

As a general thing I have the pleasure to report that I found the schools operating as successfully as could have been expected under all the circumstances. The unusual amount of sickness prevailing throughout the County during the entire School term, added to the exorbitant price of labor affected very seriously the attendance of Pupils—such was the concurrent testimony of all the Teachers.

While at the School House I obtained from each Teacher or made from personal observation a written report of each School.

The whole number of Schools organized last term, was forty-seven; whole number of Pupils admitted into the Schools, fourteen hundred and twenty-four—Boys, six hundred and sixty-nine; Girls, seven hundred and fifty-eight.

1. The condition of Public Schools under the *old law* was very unsatisfactory and inadequate to the wants of Public Instruction—much of the fault we believe to be on the part of the parents and people themselves, who seem to become more or less careless and indifferent the moment any provision is made by law for the education of their children—they seem at once to relax their own proper energies and interest, and rely on the law to do *all*—in short, to take the whole responsibility out of their hands. On this view of the case I would predicate an argument in favor of the most *thorough* and *efficient* School law with sufficient vigor in itself to accomplish everything necessary—independent of the voluntary co-operation of parents which might or might not be conceded, as the caprice or prejudices of parents might prevail over their better sense. The condition of the School Houses was barely adequate to the most common school purposes—without regard even to convenience, looks or comfort. The character of the Teachers was not of a high order—being such persons as could most conveniently be obtained in the home market, and without previous special preparations for their professional duties.

The mode of supervision was by a Commissioner appointed by the Orphans Court for each Election District, assisted by a Trustee appointed by the Commissioner for each School.

2. The Schools under the old law were supported by the Free School Fund—a tax of twelve cents in the one hundred dollars of assessable property in the County, Dredging Licenses, and the donation under Act of Assembly, 1864, chap. 28. We do not feel justified in saying that the Schools attained to any considerable degree of efficiency—certainly not to any degree of excellence under the old law.

3. While we would not be understood to speak disparagingly of the general intelligence of the people of our County, it is nevertheless, too true that we have a large number of persons who can neither read nor write.

4. We regret to say that there is not, in our opinion, a proper evidence of zeal in sustaining Public Schools and of willingness to erect and furnish Public School Houses. Our people, unfortunately, have been too much divided in sentiment on the vital question of sustaining the National Government itself—it is hardly to be expected that they will *so soon* be united and zealous in sustaining an institution of the State, however good and perfect it may be. Let the Legislators of Maryland in all time to come, conscious that the education of the masses, through the instrumentality of free Public Schools, is the true policy to be adopted by the State—adhere to this policy with *firmness* and perseverance; and public sentiment will not be long in rendering a cheerful acquiescence—the growth of a good wholesome moral sentiment will mark the progress and zeal of our people in sustaining Public Free Schools. At present they are much swayed by prejudices, exasperated and intensified by our recent excited election.

5. Our Board has adopted the sliding scale of Baltimore County for fixing the salaries of Teachers—the minimum being seventy-five dollars for fifteen scholars—one dollar and a half each for the first ten scholars—one dollar