

existing conditions. Perhaps the system worked for the best as it was; but the disruption of the central educational authority in the town, when it came, and the introduction of a plurality of authorities, entailed upon the Commonwealth serious evils which will claim our attention hereafter. The old system of town control did not disappear at once; in fact, the Law of 1789, soon to be mentioned, assumes that it is still in vigorous operation.

In 1780 the constitution of Massachusetts was framed, ratified, and put in operation. It took under its protecting ægis the State system of education. It contains by far the most generous recognition of education found in any of the State constitutions of the period, and has never been outgrown. The constitution was followed, in 1789, by a revision and codification of the school laws, which was practically an adaptation of the law to the existing state of things. The declension of this law from the standard set by the Puritans is very marked in two particulars. A six-months' school takes the place of the earlier permanent school, and two hundred families is substituted for one hundred in the description of towns required to maintain a Latin school. This law would have wrought great havoc, provided all the towns had been complying with the old requirement. Under the old law two hundred and thirty towns out of two hundred and sixty-five were required to maintain a Latin school; under the new law, only a hundred and ten.¹ This was a long step

¹ Martin, *The Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System*, Lect. III.