

there is necessity for. Without overcrowding the schools the number of departments could be reduced without increasing the teacher's work beyond a fair limit. In only two of the schools is there an excess of pupils over desk accommodation. In all the others there are more desks than pupils. There is no school with more than 50 pupils, and the average attendance under such circumstances is about 40. It is generally conceded that a teacher can look after 50 pupils in a graded school. As the average attendance is only a trifle over 6,000 the number of departments could be reduced from 154 to 120, or if this reduction is too great, to 125 which means an annual saving of upwards of \$8,000.

It must be recognized that there has been a continuous improvement in the schools ever since the inauguration of the free school system. All that has been wished for has not been realized and the improvement has been gradual and steady rather than spasmodic. There have been changes in the system, some of which were in the nature of experiments but it is to the credit of the Board if they found that the experiment was not a success it was abandoned. The duties of the Trustees are executive rather than administrative. They do not originate the course of study but simply carry out the ideas of the Board of Education whose function it is to frame the course of study. Good work has been done in the schools in the past and the opinion of many is that the work of the present is better than that of the past. Whatever prejudices existed against the free schools in the past have been largely obliterated and will altogether dis-

appear in a few years. Most of the present generation of taxpayers received instruction under the free school system and are therefore acquainted with the methods pursued, and are quite competent to express opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of the present system.

The main question dealt with in this article has been the cost of the schools which were responsible in 1904, for 37.9 cents of the assessment levied for city purposes and 6.4 of the County taxes or say 45 cents on a levy of \$1.71 for each \$100 of value. This is an increase on the figures of 1898 only one cent. For 1903 it was a trifle less than the years given. The differences between the Council and the Trustees have remained adjusted on the basis of 1898, with this exception that the whole amount of the school warrant is paid over to the Trustees after the assessment is collected—the general account of the city bearing whatever loss there may be through default.

The Trustees give their services free of charge and are all large tax payers themselves. There may be too many schools, but one thing can be said in favor of the trustees, and that is, they manage to keep the current expenditures within the estimates. They have not been so successful when erecting new school buildings are nearly all of the building have greatly exceeded the cost estimates by the architects in charge. But for this the architects must take the responsibility. But no more new buildings will be required unless it is proposed to vacate some of those now under lease. There is prevailing opinion that all buildings occupied as schools should be owned by the Board.