

form series of Text Books, the State Normal School, building and furnishing School houses, and the local tax required in several Counties to continue the Schools in Session as Free Schools, longer than the 6 months required by the Constitution and Act of Assembly. In various parts of the Law, verbal alterations were made to correct ambiguity of language and contradictions or seeming inconsistencies, which resulted from the fact that there was no general revision of the whole law after it had been amended and almost entirely changed, in some of its leading features, while under discussion in the Senate.

Nothing was then reported which changed the essence of the law. No organic alterations were then proposed nor are any now recommended. The system of Free Schools is in the main adapted to our wants, and nothing would tend so much to unsettle confidence in its operation, interrupt the progress of pupils in their studies or disturb teachers in their methods of instruction and discipline as changes, unless they are imperatively demanded, and are suggested by persons who coming in daily contact with the Schools, can fortify their recommendations by practical experience, derived from a close and intelligent observation of the condition and progress of the system of public instruction. It would be wiser to bear with minor defects and to contend against moderate difficulties, than to attempt any change by which modes of administration to which teachers and pupils are becoming accustomed will be disturbed. What we want now is a patient continuance in well doing.

SCHOOL LEGISLATION.

Here I ask the privilege to depart from the plan which has been kept in view in this report, namely, the explanation of the School law and an exhibition of its work, and to discuss briefly the subject of School legislation. While studying closely the History of School legislation in every State which has adopted a system of Free Public Schools, one fact has been most forcibly impressed upon my mind. It is that every man claims to be an expert on the question of Schools, and to know exactly what a School ought to be, who is a good teacher and how he ought to govern his pupils. This is to my mind an anomaly. Gentlemen who are farmers do not venture to discuss dictatorial questions of law. Financial problems are not most properly referred to physicians, nor are clergymen invoked to decide upon the State policy as it concerns Rail Roads and Canals. The manufacturing interests and mining interests are wisely committed to skilled mechanics and scientific men who have made mineralogy and geology a specialty; in a word, all specific interests are presumed to be best regulated and most wisely developed by