

## **RS#12: Chairman's Report, Fire Prevention Committee**

Dr. George Martin Price, chairman of the Fire Prevention Investigating Committee, March 27, 1911.  
Following the fire, a committee was formed to inspect the condition of other factories in New York City.  
The following excerpt is from the chairman of this committee as he reports on other factories similar to the Triangle Shirtwaist factory two days after the tragic fire.

What was expected has happened. Those who knew of the flimsy fire protection in the loft buildings of New York long ago predicted just such a disaster as occurred in Washington Square. If however, this building were the only one of those unprotected against fire the situation would not be so terrible, but the fact is that there is hardly a large loft building in New York which is better protected against fire, or whether special care taken to safeguard the limbs and lives of operatives.

The Joint Board of Sanitary Control employed 8 inspectors... and the data gathered by these inspectors throws much light upon the adequacy of the fire-prevention facilities in most in most 1,243 shops inspected by the board.

- In 14 shops no fire escapes at all have been found.
- In 101 shops no drop ladders at all were found, or those found were placed out of reach.
- In 491 shops, or 40% of all shops inspected, there were no other exits in case of fire except one fire escape.
- In 28 shops the doors leading to halls and stairways were found locked during the day
- In 60 shops the halls were less than three feet wide.
- In 1,173 shops or 97.5% of all shops, the doors leading to halls were opened in instead of out as the law requires.

In a word, the investigation has shown that even with the low standards for fire protection as demanded at present by the labor laws, there are hundreds and thousands of violations in one industry alone.

When we consider the existing regulations about fire protection, we must admit that they are far inadequate and, indeed, a delusion and a sham.

There is no reason why the so-called fireproof buildings ... where such large numbers are working and women are massed, there is no reason why these should not be completed to provide fire escapes. Nor is there any reason why the shops which are required to have fire escapes should have one, no matter how many persons work therein. According to the present law, if a building is provided with one fire escape it answers the purpose of the law, whether ten persons or ten hundreds work thereat.