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"Ours are the plans of fair delightful peace, unwarped by party rage, to live like brothers."

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REPORT

OF THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS OF THE
LITERARY FUND OF NORTH CAROLINA.
ON THE SUBJECT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.
November, 1838.

A Resolution adopted at the last session of the Legislature, made it the duty of the President and Directors of the Literary Fund to digest a plan for Common Schools, suited to the condition and resources of the State, and to report the same for the consideration of the present General Assembly.

The Board have given to this subject attentive and anxious consideration, and taken pains to procure all the information within their reach, which seemed essential to enlightened legislation. On the day of last, the President, under the direction of the Board, transmitted a Circular to the Governor of each State in the Union, requesting copies of all legislative acts and other official Documents in relation to Common Schools, either in existence or contemplation. This communication received the favorable and general attention, which the interesting subject to which it relates was so well calculated to excite; and the Board have thus been enabled to present to the General Assembly many publications of great interest and value.

They regret to be compelled to state in connexion with this topic, that their efforts to procure still more important information, with respect to the actual state of education in North Carolina, have been much less successful, and that no means at their command will enable them to obtain such facts as are indispensable to the proper discharge of the duty required at their hands.

The reports to the Senate in 1816 and 1817, by the late Judge Murphey, the letter of Charles R. Kinney, Esq., communicated to the General Assembly by Governor Owen in 1828, and the letters of the late President Caldwell, originally published in the newspapers and republished in pamphlet form in 1832, have been procured, not without difficulty. They contain many valuable suggestions, and will well reward the labor of the most careful examination; but they are all eminently wanting in that which individual effort is incompetent to supply—the precise and minute statement of facts by which alone the accuracy of their theories can be tested.

The Memoir on the subject of Internal Improvements and on the resources and finances of the State, published by Judge Murphey in 1819, is the first and only essay that has been made towards the compilation of a system of Statistics, almost as indispensable to intelligent legislation, on the leading interests of the State, as a well arranged account book to the proper management of individual affairs.

If it shall be objected to this Report, that like all others which have preceded it, it abounds in hypothesis and theory, the General Assembly will not be disposed to censure too harshly, the most manifest defect, when it is apparent that none others than themselves are competent to afford a remedy. The Memoir of Judge Murphey, above referred to, comprised much valuable information, of great interest, at the date of its publication, and constitutes the proudest monument to his memory. On the subject of education, however, it did not profess to enter into details, and the lapse of nineteen years has wrought greater changes in the character and condition of the State, than would be likely to occur to an ordinary observer. Since that time no addition has been made to the meager amount of statistical knowledge. There is no publication extant, no individual in existence, that can afford any satisfactory information with respect to the number of common schools in the State, much less the number of pupils, the mode of instruction, the condition of the school houses, the characters and qualifications of the instructors. Indeed it is doubted, whether there is any one competent to meet these inquiries with regard to a single county; certainly there is none without the legislative body, and yet all this and much more, is not merely desirable and necessary, but indispensable to the great purposes contemplated by the Resolution requiring this Report. Of the number, resources and condition of our academies, something more, and yet very little is known. Even the history of the University is as yet unwritten: the subject has been ascertained to be obscure by those best acquainted with it, and though the institution bears the name of the State, and has

been proudly denominated "the child of the Constitution," its precise situation and resources, the mode of instruction, government and police, the effect which it has heretofore had, and is likely to have hereafter on the morals, intelligence and character of the State, are less familiarly known than they should be, even to the constituted authorities of the country.

The Board have no apology to offer for the introduction of these remarks. They believe there are none more devoted than they to the best interests of their native State, and they would regard themselves as recreant to the highest obligations of patriotism, if, under the influence of false pride, or the disposition to pander to public vanity, they should suppress any truth, which the public interest required to be promulgated.

