

In connection with this subject, I would call to your attention the accounts of the agents appointed by me to collect and transmit to this department the vote of the Soldiers at the late elections, which are herewith transmitted, presenting a very moderate claim for compensation, and for which I request an appropriation in accordance with the requirement of the Constitution.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Other parts of the Constitution expressly requiring your action, will doubtless attract your notice, whilst some of them are in my opinion, so important as to make it proper for me to bring them to your special attention. None of them exceed in importance the requirements in regard to a system of public instruction, and I consider it a subject of especial congratulation that an enterprise which has so long engaged the attention of our most thoughtful citizens, excited such anxious concern, and been so repeatedly urged upon the attention of our Legislative Assemblies, is at last about to be inaugurated upon so liberal a basis, and with such promise of success. The tax of ten cents on the hundred dollars which you are required to levy for the support of the Free Schools of the State, and the further tax of five cents on same amount towards a permanent fund, the increments of which shall hereafter support the system without further taxation, though to some they may seem, as all new taxes usually do, oppressive, will I have no doubt, pay us in the end a better premium on the investment than any tax for any other improvement to which we have ever submitted.

Though the time allowed me by the terms of the Constitution for the appointment of a General Superintendent of public instruction was much shorter than I would have desired, it was my good fortune within the time prescribed to secure for that office the services of one, that I believe to be eminently qualified for the place. He has already by personal communication with the authorities of other States, acquired much desirable information on subjects connected with his duties, and from those who have been successful in maturing similar systems; and the printed circulars and lists of interrogatories he has submitted to our local school authorities in each county, preliminary to a personal visit to them he is about to make, and copies of which will accompany this communication, will assure you that he has entered upon the discharge of his duties with that appreciation of their importance, and practical view of their character, that augur well for immediate success. He is required by the Constitution to report to you within thirty days after the commencement of your present session, a uniform system of Free Public Schools,