

the common school fund of the State, while the local authorities have annually contributed little more than sufficient to keep life in the system, without enabling it to impart any practical benefits. It may well be said of Maryland, so far as relates to her system of public education, that she has brought her children within view of the beautiful temple of science, without permitting them to worship at its altar; they are permitted to gaze upon the structure, which dazzles them with its splendor; they are permitted to approach the fountain of knowledge, but ere they have quenched their thirst at its limpid waters, the cup is dashed from their lips, the light is withdrawn from their eyes. The State has covered her statute books, with laws on the subject of education; she has laid out school districts, and built school houses; she has provided every thing, save that which is most essential, the means of conducting the system. The great mass of the people seeing that the system, owing to its present state of inefficiency, has produced so few of the advantages which they had fondly anticipated, are becoming daily more and more indifferent to the cause; even the warmest friends of popular education seem to have lost their energy; hence that apathy on the subject, which, to a great extent, pervades the entire state.

The Committee would earnestly recommend to the several counties, inasmuch as it is proposed to place the subject under their own immediate control, to increase the school tax, so far at least as to keep their schools in successful operation, for a period of eight or ten months in the year. It is confidentially believed, that if the experiment were tried in those sections of the State, where the system has heretofore been most inefficient, it would be productive of the most beneficial results; let the people for one year enjoy the advantages of an efficient and well conducted system of public schools, and they would not forego these advantages for any earthly consideration. And it is well worthy of remark, that not in a single county of those, which have increased their school tax to such an extent as to give a vigorous operation to the system, have the people asked a reduction of that tax. None has been more willingly or more cheerfully paid. And it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant, when every county in the State will have a school fund sufficient for the education of every child within her borders; and as the Constitution directs, that so soon as the public debt shall be paid off, the State stock in the internal improvement companies shall be transferred to the several counties and the City of Baltimore, in proportion to the amount contributed by each towards the completion of these works, the committee would earnestly recommend the passage of a law in anticipation of this event, directing the several counties and the city of Baltimore to invest said stocks, when received, as a permanent school fund. If this were done, it would have a most beneficial effect. The eye would be cast to the future, the