

I invite your earnest consideration of a topic of the most vital consequence to our present and future well being as a State and People.

In my last message I employed the opportunity to review at some length the inefficiency of our present legislation on the subject of Common School Education in Maryland, outside of the city of Baltimore. And in making this exception, I refer with pride to the energy, perseverance and enlightened public spirit, which has characterized the friends of popular education in that city, by which its Common Schools have been advanced to a high state of excellence and usefulness. The State at large, however, with the exception of a few localities is hopelessly deficient of results which promise any permanent benefit.

In response to my recommendation on this subject a Bill for the establishment of "a uniform system of public schools" was passed by one branch of the Legislature, and failed by a few votes to receive the sanction of the other, of the details of that bill or of its sufficiency to accomplish the end proposed, I am not prepared to express an opinion, but I trust the effort to establish some state system will be renewed at the present session, and with better success.

The total insufficiency of our public school system is painfully apparent to all who realize the importance of general education as the great auxiliary of progress. Schools located and established have only a temporary existence, and effect the most unsatisfactory results because of the uncertainty of their continuance. Confidence is wanting on the part of the people, and not only does systematic public education become a questionable policy but education itself, as a positive good falls in popular esteem.

We need therefore an energetic and radical effort, which shall establish a more substantial basis for a state system of public schools, and at the same time inaugurate a process of supervision and culture, under which thorough efficiency shall be ultimately developed.

In the first place therefore I suggest as indispensable to the end proposed, provision for the appointment of a Superintendent of Public Schools, whose duty has been prescribed by the act of 1825. To secure the services of a competent person, and his unremitting attention to the duties of his office, it will be necessary to give him a liberal salary, and to allow an adequate sum for the expenses incident to constant supervision. Upon this officer should devolve all the responsibility, for the effective and uniform operation of an improved system, for the introduction of such amendments and ameliorations as experience may suggest from time to time, and