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ham. Although consisting of several storeys, that building is wholly unprovided with fire escapes. Chatham is not the only offender. In Toronto, which has experienced three school fires of recent years, a similar condition exists. Few cities could be named where they do not. The order for reform has assuredly been sufficiently long delayed. It is regrettable that so terrible a warning was necessary to produce it.

The compulsory equipment of fire escapes and adequate exits is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, but it is one that must be followed by others before the authorities will be relieved of the grave responsibility now resting upon them. When asked as to the effect of the new regulations, the superintendent of the Toronto schools expressed doubt as to the practicability of fire escapes in schools.

"As fires in schools," he said, "usually occur in weather such as that fire escapes are likely to be slippery and the children would be liable to fall and get injured, fire escapes are of very little use. It is well known that sidewalks may be cleared off in the morning and be quite slippery by noon, so it may be imagined what difficulty there would be in trying to keep fire escapes or galleries safe. Of course, fire escapes are of use on other buildings, where there are adults, who are better able to climb around. But their usefulness on schools is a very debatable question."

In conversation with the Monetary Times, the Toronto fire chief spoke in no hesitating terms of the necessity for outside galleries and stairways in all three-storeyed school buildings. His view is also shared by the city architect, who will presumably make recommendations to the local board of control to that effect. The Chief of the Montreal Brigade, another strong advocate of outside galleries, is making a tour of inspection of the schools there, and has

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already discovered many shortcomings. One glaring instance is the St. Helen School, where the lives of a hundred little girls, mostly under seven and eight years of age, are daily in jeopardy. The school occupies the third floor of a four-storey building, the ground floor of which is used as a hardware and fuel alcohol store. The only egress from the class-room is by a tortuous stairway leading through a narrow hallway to the single front door, common to all the upper part of the building. The door opens inwards, the stairs being just wide enough in to permit it to do so. In the event of a rush, it would be impossible to hold it open; but through it the children would have to come as there is no other means of escape. Happily, the school expects to move its quarters next month. But the fact that such criminally hazardous conditions have been allowed to exist at all is further proof of the urgent need for reforms which should have been undertaken by the local authorities long ago.

The Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children has taken up the fight for better protection of the schools of Montreal against fire, and adopted resolutions provided for petitioning the Provincial Legislature for the passage of laws compelling the authorities to properly equip all school buildings with outside fire escapes.

From all parts of the country come reports telling of investigations made by municipal authorities of the condition of their schools. St. Catharines, Ont., is already preparing a by-law to enforce the placing of fire escapes upon all public buildings. Other municipalities in the Province will, nolens volens; have to follow suit under the Government order. From other points is heard a great deal about the efficiency of the fire drill. With few exceptions, no hint is given as to the existence of galleries and other appliances. At Point St. Charles, Que., where a demonstration was made a few days ago of the working of the fire chutes provided there, the fire escape law was read, and it was plainly evident that that large institution was devoid of the fire protection that the law called for.

Whether or not the various kinds of fire escapes are the most suitable appliances for school buildings is a matter for experts to determine. But all authorities are agreed upon the efficiency and necessity for outside galleries, wide corridors, broad stairs, fire-proof basements, and outward opening doors. When these conditions have been fulfilled, all that modern science can do will have been accomplished, and the possibility of disaster reduced to a minimum. Public opinion demands reform along these lines.