

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

In accordance with your request I send you the following report:

After a thorough examination of the schools of this county I find that many of my schools have done excellent work; and, on the whole, all have done fairly well, and probably compare favorably with the schools of other counties and States, yet I am not satisfied with the results.

Matters of such vital importance as public education should be considered candidly and frankly, and when they are not what they should be, fulsome praise and roseate reports will not correct the existing evils.

The causes for the unsatisfactory condition of our schools deserve careful and honest investigation. These causes may be briefly stated under three heads:

1. Short terms.
2. Untrained teachers.
3. Constant change of teachers.

Short Terms A Waste.--It is a criminal waste of money to the State and of precious time to the children to give only four or five months' terms, taught in many instances by untrained teachers. Long vacations discourage pupils, as it takes so long to form right habits of study, that by the time they get interested in their work, and are beginning to make real progress, the term ends, and another long vacation follows, broken by another school term of four or five months, and probably taught by an inexperienced teacher who in consequence of the yearly changes which take place, spends half the session in organizing the school, and getting acquainted with the disposition, capabilities and environments of the pupils, if, happily, his mind has sufficient maturity to consider these important points.

The consequence is that nine-tenths of the pupils between fourteen and fifteen an age when they should be able to do intelligent work in the shops or on the farm, do not even know the bent of their own minds.

Necessity for Trained Teachers.--The necessity for carefully trained teachers is not disputed by any thoughtful people in this enlightened age; and as bad as short sessions are, untrained teachers are worse. It is better to have a child in school five months under a teacher who has been specially trained for the work, than to have it ten months under a teacher who has not received this training, even though he be a college graduate.

Teachers' Salaries.--A good corps of trained teachers cannot be maintained on poor pay and half year employment. Teachers, as well as people in other professions, do not remain young always and must look our for a "rainy day," and thirty to sixty dollars per month does not even furnish a living for one year; consequently, year by year, competent teachers drop out and go into other lines of work, leave the field to be occupied by inexperienced recruits, who if possessed of talent soon follow in the footsteps of their predecessors.

Now as to the remedies for the evils enumerated:

The school tax is a tax of which the people never complain, if the results