The inability of the Board to obtain the full and accurate knowledge indispensable to a compliance with the command of the General Assembly, to digest a plan for Common Schools, "suited to the condition and resources of the State," will constitute the most appropriate apology, for the partial and defective statements which will be offered in regard to them.

North Carolina extends over an area of 50,000 square miles or 32,000,000 of acres. In 1830 her population consisted of 472,843 whites, 19,543 free persons of color, and 245,601 slaves. The average aggregate population to the square mile was about 14 7-10, and of white population 9 4-10. The aggregate population in 1840 will probably be about 850,000, or 17 to the square mile, and the white population 550,000 or 11 to the square mile. The number of white children between the ages five and fifteen years was, in 1830, 129,583—in 1840 the number will be about 150,000, or 3 to the square mile.

Accurate information, with respect to the proportion of our citizens who have received the benefit of a common school education, from their own resources, would shed great light upon our inquiries. The data at our command is vague and uncertain.—The Hon. W. C. Johnson, of Maryland, in the course of a series of interesting observations on the subject of common schools, made in the House of Representatives of United States, in February last, remarks that he has seen no report from N. Carolina on this subject, but that it is obvious that she stands greatly in need of an improved system of education, from the fact that, out of one hundred and eleven voters who gave testimony, in relation to the contested election in the first session of the 22d Congress, twenty-eight made their marks; in other words, one third could not write their names. It must be remembered however, that the Congressional District referred to is on our western frontier, and that although it certainly yields to no section of the State in the exhibition of mental and physical vigor, nevertheless, owing to its comparatively recent settlement and the sparseness of its population, the means of education are less generally diffused than elsewhere. The class of individuals too whose votes are most likely to be challenged are not always the most intelligent portion of the community. But after all proper allowances are made, the existence of such a fact in the most populous Congressional District in the State, and the one for which it will be most difficult to provide, in any general scheme of education, is startling. In 1840, more than one-eighth of the voters of the State will be found in this region. In the same district of country, there are not more than two well regulated Seminaries, where instruction is given in classical learning; and in these, no means are provided for the illustration of the physical sciences. With the exception of the University, we have but one institution in the State possessed of philosophical and chemical apparatus; a third will in a short time be supplied. There are not probably a dozen Academies prepared to give instruction in the use of the Maps and Globes, or half of this number furnished with Libraries.

The average number of students on the catalogues of the University for the last twenty years, is one hundred and eighteen, or in the ratio of about one to every four thousand of our white population in 1830. During this whole period however, many of our young men, probably, a third, were educated at the Colleges of other States, and if so, the ratio of students at college to the white population would be as one to three thousand.

Such is the only information that has been obtained with respect to the condition of the State.

More full and precise details can be furnished on the subject of our resources.—But much, very much will be left to be desired. The average value of the entire surface of the State, is not less than two dollars per acre, making the aggregate sum of \$400,000,000 dollars. The total value of all other species of property has been computed from satisfactory data to be at least \$260,000,000 dollars, which, added to the estimate of lands, amounts to two hundred millions of dollars.

The small proportions of the annual productions of the State which finds a market within our own borders, renders it impossible to submit any calculations upon this subject which would have reasonable claims to accuracy.

The state of the fund set apart for the support of common schools is exhibited in the following statement of the permanent property and other sources of revenue, committed to the management of the Board.

1st. PERMANENT PROPERTY.—a million of acres of swamp lands of uncertain value; 5,000 shares of stock in the Bank of the State, and 5,207 shares in the Bank of Cape Fear, subscribed at 100 dollars per share; 500 shares of stock in the Roanoke Navigation Company, subscribed for, at 100 dollars per share, and probably worth half the sum; 650 shares in the Cape Fear Navigation Company, (500 subscribed for at 50, and 100 at 100 dollars per share) subject to a like depreciation; the dividends on 6,000 shares of stock in the Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road Company, subscribed for at 100 dollars per share; and 175 shares in the Club-foot and Harlow Creek Canal Company, subscribed at 100 dollars per share, the latter of no marketable value.

