

financially to keep them up to the present standard. The only drawback is the closing of about twenty schools for lack of teaching force.

With some modifications I think we can hereafter run all our schools in this county under the present law, but if we have to get all our Third Grade Teachers into Second Grade next year, and all our Second Grade into First Grade in two or four years at farthest, we will run less schools each year or will drop experienced Second and Third Grade teachers for new ones with like certificates. You will see by this that I think the law should be so modified that we can for some years, at least, continue to issue Third and Second Grade certificates, otherwise we will be unable to run all our country schools, as teachers qualified to take First Grade certificates will not come here to take country schools running only about five months at from \$30 to \$40 per month; and we will not be able to bring our teachers up as fast as the present law requires. Should the law be thus modified, there will still be the following inducements for teachers to progress: First, under a Third Grade the teacher will have to be examined each year, and a Second Grade once in two years, and when we know how teachers dread these examinations we know they will try to progress to get rid of being examined once in each, or every other year. And again, a Third Grade teacher is liable to be dropped, if one holding a Second Grade can be obtained, and the same would be certain to happen to a Second Grade when a First Grade could be obtained. I am in favor of the present law with above mentioned modifications.

You ask what special efforts I am making for the betterment of our schools. My special efforts have always been to get the very best teachers possible; next, the very best school buildings, furniture and apparatus possible, as these are the great prerequisites for good schools, and good schools cannot be had without them. I favor the uniform examinations because they must be more impartial, and every teacher must stand on his own merits, and knowing this the teacher is bound to progress.

Very respectfully,
 JOEL D. MEAD,
 County Superintendent Duval County.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Hon. W. N. Sheats, Tallahassee, Fla.:

Dear Sir--In reply to your circular I would state that we have made appropriations for 63 schools, employing 94 teachers. Forty-one of these, with 65 teachers, are white schools, and 22, with 29 teachers, are negro schools.

We now have in operation 51 schools, employing 82 teachers, and we will have 12 small schools to put in operation, say the 1st of February or March next, which will require 12 teachers, one each.

The attendance thus far this term has certainly been 10 per cent. better than ever before, and after a trip of two and a half weeks through the county, and visiting a number of the schools and talking with the teachers and patrons, I am encouraged to believe that this year's school work will show a marked improvement over any year since public schools were established in this county.

In the way of betterment we have erected two comfortable one-room school buildings and an addition of two rooms to another building at a cost of \$1,450,