

# Poignant Slum Drama Eviction Of A Family

The family of Percy Moore, of 2625 E. 61st Street, slept uneasily last Thursday evening. Percy, Jr., a Kennard Junior high school student could hardly keep his eyes closed. The mother, tall, thin Mrs. Maggie Moore had tears in her eyes. The father, Percy, a custodian at the Martin Steel Company, clenched his fist his thoughts as tangled as knotted rope.

Each minute that ticked off the clock spelled the coming doom for the family. Each hour rolled past with a grim sentence for the family, a penalty the youngsters were quite undeserving.

At daybreak, Mrs. Moore arose and prepared the last meal. The youngsters dressed hurriedly and scampered to the kitchen. There the mother and her clan ate breakfast. Their father had left home an hour ago.

A few minutes later, the bailiff came accompanied by his crew. In clock-like fashion, the men, big, burly giants, began moving the furniture to the street. They lifted the kitchen stove and swung it through the back door. They uprooted the cabinets and the tables and piled them in the back yard.

## Gathered Desks

In like manner, they gathered the desks and the chairs, the beds, the baskets of dishes, the lamps, the trunk, and carried them from the house.

This spelled the tragic doom of the Moore family.

The mighty fear that haunts hundreds of families in Central Area had enwrapped their clan in its tentacles. They had become the hopeless victims of eviction. Hopeless because they have no place to go. Not even a room to sleep.

Mrs. Moore stood as a sentry, guarding the pile of family possessions. Her face expressed the brutality, the cruelty of eviction. Gaunt, tired, her thin face was lined with worry. She stood in the sun while her three sons played in the street scarcely aware that they had no home, no beds to sleep.

"Why had this fate come to us?" unconsciously Mrs. Moore asked. "Why must my family suffer so?"

## Glared Angrily

Neighbors stood on second floor porches and glared angrily at the furniture movers. Others gathered in small circles and defiantly whispered to one another.

This eviction was a preview of what may happen in the coming weeks in Central Area when the new rent control legislation goes into effect. Landlords have the opportunity to raise rents fifteen per cent (ONLY WITH CONSENT OF TENANTS) but the opportunity is almost a stranglehold. If tenants refuse to cooperate, landlords can either claim

remodeling or that the tenants are nuisances and they'll have a chance to take their hopeless victims in court--unless tenants band together.

Mrs. Moore, as every other tenant in Central Area, knows that there is a terrific housing shortage. For the past seven years, the clan has been living like nomads in and out of ramshackled houses, paying exorbitant rents, sacrificing everything to keep a roof over their children.

Despite this widespread condition, there is no possibility of a solution. Housing bills have been waylaid in both state and national legislatures. Cleveland's municipal government, so far, has given lip service to the housing problem, so hundreds and hundreds of families suffer. All face similar fate of eviction.

"We were \$25 behind in rent" said Mrs. Moore. "The landlord refused to take our rent even when we had it." Her husband, she said, had been sick last winter and was out of work. Even now he doesn't work regularly. The company also repaired its plant and the employees were unemployed for some weeks. This also caused a dent in the family financial sack.

The husband is the sole money earner of the family.

## Tell Judge

Mrs. Moore said when the case came up in Municipal Court, they tried to tell the judge that "they would pay up" but their words were lost in the flood of legal terms. They even told of the husband's sickness and the plant being stopped for a period but this had no effect.

When they went to the landlord, a Sam Lippo, to give him cash for the rent bill, he refused to take it. Mrs. Moore said. They had been living in the five room suite for the past seven years, paying \$20 monthly. The bathroom, the mother, contended, wasn't working and the landlord refused to repair it.

Just what the Moores will do in the housing shortage is a question they themselves cannot answer. A canvass of the area has revealed no empty suites, not even a room. Their relatives already overcrowded. They have only a minister, the Rev. J. W. Adams, the pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, who has come to their aid but even he has no vacant house.

In the meantime, their furniture is piled in the backyard of their house. The pile is uncover-

ed and may fall victim to summer rains.

The Moores, too, are unbared to the worst punishment that modern civilization in its metropolitan aspects can offer and this experience can either break or make humans.