

1922-01-01

Our Synodical Building Program

un known

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known, un, "Our Synodical Building Program" (1922). *Digitized Pamphlets*. 13.
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Our Synodical Building Program

An Urgent Appeal to the Christian People
of Our Synod

“God loveth a cheerful giver.” *2 Cor. 9, 7.*

FILE
1089



What is a Synod²

Vacant pulpits

Crowded Auditories —

\$ 2000⁰⁰ per Student —

2000 parents giving = 4 Million⁰⁰ —

A Fulfilment of Prayer.

For many years we have quoted, in our publications, the words of our Savior: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." We have also encouraged and admonished one another: "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." How often, dear reader, have you yourself heard and spoken these words?

In a most wonderful way our gracious and faithful God has heard this prayer; He has granted our petitions and blessed us beyond our expectations. From year to year our colleges have been filled with students willing to devote their lives to the sacred task of preaching the Gospel, so that we could scarcely accommodate them. Each year we were able to send forth greater numbers of laborers into the Lord's harvest, and yet each year the number of students increased, with the result that our colleges have become far too small to house them. Hence Synod, at the 1920 convention in Detroit, decided to appropriate the sum of \$1,500,000 for our colleges. Of this sum, one million dollars were to be expended for a new seminary at St. Louis and \$500,000 for other institutions, especially for new dormitories at Seward.

Since then more than two years have passed by, and during this time God has not ceased to bless us. Indeed, He has continued to shower His blessings upon us. In the fall of 1921, as also this fall, He has sent to our institutions a greater number of new students than has ever been enrolled in the entire history of our Synod. To prove this statement, we quote this year's enrolment. This fall 866 students have entered the 14 institutions of Synod, and of these only 133 are such as have previously studied at other institutions, so that there are 733 new entrants. The sum total of all students at our institutions is no less than 2,583. The following table shows the enrolment in our various institutions: —

| | New Entrants. | Students from Other Institutions. | Total. |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---|--------|
| St. Louis | 105 | 105 | 366 |
| Springfield | 71 | 10 | 185 |
| River Forest | 98 | 4 | 332 |
| Seward | 72 | 1 | 191 |
| Fort Wayne | 124 | — | 332 |
| Milwaukee | 71 | — | 235 |
| St. Paul | 75 | 7 | 232 |
| Concordia | 28 | — | 118 |
| Bronxville | 55 | — | 172 |
| Winfield | 78 | 4 | 190 |
| Conover | 19 | — | 64 |
| Oakland | 22 | 2 | 71 |
| Portland | 22 | — | 44 |
| Edmonton | 26 | — | 51 |
| <i>14</i> <i>Total</i> | 866 | 133 | 2583 |

In consequence of this large enrolment the congestion at our institutions has become all the more serious, as may be shown by the following: In 1920 we had 516 new entrants; in 1921, 729; in 1922, 733. In other words, last year we matriculated over 200 more new entrants than in the previous year. This year again we received over 200 more new entrants than two years ago. The unusual increase of new entrants has, of course, affected also the sum total of students at our institutions. In 1920 we had, all told, 2,018 students at our institutions; in 1921, 2,394; and in 1922, 2,583. In other words, we have 565 more scholars and students this year than we had two years ago.

Do all these 2,583 students intend to become ministers and teachers? No, not all. Among the 2,583 students there are 78 girl students, attending three different institutions. Besides these, there are also a number of male students who do not intend to enter the ministry, but attend our institutions for the sake of acquiring a general education. However, the number of these does not exceed 100, so far as we can now compute; yet even if the number should approximate 150 (which we do not admit), there remain, nevertheless, 2,355 students who desire to serve the Lord as teachers and ministers.

