

EDUCATION IN NEW YORK.

ANNUAL REPORT

SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS, STATE OF NEW YORK, 1891.

The Superintendent of Common Schools, in conformity to law, respectfully submits the following annual report.

RECAPITULATION OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

The returns contained in the annexed table show the condition of the common schools for the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1890, covering nearly the entire period during which the free school system has been in operation. It is characterized by a period of transition from a system, early and untriedly adopted, to a system, which, in its practical operation, had proved in many respects eminently desirable, and a period in accordance with the popular will, a system, consequently, which had been generally accepted by the public sentiment in favor of elementary institutions for popular education, but the stability and value of those institutions themselves.

The unequal pressure of local taxation for the support of the common schools, and the unequal provision in the act referred to—a provision, the operation of which, in this respect, was almost entirely unforeseen—had originated a strong feeling of hostility against a system which, a few months before, had been generally accepted by the public sentiment in favor of elementary institutions for popular education, but the stability and value of those institutions themselves.

Under the peculiar circumstances attending its passage, the act of the last session was unquestionably the best that could be obtained by the friends of free schools. The only alternative presented was the return to the system of separate district schools, which had so long struggled, and which had so repeatedly and signally triumphed.

The average number of children which the schools were kept open, under the charge of duly qualified teachers, was seven months and seventeen days. The whole number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, residing in the several districts, on the 31st day of December, 1890, was 1,077,777, showing an increase during the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1890, of 7,057 over the number under instruction during the entire year; 42,306 for a period of ten months and less than two; 59,942 for eight months and less than two; 110,982 for six months and less than two; 170,005 for four months and less than two; and 196,961 for a less period than two months.

The number of unincorporated select and private schools within the limits of the several districts, during the year reported, was 2,277, and the number of pupils in attendance on such schools, was 45,340.

The number of schools for colored children in the State is 103; and the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, in said schools during the year reported, was 5,305.

The number of volumes in the several district libraries, on the 31st day of December, 1890, was 1,307,077, showing an increase during the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1890, of 7,057 over the number under instruction during the entire year.

ESTIMATES AND EXPENDITURES OF SCHOOL MONEY.

Table with 2 columns: Description of expenditure and Amount. Includes items like 'The whole amount of public money received and expended by the several districts during the year embraced by the reports contained in this report', 'Salaries of teachers', 'Fuel', 'Books', etc.

By the 24 section of the act for the establishment of free schools throughout the State, passed at the last session of the Legislature, the sum of \$1,000,000 was appropriated to be paid out of the annual revenue by tax on the real and personal property of the State, for the support of common schools; and it was made the duty of the State Superintendent, on or before the 1st day of July, in each year, to appropriate the amount thus directed to be raised among the several counties of the State, according to the valuations of real and personal property therein, returned by the assessors of the several towns and cities in accordance with the act of the 1st day of July last, was \$1,022,422 70.

valuations of real and personal property of each county, and the share of the State tax apportioned to each, is herewith transmitted, and will be found in the annexed table.

By the 4th section of the same act, the Superintendent of Common Schools was directed, on or before the first day of January in each year, to apportion and divide one-third of the several counties, and one-third of the several cities, and one-third of the several towns, into as many districts as the population of each would justify, so that the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, in each district, should be as nearly equal as possible to the number in any other district.

Some further legislative action will, it is conceived, be necessary to enable the department to carry into effect the existing provisions of law relating to the apportionment of the State tax, and the several amounts directed to be raised by tax in the several counties are required, when collected, to be paid over to the County Treasurer, and to be held by him, subject to the order of the State Superintendent, for the purpose of paying the same to the several counties, in proportion to the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, in each county.

It is conceived, that the noble enterprise, the foundations of which have been so strongly laid in an enlightened public sentiment, should not be delayed by any unnecessary delay, but prosecuted to a successful issue.

Whether, however, this desirable result shall be accomplished or postponed to a more favorable period, no reasonable doubt can longer exist as to the necessity of a restoration in some form of the system of county supervision. The attention of the Legislature has been annually called to this subject, and by my predecessor in office and myself, from the year 1857 to the present time, the necessity of a restoration in some form of the system of county supervision.

