

BIDAULT FOUND IN W. GERMANY

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Eye Study of School Fire-Escape Needs

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(Newsday Photo by Lyons)

FIRE VICTIMS. Nurses at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital, East Patchogue, attend students injured in fire that swept Bellport Junior-Senior High School Friday. Some who suffered smoke poisoning are in oxygen tents, but all are recovering. Fourteen of the 37 persons hos-

pitalized by the fire were released over the week end. As faulty wiring was blamed for the fire, Suffolk County Executive Dennison said he might order countywide survey to determine if schools have adequate fire-escape facilities. (Story, other photos on Page 3.)

Capital Punishment: Right or Wrong?

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Eye Study of School Fire-Escape Needs

By Robert Uris and Maurice Swift

Bellport — Suffolk County Executive Dennison said yesterday that he may order a countywide survey to determine if schools have adequate fire-escape facilities. His statement came in the wake of Friday's fire at the Bellport Junior-Senior High School, where 990 persons fled, many injuring themselves by leaping from second-story windows. Meanwhile, a top state fire official blamed faulty wiring for the blaze.

Dennison said, "I cannot understand how and why school buildings wouldn't have fire escapes. I will probably follow through with a survey of all schools in the county." He said he might recommend the provision of escape facilities, such as outside stairs and protected stairwells, where needed on two-story school buildings. State law does not require outside fire escapes on buildings less than three stories high.

In the fire, which broke out in the school's auditorium shortly before classes were to end, 36 students and a teacher were hospitalized, many with smoke poisoning. By last night, 14 had been sent home.

Suspicious that faulty wiring in the ceiling of the auditorium was to blame for the fire were given unofficial confirmation yesterday by George H. Proper Jr., acting director of the State Division of Fire Safety. He said his investigation indicated that the fire had been caused by electrical wiring in the concealed space between the flat roof of the school and the inside ceiling. Proper was critical of the "hollow ceiling" type construction in the 34-year-old wing. "If you have concealed space, a fire can spread across a building before it is noticed," said Proper. "We have a standard suggestion to avoid using concealed space in buildings." However, he said the structure was typical of buildings constructed 30 or more years ago.

Make Report Today

Proper was scheduled to meet today with Suffolk Police Commissioner John E. Barry, Suffolk assistant fire coordinator Lloyd Case and other county officials to review the fire and examine reports of the investigation. Barry said preliminary findings indicated the fire was started by a short circuit in electrical wiring in the auditorium ceiling. This is also Proper's opinion, although no formal report has been made attributing the fire to faulty wiring. Barry said a summary of the findings would be released after today's meeting, which will be held in county firematic headquarters, Yaphank.

Over the week end, 14 of the 37 persons hospitalized by the fire were released from Brookhaven Memorial Hospital. One of the students was removed from the critical list. Among those sent home was teacher Deward Eades of 3 George Ct., Bellport, who suffered a back injury. He was the only teacher injured. The other students were kept in the hospital, still suffering from smoke poisoning and minor injuries. Sixteen of them remained in oxygen tents last night. The only student on the critical list is John Allers, 13, of 730 Bellport Ave., Bellport. He suffered fractured ankles, internal injuries and smoke poisoning.

In other action, the Bellport School Board met in lengthy session yesterday to map future action. A board spokesman said the students will probably return to classes on a double-session basis within a few days in the new, unburned wing of the school. This was protected from the fire by huge fire doors. The spokesman said the students would not return until the undamaged wing had been thoroughly

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(Newsday Photo by Lyons)

CLOSE CALL. Fred W. Strybing, 14, shows his father, Suffolk County Police Capt. Fred H. Strybing, the window through which he escaped during blaze at the Bellport Junior-Senior High School. The elder Strybing was among police who helped the injured.

TFX Pact Called Firm

Washington (AP)—Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell L. Gilpatric said last night that the Defense Department would not reverse its decision on awarding of the controversial TFX airplane contract despite criticism from some members of a congressional committee.

Gilpatric said the judgment of the department in awarding the design contract to General Dynamics Corp. and Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corp. of Long Island would be borne out "when all the facts are in." He said that a Senate investigating subcommittee, headed by Sen. John L. McClellan (D-Ark.), had presented "up to now a confused and at times one-sided, view of the case." The subcommittee, probing rumors of politics behind the award, has said its findings show that Boeing Co. offered a cheaper and better design than General Dynamics-Grumman. However, Gilpatric, in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," noted that the hearings had not been completed and, he said, the committee had a well-

deserved reputation for fairness. (See editorial "No Reversal" on Page 43.)

Gilpatric, the No. 2 man in the Defense Department, denied categorically that any politics was involved in the awarding of the TFX or any other defense contract. "On the basis of the facts as we know them, we would not change our judgment," Gilpatric said when asked if the contract award would be reversed.

The subcommittee has said that Defense Secretary McNamara overruled a military evaluation board that voted unanimously three times in favor of the Boeing design. Gilpatric said there were three main factors in the case. "First is the fact that both the General Dynamics and Boeing (offers) would be acceptable," he said. "... This is not a case where only one of the airplanes would meet the objective. Secondly, the major desire of the Defense Department is to find an airplane of common design . . . which would meet the needs of both

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