

as to the progress of educational matters in Marion county, I have the honor of submitting the following report:

Primitive Condition of Schools.---Entering the office of County Superintendent in 1880, after careful inspection of the field my report to the Board for that scholastic year made plain the necessity for comfortable school buildings, furniture, and the adoption of a series of text-books, for the county did not own a single building, and schools were taught in cabins, churches and private residences.

Uniform Text-Books.---One recommendation made in 1883 resulted in the adoption of a series of text-books by the Board, which has been continued, with few changes, to the present date. At first this innovation met with some opposition; but, after seeing the good results and real gain in the work of the school-room, it was fully approved.

School Attendance.---From this date the attendance in our schools began to increase and continued to do so until 1894, when it reached the highest enrollment--over five thousand pupils. The demoralizing effect of the freeze, almost ruining our people in many sections of the county, reduced the attendance but not the interest, for, commencing this term with seventy-seven white and Thirty-six colored schools, the reports from these schools show that the attendance will be greater than it was in 1895 and 1896, proving clearly that the patrons have an abiding interest in our schools.

School Buildings.---The great drawback to any decided improvement in school work from the first, was the entire absence of proper buildings and furniture. Seeing this, I urged in every section the necessity of supplying the imperative demand in this line. In 1886 the work was begun, and has been continued to the present. The county now owns sixty-seven good school buildings, furnished with the very best improved patent desks, black-boards, maps, charts and globes. Since 1894 four white and three colored school buildings have been erected and furnished. Of the entire number of buildings only seven are for colored schools, as the negroes seem loth in most cases to deed to the Board a site upon which to build; but, be it said to their credit, they all have very comfortable frame buildings, which are in amny instances well furnished with good desks and black-boards.

Uniform Examinations.---Uniform examinations did not at first meet the general approval of the public. As the law was not well understood, and in its original form was too iron-clad in its terms, it gave much dissatisfaction. Since the amendment by the last Legislature the law is approved by all interested. It has relieved the County Superintendents and School Boards of great responsibilities and placed the same upon grading committees, who are made responsible for the teaching force in each county. If care is taken in conducting the examinations and every interest properly guarded, as it has been my aid to do, there seems no reason for changing this law. The standing and character of the committees appointed by the Board to grade the papers are above reproach, and I feel confident in stating that these examinations have been honestly and fairly conducted. Yet this has not improved our teaching force, as the county has lost none of its old teachers on account of the new system, and has to-day (sic) a large surplus of unemployed people who have passed the examinations successfully.

Course of Study.---Soon after the adoption of text-books a course of study for the county schools was adopted, but it was not made mandatory until a full set