The proposed alterations of the existing system are independent of each other; and any one or more of them may be adopted by the Legislature, or they may be rejected, leaving the enactments of the present law to stand substantially as they are, with a new and improved classification and arrangement, and with such modifications as may be deemed necessary to adapt the system to the objects for which they were designed, and to carry out more fully the obvious wishes and views of the Legislature.

With reference to the separation of the office of Superintendent of Common Schools from that of Secretary of the Board of Education, it is in favor of the adoption of such a measure, in the peculiar position of the present incumbent, about five and a half dollars, are now required to be made to the county clerk, or other officer, in order to secure the collection of the school tax.

This excellent institution continues, the highest grade of excellence, and to vindicate the far seeing wisdom which provided for its establishment and permanent maintenance. The report of the Executive Committee will present an outline of the operations during the past year, and of its present state and condition. At no previous period in its history have its prospects for continued usefulness been more flattering and auspicious; its arrangements for supplying schools more perfect and complete; its corps of teachers more numerous and devoted. It is earnestly to be hoped that the distinguished success of this institution may induce the further extension of the system, in other sections of the State, until every district shall be furnished with thoroughly educated and competent teachers. The funds of the State can in no way be more beneficially applied than in securing this most desirable result.

all question conclusive of their intention, at all hazards, to preserve unimpaired the free school principle; and the strong voice of the direct representative of the people, in the Legislature, in favor of the act of the last session, declaratory of this principle, affords indubitable testimony of the strength of public sentiment in this respect.

Let us look for a moment at the practical results of the act of the last session, in its face to be "An act to establish free schools throughout the State," and the first section explicitly declares that "Common schools in the several school districts in this State shall be free to all persons residing in said districts, over the age of five and under the age of sixteen years."

The annual revenue of the Common School Fund amounts to three hundred thousand dollars; and the average length of time during which the several schools are kept open during each year is eight months and seven days. The aggregate amount paid for teachers' wages throughout the State falls a little short of \$1,500,000, and is constantly increasing as teachers of a higher grade of qualifications are secured, and the average length of the term of four months, the schools may, therefore, be entirely free; in other words, free for one third of the year.

The attention of the Legislature was called, in the past, to the necessity of restoring jurisdiction to the Superintendent, in all school district controversies, of which he was involuntarily deprived by a clerical error in the engagement of the Assembly at its last session, but was omitted to be acted upon in the Senate, from want of time.

I respectfully recommend a renewal of the State subscription to this valuable periodical, as an indispensable means of disseminating information, and in the dissemination of educational views generally. Its value in these respects might be essentially enhanced by an increase of the appropriation therefor, which would enable the Superintendent to devote its columns entirely to the objects for which it was specially designed.

By a resolution of the Assembly, of the 11th of the past, the Governor was authorized to appoint a Commissioner, whose duty it should be to prepare and report to the Legislature, at its ensuing session, an entire common school code, in one act. Under this authority, the appointment of Commissioner of Education, and the appointment of Deputy Superintendent of Common Schools, who proceeded at once to the discharge of the duty thus devolved upon him, and whose report will be forwarded to the Legislature at an early period of its session.

With reference to the separation of the office of Superintendent of Common Schools from that of Secretary of the Board of Education, it is in favor of the adoption of such a measure, in the peculiar position of the present incumbent, about five and a half dollars, are now required to be made to the county clerk, or other officer, in order to secure the collection of the school tax.

The proposed substitution of a permanent annual State tax of one mill upon every dollar of the aggregate value of the real and personal property for the support of common schools, in lieu of the present tax of eight hundred thousand dollars; and, thirdly, the restoration, in a modified form, of the system of county supervision, and restrictions of the system of county supervision.

The proposed alterations of the existing system are independent of each other; and any one or more of them may be adopted by the Legislature, or they may be rejected, leaving the enactments of the present law to stand substantially as they are, with a new and improved classification and arrangement, and with such modifications as may be deemed necessary to adapt the system to the objects for which they were designed, and to carry out more fully the obvious wishes and views of the Legislature.