2d. SOURCES OF REVENUE.—The tax imposed by law upon the retailers of spirituous liquors—the tax on auctioneers—all monies paid into the Treasury on entries of vacant lands (except Cherokee lands)—and all profits accruing to the State, for subscriptions to works of Internal Improvement, and from loans made from the Internal Improvement Fund.

The transcript in the appendix taken from the report of the Public Treasurer, exhibits the whole fiscal transactions of the Board since April, 1837, and is given at length to enable those disposed to enter into the investigation, to satisfy themselves of the degree of reliance which may be placed upon the following estimates:

ESTIMATES FOUNDED UPON THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS.

The Bank stock belonging to the fund, is of greater value than the subscription price, and this excess of value will be more than equivalent to the depreciation of the navigation stocks. There can be no risk, therefore, in estimating the Bank stock and the Roanoke and Cape Fear Navigation stock at par—and the Club-foot and Harlow Creek Canal stock as destitute of value.—The value of the Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road stock can only be determined by time and experience. At present favorable expectations are entertained.

RECAPITULATION.		
10,207 shares of Bank stock at \$100 per share		\$1,020,700
500 do Roanoke Navigation		50,000
100 do Cape Fear do		32,500
650 do Cape Fear do		32,500
Cash in the Treasury, 31st October, 1838		27,285
		\$1,133,485
6,000 shares of stock in Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road Company, subscribed at \$100 per share		600,000
		\$1,733,485
ESTIMATED ANNUAL INCOME.		
The Bank and Navigation stock, as above, will probably yield a yearly profit of 8 per cent. on \$1,100,000		66,000
Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road stock, 6 per cent. on \$600,000		36,000
Tax on retailers of spirituous liquors do on auctioneers		2,800
Monies paid for entries of vacant lands		1,200
		5,000
		\$111,000

One of the principal sources of revenue during the last two years, viz: interest arising from loans made by the fund for Internal Improvements, is omitted in the estimate, because the principal money may be appropriated to some public work during the present session, and this may or may not be a source of revenue, according to the character of the enterprise. The swamp lands are omitted, because no calculation can be made with respect to them on which the Board can rely themselves, much less command the assent of others.

To devise a system then, which shall secure instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, for 150,000 children, dispersed through the State in the ratio of three to every square mile, with the resources stated, would seem to be the precise duty required of the Board, by the last General Assembly.

Massachusetts is entitled not merely to the high distinction of having given birth to the common school system in America, but to the peculiar glory of having preceded all other people in the efforts now making for the intellectual regeneration of the world. The cradle of liberty was none other than the cradle of intelligence, and the spirit of our free institutions can continue to exist in none other than the brilliant atmosphere which gave it birth. The population of Massachusetts in 1830 was 610,014, or 81 to each square mile of her Territory; in 1840 it will be about 710,000 and about 94 to the square mile. The number of children between the ages of four and sixteen is returned at 177,053, and the amount expended for instruction is estimated at \$841,000, of which sum \$465,000 is raised by a direct taxation. The latter sum is divided annually among more than three thousand teachers. The assessed value of property of the people of that State in 1830 was \$208,300,407, and is probably much greater now. The reputation of her citizens for intelligence and enterprise, is co-extensive with civilization. It is a matter of just pride with her Statesmen, that a com-

mon school system cherished to the extent which has been shown, is well suited to the condition and resources of that commonwealth.

