

In the history of this county the schools were never in a better condition financially, educationally, and in every other way than at present. Good school houses have been and are being built as rapidly as our funds will permit, furnished with patent school desks, charts, maps, stoves, blackboards, etc. There is less complaint from dissatisfied patrons than ever before, and, so far as the writer knows, the people are better satisfied with the progress and management of their children than at any previous time. The teachers are all residents of the county, identified with its interests, and have the confidence of the people. The same is true of all the school authorities.

The teachers are organized into a County Teachers' Association, which meets once in every two months at different places in the county, thus bringing the teachers and patrons in social and educational contact and acquaintance. At these meetings, practical essays are read and discussed, live questions propounded and answered, experiences compared, opinions interchanged, future plans considered and, in fact, the whole range of school work brought in review and passed upon. The best of feeling and good fellowship have always prevailed at such times. No rasping, harsh criticisms are indulged in, but helpful fraternity and becoming courtesy is the rule.

The Superintendent has failed in but two instances to be present at these meetings, and then only because it was unavoidable. He delivers lectures on pedagogics and discusses practical questions at these times, and endeavors by every means in his power to push forward the work of education in the county. He visits the schools, consults with the teachers, patrons and pupils, considers and relieves, as far as possible, the needs of each of these classes, tries to correct their mistakes and encourages the teachers to faithful work, the patrons to send their children regularly to school and the pupils to diligent and persevering study. No adverse criticism of the teacher in the presence of his or her pupils is indulged in by him, but rather, if anything amiss is discovered in the teacher's methods, conduct or management, he quietly calls his or her attention to it by a written note which is unobtrusively handed to the teacher before leaving. This cautiousness he deems very important for obvious reasons. He devotes all his time to his official work, except, of course, the Sabbaths. When dissatisfaction arises in any community about school matters he repairs as quickly as possible to the locality, consults with the parties concerned and rarely fails to adjust the difficulty. In his efforts to secure the efficient working of the school laws and promote the best interests of the school, he has generally had the hearty co-operation and approval of the School Board. The President of the Board frequently attends the meetings of the teachers and enters earnestly into the work of the day by essays and counsel. Other members are sometimes present also. Supervisors are, in most cases, efficient and faithful to their duties though some of them do not visit the schools as often as could be desired.

Finally, though we consider that school matters in this county are progressing as well as could be expected in view of the sparseness of the population in many parts of the county, and other difficulties, yet we do not propose to rest content until we have brought our schools to the highest attainable efficiency and success. To this end, the Superintendent, School Board and teachers of this county will learn, as far as in them lies, of other and older counties and school workers the best ways to achieve the results desired.

Those who are in advance of us on educational lines will find us ever ready to listen to their counsel and profit by their experience.

As to needed legislation, I would respectfully suggest amendment of the law