Will all these students attain the goal, i. e., complete their studies and enter the ministry? Probably not. Each year some students give up their studies and do not return to their *alma mater*. This is, of course, a great loss; nevertheless, the enrolment at St. Louis shows that the percentage of those who finish their studies is comparatively large. Our theological seminary at St. Louis gets its students from ten colleges, located at Fort Wayne, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Concordia, Bronxville, Winfield, Conover, Oakland, Portland, and Edmonton. This year 520 new students have entered these institutions. This total of new entrants includes a number of such as do not intend to become ministers, as well as a number of young ladies who intend to become teachers in our parochial schools. Even if only one-third of these 520 should continue their studies and enter St. Louis to take up the study of theology, the enrolment at our seminary would amount to 173, and if one half of them would come, it would approximate 260. In the past an average of 100 graduates of these ten institutions have entered St. Louis. This year there were 105, last year, 99, two years ago, 78.

The question that now confronts us is: How shall we at St. Louis accommodate the ever-increasing number of those coming to us? Our present dormitories are altogether too small to house them. Besides, we have only one lecture-hall which can accommodate such large classes. Again, if we divide the classes, as has been done, our three classrooms will not suffice for so many classes. For this reason it is surely necessary that the new seminary at St. Louis be erected at once. To this Synod, two years ago, agreed unanimously and with great willingness. However, the present status of our Building Fund renders it absolutely impossible to carry out the resolution of Synod. On September 30, this year, more than two years after the meeting of Synod at Detroit, only \$671,248.20 of the appropriated sum of \$1,500,000 had been collected. According to the resolutions of Synod, building operations should not commence till the entire

sum is subscribed, and at least two-thirds of it have been paid in. If we postpone the building of the new seminary, if the matter should drag on perhaps for a few more years, as it did the past two years, then we shall have at St. Louis a body of students which simply cannot be provided for. Every one who visualizes the future must admit that such a state of affairs will be very detrimental to our whole Church and its work. Hence it is necessary that we immediately attempt to collect the whole sum of \$1,500,000, and more, in order that room may be provided for our students at St. Louis and the other colleges.

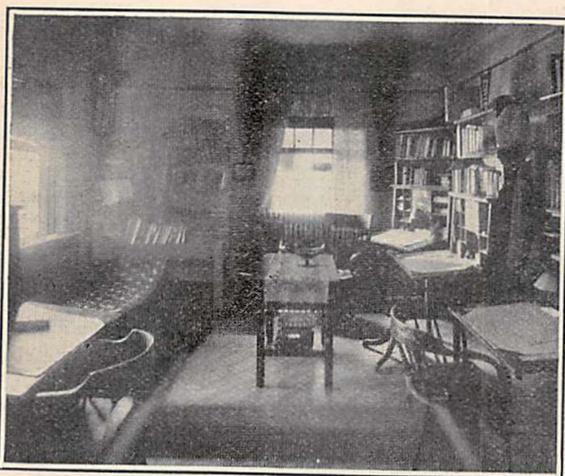
There is another reason why this must be done. All our institutions, as stated above, show an unusual enrolment of new students, and this number will be increased in the future. Our next convention, which will meet in June, 1923, must therefore make new and greater appropriations for our colleges in order to accommodate those whom the Lord sends there. However, Synod will not have the courage to plan the erection of new buildings if the burden of building the St. Louis Seminary and the dormitories at Seward still rests upon its shoulders. The result will be that all our institutions will suffer to such an extent that they will not recover for years; and not only they, but our entire church-work, the preaching of the Gospel, and especially our mission-work.

Our institutions are the schools of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has given them to us through His Christians, and has to this very day graciously preserved and blessed them. When our institutions are thus in need, a fact for which we should indeed give thanks and praise, it is in reality our Lord Jesus Himself who comes to us with a plea for help. If all our Christians bear this in mind, will they refuse the petition of Him who has heard their prayers and granted them His inestimable blessings? Certainly not! Let us therefore by immediate, unanimous, and energetic action, in which all, old and young, men and women, and all our young people, are called upon to participate, collect the required sum during this fall at the time of our annual Thanksgiving. The blessing of the Lord which we have described, the great number of students willing to enter the ministry, is of the greatest importance for the growth and promotion of our Synod during the next decade and beyond this time, both at home and abroad. We can in no better way show our gratitude toward the Lord than by doing all we can to prevent the Lord's blessings from being wasted, and to see to it that they are utilized for time and eternity.