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where they have been very extensively adopted; and I earnestly recommend that this requisite appropriation for their encouragement, as well for the maintenance of the system, be secured by the act of the last session, in many respects, that some adequate provision should be made by the Legislature for the selection and designation, either by the department or some officer specially appointed for that purpose, of competent and well-qualified individuals to preside over and conduct the exercises of these institutes, in order to render them efficient in the highest practicable degree, towards the accomplishment of the object in view.

In accordance with the directions contained in the section of the act of the last session for the establishment of free schools throughout the State, the several laws relating to common schools, with full practical working, and a complete digest of the several decisions now in force applicable to the existing system, accompanied with a concise history of the origin and progress of the system, and a summary of its leading features, have been compiled by Samuel R. Rand, Deputy Superintendent, under the direction of the department, and forwarded to the several school districts and school officers.

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session providing for an annual State tax of \$800,000, in addition to the annual revenue of the school fund, for the support of common schools, and directing that any surplus of the same should be applied to the purchase of books, and the maintenance of the system, be secured by the act of the last session, in many respects, that some adequate provision should be made by the Legislature for the selection and designation, either by the department or some officer specially appointed for that purpose, of competent and well-qualified individuals to preside over and conduct the exercises of these institutes, in order to render them efficient in the highest practicable degree, towards the accomplishment of the object in view.

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Trade and Commerce of the Canal. (From the Albany Evening Journal.) In accordance with our usual custom, soon after the close of each season, we secure an early market, and publish a pretty full account of the amount of property passing through this great artery, for three past seasons.

The canal closed several days earlier than was anticipated, and so early, that a large amount of property, consisting principally of flour, wheat, barley, and beef, destined for tide water, was locked up in the canal between Schenectady and Little Falls, which, had it arrived here, would have materially advanced our figures for the year. The commercial year, however, compares favorably with any of its predecessors. We have not complete returns of the amount of property going from tide water; but from the fact that while there has been a slight falling off in the tonnage coming to the Hudson river, the aggregate toll received on all the canals exceeded those of last year about \$70,000, thus showing that a larger amount of property has been conveyed on the canal than there was last season.

During the summer and early fall, the railroads monopolize the carrying trade in perishable articles, and dealers in butter, cheese, and lard, avail themselves of those facilities, and secure an early market. While this is true in regard to the articles named, the canal must necessarily retain such articles as sugar, molasses, iron, &c., which paying but small profits to the trader, will not bear so high a rate of freight as the railroads. We are inclined to give the "general movement," showing the aggregate tonnage of property ascending and descending the canal, and its estimated valuation.

Table showing the aggregate tonnage of property ascending and descending the canal, and its estimated valuation. Columns include Year, Tonnage, and Value.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE TOTAL QUANTITY OF EACH ARTICLE OF PROPERTY PASSED THROUGH THE HUDSON RIVER CANAL DURING THE YEARS 1849, 1850, AND 1851:—

Table showing the total quantity of each article of property passed through the Hudson River Canal during the years 1849, 1850, and 1851. Columns include Article, 1849, 1850, 1851.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF EACH ARTICLE WHICH CAME TO THE HUDSON RIVER, ON ALL THE CANALS, DURING THE YEARS 1849, 1850, AND 1851:—

Table showing the estimated value of each article which came to the Hudson River, on all the canals, during the years 1849, 1850, and 1851. Columns include Article, 1849, 1850, 1851.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE AGGREGATE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHICH CAME TO THE HUDSON RIVER, ON ALL THE CANALS, DURING THE YEARS 1849, 1850, AND 1851, UNDER THE DIVISIONS SPECIFIED IN THE ABOVE TABLE:—

Table showing the aggregate value of the property which came to the Hudson River, on all the canals, during the years 1849, 1850, and 1851, under the divisions specified in the above table. Columns include Division, 1849, 1850, 1851.