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REPORT

— OF THE —

SUPERINTENDING SCHOOL COMMITTEE,

— OF THE TOWN OF —

LEE, N. H.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH, 1876.



NEWMARKET, N. H. :

ROCKINGHAM ADVERTISER STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.

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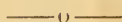
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REPORT.



The first thought that occurs to the School Committee, in making this, the Annual Report, is:—Who will care to read it? Who will heed aught that the committee may say? Who will believe aught that they say, unless it should happen to coincide with his own views and prejudices? And, to be honest, will what the committee says be worth reading and believing and saying?

Again shall the committee report the unvarnished truth, as it appears to him, or shall a poultice be applied where the case seems to need a blister?

Undoubtedly I shall be justified in taking DUTY as my guiding star.

In presenting my report of the schools in this town, I would remark, that the subject to be reported on presents so many interesting points, that it will be impossible to discuss every topic indicated, with any degree of justice, and confine the report within desirable limits.

While I have seen much to approve in the diligence and perseverance of teachers, and in the conduct and improvement of scholars, I must say I have regretted some defects in government and modes of instruction in the teachers, and much want of interest in the scholars and parents.

On the whole, however, I would say that there has been some decided improvement in the general condition of our schools.

There are yet wanting greater energy and strictness in the

government, more system in the modes of teaching, more uniformity in books used, more industry, implicit obedience and punctuality of attendance, and more interest among parents in the intellectual and moral training of their children.

I would here suggest the propriety and importance of appropriating a small sum of money yearly for the purpose of obtaining apparatus for our schools.

Every school-room should contain a clock, dictionary, a chart of the vocal elements of the English language, a globe, and a series of outline maps, cube root blocks, mottoes, diagrams, etc.

All persons who have had experience in teaching children, know the importance of having something by which to demonstrate whatever they would teach. In most of our schools there is too little explanation or familiar illustration of the branches that are taught.

The instruction is therefore superficial. This is owing, in a measure, to a want of the proper means of giving such illustrations; but, with a suitable apparatus and proper skill on the part of the teacher, the principles of which the different branches of study are based, will be better understood.

Another evil in our schools is the haste on the part of the scholars to press forward, and go over a large field of study, before the elementary principles are thoroughly understood.

This is unwise, as no one is prepared to advance in any study until its first principles are mastered. This desire of the scholars to have a smattering of almost everything, is too often encouraged by parents, and not kept within proper limits by teachers.

It is useless to attempt to hasten children along faster than they understand what they study. Let it be impressed upon the mind of the child early, that he is to advance no faster than he thoroughly understands what he goes over, and we shall see different results.

Another point to which I would call the attention of parents, teachers and scholars, is the lack of proper attention given to reading, writing and spelling in our schools. These are crowded out or kept in the back-ground by what are termed the higher branches, many of which are indeed lower in importance. Our scholars are generally poor readers and spellers compared with their other acquirements. Sometimes we find them quite familiar with difficult problems in algebra, while they will stumble at a simple question in orthography or pronunciation.

Another thing that has, as I think, operated to the injury of some schools is the prejudice excited in the minds of scholars against the teacher by remarks of parents and others out of school and before it commences.

The way is all prepared for failure, because scholars come to school at first with the expectation, if not determination, not to like the teacher.

They are prepared for every form of insubordination. It needs the wisdom of the serpent, blended with the harmlessness of the dove, to succeed under such influences.

If there are those who do not feel satisfied with the choice of teacher, instead of exciting prejudice against him or taking the part of the children in all their complaints, sustain him, co-operate with him till he is proved, and then if he fails the responsibility is his own.

It is both cowardly and cruel to turn a cold shoulder to a teacher, or stand aloof from him and then reproach him for want of success. How few of those who are clamorous with complaints have seen the school, or are even personally acquainted with the teacher? Is this just? Go and see what he is doing before you censure. If your children come home with their grievances, investigate the matter and see who is in fault before you give your decision.

Thanks to our teachers! Their registers have been re-

turned to the committee (all that have been returned the present season) in a better condition than is common. We are glad to note the improvement—the gradual waking up of teachers in this matter. What we want in these reports from teachers is no flourish, no spreading of wings, but a plain, condensed, straightforward statement of facts, with the teachers' timely suggestions, where any are needed.

Following I give brief notices of the individual schools :

I have taken no pains to seek out faults and imperfections. Rather have I striven to commend, so far as I conscientiously could, and I have found much to commend—still hoping in the future to find more.

DISTRICT NO. 1.—TURNPIRE.

Summer Term, 10 weeks. Number of scholars, 31; tardy, 14; dismissals, 7; wages per month, including board, \$28.00; Miss Laura L. Bumford, of Barrington, teacher. This school was fortunate in being placed under the care of an experienced teacher—one who understood very well how to drive nearly all sources of disorder from the schoolroom. The examination at the close of the term, gave decided evidence that the pupils had made a dilligent use of their time.

