

FREDERICK COUNTY.

On the 30th of November I transmitted to your office an abstract of the Reports furnished by the Teachers of this County, for the Fall Term ending November 15, 1865. Since the transmission of that abstract I have received your circular dated December 1st, asking that a report be made on certain topics furnished in the same. I shall endeavor, in this communication, to furnish the information desired.

1. The Public Schools of the County were conducted with very little spirit under the old law, and in accordance with no very well defined general rules. The peculiarities of the system may be stated in a few words: The County Commissioners appointed annually "a Board of Inspectors of Primary Schools, consisting of one person from each Election District." It was the duty of this Board to divide the County into School Districts, to examine all persons offering themselves as candidates for Teachers, to visit the Schools for the purpose of inspection, to apportion such funds as might come into their hands among the Districts, and to audit the accounts of the Trustees. Each School District elected three Trustees, who were charged with the duty of erecting and repairing School Houses, of employing Teachers from among those approved by the Inspectors; of expelling refractory pupils, and of imposing other punishments. Excepting a very superficial examination of Teachers, the apportionment of the School funds, and the auditing of the Trustees' accounts, the Inspectors did very little of what would be called inspection under the present law. The Trustees rarely visited the Schools, and the people took very little interest in them. Indeed the annual elections were attended by very few of the citizens, and these were sometimes collected together by the Teacher, who was zealous in his efforts to secure the election of Trustees favorable to his own retention in office. This state of affairs produced carelessness as regards the qualification of Teachers, the character and condition of School Houses and School Furniture, and everything indeed connected with the Public Schools.

To illustrate the carelessness shown, even by Inspectors, concerning the fitness of Teachers for their duties, I may state that the Board, at one time, excused certain Teachers from examination on English Grammar, because the children attending their schools were not sufficiently advanced to take up that study. And Teachers, finding that neither Trustees nor patrons took sufficient interest in the work of education to secure a visit to the Schools or a kind and cheering word to them, became careless, dispirited and mechanical in their teaching. This reacted on the scholars, who looked upon their lessons as tasks, grievous and oppressive in their very nature, and of doubtful utility. There were some teachers who kept themselves *au courant* with the branches they were expected to teach, and their scholars were mostly studious and ambi-