

*KENT COUNTY.**Office Commissioners of Public Schools of Kent Co., Md.**Chestertown.*

REV. L. VAN BOKKELEN,

*State Superintendent Public Instruction.**Dear Sir :*

The tabular statements, herewith submitted, give so clear an idea of the condition of the Public Schools of this County that little need be said in addition thereto.

An examination of these tables will show that the number of pupils attending the schools has steadily increased from the inception of the present system up to the close of the scholastic year; and this fact should, it appears to me, be sufficient proof that the opposition to the system, which is undeniably strong in this County, has its origin and foundation in prejudice rather than in reason.

Those who, from their connection with both the old and new systems, are best able to judge of their comparative merits—I mean the teachers and those who, as trustees, took an active interest in the schools under the former regime—unequivocally declare in favor of the present system and assert that the schools have gained in efficiency. On the other hand, a large majority of those who denounce the present system knew but little of the defects of the former, and know nothing of the practical working of the present. In all my visits I have not met with one of this class in the school-room.

The complaint is loud, if for any cause, the schools are suspended; yet if they are in any respect worse than their "illustrious predecessors," their entire suspension would, I am very sure, be a public blessing. A good deal is said, too, about the cost of the present system. We challenge a comparison with the past. Heretofore there was uniformly a levy on the County of \$5,250, to which was added the State fund, making nearly \$9,000, and as much more by private contributions. Nearly all the fuel was given, and when a new stove or slight repairs became indispensable, a subscription was resorted to.

The present Board have paid \$1,400 debt incurred by the former Boards of trustees, have expended \$1,100 for stoves and fuel, have paid upwards of \$200 for repairs, and employed better teachers at higher salaries, and yet have received nothing from the County, nor a chip of wood from any quarter, nor will the Board shrink from a comparison of results. With the funds at our command we have kept the schools in operation ten months consecutively, which is as long as the