

# Percy Predicts Wide Rest Home Reforms

BY WILLIAM JONES

(Pictures on back page)

Sen. Percy [R., Ill.] made a surprise inspection of Chicago nursing homes yesterday and predicted that the disclosures of neglect and abuse of the elderly poor here will bring nationwide reforms.

Percy described the tour as a preliminary look at nursing home conditions before the Senate Select Committee on Aging opens hearings in Chicago April 2.

Percy is a member of the committee and requested the hearings after disclosures by THE TRIBUNE and Better Government Association of wretched living conditions in many Chicago area nursing homes.

## Stops at Kenmore Home

Percy's first stop was the Kenmore House Nursing Home, 5517 N. Kenmore Av., exposed as one of the filthiest in the city and where meals were found to be so meager that the waste from one plate is

scraped onto another to make the food go around.

"By the owner's admission he is paying painters and maintenance men overtime on Sunday to make needed repairs," Percy said when he emerged from the home.

## Sees Gains for Aged

"I would bet that the same thing is going on in more than 1,000 nursing homes all over the country as a result of what you have exposed.

"That is why we are beginning

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# Percy Predicts Nationwide Reforms for Nursing Homes

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our hearings in Chicago and using them as a focal point. Every penny the TRIBUNE Task Force and B. G. A. have invested in this fine effort is going to be returned a thousand fold in the welfare of our elderly."

Percy said that when he questioned the owner, Rabbi Benjamin Cohen, about profits and expenses in the operation of Kenmore House, Rabbi Cohen did not answer the questions.

"He told me he wasn't very good with figures," Percy said.

"He said I would have to ask his accountant, which we will do, of course. He told me he thinks the profit is about 10 to 15 per cent and that is surely enough to put a coat of paint on once in awhile."

State welfare records show the nursing home receives about \$250,000 a year for housing welfare recipients.

Percy was accompanied on the tour by George Bliss, acting executive director of the B. G. A., and William Recktenwald, Bliss' top investigator.

Percy also visited the Balmoral Nursing Home, 2055 W.

Balmoral Av., where a Task Force reporter working undercover as a nurses' aide found excellent patient care and cleanliness.

"I've heard so many good things about your nursing home and I'm here to see how you do it," Percy told Henry Mermelstein, the owner.

Committee hearings into the nursing home abuses are expected to be held in an assembly hall on the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus. The committee chairman is Sen. Frank Church (D., Idaho).