Let us compare, for a moment, the relative advantages of the two States in both these respects. Our white population is spread over the State in the ratio of eleven to the square mile; her's in the proportion of ninety-four. Density of population is a great advantage, provided it be equally diffused, inasmuch as the school-house can be brought nearer each man's door. In equality of diffusion, owing to the non existence of large towns, we have greatly the advantage: and it is believed that it can be shown to a demonstration, that the advantage arising from the greater density of population in Massachusetts is fully counterbalanced by evils of an opposite nature, from which we are exempt. We are blessed with a climate equally salubrious, a soil of greater average fertility, a larger variety of productions, and more valuable staples, a domain between six and seven times as extensive, an amount of aggregate wealth nearly as great, and greater, man for man, divided among our citizens with an equality, strikingly similar to that which characterizes their distribution over the State. In the relative dissemination of intelligence, it must be admitted that the superiority is not with us, and to this cause alone, must be ascribed the fact, that, with immensely greater facilities for the production of wealth, we have so little surpassed our keen sighted rivals. Neither argument nor example is necessary to prove that the enterprise, and consequent wealth of every nation, is in a direct proportion to its intelligence. It is the history of the world, and the experience of every individual.

A comparison of the relative advantages of North Carolina, with either of the States that has entered upon the great career of improvement, will serve to show there is nothing connected with the condition and resources of this commonwealth, that should deter the patriot from the attempt to discharge his duty. New York, Pennsylvania, and the infant Colossus, Ohio, are apposite and cheering examples. The empire State, that astonished the world, by the accomplishment of a physical improvement, "a century in advance of the age," has effected infinitely more for our country and mankind, in the admirable organization of her system of intellectual improvements. With a territory not quite equal in extent to ours, an aggregate population perhaps three times as great, she has established more than ten thousand common schools, in which, instruction is given to a large number of children than that of our whole white population. If De Witt Clinton had never been born, and if the first conceptions of her whole scheme of Internal Improvements were yet to be formed, they would certainly and inevitably result from her common school system. It is mind that acquires dominion over matter, and education that forms the mind. Pennsylvania entered comparatively late into the generous contest of physical and intellectual improvement, but she entered with a giant's stride, and has made and is making a giant's progress. With an extent of territory, less by one-tenth than ours, an aggregate population twice as large, her system provides for the immediate instruction of 300,000 children, at an annual expense of \$600,000.

This expense, let it be remembered, has been voluntarily assumed by her citizens, at the polls, in their several school districts, and at a time when they were charged with the maintenance of a system of internal improvements, extensive and costly beyond all parallel. Ohio, that in the memory even of the middle aged men of the present generation, was a wilderness, promises to outstrip all her sisters in physical and intellectual improvement. One of her citizens* is entitled to the proud distinction of having given the first impetus to the greatest physical improvement of the age—and another,† a forest born Professor, has, probably, accomplished still more gigantic results, by the interest which he has excited in favor of education in his native State, and throughout our country. It cannot be necessary to enter more extensively into these calculations.

Our condition is not unfavorable to the establishment of common schools; we have the necessary resources, and need nothing but the will to apply them liberally, and the intelligence to apply them with discretion. With respect to the mode of application, we have fortunately access to more satisfactory information, than on any other topic, that has engaged our attention. The regret that we have not been enabled to act efficiently at an earlier period, is lessened by the consideration that we are enlightened by the recorded experience of those who have preceded us. If there were widely discordant opinions, as to the best mode of national enlightenment, we might still experience much difficulty in arriving at satisfactory conclusions.

So far, however, as the Board have had an opportunity of examining the history of education in the old and new world, the mode of procedure is substantially the same. In Sweden, Prussia, Germany, Austria and Russia, the machinery is arranged with a celerity, and the system pur-

sued with a vigor peculiar to the operation of despotic forms of government. In this country, where the people are sovereign, action implies deliberation, & to deliberation are sometimes incident, hesitation & delay.

In digesting the system of common schools, now to be submitted, the Board claim for themselves no originality of conception. They have done nothing more than to endeavor to adapt to our condition and purposes, machinery which has been well tried, and found eminently useful elsewhere.

