

designed. In many the system has become almost extinct; in others, it has never been adopted; while in but very few the working of the system gives satisfaction to the people. What is the natural consequence of this state of things? The public system is inefficient in its operation; the public schools are closed for the greater part of the year; the private schools are banished from the State, private teachers have sought elsewhere for their labors a more congenial soil, and hence thousands of our children, left with inefficient schools, either public or private, have been deprived of the light of knowledge, and compelled to grow up in ignorance. Let the friends of education reflect upon these facts; let them remember this truth, which should be written in indelible characters upon the memory of every parent, and engraven upon the heart of every friend of science in the State; that an efficient system of public schools is far more detrimental to the cause of education than no system at all.

From what we have shown, it must be apparent to every reflecting mind, that our present system is seriously defective either in theory or in practice; that the present laws on primary education are ineffectual in accomplishing the object for which they were designed. It is equally apparent, that it becomes the imperative duty of the State to arrest the evil and apply the remedy.

The Committee, after a careful examination of the subject, are firmly of the opinion, that the inefficiency of our system may be traced chiefly to two causes, viz: *First*—the want of a general law on the subject, which would operate, as far as practicable, uniformly throughout the State; and, *Secondly*—the want of funds sufficient to give vigor and energy to the practical operation of the system. If we examine the laws on this subject in those States in which popular education was early established, and in which time and experience have combined to bring the system to a high state of perfection, we find some general and uniform laws on the subject. But in Maryland each county has a separate school law, and the city of Baltimore has also a separate regulation for the government of her own schools. In almost every other State, where the standard of popular education has been unfurled, the laws uniformly direct that an annual report on the subject shall be published. These reports contain a fund of valuable information. They exhibit the number of schools, the number of teachers and pupils in the several counties and cities respectively, the incidental expenses of each school for teachers salary, for books, stationery, &c.; the aggregate cost of the entire system of the whole State, with many other items of useful information, which tend to awaken the public mind to the subject, and to diffuse among the people a lively interest in the cause of education. But in Maryland we have nothing of the kind; no general law; no uniform system; no annual report. The opera-