

THE COURIER

VOL. XVIII, NO. XIII

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 1902

ESTABLISHED IN 1886

LINCOLN'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

They are Advancing Rapidly Along Educational Lines
Despite the Depressing
Influence of an Overlap which Prevents Proper Development

Eighteen public schools serve to educate the young of Lincoln, many of the surrounding country and even a few from surrounding states. It costs a great sum of money and yet little more is expended now than in 1892 when there were 1,000 less students and the means for raising money were no better. During the hard times an overdraft began to grow and it attained such size that years will be required to wipe it out, if the present rate is maintained. Meantime the growth of the schools will be retarded. Even under the circumstances they have made an excellent record for advancement.

But O that overdraft!

It is a black cloud that overhangs the school board. Whenever anybody speaks of raising the salaries of teachers or janitors, whenever anybody talks of libraries and supplies that would facilitate the work of the students, two or three members point trembling fingers at the cloud and then they all shudder and pronounce the magic word "economy." It is the biggest word in their dictionary.

This overdraft is \$77,291. As a result of the vigilance of the economy committee of the board this was reduced \$3,000 last year and now the estimates are that \$20,000 more will be lopped off by the end of the present year.

Were this \$20,000 devoted to school purposes, says Superintendent Gordon, things would be running finely and the teachers would be receiving salaries something like those paid their fellows in other towns of the same size. Some other way should be devised to subdue the overdraft. It could be funded into the bonded debt, says Mr. Gordon. This has been suggested before, but no one has shown an inclination to push the project. If it were done payment could be made in another way and money that is switched from the necessities of the schools could be turned to much better use. The levy of twenty mills authorized by the last legislature is not very big. It would do the work if the assessment were higher. The trouble is that the legislature which raised the levy at the same time lowered the county assessment and counteracted its own efforts. People think twenty mills is heavy taxation. They are hurt before they feel it. They pay school taxes on the county assessment and with that at low ebb they really suffer not at all. By all means the schools should be severed from saloons, says Mr. Gordon.

"It was a brilliant move on the part of saloon men," says he, "when they propelled to success the idea that the license money they pay should be devoted to the schools. It was a scheme to hitch the two together in a way to make the saloon seem a necessary institution. Now the people hesitate to separate them for fear the schools will suffer. It was clever. The proper

way to keep the schools in funds is by direct taxation. The present levy of twenty mills would be wholly sufficient if the county assessment were only raised."

And the Lincoln schools deserve better financing. They have made admirable progress but they could make more if they only had leeway. The average membership is 5,485 and the average per capita expense of each one is \$21.54. In 1892 the average membership was 4,443 and the per capita expense was \$25.19. This is a difference of over \$3. That much more was devoted to the education of the young folks in those days. The total enroll-

estimated they will be \$93,538. Janitors, last year, \$7,715.20, this, \$8,250.75; repairs, last, \$4,603.33, this, \$4,500; fuel, last, \$4,026.91, this, \$4,000; rent, last, \$366.73, this, \$174; stationery, last, \$1,064.82; supplies, this, \$2,336.90; office expenses, last, \$2,280.43, this, \$2,300; supervision, last, \$3,999.80, this, same; printing, last, \$640.40; fire insurance, last, \$922.50, this, \$1,000; census, last, \$473.68, this, \$352.96; legal, last, \$158.55, this, \$155; furniture, supplies and printing, this year, \$5,000; interest on warrants, last, \$5,388.37, this, \$5,300; interest on bonds, last, \$4,382.36, this, \$3,600; miscellaneous, last, \$2,819.45, this, \$3,000; real estate and buildings,

1891	108,133.43
1892	111,924.72
1893	105,415.80
1895	91,017.29
1896	89,993.11
1897	95,111.56
1898	97,299.67
1899	108,524.87

Four new buildings have been erected this year or are at some stage in the process. They are the Capitol annex, at a cost of \$8,000 with \$3,960 added for heating and plumbing; the Whittier addition at \$8,000, \$2,000 more for heating; Randolph, new building, \$9,800, heating \$2,100; Central, the new graded school, growing on the old high



A GROUP OF LINCOLN SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

ment is 7,147; in 1892 it was 6,400. The average attendance is 5,156; in 1892 it was 4,196. The average attendance at the present time is thus about 1,000 in excess of that of 1892. The total expense of running the schools then was \$111,924.72. Last year the cost was \$118,257.47 and the overdraft was reduced \$3,000.

Last year the salaries of teachers amounted to \$87,272.68. This year it is

last, \$4,401.45, this, \$60,325; school furniture, last, \$636.81; teachers' library, \$3.65; office furniture and fixtures, last, \$17.50; text books, last, \$3,422.37, this, \$4,404.37.

These are the total sums expended to run the schools in past years. No books were kept prior to 1887.

1888	\$100,553.00
1889	98,451.00
1890	104,557.00

school campus, \$23,847, bids for heating to be opened at the next meeting of the board of education. Mr. Gordon thinks there is a need for a new twelve room mate for the Bancroft, a six room Hayward twin and another high school.

At present the two high schools are overcrowded. The basement of the old one is used as a common school and the pupils here will be transferred next