

6,466 persons between five and twenty. She, therefore, receives \$10,883.47. But by act of Legislature she is released from the responsibility of educating 4,384 of those persons, they being black, and uses the entire School money for the education of 2,082, thus receiving \$5 for each. On the other hand, Allegany County receives \$18,264.24 for a population of 10,851, nearly all of whom have to be educated; there being only 464 colored children in the County, thus receiving only \$1.94 for each pupil.

This is an unjust discrimination in favor of certain Counties. It alone would furnish sufficient reason for requiring separate Schools to be opened for colored children, even were there no arguments upon economic and general grounds.

If the money is given for a specific purpose, it is the duty of legislators to require its faithful application.

While the State is holding back, an association of citizens, influenced by philanthropic motives, is endeavoring to make up our lack of duty. Their report shows thirty-four Schools in the different parts of the State, maintained by private liberality. The plan of operations for 1866, embraces 116 Schools, at an expense of \$56,000. If nothing more can be done, this Association ought at least be authorized to draw from the Treasury the amount paid for each colored child, but I trust the General Assembly will put into the law the sections reported by me last February, directing that separate Schools shall be established for the instruction of youth of African descent, whenever as many as forty claim the privileges of Public Instruction; these Schools to be under the control of the Board of School Commissioners.

No person of intelligence pretends to doubt the capacity of colored children to acquire knowledge. The experience of the past three years settles this point very satisfactorily; not only in our midst, but even in those portions of the South where slavery was more exacting, and the negroes were worked in large bodies upon the rice and cotton plantations, having very little intercourse with persons of any degree of intelligence. Our labor then will not be in vain, and I invoke the General Assembly to manifest its wisdom and philanthropy by proffering the blessings of education to a class of children long neglected, whose parents have rendered faithful service and by whose labor millions of dollars have been added to our wealth.

I leave politicians to discuss the question of suffrage, but this much may be asserted, that while it is very doubtful whether the colored man is fit to be trusted with the ballot, there can be no doubt that he ought to have the Spelling Book.

#### VIII.—PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHOOL LAW.

The amendments proposed, do not change the character of the School System, and with one exception embrace those sections which were reported by the Joint Committee on Education, but failed to receive the sanction of the Senate when the bill was under debate. They embrace:

1st. Certain verbal alterations which will remove that obscurity of expression which is claimed to furnish some reason for the difference of