

Conflicting Views

"The neglect of factory owners in the matter of safety of their employees is absolutely criminal. One man whom I advised to install a fire drill replied to me: 'Let 'em burn. They're a lot of cattle, anyway.'"

Mr. H.F.J. Porter

"The Asch Building fire started with the Fire Department. The Fire Department says, "Our records are all right; everything we ordered was complied with." The Building Department says, "Our records are all right." The Health Department says, "Our records are all right." The Police Department have not got through investigating yet, and I don't think they ever will and nobody is responsible. There are just as many factories in New York in the same condition as the Asch Building was and probably is today."

Edward F. Croker former NYC Fire Chief 1911

"Well, the shafting under the machine tables was not guarded...They had no dressing rooms for the girls, that is, that complied with the law, and the lights in the halls were inadequate...They didn't unlock the door at all...18 inches-That is an adequate space for people not in a hurry."

A. G. I. Harmon Labor Dept. inspector 1911

"I found the fire-escape on the rear of the building, which was the only one, and was entirely. Too small and too light, and the iron shutters on the outside of the building when opened would have obstructed the egress of the people passing between the stairway and the platform...inadequate for the number of people employed in that building. "

Former Fire Marshall William L. Beers 1911

"Harris and Blanck, the Triangle Company, have offered to pay one week's wages to the families of the dead girls--as though it were summer and they are giving them a vacation!The day after they (Harris and Blanck) were installed in their new quarters, the Building Department of New York City discovered that 9-11 University Place was not even fireproof, and that the firm had already blocked the exit to the one fire escape by two rows of sewing machines."

Martha Bensley Bruere 1911

"The regular work pays about \$6 a week and the girls have to be at their machines at 7 o'clock in the morning and they stay at them until 8 o'clock at night, with just one-half hour for lunch in that time. Whenever we tear or damage any of the goods we sew on, we are charged for the piece and sometimes for a whole yard of the material. At the beginning of every slow season, \$2 is deducted from our salaries. We have never been able to find out what this is for."

Clara Lemlich 1909