

Flash fires kill 39—Why?

By Rod :olmgren

Six Chicagoans — three of them children — lost their lives in an early morning fire last Saturday at 549-551 E. 44th Street.

The tragedy, bringing to 39 the number of tenement fire-deaths in recent weeks, dramatized almost criminal failure of two divisions in Chicago's city government to enforce provi-

sions of the city's municipal code.

Facts uncovered by the Illinois Standard indicate that in addition to the clear need for action against landlords of Chicago's several hundred firetrap tenements, the following agencies are wide open to charges of negligence contributing to Chicago's soaring fire-death rate:

● The license division of the Municipal Court, whose judges for years have failed to enforce

the health and fire safeguards of the code by levying a \$25-a-day fine against delinquent landlords until they correct violations.

● The Building Department, 24 of whose 51 inspectors are precinct captains or enjoy other kinds of political immunity.

There were almost 60 persons, including 21 children, crammed into the tiny corners of the 44th street building, a three-story structure that had been sub-di-

vided and then re-subdivided in recent years into 9 apartments.

Rev. Joseph Moore, assistant pastor of the Cleveland Baptist Church at 4508 St. Lawrence st., who resided in one of the basement flats and who was the first to discover the fire, told a Standard reporter he had reported the building's condition to the city building department a year ago.

The rear stairway was unsafe, with several steps missing, nar-

row casement and landings, and littered with garbage. The rear exit from the basement had not been used in many months, because it was blocked with debris.

Sections 48 to 54 and 60 to 63 in the Chicago Building Code provide that every home above the first floor must have two exits, stairways and doorways must be at least three feet wide, stairways and doorways must be kept clear, and dangerous or

Continued on page 7

Your
Fighting
News-weekly

THE ILLINOIS STANDARD

News
Features
Comment

Copyright, 1948, by The Illinois Progressive Publishing Company

VOL. 1, NO. 21

Published Weekly 618 CHICAGO, JANUARY 29, 1949

5 CENTS

CONSUMERS PAY STATE TAX: RICH RIDE FREE

By Bernie Asbel

The man who works for wages is paying the fare for a virtually free tax ride by million-dollar corporations in Illinois.

Inquiries by the ILLINOIS STANDARD into who pays for state government have just disclosed the following astounding facts:

● More than 75 cents of every state tax dollar comes from levies aimed at consumers.

● In one typical plant, Caterpillar Tractor Co., Peoria, annual sales taxes paid by all the workers is close to 20 times the tax bill paid direct to the state by their employer-company. Yet the company is known to have shown a profit of more than \$10 million last year.

The heaviest single chunk of state income, the direct sales tax, developed this week as the object of a political tug of war, as:

● Gov. Stevenson's new finance chief, George W. Mitchell disclosed plans to make the sales tax an even heavier levy. He lamented exemptions for barbering, tailoring, auto repairs, prescriptions, books, magazines, and others.

● The Progressive Party launched a downstate petition campaign to wipe out the sales tax and substitute a graduated income tax with high personal exemption to exclude the average wage earner.

That the great bulk of state income derives from the plain consumer is shown by state admission that 76½ cents of every tax dollar comes from: sales tax, motor fuel, motor licenses, cigarettes and old age benefit kickbacks from the Federal government after payroll deductions.

The sales tax itself brings in 36 percent of state funds. It was passed originally in 1933 as an emergency measure when the state was nearly bankrupt while faced with mass demands for unemployment relief.

During its first full year of operation, 1934, the sales tax pennies totaled \$38,609,000. Though the reason for

assets are within the state.

There, 16,000 workers each pay a minimum estimate of \$40 per year in sales taxes. This totals \$640,000 for all the workers in the plant.

In contrast with this \$640,000, the company pays an estimated \$34,000 franchise tax, the only levy made directly by the state against corporations. Nor do individual executives and stockholders pay any state tax for the large dividends they extract from the company.

Real estate taxes are paid to

Continued on page 8

Meet the National Guardian!

WITH great pleasure we introduce the National Guardian, the progressive weekly newspaper which has won so many thousands of friends in the few short months since it was born last fall.

Starting next week, the National Guardian is going to be YOUR newspaper.

The Guardian counts among its frequent contributors such authoritative writers and public figures as Elmer Benson, Norman Mailer, Henry Wallace, Dr. Frederick Schuman, Johannes Steel, Kumar Goshal, Paul Robeson, Earl Conrad, James Dugan, Max Werner, John Lardner, Clyde Miller, Anna Louise Strong, Ella Winter, as well as many correspondents abroad who write exclusively for the Guardian.

Edited by Cedric Belfrage, James Aronson and John T. McManus, the National Guardian features news the rest of the press refuses to print, such as bringing to national attention the long-censored story of six Negroes condemned to die in New Jersey for a crime they did not commit.

The Guardian is planning a series of regional editions, including a Midwest Edition. This means that in addition to the excellent national and international features regularly carried in the Guardian, Chicago and Illinois readers will also get coverage and analysis of news breaking in their own backyard.

Effective with this issue, the Illinois Standard is making way for the more complete coverage represented by the Guardian.

We are proud to announce completion of arrangements for the National Guardian to serve Standard subscribers for the rest of their subscription terms, taking into account the fact that Guardian subscriptions are \$4.00 a year, while Standard subs have been \$2.00.

So starting Monday, Feb. 7, you will receive the National Guardian, jam-packed with news and comment written by progressives for progressives, every week, unless you indicate otherwise.

We look upon this as a forward step toward unification of the progressive press into a single, hard-hitting "package." We know you join us in that conviction.



LEADS REPEAL FIGHT. Senator Claude Pepper (D. Fla.) has served notice that he will lead in the fight in the upper house for immediate repeal of the Taft-Hartley law and reenactment of the Wagner Act.

Washington trek to demand 'no more Jimcrow'

Illinois citizens will demand payoff on campaign promises to wipe out Jim Crow when they join in an historic national assembly in Washington Feb. 11-12.

With the active support of the Progressive Party an impressive list of local sponsors for the rally is being gathered for early announcement.

Initiated by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois and five other top Negro leaders, the mass demonstration for passage of federal civil rights legislation has an extremely broad sponsorship. Chairman of the preliminary meeting will be Dr. J. Finley Wilson, head of the Elks fraternal order.

Among the prominent persons endorsing the project are Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, Natl. Council of Negro Women; Deems Taylor, music critic; Lester Granger, Natl. Urban League.