Why a New Seminary in St. Louis?

God is giving us an increasingly large number of students. As a result our present Seminary buildings in St. Louis are filled beyond their capacity, and we are even now using a dwelling in the neighborhood to take care of the overflow. This very fact has compelled Synod to decide upon a building program for St. Louis. The situation at St. Louis is such, however, that Synod cannot simply add new buildings to the present ones, but that it had to buy a new piece of ground and decide to build an entirely new Seminary plant.

If our Christian people from all parts of our Synod could come to St. Louis, they would soon be convinced that the present plant has outlived its purpose. Since all our Christians cannot come to St. Louis, we



Living-Room.

shall, by means of a few pictures, put before them the reasons why a new Seminary must be built.

Picture No. 1 shows one of our living-rooms, or studies, with five desks, five chairs, bookcases, table, etc. The crowded conditions will be better realized if the five students living in this room, who were eating their dinner at the time the picture was taken, are added. According to the modern system of college-planning the average floor-space which ought to be available for each student is sixty-four square feet. In the room shown in the picture each student has a floor space of only forty-six square feet.

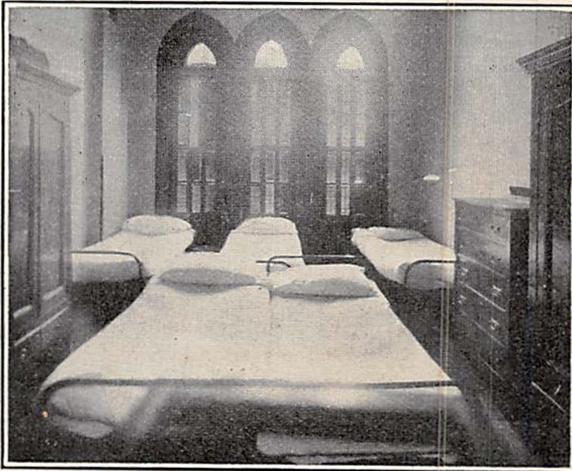
These calculations are made chiefly from the view-point of a student's health. But another very important fact deserves serious consideration. Our present building was intended to house not more than 200 students. At the present time there are about 300 living in *one* building. Even if all unnecessary noises are eliminated, the very fact that so many people are crowded together in one building is a disturbing element which prevents the individual student from giving the necessary attention to his studies.



Large Sleeping-Room.

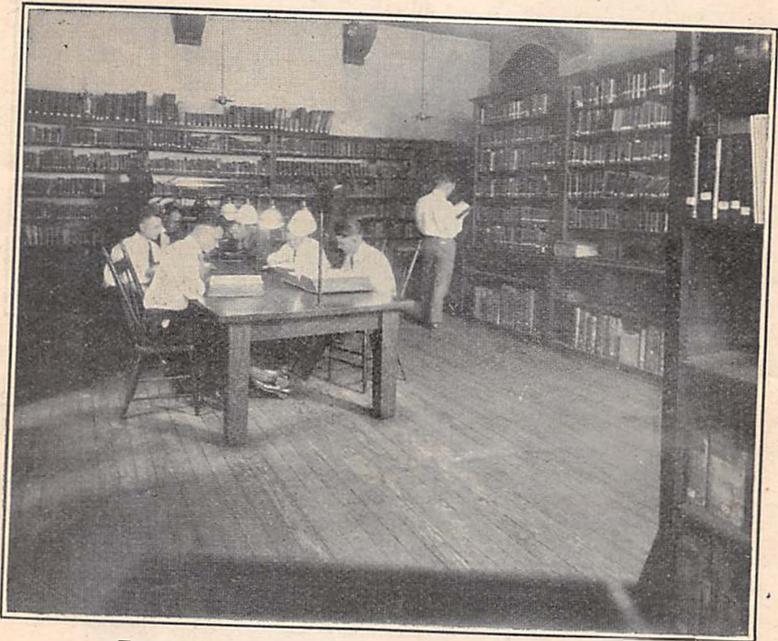
We have four large sleeping-rooms. If one looks at picture No. 2, one can count twenty-five beds. In addition, there are a number of wardrobes, which the picture does not show.

