

4. *Non-attendance at school.* It appears that last year there were 250 school sections that had no school during the year. About 29,000 children, between 5 and 15 years of age in the sections where schools were taught, did not attend. Now, in sections where there is enough rateable property, and say from 12 to 30 children or over, school half the year at least should be kept, and with such sections as failed to organize under the school law, compulsion should be used. When the case is one of failure to get a teacher, let the matter be clearly certified by the inspector or board. Where the rate-payers have unanimously voted no school, let a reasonable amount be directly assessed above the county rates and collected in the regular way to be distributed among poor sections. When a majority has voted down the school, let the minority be empowered to hire a teacher and assess a reasonable amount for the half year. It might be well also to empower trustees to fine the guardian or parent of absentees from school the amount per head according to the county appointment of which they deprived the school, unless they could furnish a valid excuse for their absence.

5. *Exemption of rateable property from liability of assessment.* Nothing has been more injurious to the country schools than the exemption of \$1,000 worth of property belonging to persons over sixty years of age. There are many sections that I know which have lost one-half to two-thirds their property by this arrangement. The old men keep nominal possession of the property just to escape the tax, while the sons really own it. It is not only a temptation to dishonesty, but it is weakening our school sections, so that they cannot pay reasonable salaries to teachers. As a shrewd common sense countryman remarked to me, "This amendment has tinkered the bottom out of our school law. The sooner it is soddered up the better."

In conclusion we may ask, will granting separate schools remedy any of the practical defects in the working of our school system? Will it improve the teaching qualifications? Will it improve the inspection? Will it increase the attendance? Will it enhance the value of rateable property? Most assuredly not. We can improve our present system without interfering with the principles on which it rests, just as well as we would any separate school system which could be adopted. Our aim should be not re-organization but improvement, not experiments at compromise, but concentrated effort for greater efficiency. It is not a new style we need; but some earnest energetic men to work the one we have.

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