

FIRE DRIVE SHUTS 7 MORE SCHOOLS

Performing Arts Building
Closed—3 Brooklyn Units
Have Minor Blazes

By PETER KIHSS

The Fire Department's inspection drive closed seven more school buildings and part of an eighth yesterday.

One of the closed schools was the High School of Performing Arts at 120 West Forty-sixth Street, which has 583 students in a building erected in 1893.

The continuing drive, which began Dec. 3, has thus far shut twenty-six school buildings, of which seven have corrected complaints and reopened.

There were minor fires at three schools yesterday. Those at Public School 138 at 760 Prospect Place, and the Holy Rosary parochial school at 180 Bainbridge Street, both Brooklyn, were termed suspicious in origin. The third was a kitchen frying-pan fire at Girl High School, Nostrand Avenue and Halsey Street, Brooklyn.

School Count Revised Up

Meanwhile, Fire Commissioner Edward F. Cavanagh Jr. said the school inspections had disclosed that the city had hundreds more nursery and private schools than it realized. The Fire Department's new count is 1,931, instead of the initially estimated total of 1,300. Inspections will continue through next week.

The Commissioner said the state education law required the licensing only of schools with children between the ages of 7 and 17. He said he had conferred with Mayor Wagner on how to stiffen controls over occupancy and operations of those not now licensed.

Commissioner Cavanagh visited the High School of Performing Arts and ordered its closing at 3:15 P. M. The complaints included open air ducts that formerly had been used in heating, wooden doors, and rubbish in the basement.

The building was the fourth public school shut as a result of the inspections. Three others have reopened. The Performing Arts school is scheduled to move into a new building in the Lincoln Square urban renewal project.

Pupils Go to 2 Other Schools

The nearly 1,000 pupils at Public School 179, which was closed Tuesday, went to classes yesterday in two other schools.

P. S. 179, at 140 West 102d Street, is likely to remain closed today and tomorrow, according to a Board of Education spokesman. The building has been undergoing major modernization.

About two-thirds of its pupils were moved temporarily to P. S. 163 at Amsterdam Avenue and West Ninety-seventh Street. The rest went to P. S. 105 at Amsterdam Avenue and West 104th Street.

The other buildings closed yesterday were:

¶Mount Calvary Methodist Church child-care center, 116 Edgecomb Avenue, a one-story building with basement, used by ninety children.

¶Jacob Joseph Yeshiva annex, 134 Henry Street, a five-story brick old-law tenement building, with seventy-five pupils.

¶Bobover Yeshiva Bnei Zion, 176 Brooklyn Avenue, Brooklyn, a two-story frame building, with 300 students, where some pupils pass through a second-floor apartment occupied by a caretaker.

¶Yeshiva Umsivta Rabeinu Chaim Ozer, 2084 Arthur Avenue, at 180th Street, the Bronx, where 100 children attend classes on the top floor of a three-story building.

¶Forest Park Nursery and Kindergarten School, 102-35 Sixty-third Road, Rego Park, Queens, with sixty-six children. It is part of the Beth Jacob Jewish Educational Center.

¶Spanish-American Bible Institute, 312-314 East 138th Street, with 300 adult students and ten teachers holding classes in a two-story former factory building.

The building partly closed was St. Adalbert's Roman Catholic parochial school, 337 Morningstar Road, Port Richmond, S. I., where only the basement cafeteria and meeting place were shut. The school itself, with seventy to 100 pupils, using the first floor will remain open, as will the church on the second floor.

Boy, 12, Said to Confess

Fire officials and detectives said a 12-year-old boy had confessed after three hours' questioning to setting the fires in the Holy Cross Rosary School in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn.

Commissioner Cavanagh said the seventh-grade student admitted starting a blaze in a baby carriage with a cigarette lighter in a storeroom "to be funny."

The school's 920 pupils were evacuated in an orderly drill, and firemen summoned at 9:11 A. M. put out the fire in two minutes. The boy was booked for juvenile delinquency.

The fire at P. S. 138 in the Prospect Heights section, also termed suspicious, caused 1,000 pupils to be evacuated at 8:45 A. M. It started on a bulletin board on the second floor, and was beaten out with an overshoe by Mrs. Rita Goldberg, a teacher.

Firemen had been summoned.

The school inspection drive has followed a fire in a Chicago school that took ninety-two lives.

Speaking to the Hotel Association of New York yesterday, Mr. Cavanagh commended the group's 150 major hotels for increasing fire precautions in the last few years.

In December, 1955, he criticized the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel

for neglecting to summon the Fire Department for minor fires.