Picture No. 3 shows five beds, three wardrobes, and a chiffonier. Most of our sleeping-rooms are such small rooms.



Small Sleeping-Room.

According to modern college-planning every student ought to be given fifty-five square feet in his sleeping-room. In the larger sleeping-room, shown in Picture No. 2, each student has only thirty-six square feet, or a space 6×6 feet, for his bed and his wardrobe. In the smaller room each student has only forty-one square feet, or a trifle more than a space 6×6 feet. Every one will readily see that such crowded conditions in sleeping apartments are not conducive to good health, especially when during inclement weather all the windows cannot be kept fully open. Every housewife who looks at the pictures will also quickly realize that such crowded rooms cannot well be kept clean.



Formerly a Classroom, Now Part of Library.

But we have not yet told the whole story. The continual noises on the street very much disturb the work in the classroom. The instructor must strain himself very much to be understood, is frequently compelled to repeat two or three times what he has said, and is often not understood at all. We have only three classrooms, and of these, two are already becoming too small for the increasingly large classes. If the large classes are to be divided, as Synod has decided, which to some extent has already been done, then more than three classrooms are needed. There is no classroom at all for the students of the fourth year, those of the elective course. These are now being instructed in a large room in a near-by dwelling.

Picture No. 4 shows a room which was formerly used as a classroom (*Baier-Lehrsaal*). In this room the reader sees one part of our library; the other part is in another room directly opposite. In these two rooms

there are three such tables as the one which is shown in the picture. These three tables take the place of the reading-desks which are usually found in public libraries, and of which, for our 300 students, we ought to have a goodly number in our library. When the instructor, in the course of his lectures, calls the students' attention to this or that book, any student ought to be able to go to the library, take it from the shelves, study it at the reading-desk, and then leave it there for others to use. Our "library" being not properly equipped, the student takes the book from the library to his room and thus prevents others from using it. Light and ventilation are poor, and there is no space for additional books. Every one who understands the situation will readily admit that a good library and good library facilities are not a luxury, but a necessity in any institution of learning, and especially in our theological Seminary.

In many other respects our present Seminary building no longer serves its purpose. Only the Dean has a small office at the farthest end of the building. All the other members of the Faculty have no place where they can meet their students to talk over the class-work, hear the reading of many sermons, etc. An increasingly large number of strangers come to the Seminary building: visitors, business people, the postman with a special delivery letter, or the messenger boy with a telegram for students and for professors (many letters and telegrams for the professors are simply addressed to Concordia Seminary). All these people do not know where to go, for we have no general office nor a reception-room, because all available space has been used to house our many students. We have not a sufficient number of lavatories to take care of the needs of 300 students. We must feed our 300 students three times a day, and we ought to buy our food in large quantities when the market is favorable; but this we cannot do, for we have not sufficient storage-room. All trunks must be taken up three flights of steps and stored in the attic. Our Synod very much desires that also our theological students should give some attention to music, in order that later they may, as, for instance, in mission-charges, play in the service or conduct a choir. But we have no music-rooms at all. Even for our employees we have not sufficient room and are now already using space which ought to be occupied by our students.

We have only a small yard. Our students use it to "play catch" or to play a game of horseshoe. Even the batting of a ball is forbidden, lest windows be broken and passers-by be injured. The space is hardly large enough to accommodate twenty-five students, not to speak of 300. Every other educational institution has its athletic field; we have none. Our students need bodily exercise, not only to keep them in good health for the time being, but also to fit them for the bodily strain which they must later endure as ministers of the Gospel.

