

or a decrease of \$4,639,176.00. The counties show a gain of \$65,960.00, while the shrinkage in Baltimore City is shown to be \$4,705,136.00, attributable possibly to the errors in the new assesment of the year previous. Notwithstanding this shrinkage, there is yet a gain of \$62,798,389.00, under the new or "Bankard" assesment over the basis of 1896, as made under the provisions of the assesment of 1876.

PUBLIC SCHOOL TAX.

Statement "L" exhibits the levy, receipts and disbursements by counties on account of the Public School Tax for the fiscal year 1898. The balance on hand October 1, 1897 and the receipts during the year, aggregate the unprecedented sum of \$1,166,304.96, while the disbursements amount to \$827,366.71, leaving a balance of \$338,938.25 on hand October 1, 1898 for future distributions. The amounts distributed to Public Schools for the past five years may be instructive by comparison :

\$827,366.71	in 1898,
496,224.69	" 1897,
591,753.00	" 1896,
601,088.04	" 1895,
600,294.57	" 1894.

The large gain in 1898 was owing to the increased basis and prompt collections by this Department.

Two changes were made by the last Legislature in the distribution of this tax. The appropriation to the State Normal School (white) was increased from \$10,500.00 to \$20,000.00 per year, while the amount to colored schools was increased from \$125,000.00, possibly \$100,000.00, depending upon the amount collected, to the fixed sum of \$150,000.00, regardless of collections.

FREE BOOKS.

In Statement "M" is shown the levy, receipts and disbursements on account of this fund, the receipts amounting to \$136,433.10, being the amount of the 2 cents of the 17½ cents tax and the disbursements as fixed by statute, \$150,000.00, leaving a deficit of \$134,384.98 as a net payment from the Treasury during the three years of the operation of the law. During this time the counties and Baltimore City have so wisely expended this money that in many instances the sums received are more than adequate for the purposes mentioned.

RECEIPTS IN DETAIL.

In Tables Nos. 1 to 12, inclusive, are fully set forth in detail the itemized receipts into the Treasury during the