

THE OMAHA VIEW

SCHOOL IS ISSUE

Building Inspector Got After It a Year Ago, and the Board Hasn't Fixed It Yet.

Nothing Done in the Way of Repairs, It Can't Be Used on a Windy Day.

Is the Omaha board of education one of the "large bodies" that "moves slowly?" That is what Omaha patrons of Omaha View school in particular, and the patrons of some other schools in general are asking.

W. B. Christie, chairman of the board's committee on buildings and property, is still carrying around in his pocket the report made to the fire and police board on the condition of school buildings. A commissioner vouchsafes that the report is not sensational. It was called for as the board calls each year, for reports on theaters, factories, other public and semi-public buildings and schools, and Commissioner Cowell concluded to turn this over to the school board.

It shows such instances as a fire escape being difficult to reach, a fire escape ending eight feet above the ground, some doors opening inward instead of outward, but hooked open during school hours, and some exits obstructed by clothes closets.

Patrons of Omaha View school show most concern, because nearly a year ago they say Building Inspector Withnell, Chairman Christie and Superintendent of Buildings Finlayson inspected the building.

Mr. Withnell reported to the board that at the request of the building committee he had inspected Omaha View school and this report, dated November 21, 1907, concludes:

"The building is in a shaky condition, but do not consider it extremely dangerous at this time, but would advise the board to abandon its use as a school building after the expiration of the present term."

That term ended in June last.

Eleven months later, this very day, the building shows that no repairs whatever have been made to it. The cracks that Building Inspector Withnell measured still exist and school patrons say they have extended during this year. Superintendent Finlayson says they have not extended.

Plaster that had fallen out from between bricks in the basement story a year ago still remains out and in places one can put a lead pencil back the full length of the brick. Mr. Finlayson says this makes no difference. The whole row of outer bricks might fall and yet the building would stand.

An extra ceiling put over the boiler room has sagged until it rests upon some steam pipes. The pipes are asbestos covered. Mr. Finlayson says if they rest on the pipes it is owing to the sagging of one by twos that support the extra ceiling and it can be remedied. In the opinion of the patrons of the school this sagging ceiling is the least safe or most dangerous—as you please—of the features of the building.

Steps that led to the double doors at the north side of the building have been removed for some reason unknown unless to make a driveway, leaving a sheer jump from the doorsills to the ground of fully six and one-half feet. Because of this, these doors are never opened. In brief, nothing has been done in way of repairs to this school in eleven months, since this condition was called to the attention of the board of education.

"You can say," says Chairman Christie to the World-Herald, "that the Omaha View school has all the repairs it is going to have. The board will put no more on it because we are building a new school!"

Miss Franc Eaton, principal of the school, dismisses it for safety whenever a high wind blows from the north or northwest. The school has about 400 pupils.

Down at Thirtieth and Locust streets, a lot which the board secured possession of in May has been excavated for the new Omaha View school. Some material has been delivered. The workmen say they are waiting for the concrete foundation to be put in before bricklaying begins. Superintendent Finlayson, when asked about this delay, said he had been hindered six months in getting the plans from the architects. He added that old Omaha View school's condition has not changed in eight years. It was poorly built to begin with.