

FIREMEN HELPLESS AS SCHOOL BURNS

Water Lacking to Save Old Bennett Building, Brighton



BENNETT SCHOOL IN BRIGHTON, DESTROYED BY FIRE.

Four Alarms For Spectacular Blaze—Watched by 30,000

Blazing away while dozens of firemen with empty hose waited for water, the Bennett School, the oldest school in Brighton, was destroyed last evening, in one of the most spectacular fires the Boston Department has witnessed in years.

Four alarms called most of the apparatus in the city to the scene, but when the firemen arrived they found that the low pressure of hydrant water made their task of saving the structure hopeless.

For 20 minutes to a half hour after the first alarm was sounded, at 9:55, about all the firemen could do was watch the building burn. At 10:30 there was only one weak stream on the building and a high wind was taking that out of its directed path.

Water Not Available

Fire Commissioner Theodore Glynn and Chief of Department John O. Taber were frantic over the lack of water. The firemen did their work efficiently enough, coupled their lines and started pumping, but the water was not there to be pumped.

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The Bennett School was a 4½-story brick structure at the junction of Chestnut Hill av and Dighton st. diagonally opposite St Elizabeth's Hospital. Across

the street from the old school is a new annex, larger than the old building. The annex was not touched by the flames.

The Bennett School was a 3¼-story at a cost of \$150,000, according to school-house custodian Mark Mulvey. The cost of rebuilding will be \$500,000, according to Mr. Mulvey. About 700 pupils are deprived of a school building by the fire.

The fire was discovered by an unidentified citizen who telephoned to Fire Headquarters, from which an alarm was sounded. On the arrival of apparatus a second alarm was jumped and a third sent in immediately.

The third alarm brought Chief Taber and Commissioner Glynn, who ordered a fourth. The fire apparently started in the boiler room and worked up through the staircases until it gutted the building.

The flames got such a start that when lines were finally brought on the building they had little effect. Sparks and embers were sent high in the air and fell throughout the district.

Because of the recent heavy rains, roofs were so thoroughly saturated with water that not a single fire was set by the falling sparks and embers.

Watched by 30,000

The low-hanging black clouds reflected the glare for many miles around, and automobile roads were choked with cars bound for the blaze. At least 30,000 people turned out to watch the destruction of the school.

The principal of the Bennett School is Louis B. Nash. A prominent graduate is Police Commissioner Herbert A. Wilson. The late George E. Brock, former chairman of the School Committee, was another graduate.

The Bennett School was the outcome of one established in 1722—more than 200 years ago—on Washington st, Brighton, east of Market st. It became distinctively a grammar school in 1847, and was then known as the Harvard Grammar School.

It was later known as the Second Grammar School and, when the building on Chestnut Hill av was built in 1873 and the school transferred there, in order to obtain a release from certain conditions imposed in the deed of the land given by Mr Bennett in 1860, the heirs were allowed to place a tablet on the new building reading as follows: "Bennett School, founded by Stephen Hastings Bennett, 1874."