

## COUNCIL WAITS FURTHER STUDY OF SLUM PLAN

Tract Annexed to Clear Way To Sewer: Analysis of Coal Buying Asked.

A majority of the members of City Council today indicated they will give the proposal for slum clearance in Indianapolis further study before taking any possible action.

Nathan Straus, U. S. Housing Authority Administrator, recently offered the City co-operation in slum clearance projects similar to Lockfield Gardens.

Five of the Councilmen—Joseph G. Wood, president; Ralph Moore, Republican; Herman O. Campbell, Republican; Albert O. Deluse, Democrat; and Ernest C. Ropkey, Democrat—said they would like to study the proposal before committing themselves.

### Two Quality Stand

Ollie A. Bach and P. B. Ransom, Democrats, said they favored further clearance "if it actually benefits those for whom it is intended."

Dr. Walter Hemphill, Republican, said he had no opinion on the matter at present.

President Wood said that he believed the housing question should be presented by Mayor Sullivan to some other City officials before he and other members of Council should take a definite stand.

Meanwhile, Council, under suspension of rules, passed an ordinance annexing Meridian-Kessler Terrace, containing 57 acres.

### Makes Sewer Possible

The annexed territory, bounded on the west by Illinois St., north by 61st St. and south and east by the Canal, will enable the City to build a \$100,000 sanitary sewer through Warleigh to Meridian St. and the Canal.

The new land is owned by Mrs. Alta G. Wheeler, A. H. Moore, former City Civil Engineer, who said he represented Mrs. Wheeler, told Council that only immediate annexation would make the sewer possible.

"It is possible for property to stand the assessment for the sewer only if it is built through WPA labor," he said. "We don't know how long the WPA will be available, but we do know that unless the City annexes this land, we will be tied up for months in litigation and postpone the building of the sewer at least a year."

### Area to Pay Cost

He said previous efforts to get the sewer through court proceedings had failed. City Engineer M. G. Johnson said the cost of the sewer would be assessed against the property which it is to serve.

The annexed area provides a bridge between the city proper and Warleigh. The sewer must pass through it to reach the Meridian Street to the sanitation plant. Mr. Moore said the development of the Wheeler property was contingent on the sewer.

An ordinance ratifying Works Board expenditures totaling \$100,000 was withheld pending a report from the Board on the frequency with which the City's coal purchases are analyzed.

The expenditures included \$72,000 worth of coal for the sanitation plant and were challenged by Councilman Campbell.

"I think you can buy the coal cheaper than what you're paying for it," he told Albert Losche, purchasing agent.

### Check on Testing Asked

Mr. Losche said the City was paying a total of \$244 a ton for the coal which, he said, was one and one-half inch washed screenings from the Deep Vein Coal Co. of Vigo County.

Mr. Campbell asserted that he had heard from certain parties that the City was paying too much for its coal and asked how often the City was testing it to make sure deliveries were meeting specifications.

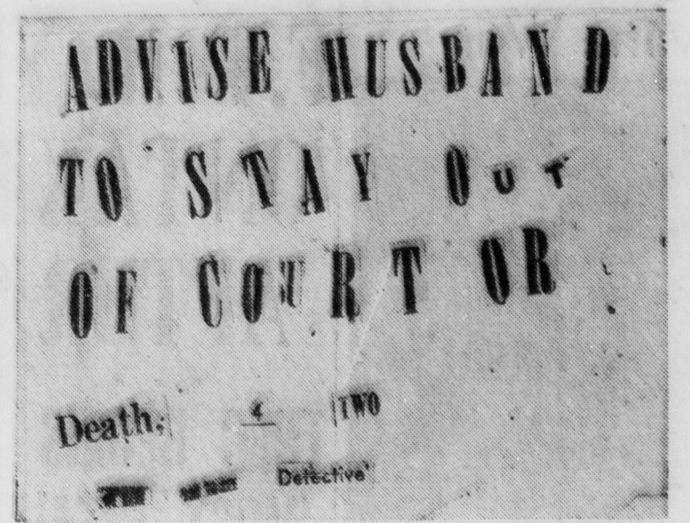
Mr. Losche said that all City purchases are tested by the City chemist and that coal is tested about once a month. President Wood asked Leo F. Welch, Works Board member, to check on the methods and frequency of testing coal.

An ordinance restraining gamblers from loitering in hotel lobbies was passed. Council also passed, under rules suspension, a revised measure to enable the Indianapolis Union and Big Four Railways to operate a cross-arm signal at a crossing between McCormick and Ohio Sts. and Richmond St. and Mile Ave.

