

and condition of the public schools of Citrus county for the past two years.

Attendance.--Thirty-two schools have been maintained with an enrollment of 742, and an average attendance of 565 for the year ending June 30, 1898. The report of 1896 shows an enrollment of 737, and an average attendance of 492. While there has been very little change in the enrollment, the attendance has increased 4 per cent.

Discipline.--The morale of the schools has been good, and discipline has not been difficult to maintain. The study of such books as Page of Teaching, and White's School Management, as brought forward in the uniform examinations, has had a good effect in this direction, as well as improving the methods of teaching.

Grade of Teachers.--There has been a gradual improvement in the grade of teachers' certificates. The force employed at present (1898-99) shows thirteen 1st grade teachers and two 3d grade, as against nine 1st grade and six 3d grade in 1896. The tendency in our training schools and teachers' associations is to elevate the profession and raise the standard of education.

Loss of Revenue.--It is a matter of deep regret that our revenues are decreasing. The assessed valuation of property in Citrus county in 1896, was \$1,629,780. By the last assessment (1898), it is \$1,305,616, a decrease of \$324,164. This causes a direct loss to the school fund of about \$1,500 per year. Our county school tax was already five mills, hence could not be increased. It has been a difficult problem to keep up the standard in the schools on this diminished revenue. Four things have been suggested and attempted with this end in view, viz; Money has been borrowed; salaries have been lowered; sub-district levies encouraged; and schools consolidated as much as circumstances would permit.

Teachers' Warrants at Par.--To accomplish this and yet keep within its income, the Board has borrowed money each year to pay teachers' warrants from November until April. After this time, the tax collections are sufficient to refund this money and keep up school expenses. In 1897, a debt which had been carried over, was not paid until September. To meet this deficiency, the school term was shortened one month, making it four months for that year. At present we have \$1,984.51 cash on hand. Our indebtedness is \$1,500, leaving us a balance in the treasury of \$394.51 over our indebtedness.

Salaries.--By report of 1895 and '96, it appears that the cost per pupil, in Citrus county, was the highest in the State, with the exception of two counties. The teacher's salary was based on grade of certificate held. A change has been made in this respect. The salary is now based upon the enrollment and attendance, and the studies required to be taught in each school, thus placing it as nearly as practicable upon a "pro rata" basis. This has reduced the cost of the schools several hundred dollars.

Transportation.--Wherever it has been found to be economy to pay for the transportation of children in small schools to other school near by, the Board has recommended this course, and sought to introduce it. Our experience shows that three small schools can be transported to another school for about the same amount as would be required to maintain one school. This plan has been adopted with two small schools the present term. By this plan, the children are more regular in their attendance, and the increased number adds to the interest of the school.