Winter Term, $16\frac{2}{3}$ weeks; number of scholars, 38; tardy 72; dismissals, 18; Mr. Frank J. Davis, of Durham, teacher. Wages per month, including board, \$28.00. None but an active, energetic and judicious teacher can hope to accomplish much good in this district. Such a teacher is Frank J. Davis, who evidently labored assiduously for the advancement of his pupils, sparing no pains to make his school one in which no scholar could attend without being benefitted by it.

Although this was his first attempt at teaching, the closing

examination gave evidence of his possessing marked ability and aptness as a teacher.

The progress made during the term was highly satisfactory to me. I was exceedingly pleased to notice several of the residents of the district present, an indication that they have an interest in the welfare of their school.

JOHN W. HILL.

Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 2. MAST ROAD.

Summer Term, 7 weeks; number of scholars, 16; average attendance, $14\frac{1}{2}$; tardy, 1; dismissals, 1; Miss M. Abbie Ewer, of Lee, teacher. Wages of teacher, including board, \$30.00. I was not notified in season to make a second visit to this school, therefore I am unable to definitely report in regard to the improvement made. The school, however, at my first visit, appeared very studious, and I doubt not but that the remarks by the teacher, which I append, are correct. "I consider this term as one of the pleasantest I ever kept. The pupils are bright, wide awake and nearly all anxious to learn, which speaks well for their future standing. Throughout the term I have had no occasion to use any punishment whatever; the scholars were more than obedient and respectful if that can be. It gives me real pleasure to look back upon the term and note the progress and interest of each pupil."

The names of 9 scholars are reported as not being absent or tardy during the term, which are:—Samuel W. Bartlett, Addie P. Chesley, Carrie E. Fernald, Ella J. Fernald, Willie E. Fernald, Frank O. Fernald, Sarah L. James, George P. James, Alice G. James and Carrie L. Thompson.

Winter Term, 7 weeks; number of scholars 17; tardy 2;

dismissals, 1; Mr. Daniel W. Snell, of Lee, teacher; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.00.

Though this was Mr. S.'s first pedagogic labors, still he acquitted himself with much credit, and may well feel encouraged to persevere in his new vocation.

Most of the scholars made commendable improvement, and in point of order the school stood No. 1.

CHARLES E. THOMPSON,

Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 3.—WEDNESDAY HILL.

Fall and Winter Term.—10 $\frac{2}{5}$ weeks; number of scholars 5; tardy 6; dismissals 0; Miss Nellie E. McNeal, of Epping, teacher; wages of teacher, including board, \$28 00.

This school is very small; quite too small to be interesting or desirable as a field of labor. The school-house is ancient, untasty, and not very commodious. If the district is to be dissolved and absorbed by other contiguous districts, as it ought to be, the "old school-house" is well enough as it is, but if the district is to "arise and shine in a new life," I think it should have a better house to put its light in.

This term of school, however, was quite pleasant and successful. The teacher was faithfully devoted to her task, and kept her little family quite harmonious and industrious. The committee cheerfully accords to her the merit due to a good teacher, and hopes for her the best success hereafter.

WILLIAM A. JENKINS, Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 4.—HILL.

Summer Term, 8 weeks; number of scholars, 23; tardy, 3; dismissals, 3; Nellie E. McNeal, of Epping, teacher; wages of teacher, including board, \$28.00.

Miss McNeal, being young and rather inexperienced, fears might reasonably have been entertained for her success. But all these fears were happily disappointed. Her success, under the circumstances, was very good. She acquitted herself well, and left a record indicating future success and usefulness as a teacher if she be true to herself. Therein will be found the secret of triumph.

Winter Term.—The first 9 weeks of this term were under the charge of Mrs. Millie C. Plummer, of Lee; number of scholars, 28; tardy, 5; dismissals, 2; wages of teacher, including board, \$36.00.

I wish every other district in town could find luck lying at its door, as No. 4 has, and with the same wise disposition to welcome and appropriate it. Am I understood? I mean by this to commend—more heartily than sinners will have faith to believe—the practice of selecting a teacher who is a resident of the district, when one can be found of competent qualifications, of maturity of intellect, individuality of character, and with a good heart to match. The teacher knows her work and the district knows its teacher. And an established reputation in the district is not so easily tampered with by foolish whims and idle prejudices, as in the case of a stranger. Hence under the care of such a teacher there is more dignity to the school, and consequently more intellectual and moral progress.

I here append the remarks by the teacher, which speak volumes in praise of the school, viz: “I am pleased that I can speak so well of this school. The scholars deserve much credit, not only for good moral deportment and dili-

gence in study, but for punctuality and regular attendance." The names of scholars not absent one half-day are, Fanny Snell, Carrie B. Ryan, Annie M. Jones, Fred E. Snell, Earnest S. Comings, Frank C. Ryan, Irving A. Thompson, Willie H. Thompson, Ralph H. Critcherson, Oscar L. Pendergast, Daniel T. Buzzell, Fred P. Comings, Elmer E. Davis, Willie T. Wallace, Edwin C. Thompson, Granville B. Thompson and Willie F. Critcherson.

