

the first two weeks after being distributed, varied from \$1.68 to \$33. On the whole, it is my impression they are being introduced in our County, quite as fast as could be reasonably expected. Parents feel aggrieved at first, that they should be required to throw away the old school books, so that the substitution must be a work of time.

But if we escape the *misfortune* of a selection of different books by a differently constituted State Board, I think it will not be long before a most desirable object will be accomplished in the use by all the Public Schools, of a uniform series of Text Books. Already I see a beneficent change being worked in this way, especially in the less favored parts of the County.

"How long," you inquire "will you be able to continue the Schools with the present income?"

It is known to you that the section of our present School Law, which was devised for the object of continuing the local school appropriation until 1867, was disregarded by the Commissioners of Montgomery County. Consequently that source of income, so necessary to build and furnish new School-Houses, is cut off from us. We will, therefore, be unable to continue the Schools during the entire year. From present appearances, they will be closed at the end of the third quarter, the 15th of April. We are enabled to extend the session to that time, through the occurrence of several favorable circumstances—the principal one being, that by the operation of the *just and beneficent* system of distribution of the funds from the State Tax, adopted in our School Law, *our comparatively poor County* receives help from its more favored sisters.

In reply to your inquiry in regard to the zeal of our people in sustaining the Public School System, and also their actual status in regard to general intelligence, I have to say, that the majority do not appear to be very zealous in the cause. In fact there exists a great degree of apathy. It has not taken hold of them in the right way as yet. But there are some pretty good reasons for this lack of interest. They have tried several different School systems, and they complain with some show of truth, that the beneficial results visible so far are scarcely in proportion to the expense incurred. It is stated in the *First Annual Report, herewith sent you* (p. 15,) that there were 450 white people in the County, in the year 1860, above the age of twenty, who could not read and write. The fact of the existence of such deep darkness, in our midst, ought to stimulate us to the most vigorous efforts remove to it, and I believe it will.

Our people have suffered much in their property from the late fearful civil strife, and still more in their mind and feelings. But a brighter day is coming—the dawn is distinctly visible—light is dispersing the mists. Slowly, however.

In conclusion, as you ask me to state my opinion of the School Law, I can say with some confidence, that the more I have examined it and the farther I have seen it tried, the higher is my opinion of it, as a good working system, well adapted to the wants of the people of Maryland.

Improvements to the machine I am not prepared to suggest—should be shy of suggesting—until I have seen it running some time longer. You have added a feature in the By-Laws, which in my judgment will be very beneficial, in providing for the appointment of a School Visitor, or local trustee. Great care should be taken to select the right man for the post; I could wish there had been a printed commission made out for the appointee, just to give more show of importance to it.

I think the School Law is good; but must add that one of its most *essential* provisions is not yet put into operation. I refer to that for establishing a Normal School. Without such an institution, I do not see where or how we are to find competent teachers. Without competent teachers (and they are