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Kansas (Territory) Supl. of common schools.

REPORT
OF
SAMUEL W. GREER,
TERRITORIAL SUPERINTENDENT OF COMMON
SCHOOLS.

OFFICE TERRITORIAL SUPERINTENDENT COM. SCHOOLS, }
January 16, A. D., 1859. }

To the Speaker of the House of Representatives :

SIR—In pursuance of law, I herewith transmit to the Legislature my report as Territorial Superintendent of Common Schools. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. W. GREER,
Territorial Superintendent.

To the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Kansas :

The Territorial Superintendent of Common Schools, is required by law to prepare a report, to be submitted to the Legislature, upon certain specified matters.

The short period of time that has elapsed since I assumed the duties of that office, prevents me from making as full a report as circumstances might seem to require.

The County Superintendent of Leavenworth county has made a report, as required by law, which shows

The whole number of school districts, set off in Leavenworth county, to be	28
Joint districts, - - - - -	1
Districts which have reported to County Superintendent,	16
Number of children residing in said reported districts, over five and under twenty-one years of age, -	866

A partial report has been received from the Superintendent of

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Atchison county. Eighteen districts have been organized in that county, eight of which have schools in successful operation.

I have been informed by the Superintendent of Douglas county, that four districts have been organized in that county.

I did not receive my commission until the second day of December, A. D., 1858, which left me but little time to ascertain the condition of the common schools of the Territory.

But few counties have made any effort to carry the present school system into effect.

In those in which it has been attempted, it bids fair to work well, and the schools that have been established are in a prosperous condition.

The laws of last winter, including the present school law, were not published until June or July last, so that the people generally were not aware of the existence of the law, until several months had elapsed after its passage. It could not be expected that, within such a short time, our schools should reach a great degree of perfection.

As yet there has been no appropriation of school moneys by the Territory, and I am therefore unable to make an estimate and account of the expenditures thereof.

My predecessor, I have learned, has recommended certain text books, to be used in common schools throughout the Territory, but as I have not been able to obtain any official information of his acts, I cannot speak with any degree of certainty upon the subject; I have had the matter under consideration for some time, and will, at an early day, take definite action upon it.

In compliance with the requirements of the law, I have opened a correspondence with the school departments of several States, to obtain information relative to the system of common schools, and its improvement in those States. No replies have as yet been received, and I am therefore unable to lay any such information before you.

Under the 42nd section of the Act of February 12, 1858, providing for the assessment and collection of taxes, the county Board of Supervisors of certain counties, at their last annual session, levied a tax of two-and-a-half mills on the dollar, on the taxable property in the county, for the purpose of raising a revenue to assist in the support of common schools, until there shall be a distribution from the income of the school fund.

There seems to be no definite provision for the disbursement of the fund raised in this manner. The county Superintendent is authorized "to apply for and receive from the county Treasurer, or any person authorized to disburse the same, all moneys apportioned for the use of common schools in his county." It has been suggested that this only means the case of an apportionment from the Territorial fund, and does not authorize him to

receive and disburse school moneys raised from a tax by the county.

I would respectfully recommend that provision be made upon this subject, so as to relieve it of all doubt, as it is of the utmost importance that the entire machinery of the school system should move on as smoothly as possible.

There may be other deficiencies which the Legislature will be called upon, from time to time, to correct, but it will require time and experience to point these out.

Our system is yet in its infancy, and under such circumstances perfection cannot be expected. It may be easy for some to point out seeming deficiencies, but the task of suggesting a remedy which shall prove both just and practicable, is far more difficult of performance.

It is a fortunate characteristic of our population that they can readily accommodate themselves to almost any state of circumstances. But to encourage them in forming efficient organizations under the present school system, they should be assured of the stability of its provisions. A system which is perpetually changing; which vascillates from year to year—now adopting one mode of administration and then another; which fills a volume with laws, the crudities and inconsistencies of which, no judicial officer can unravel, cannot, while in this transitory state, accomplish the important objects designed to be attained in a system of general education.

I am satisfied that after a careful consideration of the subject, you will not regard with favor any alteration in the present school law, beyond those simple amendments rendered necessary by public convenience, and which will, without doubt, give a greater efficiency to existing enactments.

It has been suggested that, in order to render our system more complete, that normal schools should be established at different points in the Territory, and appropriations made for their support. Such a course might be of great advantage to the cause of education, but the financial embarrassments under which the Territory is at present laboring, as well as the prevailing depression which marks all branches of trade, render this an inauspicious time for the inauguration of new enterprises involving, a heavy expenditure of money. We must be satisfied to advance in the perfection of our common school system, as our Territory increases in wealth and population. A plan that would meet the wants and suit the circumstances of a thickly populated and wealthy State, might in many respects be entirely unsuited to ours. Such States as Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, may well boast of the symmetry and perfection of a system upon which the labor of years has been spent in building up, and upon which the money of a numerous and wealthy peo-

ple has been expended. But our circumstances are different. Our system has just been inaugurated; their's have been in operation for years. Our Territory is new and sparsely settled; those States are old and thickly populated. Moreover it is an apparent fact, that the number of children in the Territory, in proportion to the population, is not as great as in the older States.

It is necessary, that some provision should be made, with regard to schools established in incorporated cities under special provisions in their charters. In some instances, the county and district authorities have come in conflict with those of the city.

I would further suggest the propriety of amending the law, so as to make each municipal township an original school district, still, however, allowing sub-districts to be formed out of any part of such township as the necessities of the inhabitants may require, in the same manner as school districts are formed under existing laws.

I cannot refrain from adverting to the excellent manner in which the public school in the city of Lawrence is conducted. On the invitation of Mr. C. L. Edwards, the principal, I visited it a short time ago. The principal is aided by two female assistants. The number of scholars in attendance is one hundred and seventy-five. The best order prevails, and everything seems to move in a perfect system. The scholars, I am informed, are advancing rapidly in their studies, and the citizens of the place look upon the school with pride. Examples of this kind, it is to be hoped, will awaken a spirit of generous emulation in other parts of the Territory.

Every good citizen must rejoice in the establishment of a system of common schools in the Territory, and we have reason to hope will unite in putting that system into full and complete operation. Upon that system we may rest the brightest hopes for the future of our Territory. Common schools are the people's colleges, and by these mighty, though humble agencies, the common mind is elevated and purified, and the people are led to a just appreciation of the blessings of Republican liberty. A mind undeveloped by culture is a captive, and walks around its narrow cell of thought, from childhood to the grave, in unconscious servitude. But knowledge breaks the shackles from the soul and permits it to rise to a higher and better life. A nation of scholars can never be enslaved, but a swarming multitude of ignorant men must be governed by a wisdom higher than their own, and can only find safety in submission.

If we expect to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, we expect what never was and never will be. Education makes the man—that alone is the parent of every virtue; it is the true source of our prosperity and the ultimate refuge and defence of