy over the possibility that their Bell bills would go up an average of \$12 a year after the inquiry has been completed. There were two reasons for this uneasiness:

Alderman Wagner apparently has been designated by the City Council to oversee the inquiry as chairman of the utilities committee. He's the same Alderman Wagner who handled the same kind of inquiry into the Commonwealth Edison Company last year when that firm asked a re-

newal of its franchise — and Commonwealth got virtually everything it wanted, at the expense of the tax-payer and consumer.

The persistent refusal of Gov.-elect Adlai Stevenson to comment or intervene in the Telephone Company rate case left the impression that Stevenson may favor an increase. Stevenson will shortly appoint the members of the new Illinois Commerce Commission which goes into office in January.

Meantime, the Illinois Bell Telephone Co. was moving ahead in its attempt to obtain rate increases ranging from 33 to 60 percent in Lake and Porter counties, Indiana. The Lake County Citizens Welfare League protested the request, pointing out that Illinois Bell put \$15,000,000 into a depreciation fund last year when that fund had already pyramided to \$169,000,000.

## Power companies show profit hike

WASHINGTON (FP)—Privately owned electric utilities companies had a net income of nearly \$48 million in October, 1948, a boost of 5.3 percent over the net income figure of October 1947, the Federal Power Commission said this week.

## Chicagoans say Rights Bill OK—'Make it work'

By Bob Lucas

In Paris last Friday a historic document was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, but on 47th and South Parkway there are a few doubts about the Declaration on Human Rights.

A survey this week by The Standard revealed a feeling of hope mixed with scepticism among Southsiders. Most of those interviewed thought it was "a fine thing, but—"

Of the half dozen persons polled by The Standard few were familiar with the declaration and its 30 articles. One or two had heard about the human rights bill and the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in formulating it.

Perhaps the most articulate was Joe Johnson, author of an unpublished manuscript on lynching. Said Johnson, "The fact that this U.N. Bill of Human Rights is based on the bill submitted by the American delegation to the UN places a heavy moral responsibility of the United States government to see to it that the disparity between the declaration provisions and the anti-democratic practices in our country—segregation, discrimination, lynching and the propagation of racial prejudice—should be eliminated forthwith."

Article 16 and 25, which underline the rights of women throughout the world, most impressed Jean Govann of 362 E.

## Max Steinberg to appear here for report on Israel

Max Steinberg, secretary-treasurer of the American Jewish Labor Council, just back from a tour of the Middle East and Europe, will offer a "Report from the Israeli Battlefield" in Chicago, Wednesday, Dec. 22, at 8:00 p.m.

Steinberg will appear at the Jewish People's Institute, 3500 W. Douglas Blvd., under sponsorship of the American Jewish Labor Committee, whose Chicago division chairman, Abe Feinglass, will act as master of ceremonies for the meeting.

Among entertainers will be Cantor Benjamin Landsman and Concert Pianist Ruth Kaufman.

53rd St. The Declaration itself "is very nice," she said. "I only wish they were true, especially those two articles."

They Sound Good

Anna Redmon, 3426 Michigan Ave., commented: "All the articles sound good, but I'm afraid most people will merely glance at it and put it down."

The "right to work" article Number 23, which includes equal pay for equal work regardless of color or sex, caught her eye. "It's not like that over here, even at the plant where I work." She is employed by a large printing firm. "Actually, I don't think there is one of these articles the United States really practices," Miss Redmon added.

Businessman Amos White, 517 E. 63rd St., was more optimistic. He felt the adoption of the declaration would "make it better for all nations and all mankind, not only in the United States."

"Some of it is OK and it sounds reasonable," stated Joe Smith, 6200 Rhodes St. "But so many people don't have these rights. I think things would be much better if they were put into effect."

A veteran, who is attending

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