

Although Hillsborough county ranks first in the State of Florida in regard to teachers' salaries, yet owing to the shortness of the terms (six months in the country, eight months in the city and town schools), many of our teachers every year feel obliged to enter vocations which insures work for the whole year. This is especially the case with our young men.

It is apparent that these frequent changes in teachers retard the progress of the schools. During the past year it has been difficult to secure competent teachers to supply all the schools.

Salaries.--The salaries of teachers are based upon the grade of certificate, efficiency in teaching, size and locality of school.

Finances.--For the last three years the County Commissioners have granted us the full limit of five mills. By using strict economy on all lines we have been able to pay teachers' salaries in cash. It might be stated here that for the last fourteen years or more the school fund has never been behind. It is the opinion of our most prominent men that the members of the School Board should have the power to make the levy. Our most progressive citizens favor a higher rate of taxation than is allowed by the Constitution.

During the past two years there have been erected fourteen substantial frame school houses, costing from \$250, \$300, \$350, \$400 to \$6,500. With the exception of the County High School building, the patrons have contributed the larger portion.

Teachers' Examinations.--It is a conceded fact that the present examination law has raised the standard of teaching throughout the State, but from the current reports in regard to the abuse of this law in different portions of the State, it is evident that a change is needed in order to protect the youth and the conscientious, progressive teachers. The present examination only tests to some extent the knowledge of text-books and fails entirely to ascertain those qualifications that are as important as mere text knowledge.

This law has worked a great hardship upon professionally trained primary teachers, because time and strength that should be given to their special lines of work has to be given up to reviewing for examination.

In my opinion there should be an Examining Board for the whole State, consisting of professionally trained and experienced teachers, appointed by the State Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent, whose duty it be made to examine the teachers of the State. Examinations should be oral and written. Teachers who have passed for a first grade certificate and taught successfully for three years should upon a second examination be granted a life certificate good for the public schools of the State.

Regardless of party views, I think it the duty of every patriotic citizen to see to it that the youth of the country is properly educated. This can not be done without compulsory education. A law should be framed making it obligatory for every child between the ages of 6 and 14 to attend school, private or public, at least four months in the year.

L. W. BUCHHOLZ

County Superintendent.