

present would be forgotten. The man who is now heavily taxed for the support of the public schools, would pay his tax with a more cheerful heart, in anticipation of the day which he saw was rapidly advancing when this tax would cease, or be comparatively small.

In a state whose geographical limits are so peculiar as those of Maryland, where the interests of the different sections are so conflicting, it becomes no easy task to frame a law on the subject of education that would give satisfaction to the whole. The committee, in the discharge of their duty, were beset with difficulties at every step of their progress. That system which would be agreeable to one section, was found impracticable in another; that which was acceptable in the northern, would not suit the southern portion of the State. The committee, however, after examining the inefficiency of the present system, and being firmly persuaded that the cause of popular education would be promoted by the passage of a general law, have proposed such a law on the subject, as, in their judgment, will be acceptable to every locality of the State, while, at the same time, it will preserve the grand features of the system uniform and unbroken.

If we cast our eyes abroad and examine the educational laws of other States, we invariably find that there is some controlling head to the system. In most of the New England States, the system is controlled by a Board of Education. In others, it is governed by a State Superintendent; while in New York and some other States, the Secretary of State is constituted the superintendent of the public schools. The committee, deeming it important to have some centre to the system, have proposed the Secretary of State nominally, as the superintendent of the public schools in our State. They do not, however, propose to clothe that functionary with the powers with which he is invested in other States, but they would simply impose upon him the duty, after receiving the reports from the schools in the several counties, to compile from them a general report for the whole State, and publish the same annually.

In order to remove a prejudice which has hitherto existed against a general school law, the committee would remark, that the bill which they propose, so far from taking away from the counties any power or control over their own schools, gives them a far greater power in the management of their schools than they heretofore enjoyed under their local laws. The bill provides that there shall be a Board of Commissioners of public schools, either elected by the people, or appointed by the judges of the Orphans Court in each of the several counties, and invests these Commissioners with various powers, heretofore retained and exercised by the Legislature. At the present time, if it becomes necessary to lay out a single school district in any county of the State, or to