Another measure to prohibit obstructions more than 44 inches high within 25 feet of a curb intersection was tabled.

## Upholsterer's Need for \$25 Loan Lifted Lid on Mass Murder Syndicate

Rejected Job as Executioner and Carried Fantastic Tale to Secret Service, Leading to Uncovering of Incredible Deaths—but Story Doesn't End There.



A copy of a letter threatening the wife of George Meyer after he had "informed" on the murder-for-profit conspirators.



Mrs. Stella Alfonsi, the widow of one of the arsenic ring victims.



Left to right: George Meyer was broke. Herman Petrillo offered him \$500 to "knock off" Ferdinand Alfonsi. Meyer declined, tipped off G-Men. Alfonsi later died on arsenic poisoning. So did a stepson of Mrs. Carina Favato. Then, up in Sing Sing, prisoner, John Cacopardo, revealed the existence of a vast insurance-murder ring—and said he had been offered the post of its chief executioner by Paul Petrillo, "witch doctor" cousin of Herman. Thus did light first break upon the grim, fantastic case.

### (First of Two Articles)

PHILADELPHIA, May 16 (NEA).—Philadelphia's phantasmagoria of poison-for-profit—already classed as the greatest mass-murder plot in American history, with the surface not even scratched—might still be undiscovered if a New Jersey upholsterer had not been in need of \$25.

In June, 1935, one George Meyer, cleaner and ex-convict, journeyed to Philadelphia to make a small "touch." He wound up at a party where he tried to borrow \$25 from one Herman Petrillo, a dark Italian with a Napoleonic head, a way with the ladies and an imposing police record.

Instead of the loan, Meyer got an offer from Petrillo of \$500 in good money or \$2500 in counterfeit to "knock off" an "old man" with a piece of lead pipe.

The victim was to be 83-year-old Ferdinand Alfonsi, a frightened ex-convict contractor who was unaware that his handsome wife, Stella, had \$4000 of insurance on his life.

### Refuses to Take Job

Meyer did not do the "job." He took a second guess and went to the Philadelphia branch of the U. S. Secret Service.

An agent was assigned to the case. He wormed himself into Petrillo's confidence by "agreeing" to kill Alfonsi, stalled the former until he bought counterfeit bills through him, then arranged to bring Alfonsi to a hospital.

Examination of Alfonsi's stomach showed he had enough arsenic in him to kill 12 men. Herman Petrillo and Mrs. Stella Alfonsi were arrested. A month later, Alfonsi lay dead of arsenic poisoning.

Instead of flowering into a bewildering gruesome tale, the story might have ended right there, for such murders are common enough. But—Mrs. Alfonsi arranged with one Mrs. Josephine Erichette to bury Ferdinand Alfonsi.

Funeral-directress Erichette studied Alfonsi's discolored features and remembered that Philip Ingrao, 18, whom she had buried that summer, looked like this. She went to the police. Philip Ingrao's body was exhumed and found to contain arsenic.

Detective-Lieut. Samuel Riccardi was assigned to the case. He discovered that Philip Ingrao, who earned only \$5 a week, had insurance policies totaling \$6500 on his life. And that Philip's stepmother, Mrs. Carina Favato, was the beneficiary of them all. It was also found that Mrs. Favato was a friend of Petrillo's.

### Husband Carried Insurance

Finally, it was learned that Mrs. Favato's dead common-law husband, Charles Ingrao, had carried about \$8000 insurance of which his wife was beneficiary, and that one Giuseppe di Martino, a friend of Mrs. Favato, had died suddenly after she had visited him while sick.

The bodies of both men, when exhumed, contained—arsenic. A grand jury indicted Mrs. Alfonsi, Mrs. Favato and Herman Petrillo for murder.

Again, the story might have ended there, with the trial and possible conviction of these three. But up in New York in Sing Sing Prison, a dark, wizened convict

named John Cacopardo repeated once more the fantastic story he had been trying to make people believe for two years. A Philadelphia official went to see Cacopardo, brought him back and produced a sensation.

For Cacopardo revealed that these were no isolated slayings. They were the work of a ring.

In 1936, Cacopardo testified, he had been offered a post as chief executioner for the ring, at \$500 per job for putting arsenic in people's drinks. The man who made the offer, he declared, was one Paul Petrillo, cousin of Herman, and a South Philadelphia tailor and "witch doctor."

On getting the offer, Cacopardo wrote to his Brooklyn sweetheart, Mollie Starace, and told her about it, for Paul Petrillo had once come between them. Paul Petrillo heard about the letter and went to Brooklyn.