Of the 50,000 square miles, or 32,000,000 acres, constituting the surface of North Carolina, a million and a half of acres, estimated by the Engineers appointed to examine them, to consist of vacant and inaccessible swamp lands in the Eastern section of the State. If this estimate approximates accuracy, and we add to the extent of the swamps, the mountainous districts of the west unsuited to cultivation, we may safely conclude that at least one-tenth of the State is uninhabited. There remain, then, 45,000 square miles of inhabited territory. If this area be divided into common school districts, six miles square, or as nearly so as the nature of the country will admit, the State will contain 1250 districts. If the population were diffused throughout the State, with precise equality, each district would contain about one hundred and eight children, between the ages of five and fifteen, and the most remote child would be a little more than four miles, in a direct line, from the centre of his district, while the greater number would be less than half the distance.

It may be very desirable, and certainly will be so ultimately, to have smaller districts and more numerous schools. New York, we have seen, has divided the same extent of territory, into more than ten thousand districts. She has, however, nearly 5 times as many children to provide for, and it is a matter of much regret with her most intelligent citizens, that they have not fewer, and consequently better schools.

The division proposed, would, if our counties were all of the same extent, give about nineteen schools to each county.

As stated in the outset, the Board have no means of ascertaining, but the opinion is confidently entertained, that there have been at no time a dozen good schools sustained in the most populous and wealthy of our counties. It is believed, moreover, that if the requisite funds were at the command of the Board, the establishment of a greater number of schools would not be desirable, for the obvious reason that it would be impossible to supply them with competent instructors. Indeed, as will hereafter be shown, the greatest difficulty to be encountered, in this great effort at intellectual reform, will be in commanding the services of proper school masters.

The districts having been laid off by designated boundaries, a school-house is in the next place to be erected, at a proper place, of suitable materials, and on the most judicious plan. As the rising generation is to pass a deeply important, interesting, and the most impressive portion of life in these tenements, the mode of construction is a matter of no small moment. Indeed much of the efficacy and success of the whole system, will depend upon the model which shall be selected, and the manner of its execution. Too much attention cannot be bestowed upon either. The edifices should be pleasantly situated: should be neat and comfortable, and as they may, on an average, afford the only opportunities of instruction to 108 children, they must be spacious. In no community, however, will the whole, or nearly the whole number of children, ever be sent to school at the same time.

The accompanying report of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, on the subject of school houses, contains all the information on this head that can be desired, and obviates the necessity of further remark here. The districts having been designated, and the requisite school houses erected, the difficult question returns upon us—how are instructors to be provided? No one capable of forming correct opinions upon the subject, and conversant with the state of things around us, can suppose for a moment, that we can find twelve hundred and fifty, properly qualified instructors, in North Carolina, or any considerable proportion of this number. They cannot be had from the North, if it were desirable to employ others than those reared in our own State, for the difficulty of obtaining them is much more loudly complained of in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and even in Massachusetts than here. What then is to be done? We will be compelled to adopt the course crowned with such perfect success at Hofwyl, in Switzerland, in Prussia, and Germany, and which is now in the progress of successful experiment in New York, and about to be adopted in Ohio, Pennsylvania & Massachusetts. A scheme, pressed with so much earnestness and ability on the attention of the citizens of this State, by President Caldwell, in his volume of letters published in 1832, and which indeed, constituted his only plan and hope for the improvement of our common schools. We must establish Normal schools for the education of our own teachers, and we need entertain no hope of accomplishing the favorite object of the State in any other way.

New York has endowed a separate department in each of her ten district academies, for the instruction of common school teachers. It has had the effect already of giving increased reputation to the least appreciated, but most useful of all the learned professions, and promises a radical change for the better in the schools throughout that State. The graduates of these Normal schools are sought for with the greatest avidity, and notwithstanding all the efforts that have been made to give efficiency to these departments, the supply is by no means commensurate with the demand.

The superintendent of common schools in Pennsylvania, advises the establishment of practical Institutes in different sections of the State, the procurement of suitable libraries and apparatus, and a faculty of six professors for each, involving an annual expense of \$40,000.

