

present system, it remains for me to detail the operations of the Board, and the condition of the Public Schools for the past year. From the multiplicity of events and duties that claimed our attention during the year just closed, it is a matter of some difficulty to select those best fitted for presentation, in my Report. Perhaps, however, an intelligent view of our labors, and the working of the Schools, may be obtained from a consideration of the following topics, viz: 1st, Districting the County; 2d, School Lots, Furniture and Houses; 3d, Examination of Teachers; 4th, Visiting and Examination of Schools; 5th, Text-books and Stationery; 6th, Teachers' Association; and 7th, Finances.

DISTRICTING THE COUNTY.

As this was considered a matter of primary importance, it engaged the early attention of the Board. At its second meeting, a Committee, consisting of Robert W. Yoe, Commissioner, the Secretary and myself, was appointed to examine into the limits of the existing School Districts, and report what changes (if any,) were necessary. We were required, "after furnishing ourselves with such copies of the Returns of former Commissioners as could be procured, to visit, in person, the several School Districts; familiarize ourselves with their natural features; ascertain, as nearly as possible, the population; examine into the condition and location of the houses, and obtain such other information as might be necessary to enable the Board to form an intelligent opinion on the subject." The Committee performed the duty faithfully, though one of no little labor, involving as it did, a travel of some two hundred miles, and occupying their attention, with one short exception, from the 4th of August to the 8th of September, following. Their Report is before me, in which they state 'that the existing division (made under the provision of the Act of 1854,) was effected by the division of each *Election* District, *separately*. The result was, that while some degree of uniformity in territory and population was attained in laying off the more *central* School Districts, those formed along the *border* of the Election Districts—having to conform to this boundary—were often so irregular in size and shape, that it was impracticable to so locate a house in their limits, as to be accessible to the majority of the residents. The changes subsequently made by the several Boards of School Commissioners, to remedy this defect in the original divisions, only rendered the matter worse; for though affording some temporary relief, yet as each alteration had to be made by encroaching, more or less, upon adjoining Districts, it served but to increase the want of uniformity, until—at the date of the Report—the areas of the several School Districts varied from three to ten square