In order that our new Seminary at St. Louis might be built, our Synod has voted one million dollars. Some will say that this is too large a sum of money. We ask the reader to stop and consider. To supply our needs for the present time we expect to put up the following buildings: an administration building, a school of theology, a library, a dining-hall, dormitories for 400 students (we now have 366, of whom 55 are doing supply-work or are absent from the Seminary), a heating-plant, and twelve

residences for the professors. The block plan which has been printed in our church-papers shows more buildings, but not all the buildings there shown are to be built at the present time; in the general plan the future needs have been taken into consideration. If any will ask how much it has cost in the last two or three years to build a high school in one of our large cities and then compare therewith the kind and number of buildings which we need for our purpose, we believe he will readily see that the sum of one million dollars which Synod has voted for our purpose is not too high. When our fathers, forty years ago, built the present Seminary building, they put up a structure architecturally beautiful, well built, and well adapted to its purpose. More than this we, too, do not desire to do. But it must be remembered that material, wages, etc., are to-day two and three times as high as then, that we need larger and more buildings, and that conditions generally have changed in the course of years. The members of our churches who are now building houses are not building houses such as were built forty years ago, nor for the same price. Let us not forget this. But let us also not forget that God has not only given us, in answer to our prayers, a large number of students for our colleges and Seminary, but that He has also blessed our Christians in a material way much more than He did our fathers. Our love and our thankfulness ought to prompt us to give cheerfully and liberally for the maintenance and the extension of the kingdom of our Savior. If every one will do his share, then even the million dollars which are needed for our St. Louis Seminary can easily be raised. May the Lord Himself graciously grant us faith, love, wise counsel, and good courage!

And Seward!

And then there is Seward.

"If I were to say which institution should receive first consideration, St. Louis or Seward, I would be tempted to say, Seward."

We are quoting words spoken by a member of the Concordia Seminary Building Committee when addressing a meeting of synodical officers at St. Louis, September 27. And a member of the synodical Board of Directors who had recently paid a visit to Seward expressed himself in agreement with this sentiment.

For our normal school at Seward our Synod in 1920 appropriated the sum of \$100,000. Is this too much money? Is there any need of new buildings at Seward?

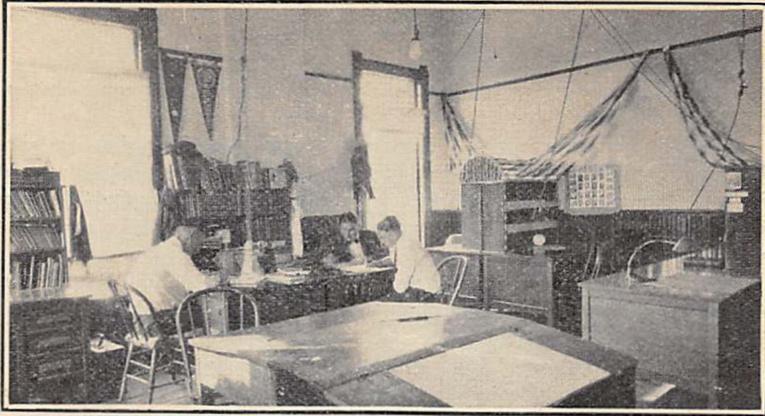
The Board of Control had reported in 1920 to Synod: —

"We are forced to come before Synod with a request for a new dormitory. The two so-called temporary frame buildings, put up years ago" (1899 and 1905), "ought long ago to have gone out of commission. But without them we should not be able to find room for our students, since the old dormitory, besides being in a deplorable condition, does not by far suffice to accommodate our students."

Let us stop here a minute. When this petition was made to Synod, Seward had an enrolment of 117 students. And the dormitory did "not by far suffice to accommodate" this number. To-day, 1922—23, there are 196 students at Seward! And they are housed in the same quarters which were overcrowded in 1919, when the enrolment was 117! How it is at all possible to accommodate this number we shall see in a moment. But let us continue with the 1919—20 report: —

"Some years ago the General Board of Control advised us not to make any repairs on the two temporary buildings because they did not justify the expense of up-keep. Now these same buildings are in such a condition that we must be ashamed to call them 'dormitories.' Accordingly, we are persuaded that Synod will see the justice of our request and will give us relief from these conditions by appropriating money for a new building." *And to-day?* Director Jesse writes that, "even if the new building will be erected, we shall still use every inch of space that we now have, including the old 'temporary' frame buildings!"

