

CHAPTER 637.

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FIRE ESCAPES AND PROTECT
HUMAN LIFE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

SECTION 1. That all hotels, lodging houses, school dormitories, hospitals or sanitariums hereafter constructed in this State, over two stories in height and over one hundred feet in length, shall be constructed so that there shall be at least two pairs of stairs for the use of guests leading from the ground floor to the uppermost story, and for larger buildings such number as the proper officials shall designate. Every hotel, lodging house, school dormitory, hospital or sanitarium in the State, three stories and over in height, shall be provided, without delay, with permanent iron balconies with iron stairs leading from one balcony to the other, to be placed at the end of each hall above the second story, in case such hotel, lodging house, school dormitory, hospital or sanitarium is over one hundred and fifty feet in length, and in other cases such number as may be directed by the Insurance Commissioner or chief of fire department of such city or town in which such hotel, lodging house, school dormitory, hospital or sanitarium is located: *Provided*, that where said hotels, lodging houses, school dormitories, hospitals or sanitariums, already built and only three stories in height, are, in the opinion of the Insurance Commissioner, provided with sufficient inner stairways, so located as to furnish sufficient egress in case of fire, the said commissioner may waive the requirement for outside iron balconies and stairs. Such balconies and iron stairs shall be constructed at the expense of the owner of said hotel, lodging house, school dormitory, hospital, sanitarium or theater: *Provided*, that this act shall not apply to private residences at which lodgers are not received for hire.

SEC. 2. *Places of public amusement, how constructed.*—That every theater, opera house or other like place of public amusement shall have as many doors for egress therefrom as may be necessary and can be made consistently with the proper strength of the building; that all such doors shall be hung so as to open outwardly, or both outwardly and inwardly; and the seats therein shall be arranged in rows properly spaced, with aisles of adequate width, so as to afford easy egress therefrom. All scenery shall be made as secure against becoming inflamed as reasonably practical, and also all reasonably practical arrangements shall be made for the constant supply of water and other means for extinguishment of fires, and they shall be kept constantly effective during the presence of an audience: *Provided*, that the Insurance Commissioner may require all theaters to be equipped with a front curtain of asbestos or other fireproof material, to be furnished by owner of

Buildings hereafter constructed.

Permanent iron balconies and stairs.

Proviso: buildings already built.

Expense of balconies and stairs.

Proviso: private dwellings.

Doors to places of public amusement.

Arrangement of seats.

Scenery.

Arrangement for supply of water and other means of extinguishment.

Proviso: front curtain of asbestos.

the building; that said asbestos curtain shall be raised and lowered not less than twice before each performance, in order to guarantee its being in perfect working order.

Doors on school-houses, factories and buildings of public resort.

SEC. 3. *Doors to certain buildings to be hung, how.*—All doors for ingress and egress to and from all public-school houses and other buildings, and also of all theaters, assembly rooms, halls, churches, factories with more than twenty employees, and all other buildings or places of public resort whatever where people are wont to assemble (excepting schoolhouses and churches of one room on the ground floor) which shall hereafter be erected, together with all those heretofore erected and which are still in use as such buildings or places of resort, shall be so hung as to open outwardly from the audience rooms, halls or workshops of such buildings or places: *Provided*, that said doors may be hung on double hinges, so as to open with equal ease outwardly or inwardly.

Proviso: double hinges.

Outside fire escapes.

SEC. 4. *Fire escapes from balconies.*—That all factories, manufacturing establishments or workshops of three or more stories in height, in which thirty or more people are employed above the first floor thereof, shall be provided with one or (if the proper officials shall deem necessary) more outside fire escapes, not less than six feet in length and three feet in width, properly and safely constructed, guarded by iron railings not less than three feet in length and taking in at least one door and one window or two windows at each story and connected with the interior by easily accessible and unobstructed openings; and the said fire escapes shall connect by iron stairs not less than twenty-four inches wide, the steps to be not less than six inches tread, placed at not more than an angle of forty-five degrees slant and protected by a well-secured hand rail on both sides, with a twelve-inch-wide drop ladder from the lowest platform reaching to the ground; that no outside fire escapes shall be required where there are already sufficient inside stairways; that for every twenty people employed on any floor above the second floor of every factory and workshop there shall be one rope or portable fire escape, and that each story shall be amply supplied with means for extinguishing fires; that all the main doors, both inside and outside, in factories, except fire doors, shall open outwardly, when the proper official shall so direct, and that no outside or inside door of any building wherein operatives are employed shall be so locked, bolted or otherwise fastened during the hours of labor as to prevent egress.

Iron stairs.

Drop ladder.

Rope or portable fire escape.

Each story supplied with means of extinguishment.
Doors to open outwardly.

Buildings to be supplied with means of egress.

SEC. 5. *Ways of escape.*—That every building now or hereafter used, in whole or in part, as a public building, public or private institution, schoolhouse, church, theater, public hall, place of assembly or place of public resort, and every building in which twenty or more persons are employed above the second story in a factory, workshop or mercantile or other establishment, the owner

or agent of the owner of which said buildings is notified in writing by the Insurance Commissioner or any one of his deputies, shall be provided with proper ways of egress or other means of escape from fire sufficient for the use of all persons accommodated, assembled, employed, lodging or residing in such building or buildings, and such ways of egress and means of escape shall be kept free from obstructions, in good repair and ready for use. Every room above the second story in any such building in which twenty or more persons are employed shall be provided with more than one way of egress by stairways on the inside or outside of the building. All doors in any building subject to the provisions of this act shall open outwardly, if the Insurance Commissioner or one of his deputies shall direct in writing.

Exits to be kept free from obstructions.
Exits above second story.

Doors to open outwardly.

SEC. 6. That the Insurance Commissioner is charged with the execution of this law, and the said commissioner or chief of the fire department are hereby vested with all privileges, duties and obligations placed upon them in section four, chapter fifty-eight, Public Laws of one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, in regard to the inspection of buildings for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of this act in regard to the buildings and requirements herein, and any owner or occupant of premises failing to comply with the provisions of this act in accordance with the orders of the authorities above specified shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and punished by a fine of not less than ten dollars nor more than fifty dollars for each day's neglect: *Provided, however*, that if any owner or lessee of any building referred to in this act shall deem himself aggrieved by any ruling or order of any chief of fire department or local inspector, he may within twenty-four hours appeal to the Insurance Commissioner, and the cause of complaint shall at once be investigated by the direction of said commissioner, and unless by his authority the order or ruling is revoked it shall remain in full force and effect and be forthwith complied with by said owner or lessee.

Insurance commissioner charged with execution of law.
Powers of insurance commissioner and chief of fire department.

Failure to comply with act a misdemeanor.

Punishment.

Appeal to insurance commissioner.

Ratified this the 6th day of March, A. D. 1909.

CHAPTER 638.

AN ACT RELATING TO MACADAM ROADS IN IREDELL COUNTY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

SECTION 1. That there may be elected by said board of commissioners at one of their regular meetings a competent superintendent of roads, skilled in the modern method of road building, who shall be paid a reasonable compensation, to be fixed by the board of commissioners; and said superintendent of roads may be re-

Election of superintendent of roads.

Compensation.

Removal for cause.