

# Tragedy Etched on Desks in Empty Room

## AT 2:42 P. M. FIREMEN BEGIN A GRIM BATTLE

### Equipment on Scene in Few Minutes

The first report of the fire at Our Lady of Angels school was telephoned to the fire department at 2:42 p. m. Monday, and nearby equipment was immediately dispatched.

Two minutes later, at 2:44 p. m., after receiving several other telephone calls, the fire alarm office pulled a box on the fire, which sent four engines, two trucks, one squad, two battalion chiefs, a division marshal, and a division patrol to the scene at 909 N. Avers av.

At 2:47 p. m., the battalion chief of the 18th district pulled a 2-11 alarm, calling in additional equipment.

#### 5-11 Alarm Sounded

At 2:55 p. m. a 5-11 alarm was sounded, bringing in 24 engines, seven trucks, five squads, nine ambulances, two light wagons, another division marshal, four pumpers, and two towers. It also called Fire Commissioner Robert Quinn to the fire.

The 5-11 alarm, the highest alarm which can be sounded outside of a special alarm, affected indirectly virtually every piece of fire fighting equipment in the city. Equipment from outlying barns moved in to take over fire stations whose equipment had been sent to the fire.

#### Police Send Squadrols

At 2:53 p. m., the police department dispatched 27 squadrols, which can double as ambulances, 23 three-wheel motorcycles, and 23 squad cars, together with approximately 100 policemen, to handle traffic.

Commissioner Quinn declared the fire officially out at 4:19 p. m. altho it had been brought under control some time before.

#### First to Arrive

Sixteen firemen under command of Chief Miles Devine of the 18th battalion were the first to arrive in response to the still alarm, with engine 85, truck 35, and squad 6.

Children had marched out of the lower floor and were lined up on Avers avenue and Iowa street, but children were crowding the windows on the second floor.

Eight ladders from truck 35 were run up, and two life nets were placed, one manned by Willard Martens and Walter Romanczak of truck 35 at the northeast corner of the building.

#### Some Miss Net

The children were so jammed together in the windows that it was impossible for them to jump one at a time. They jumped two or three at a time. Sometimes two would hit the life net at once. Others missed the net altogether and struck the ground.

The firemen agreed that the children were trapped on the second floor by what is known technically as a "hot



Debris covering charred desks in classroom of Our Lady of the Angels school. Collapsing roof battered this room.

[TRIBUNE Photos]



Mr. and Mrs. John Jajkowski near collapse in county morgue Monday night after being informed their son was one of school fire victims.



Nurse administering to Patricia Culp, who broke down in morgue when told her sister, Karen, had perished in blaze.



Louis R. Secco, 3922 Augusta blvd., being consoled by weeping nurse after he identified body of only child, Antoinette, 10, in morgue Monday night.



Phil Comparetto, still in working clothes, bemoaning loss of his son, another fire victim.

their net, and an equal number into a net held by members of squad 6.



Mrs. Lawrence J. Dunn, 3672 Grand av., near collapse in morgue upon learning son, Lawrence Jr., 10, perished in school blaze.



Father of Kenneth Kompanowski, another pupil who died, moving thru morgue in dazed condition.

smoke, heat, and flame caused when classroom doors and windows were opened, supply-  
unable to penetrate the heat in the second floor hall.  
Martens and Romanczak