

In reporting to you the state of the schools in this township, the order specified in your circular will be observed.

First—Number of districts, 4 ½

Second—Number of districts reported, 3

Third—Number of children of legal age, 1,049

Fourth—Number attending school three months, 268

Fifth—Number attending six months, 244

Sixth—Number attending nine months, 166

Seventh—Number attending twelve months, None.

Eighth—Number who have attended over eighteen years old, None.

Ninth—Number of colored children taught, 7

Tenth—Average number of months school kept open, 11

Eleventh—Terms of tuition, from \$1.25 to \$2.00

Twelfth—Amount of money raised by tax, \$3,147

Thirteenth—Amount received from the state, \$500

Fourteenth—Amount received from town collector, (part of school tax for 1852,) \$1,000

Fifteenth—Total amount appropriated for school purposes, \$842.22

Sixteenth—Number of teachers 5—male 4, female 1.

The great diminution in the number attending school during the latter half of the year demands an explanation. That explanation is found in the fact that for five months previous to this date there has been no public school in the Second River District, including the village of Belleville, a district containing more than five hundred children of legal school age.

As the mere statement of this fact, without explanation, would be not only an implication of the character of the district, most discreditable to its inhabitants, but a virtual impeachment of the fidelity of its trustees, it is due to them to state that without their consent, and against their remonstrance, the public school house, after said trustees had refused to entertain an application for the purchase of it, was torn down on the night of July 11th, of the present year.

The school being thus disbanded, by the demolition of the school house, the trustees found it impossible to procure suitable accommodations for the scholars; in consequence of which, not one of the five hundred and thirty-two children of legal school age, residing within the district has, for the last five months, enjoyed the advantages of a public school. The effort of the trustees to prevent this catastrophe having failed, the town superintendent, in the discharge of his official duty, does hereby make it a matter of record, leaving the responsibility of the act with those who assumed it, and the character of the transaction to the unbiased verdict of time.

Since my last report, the North Belleville school district, in this township, has enlarged and remodeled its school house, and the Second River district has voted an appropriation of five thousand dollars for the purchase of a lot and the erection of a school house. The lot has been selected, and the building is in progress and will probably be completed during the spring.

At our last town meeting, the inhabitants of the township voted with great unanimity to raise by tax a sum equal to three dollars, for every child in the township between the ages of five and eighteen years of age.

Having in a previous report stated somewhat in detail some of the obstacles which hinder the success of our school system, I will only add respecting them, that while very much remains to be done in the cause of public schools in this township, not a little has already been accomplished.

The fact that within the last two years nearly six thousand dollars have been raised by tax in this township, for the support of public schools, sufficiently attests the *growth* of public sentiment.

But this is not the only token of progress. Our ill located, ill constructed, ill furnished, and in all respects, *ill conditioned* school houses, are all giving place to structures, fixtures and surroundings of another sort. The cramped and crippled desks, hacked and backless seats, riddled windows and doors, floors strewn with dirt, and yawning with rifts and chinks, walls and ceilings, naked, mutilated, begrimed and sooty with charcoal sketches, surrounding and overhanging a stifling compound of dust, ashes, nutshells, cores, half munched fragments, carbonic acid, quids and saliva, reeking beneath them—all these time-honored educational insignia are fast disappearing.

But the inroads of modern innovation are not doomed to stop here. However great these improvements they deal mainly with the *exterior*, leaving unquickened the life forces within.

When we have Normal schools of the highest character, for the education of teachers; when provision is made for filling these schools with pupils, combining in the highest degree aptness to learn, with aptness to teach and train ; when the art of teaching is studied as a learned profession, ranking in dignity with the highest; when the *teacher* expands into the *educator* and finds his appropriate sphere more in training and developing than in merely *storing* the mind; when the salary of the teacher is increased one-half, the number of his pupils lessened one-half, and the time and number of the daily recesses in schools doubled, *then* a beginning will have been made in reforming our system of common schools, somewhat befitting the demands of the age.

Theodore D. Weld.