Girl Slain in Scuffle  
Cacopardo, armed with a revolver, followed. They met in Mollie's house, quarreled, fought over the revolver. It was discharged, Mollie was killed. For that Cacopardo went to Sing Sing for 30 years. Petrillo was the chief witness against him.

Before his trial, Cacopardo had told his story to his lawyer. The lawyer laughed and said nobody would believe him. Now, when Cacopardo finally got his chance to reveal what he knew, a Brooklyn lawyer disclosed that Cacopardo had told him the same tale two years before. Paul Petrillo was indicted for murder.

Philadelphia's authorities now began to talk of incredible things. The ring, they said, had operated in three states, had garnered about \$100,000 insurance money, had killed 10 to 12 people.

But when the arsenic trials got under way all this began to look puny. For, as evidence piled up against her, Mrs. Carina Favato suddenly and dramatically stopped her own trial, confessed she killed her friend, husband and stepson, then let police into the secrets of the ring.

Herman Petrillo, who had been found guilty and faced the electric chair, admitted he had killed 12 people and was involved in nine other deaths, and revealed more about the ring.

The story they told was ghastly, unprecedented.

NEXT — The Murder-for-Profit Ring Spreads Its Tentacles.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF STATE CONVENTE

Many funeral directors are too slow in informing the layman of the methods, practices and ethics of their profession, John M. Fitzgerald, Terre Haute attorney, told members of the Indiana Funeral Directors Association today.

The Association opened its 59th annual convention at the State Fair Grounds. Sessions are to continue through Thursday.

The profession has an increasing need for publicity and public relations work to inform the public on its operation, Mr. Fitzgerald said.

Also scheduled to speak at today's session was Harry J. Gilligan of Cincinnati, secretary of the national organization, Morris H. Sleeth of Shelbyville, State Association president, was to give reports at the business session. A. J. Voight of Indianapolis is reception chairman.

## NEW BEER LAW TEST FILED IN SUPREME COURT

Klipsch Case Appealed as ABC Is Due to Issue Wholesale Permits

An appeal testing constitutionality of the new beer law amendments and the extent of the Alcoholic Beverage Commission's powers was on file in the Indiana Supreme Court today.

The action was filed by Omer Klipsch of Petersburg, whose application for a beer wholesaler's permit was denied by the Commission two months ago. The Marion County Superior Court recently upheld the Commission's right to deny the application on economic grounds.

Meanwhile, the Commission was scheduled to issue the first beer wholesale permits today under the new amendments. The Commission started deliberations on 22 applications that have been on file since the Legislature removed the limit on the number of dealers in each county two months ago.

Three Make Application  
Yesterday three more applications for wholesale permits were filed by Fred C. Whitehouse of Columbus, Marion Lynn and Ray Bedwell of Linton and the Superior Products Co. of Lafayette. Senator Walter Vermillion (D. Anderson) is among the original 22 applicants for permits.

The Commission denied Mr. Klipsch's application for a permit less than a week after the Legislature adjourned. Members said it was turned down because "there were enough dealers in that territory to handle all the beer business."

Designed as a test case from the start, the Commission's action was appealed by Mr. Klipsch to the Marion County Superior Court as provided under the new 1939 amendments.

Writ Is Denied  
The Commission and Harcourt Scales, representing beer wholesalers, sought to stop the appeal but the Supreme Court denied the writ.

The Supreme Court at that time did not rule on any constitutional phase of the new beer amendments. In ruling upon Mr. Klipsch's new appeal, the high court will decide any question of validity regarding the Commission's powers under the law.

HYLAND ASSUMES INDIANA FIRE POST  
Patrick Hyland today assumed his duties as new State fire inspector, succeeding Joseph Scherer, who resigned recently to accept the fire chief post at Hammond. Mr. Hyland has been deputy inspector for several years.

## Hillis Criticizes Frogs at Monument

Conduct of the New Deal and Indiana Democrats was criticized by Glen R. Hillis, Kokomo attorney, last night at a meeting of the Irvington Republican Club.

Mr. Hillis also criticized Governor Townsend for allowing the state entrants in the frog jumping derby to be kept in the pool at the Monument.

"They took this beautiful, memory—clothed symbol of a State's reverent respect for nation-saving heroes, one of the nation's great architectural and artistic masterpieces, and made it—a frog pond," Mr. Hillis said.

Referring to a speech made by Fred Bays, the new Democratic state chairman, Mr. Hillis said:

"I was interested in that portion of his talk in which he said that the Democrats should 'close ranks' and fight the opposition." If the Democrats really "closed ranks" the New Dealers would be squeezed out where they belong—back in the Socialist Party—and I think that process is well under way right now."

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