

## THE EXAMPLE OF CONNECTICUT.

2. The Secretary to the State Board of Education in Connecticut thus graphically illustrates the comparative effects of the adoption of the township over the School section system in that State. In order to understand the facts as stated, we have found it necessary to change the words "town," "township," and "district" to *School Section*, wherever they occur.

"The tendency to manage Schools township-wise is growing. More townships united their School sections last year than in any former one. *Once united they stay so.* At least there is no instance where a township has taken this step and after grading any of its Schools, gone back to the School section plan. Let public sentiment advance as it has done for five years, and the School section system will soon be abandoned. The people are fast learning the economy and efficiency of the township system. They see that it favours the wise expenditure of the public money, gains better and more permanent teachers, longer Schools, and helps the poorer and outlying School sections. The township system, too, lessens the frequency of tax assessments and collections. Many a School-house is going to decay because the funds requisite for such purposes would necessitate a section tax. The expense of the assessment and collection of such a tax makes too large a share of the tax itself. In most of the sections the amounts thus provided were very small. So small that it would have been wiser and more economical for the township to pay the bills. \* \* \* Facts on this subject are better than theories. I have, therefore, requested one of the School visitors of Branford, to describe the effects of the change in that township. His published letter shows what they did, how they did it, what they gained by it, and why they voted almost unanimously '*not to go back.*' It will be seen that prior to the union there was much ill-feeling in regard to School matters, that the discipline was deplorable, average attendance low, and the teachers changed generally every term; under the new system the people are better satisfied.—School Committee and teachers more permanent, Schools graded, terms lengthened, the motion made at the last annual meeting to reduce the School year from forty to thirty weeks, not receiving a single vote. The average attendance has improved twenty-five per cent. Scholarship wonderfully improved—one hundred per cent. better than it was four years ago."

## THE EXAMPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

3. The late Horace Mann, so noted for his enlightened views on education, deprecating the district or School section system, says: "I consider the law authorizing townships to divide themselves into (School sections) *the most unfortunate on the subject of Common Schools ever enacted in the State (of Massachusetts).* In this opinion, ex-Governor Boutwell and the eminent educationist of the same State, concurs and hopes that the day will speedily be seen when every township in its municipal capacity will manage its School and equalize the expenses of education."

## THE EXAMPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

4. The Superintendent of the State of Pennsylvania, in his last report thus explains the township system which has been established in that State. He says:—

"Each township, borough and city in this State is made by law a School district. The districts thus formed are the only ones except a small number of what are called 'independent districts,' (like our Union School section), with a single school formed out of parts of adjacent townships, otherwise badly accommodated with schools. Outside of cities and boroughs the School districts have from one to thirty Schools in them—the average being about seven Schools. \* \* \* The State Superintendent can refuse to pay a district (township, borough, or city) its quota of the annual State appropriation, if its directors do not keep the Schools 'open according to law.'

The directors of a district are authorized by law to appoint and pay a district superintendent, and to require the teachers in their employ to hold a district institute. Each board is compelled to make an annual report to the State superintendent, through the agency of the proper County superintendent, who must approve it, accompanied by a sworn statement to the effect that the Schools of the district have been kept open and in operation according to law, and specifically declaring that no teacher has been employed during the year who did not hold a valid certificate, and that the accounts of the district have been legally settled. Failing to make such a statement, a forfeiture of the State appropriation follows.

The School directors of each county, and of each city and borough having over 7,000 inhabitants, as may choose to do so, meet in conventions triennially, at the call of the State superintendent, to choose a superintendent and fix his salary. The directors are limited in their choice of a person to fill it, to those having certain

scholastic and professional qualifications, and the sufficiency of which the State superintendent is to judge before he issues the commission. The State superintendent pays the salaries of the County superintendents, and fills all vacancies in the office by appointment."

## THE ECONOMY AND BENEFITS OF THE TOWNSHIP SYSTEM.

The State superintendent of Kansas thus forcibly discusses the advantages of a township system as compared with that of School section. He says:—

"1. *Boundaries*—It will end and for ever put to rest the interminable disputes about School section boundaries, personal heart-burnings and animosities, secret malice and revenge; neighbourhood feuds and public broils engendered by this prolific source of strife and contention, will cease to exist. The law having once permanently established each township a School division, the trouble will then be at an end. There being no more boundary disputes about which the people can make themselves miserable, they can unite in building up good Schools.

"2. *School Officers reduced*—It will dispense with a large number of School officers and elections, and simplify the control and management of our Public Schools. The present law provides three officers for each School section, the new one but six for each township, thus dispensing with a large number of superfluous officers, simplifying the management, and securing uniform work in all the Schools. The petty annoyances and loss of time occasioned by so many School meetings and elections will in a great measure be avoided.

"3. *Diminish aggregate expense*—It will diminish the aggregate expense of our Schools, and establish a uniform rate of taxation. It is a fact recognized by the best educators both in Europe and America, that the number of pupils which can be taught to the best advantage by the unclassified Schools of the rural section by one teacher is about forty. Another deleterious effect of this independent School section system lies in the opposite direction; for when the number of pupils under one teacher exceeds fifty or sixty, the teacher cannot do justice to his School, and when it reaches seventy or eighty, proper instruction is entirely out of the question. If a change were made from the old system to the new, the School board could from time to time unite small Schools and divide large ones, so as to adapt them to the wants of the people, and then adapt the teachers to both: very much after the manner in which the system is administered in our larger towns.

"4. *Uniform Taxation*—Taxation for School purposes would become more uniform, inasmuch as under the present system the people in the smaller and weaker sections pay three or four times as much as their neighbours in the larger and more wealthy sections and often get much less for it, both in quantity and quality, as they are never able to employ the best teachers. In the township system, the tax is levied equally upon all parts of the township, and as the object to be obtained, which alone justifies such taxation, is the education of all the children without distinction, nothing less than an equal provision for all should satisfy the conscience of the people.

"5. *Graded or Classified Schools*—It will provide for the establishment of a system of graded Schools. This is the highest development of the free Public Schools, ever yet attained by the best educators in any country. *It is the perfection of School Economy.* The greatest superiority of city Schools over those in the rural sections is explained in the fact of the complete gradation and classification of the former. The only feasible method yet devised for grading and classifying country Schools is provided in the township system. And it will do for the country Schools what it has already done for the city Schools, in bringing order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and success out of failure.

"6. *Convenience of School location*—Townships containing a given number of inhabitants, or a certain amount of taxable property, or both, could have their primary and intermediate Schools fixed in different parts of the township, so as to be of easy access to the smallest pupils. Then with a Superior or High School at the centre, free to all between twelve and twenty-one years of age, kept open, at least, ten months in each year, the system would be complete. With such graded Schools in each township, the superior education necessarily resulting therefrom, the increased interest in the Schools, and the great economy of time and means employed in their management, would soon bring them into universal favour.

"7. *Appropriate Grade for pupils*—It will systematize the Schools and provide an appropriate grade for each child. The great bane of the old independent section system is, there is no classification; in fact, from the very nature of things, there cannot be. Every teacher well knows that the most important thing in