

# **POLLUTED AIR COSTS MILLIONS EACH YEAR HERE**

## **Laundry Bills Higher Than in Pittsburgh**

*(This is the last article by a Tribune reporter who toured the city and suburbs to learn the effects of air pollution.)*

**BY RUTH MOSS**

How would you like to save \$35,000,000 a year?

That's what Chicago's polluted air costs you. That's how much you stand to save when you remove the causes of air pollution—smoking chimneys, fuming industrial stacks, coal burning locomotives, garbage that clogs alleys, and debris that litters the city's front yards.

As a walking dust mop surveying the city's air pollution problem, I was bombarded by billions of grime particles that rain from these sources on every square foot of Chicago every day of every year.

I weathered the soot storm that wears out fabrics and sends your cleaning bills soaring. I sampled the pollution that makes you prey to viruses, colds, and respiratory ailments that take their heavy toll in lost time and misery.

### **Walks 50 Miles**

I pounded more than 50 miles of city and suburban streets in five days in five different districts. I also investigated how a downpour of rain cleans the air and dirties persons and property on which it lands.

After more than 30 hours in the city's smoggy haze, I came back with a clear view of why Chicago's air contamination costs run so high. I also understood:

Why Chicago area residents spend more than \$45,000,000 a year on cleaning and an additional \$3,600,000 for rejuvenating rugs. Why they spend \$66,844,000 a year for laundry, yet only 37 per cent are customers.

### **How Laundry Bills Compare**

Why your per capital laundry bill runs three times more than that of Pittsburgh's residents,

doubles that of Cleveland's, is a fourth again as much as the average New Yorker's, and why it runs 75 per cent higher than it does in Detroit.

Why you spend \$110,000 a week in laundromats and in five years have built these self-service laundries into a \$5,720,000 business here.

Why large commercial buildings have to pay a window washing bill of \$3,408,000 annually.

But the price you pay for the 3,000 gallons of polluted air you breath every day runs higher than these dollar values.

### **Blackens, Clogs Lungs**

At best, the city's smoke pall deprives you of 40 per cent of your normal share of sunlight thruout the year and blackens and clogs your lungs in the process.

It doubles your household chores. [More than 10 pounds of dust blow each month into your home. More than 162,700 tons of dust fell last year on the city's 213 square miles.]

This smoke storm pads your electric bill, blackens your masonry, corrodes your metal surfaces, grinds into your collar and your car, and is the reason that most of the year you can't hang out your wash.

It accounts for a large share of the 4,700,000 pounds of soil washed from restaurant linens, office towels, and professional uniforms laundered by a leading linen supply house here.

It shortens the lives of your furniture, your draperies, your

clothes, your curtains, and possibly your own.

### **Need for Tighter Code**

Everywhere I looked I saw the need for a tightening of the city's smoke code and increased vigilance in its enforcement.

But no smoke abatement effort can be effective when coal burning locomotives on seven major railroads average 355 hours a day within the city limits, scattering fly ash and silica and soot.

A cleaner Chicago also will require the will of each home owner to learn to fire his furnace properly and save time, money, and backaches in the process.