Let us take a turn around our property at Seward. There is the old dormitory and its annex, built 1894 and 1897. Looks pretty respectable — until you get inside. Thirty years of wear and tear have resulted in "a deplorable condition." It contains study- and bedrooms. Then there are two frame buildings, the so-called "emergency" or "temporary" buildings, concerning which an official report of the Board of Directors says: "They ought to be wrecked." *They are now occupied by 62 students!* Besides being intolerably crowded, they are cold in winter because there is no basement. They are heated with old coal stoves, "roasting those near, while the rest freeze." It was in order to replace these buildings that Synod allowed \$100,000 for a new dormitory in 1920. Conditions were bad enough then. Now that the enrolment has increased from 117 to 196, the condition fairly begs description. A few figures will illustrate.



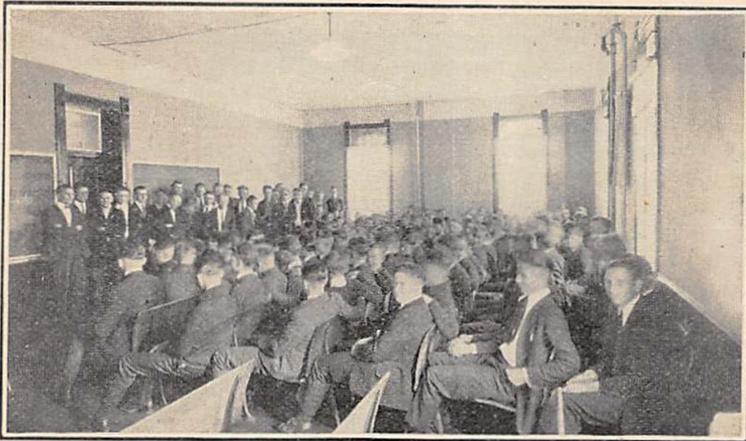
Study-Room No. 2.

A good average room. Ten desks, four windows.

(NOTE. — All these pictures show actual conditions. No rearrangements for photographer.)

In Room 1 there is space for 6 students under normal conditions; it is inhabited by 12. In Room 2 there are 10 instead of 6; in Room 3, 12 instead of 6; in Room 4, 8 instead of 4; and so on. Room 4 has one window for eight desks; Room 9 has one window for eight desks, some of these being sixteen feet from the window. Three windows must supply light for eleven desks in Room 12, and the same holds good of three other rooms.

According to accepted standards, the minimum of floor-space which ought to be provided for each student in a dormitory is 64 square feet.

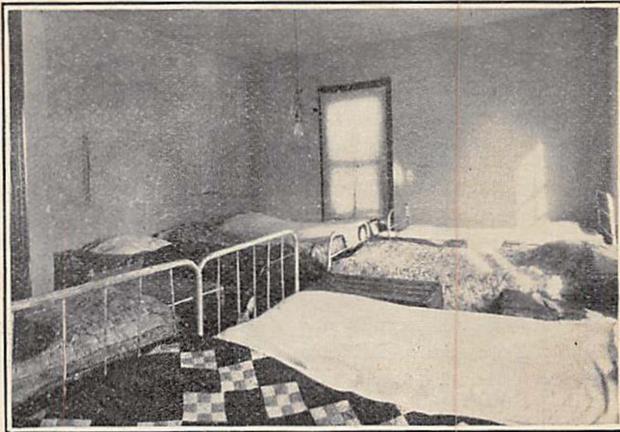


Students Assembled for Chapel Exercises.

No chapel available; this is the most suitable room. Those seated are in their regular places. Those standing belong into three vacant seats.

In these study-rooms the area available is generally 25 and 26 square feet. On this space (5×5 feet) the student must sit at his desk, and there must be enough surplus space in the room for books, clothing, radiators, doors, etc. Proper lighting and ventilation are, of course, out of the question.