If these views needed the confirmation, either of argument or authority, they would find both in the subjoined extract from the report of the Board of Education of Massachusetts, made on the 20th of April last. Governor Everett is Chairman of this Board, and it is almost superfluous to remark that there is no individual, whose opinions are entitled to more weight on all subjects connected with education.

The subject of the education of teachers is of the very highest importance in connection with the improvement of our schools. That there are degrees of skill and success on the part of teachers, is a matter of too familiar observation to need repetition; and that these must depend, in no small degree, on the experience of the teacher, and in his formation under a good discipline and method of instruction in early life, may be admitted without derogating in any measure from the importance of natural gifts and aptitude in fitting men for this as for the other duties of society. Nor can it be deemed unsafe to insist, that while occupations requiring a very humble degree of intellectual effort and attainment, demand a long and continued training, it cannot be that the arduous and manifold duties of the instructor of youth should be as well performed without as with specific preparation for them. In fact it must be admitted as the voice of reason and experience, that institutions for the formation of teachers must be established among us, before the all important work of forming the minds of our children, can be performed in the best possible manner, and with the greatest attainable success.

No one who has been a witness of the end and effect with which instruction is imparted by one teacher, and the tedious pains-taking and unsatisfactory progress which mark the labors of another of equal ability and knowledge, and operating on minds equally good, can entertain a doubt that there is a mastery in teaching as in every other art. Nor is it less obvious, that within reasonable limits, this skill and this mastery may themselves be made the subjects of instruction and be communicated to others.

We are not left to the deductions of reason on this subject. In those foreign countries where the greatest attention has been paid to the work of education, schools for teachers have formed an important feature in their systems and with the happiest results. The art of imparting instruction has been found like every other art to improve by cultivation in institutions established for that specific object. New importance has been attached to the calling of the instructor, by public opinion, from the circumstance, that his vocation has been deemed one requiring systematic preparation and culture. * * * The duties which devolve upon the teachers even of our common schools, particularly when attended by large numbers of both sexes and of advanced years, for learners, (as is often the case) are various and difficult of performance; for their faithful execution, no degree of talent and qualification is too great, and when we reflect in the nature of things, that only a moderate portion of both can, in ordinary cases, be expected for the slender compensation afforded the teacher, we gain a new view of the necessity of bringing his duties, the advantage of previous training in the best mode of discharging them.

A very considerable part of the benefit which those who attend our schools might derive from them, is unquestionably lost for the want of more skill in the business of instruction on the part of the teacher. This falls with special burden on that part of youthful population who are able to enjoy, but for a small portion of the year, the advantage of the schools. For them it is of peculiar importance, that from the moment of entering the school, every hour should be employed to the greatest advantage, and every facility in acquiring knowledge, and every means of "awakening" and guiding the mind be put into instant operation; and when this is done, two months' of schooling would be as valuable as a year passed under a teacher destitute of experience and skill.

If the Legislature should determine to establish a single school of this character, the public convenience will, of course, require that it shall be located near the centre of the State. If the board were authorized to make an arrangement with the Trustees of the University, and to annex to that institution a department for the instruction of common school teachers, a less numerous faculty might be required, than for a separate school. The libraries, apparatus, geological and mineralogical cabinets, would subserve equally the purposes of both.— That institution now receives without charge either for tuition or room rent, every native of the State, destitute of the means of education, who, upon examination by the faculty, is believed to possess the requisite mental and physical constitution to render him a valuable member of society.

There can be no difficulty in pronouncing that the Trustees would greet with a similar spirit of benevolence, any proposition which should promise still more extended usefulness.

If a system of common schools of this or similar extent should find favor with the General Assembly, it will next become necessary to inquire more particularly into the amount of expenditure it will involve, and the manner in which the requisite funds can be provided.

The net annual revenue of the Literary Fund, as at present constituted, cannot, as