The last four weeks of the term were under the charge of Miss Nellie E. McNeal. I think Miss McNeal was most zealous for her pupils' improvement, but I do not think this school in winter her proper sphere of labor. In saying this I do not mean to disparage her literary qualifications nor impugn the character of her pupils.

If her success the present term was not equal to that of the first, it was owing to circumstances. There was some dissatisfaction in the district. With so large a number of scholars, and some of them, no doubt, feeling that nine weeks were enough for one term, with a great amount of labor to be performed; amid these embarrassments, we could very easily predict that a young woman, unless she was a real heroine, would not succeed in satisfying everybody—even satisfying herself. Unless it be in some peculiar school distinguished for gentleness and good order, I do not think it good policy to entrust a winter school to a female teacher—certainly not unless the parents are pretty good saints and will sustain her promptly and fully in the exercise of vigorous discipline.

JOB THOMPSON,

JOHN THOMPSON,

THEODORE P. KNIGHT,

Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 5.—HOOK.

Summer Term, 8 weeks; number of scholars, 28; tardy, 74; dismissals, 0; Miss Mary S. Bennett, of Newmarket, teacher; wages per month, including board, \$30.00.

Miss Bennett is a teacher of good qualifications and considerable experience. The discipline in her school has not been so rigid as that in some other schools—whether wisely or unwisely so, I do not pretend to affirm. Discipline in different schools is often wisely varied.

The term was an agreeable one and improvement in scholarship decidedly good. A few advanced scholars in grammar and mathematics, in this school add much to its character.

Winter Term, 8 weeks; number of scholars, 29; tardy, 64; dismissals, 5; Miss Edna A. Hobbs of South Newmarket, teacher; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.00.

Miss Hobbs' former reputation as a skillful and successful teacher was fully maintained during this term. I found the school under very good discipline, classes well arranged and pupils studious. It is seldom that a term of school passes off with so little to regret, or so little to mar the harmony in the school-room or disturb the feeling of the parents.

JAMES S. GLIDDEN,

Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 6.—WADLEY'S FALLS.

Summer Term, 9 weeks; number of scholars 29; tardy, 66; dismissals, 7; Miss Annie Leighton Bennett, of Newmarket, teacher; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.00. Here I found teacher and scholars wide-awake. The teacher appeared truly zealous in her vocation, and seemed to impart life and energy to all around her.

The examination showed as much improvement as I have

found in any school, during the summer terms, visited by me.

The winter term in No. 6 was under the care of Mr. Frederick C. Bartlett, of Derry. He having returned no register at the time of my writing up this report I am unable to make a full report of his doings, but I feel it my duty, though with many regrets, to say that the scholars at the close of the winter term did not show much evidence of improvement. Many of the parents, being dissatisfied with the teacher, kept their children at home. The teacher attributed the blame to the parents for want of sufficient interest in the school which caused the failure. By the way, this was Mr. Bartlett's first effort at teaching.

ISAIAH D. EDGERLY,

Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 7.—LANG'S

Summer Term, 7 weeks; *Winter term*, 7 weeks; tardy in summer, 13; in winter, 13; dismissals in summer, 5; in winter, 10; Miss Annie E. Gile, of Nottingham, teacher of both terms; wages of teacher, including board in summer, \$32.00; in winter, \$34.00.

This was a very quiet school during the whole eighteen weeks it was in session—one of the most quiet and orderly in town.

The teacher was certainly very faithful, active and persevering, and may justly pride herself upon leaving her school with a good reputation. Her success was most marked and praiseworthy. In her teaching there was a maturity of thought and precision of explanation, very much needed in our common schools. What she taught was not merely a book fragment, but a part of herself. Pupils trained according to her plan, will be likely, hereafter, to have an idea of their own.—How desirable!

AMOS PIPER.

Prudential Committee.

In closing this report, your committee would bespeak the earnest co-operation of parents and citizens in behalf of our schools.

The cause is one of interest and magnitude, second to none relating to the public welfare. Nor can it be neglected without the most serious results.

If our farms, stores, workshops, factories, banks and other interests of the community demand our attention and support certainly the education of our children ought not to be neglected.

Some one has wisely said that "our common schools are the cyries of liberty and the hands of law, as they are both the offspring and the root of religion. They were devised by a foresight which reaches every interest of man, they were established by a sacrifice that proves the depth of the principle which decreed their being, and they have been guarded from age to age, by the sleepless vigils of wisdom and goodness."

Hoping that my efforts to faithfully discharge my whole duty in connection with my business as Superintendent of Schools for the past year, have not all proved fruitless, I submit my somewhat tedious report to the indulgent consideration of the thoughtful and generous.

HOSEA B. SNELL,

Superintending School Committee.