There are at Seward 11 bedrooms. From the statistics submitted in October, 1922, by Director Jesse we cull the following: "In five *attic rooms* there are 45 beds; normal capacity, 32." Not so bad, one is tempted to say, until one hears that this gives us an average of only 36 square feet per student (against a standard minimum of 55), or a space 6×6 feet, in which bed and trunk must find room. Sweeping and dusting is, of course, next to impossible. In one large room (20 beds) there is only a space measuring 4×7 feet for each bed, including aisles. Under normal conditions there would be room in this attic for 32 students, without trunks; they are occupied by 45 beds and 45 trunks. Besides, these attic rooms are



Bedroom in One of the "Temporary" Buildings.

Not the worst of the bedrooms. The worst is too dark for photographing without flash-light.

very low, having been intended for storage purposes only, and the windows are half the ordinary size.

In the two ancient "temporary" buildings both upper stories are used as bedrooms; 58 beds in all. Likewise, 58 trunks. Concerning the conditions in these bedrooms, Director Jesse writes: "The crowding in the bedrooms favors the spread of every ailment which is at all communicable. Thus, if one student in the bedroom has a cold and coughs, his neighbors on either side are within about 40 inches of his face, while if they happen to be turned toward each other, their faces may be only one foot apart. This means, of course, that if one coughs, his neighbor will inhale the germs, thus spreading very rapidly even such ailments as colds."

Finally, there are some beds also in the Music Building. Here, in a room 61×35 feet in area, no less than *sixty-one beds* are placed. The trunks are stored in piano-rooms. No closets of any kind. How if a case



A Large Bedroom.

Note crowding and absence of closets.

of infectious disease should develop in these crowded bedrooms? Director Jesse writes, and we must agree with him: "The Lord has been exceedingly good to us until now. But surely we ought not to tempt Him; and that is what we are doing if we permit present conditions to continue a single day longer than is absolutely necessary."

Again: "The new dormitory will not bring full relief, though it will help very much. Two-thirds of the bedrooms in the new building would have to be occupied by those who now sleep in the Music Building. The new building will not even permit us to dispense with the old frame 'emergency' buildings. I wish I could, even after the erection of the new dor-



Bedroom in Music Building.

Count the beds. There are forty others in this room.

mitory, see the end of our distress. But even then we shall need more hospital rooms, a larger dining-room, more and larger classrooms, etc. I hate to tell the whole truth for fear of discouraging our people before anything is done at all."

Such are the conditions at Seward.

Young people cheerfully submit to conditions which would be intolerable to grown-ups. Faithful professors are willing to carry on their work under the most serious handicaps. Teachers and students at Seward, both, are inspired with devotion to the cause of Christian elementary education. Striving for the goal of supplying the Church with workers in Christian schools, — the foundation of all our synodical growth and prosperity, — they put up with the conditions which we have here described. "But why," some one will ask, "have these conditions been permitted to exist?" Because, in spite of all announcements of building programs, our people have not yet supplied the necessary amounts. And what might have been the cause of this? Certainly there can only be one cause. Not the size of the appropriation; no one will say that our people cannot give a hundred thousand dollars or a million, if they see the necessity for it. No, the cause of this failure to raise the appropriated amount has been purely, simply, *lack of information*. Now that the increase in attendance has created a truly critical situation, these facts dare not be withheld any longer from the knowledge of our people.

It is surely acting in the sense and in accordance with the resolution of Synod if at this time the information regarding St. Louis and Seward is placed before the people of the Missouri Synod. Shall we doubt that our people will supply the necessary funds, when so many are willing to give up for the service of the Church what is worth more than silver and gold — their own boys? Shall not our institutions keep pace with the wonderful attendance which divine favor has vouchsafed to them? Shall not buildings be put up, new plants built, where the necessity therefor has developed? We believe that every dollar given for such purpose is given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He, our exalted Savior, is asking to-day for the contributions of His redeemed.
